



THE HEALING TOUCH

The Newsletter of the Medical Missionaries of Mary

'Rooted and founded in love'



MMM
Worldwide News

News from MMM Areas



NIGERIA

Torugbene: There is currently a measles outbreak in Torugbene, and the Sisters are raising awareness in the community, treating those who are already infected, and immunising children under the age of five to prevent measles from attacking children and causing further harm.

Fuka: Our Sisters in the Northern part of Nigeria have been coping with insecurity for some time. There are kidnappings, killings and cattle stealing in the area. The Sisters have moved to a safer place organised by the Bishop, closed the fixed clinic for the present and will do mobile clinics as far as is possible. Please pray for the safety of all.

KENYA:

Mukuru: The Sisters are reporting that the recent demolitions have left many people homeless and hungry. They are particularly worried about the increase in sexual violence against young girls who are left exposed without proper shelter at night.

TANZANIA:

Seventy five years of presence in Tanzania is being celebrated in great style by MMM. The younger Sisters tell us they know they are standing on the shoulders of the early Irish Sisters who began in 1947.

IRELAND:

Drogheda: March was a difficult month in the Motherhouse with many Sisters sick with Covid-19.

Thank God all have come through the sickness well.

Dublin: The Rosemount complex is offering housing to Ukrainian refugees in a recently vacated property once used by the Communication Department before it moved to Drogheda. Our gesture of hospitality is being organised through the Association of Religious in Ireland and the Red Cross.

ENGLAND:

Congratulations to Sr. Chinyene Lumenze who has received the Dean's Award for Excellence in her studies again this year, her second year of studies in Child Health and Family Health at the University of Derby.

Counter Human Trafficking



Sr Mary O'Malley

Since 2006, Sr. Mary O'Malley has been involved in the ministry of Counter Human Trafficking in Kenya. This involves both directly working with victims and awareness raising through training programmes in schools, youth groups and with vulnerable populations.

Over the years her work has spread from Kenya to other countries in East Africa. At the Faraja Centre in Tanzania there is also an active programme.

Human trafficking involves the recruitment or movement of people for exploitation by the use of threat, force, fraud, or the abuse of vulnerability. Poverty is a driving factor, and people who genuinely need to better their situation in life are particularly vulnerable. It is a crime that can occur across international borders or within a country. It often crosses multiple geographic and legal boundaries. Women from rural areas are trafficked to the cities and sold into prostitution. Men are offered lucrative employment in rural projects in another part of the country or abroad and end up exploited for their labour and in poor living conditions.

Individuals who have been trafficked are likely to experience multiple physical and mental health risks



Man trafficked to Saudi Arabia is now doing well selling shoes and is able to support himself and family

prior to, during and after their trafficking experiences. Many suffer acute and long-term health problems. This includes injuries, physical pain and illnesses, sexual health problems and mental health problems,



Mary and trafficked woman

such as depression, anxiety, psychosis and post-traumatic stress disorder.

High levels of sexual violence are reported among women trafficked for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, with high levels of symptoms of sexually transmitted infections reported by men and women alike.

What can we do as Medical Missionaries of Mary?

Trafficking is a process comprising various stages, starting with recruitment and followed by travel and transit, destination and exploitation.

We raise awareness which targets the recruitment stage. It helps young people identify “too good to be true” offers, even coming from family members. We also raise awareness with groups such as airlines and the hospitality sector who are unwittingly used by traffickers for transporting people.

MMM also works with victims of trafficking, providing support for individuals who have been liberated, trauma counselling and addressing the multiple needs such as income generating projects so that they do not become vulnerable again.

Currently MMM is involved in this work in Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria and USA. You can follow the work in Kenya through the following website: <https://chtrust-eastafrika.org/>

Lily's Story

By Sr. Mary O'Malley MMM

It was very clear to me that the young woman who came into our office was in great distress. As we introduced ourselves to each other and Lily began to talk - slowly at first - then most of it flowed out in copious tears. I realized that the "Beirut Blast" in August, 2020 had taken a terrible toll on her life. After a painful separation from her husband because of infidelity in July, 2018, she left for 'greener pastures' in the Lebanon. She trusted that her 10 year old daughter would be safe with her mother.

Life was hard in Lebanon and Lily was forced in her own words "to do the work of three people." But she decided not to complain and it was extremely painful when she learned that the first 3 months of her salary was 'directed' to her airfare. Then from the fourth month, she received less than half of what was promised. At times she felt angry as most days she was on her feet for 18 - 20 hours or more in back-breaking drudgery. The family she worked for gave her no day off. She said "I was driven like a slave." (I nodded in agreement). Some days prior to the blast, Lily felt she could take no more and decided to escape, but life on the streets in the capital city was a different kind of nightmare. She joined some Kenyan women who had an equally chequered history of life in Beirut as homeless African women. They all slept in one room and took turns that one waited behind to care for the children, while others worked in various casual jobs during the day.

One night when all the women went out as ladies of the night and while all the children were sleeping, Lily was dragged out by a group of young men who kicked in the door. She was savagely raped by the gang. She said "I went in and out of consciousness". At that point I was not surprised that she had terrible dreams and nightmares. With the help of a skilled psychiatrist, cum PhD in Clinical Psychology, she healed eventually. But these terrible memories of her experience remain part of her life story. After the blast, people of various nations received some form of assistance from their embassies, but Kenyans did not. So, they got together and decided to storm their embassy. As a result, at least 129 of them received tickets to return home.

A New Chapter in her Life

Thankfully, Lily was among those repatriated and came to our office three weeks later. To add to all the woes in her life at that moment, she suspected that she might be pregnant. If I could come with her to the hospital she agreed to go and find out the truth. She shed many tears when the result read Positive, but she bravely told herself and me "it's not the fault of this baby" Now more than ever Lily needed all our support. As with most victims/survivors of trafficking she had multiple needs to help to heal and restore her back to life.

Together with her medical care, counselling, housing and livelihood, we felt happy that since she had experience in selling fried fish at the market. We felt confident, with her, that it would be a good choice to sustain her, both in the long and short term, no matter where she set up house in Kenya. But in the current sharp downturn in the economic situation, her sales were slow and the fish proved a disaster!! The reason? As she had no means of refrigeration, she was inconsolable after being forced one evening to throw her precious commodity to stray dogs. Next day she requested to come to our office. She had spotted a small second hand freezer for Euro 100.00 (One hundred KHS) in the market. However, she was halting in her enthusiasm and said "but, Sr Mary, you have done so much for me". I did not hesitate for a moment and suggested we purchase it and have a man pulling a cart (mkokoteni) to take it to her home. From that time her project has gone from strength to strength. On a good day her income can be Euro 25.00 or just Euro 6.00, if customers are few.

"My Beautiful Lebanese Daughter"

In June, 2021, Lily gave birth to a baby girl. She called me to say "I have a beautiful Lebanese daughter." Only a woman of extraordinary courage and a heart full of forgiveness could make such a statement. Of the months of counselling, she said: "only for this gift of counselling and the means of livelihood, I could never have coped so well and be where I am today." Lily's 12-year-old firstborn (girl) is now ready to join First Year in secondary school shortly, it will be a good test of her ability to cope with these extra expenses. We wish her well and are here to support her.

Pediatrics - a Speciality and a Passion



Sr Martine Makanga

Sr. Martine Makanga is a Consultant Pediatric Surgeon. She is the only highly qualified doctor in this line of work for the whole of eastern Rwanda and in the hospital where she works in Kigali, she receives referrals from 10 other District Hospitals. Her passion is to offer quality pediatric surgery services with compassion to children who are

sick. She says: “with love, tenderness, compassion and dedication we work together as a whole Team to care for these children”. The surgeries are complicated: inguinal, umbilical hernia, undescended testis, cleft lip/palate, spina bifida, and hydrocele. Some of these are fatal if left untreated, all cause major deformity which would have stayed with the child their whole life.

For Sister Martine her life of prayer is integral to her ministry. “Each day, I offer to the Lord the children I will examine and operate on that day. I ask the Lord to guide me, to bless my poor hands to become instruments of healing when I do surgery. I ask to bless my words that they may be words of consolation and comfort to the family and to the children. I put them under the protection of Mary, our Mother.”

Another part of Sr. Martine’s ministry is training other pediatric surgeons. Passing on skills is important to MMMs. Rwanda is a country with a young population and at present there are only two other local pediatric surgeons for a population of an estimated 13 million people. The University of Kigali has started a Fellowship post graduate course in Paediatric Surgery. It is a three-year programme and the first three general surgeons are in this specialist training.

Does Sr. Martine ever get a holiday? Yes, of course she does. She goes to visit her family in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville). But what does she do there? She offers her services for free again to the Diocese of Pointe-Noire, her home diocese. They set up a Summer Camp and treat over

100 young children in a two-week session. The Archdiocese and other donor groups provide the local staff and drug costs and Sr. Martine has the expert skill they need. Well done, Sr. Martine. Your initiative is coming from the heart.



Celebration for children following surgery - Congo Brazzaville



Sr. Martine Makanga in surgery

Meet the Sisters



Sr. Cecilia Chinenyenwa Kanulor

Sr. Cecilia Chinenyenwa Kanulor is a strong woman! She is fairly tall and holds herself erect. She faces the challenges of life head on and with much good humour. Cecilia comes from Nigeria, from Ahiara Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area of Imo State. She was born the tenth child in a family of eleven, she had six sisters and four brothers. You can imagine that being one of the youngest in a large family group, she became used to community life from a young age. Her aunt, Sr. Therese Jane Ogu, entered MMM over 60 years ago and quietly, Cecilia watched her aunt and weighed up her vocational choices. She says her aunt exemplified all the qualities she would later admire in the MMM Sisters she would meet - compassion, simplicity, understanding, and care.

After leaving school, Cecilia studied nursing and midwifery before joining MMM. She enjoyed community life, and settled in well. Her first assignment after her First Profession of Vows was to Abakaliki where she worked in the hospital. Her initiative and competence were noted. Soon she was asked, with other Sisters, to spearhead a new mission in Torugbene, Bomadi, southern Nigeria in Delta State.

Cecilia enjoys life. Her hobbies are wide and varied. She is interested in music, reading, dancing, cooking, making friends, and in indoor and outdoor games. When she came to Drogheda, she showed interest in the jigsaws some of the Sisters were making.

In 2020, Cecilia travelled to Cork, Ireland to upgrade her Nursing Studies. Unfortunately, it was right in the middle of the pandemic and most of the studies were online. This was a challenging time to be a student but she was characteristically philosophical:

“The pandemic experience has taught me to live in the present and to be flexible in my personal and public relationships. Meanwhile, life experience keeps on encouraging me, according to Reinhold Niebuhr, to ask

God each day for the tranquility to accept what I cannot change, the courage to change what I can, and the discernment

to know the difference. For example, the alteration of life by Covid-19. With this in mind, I seek God’s face each day through prayer and the happenings around me while leaving everything in God’s hands as well as trusting Mother Mary Martin’s mantra that if God wants the Work, God will show the way.”



On her return to Nigeria after her time of studies, Cecilia went back to Torugbene. Life there continues to be challenging. She is doing primary health care work combined with some pastoral work. Presently they are coping with an outbreak of measles! We wish her well as her MMM life unfolds.



Sr. Cecilia Kanulor, Torugbene

Inspiration



“God has been good to me. I trust God absolutely. The past is in God’s hands, so is the future and present.”

Mother Mary Martin

Thank you for your continued support.
We hold you in our prayers.

