



All photos taken by
Sr. Kathie Shea MMM

MEDICAL MISSIONARIES OF MARY

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Winter
Newsletter
2023

*"Each of us is the result of a thought of God.
Each of us is willed.
Each of us is loved.
Each of us is necessary."*

—Pope Benedict XVI

Dear Friends,

Before I share anything about the recent events in the life of MMM, let me speak to you about you! We begin this new year with hearts full of gratitude and hope that you gave to us by your response to our Christmas card and appeal and the continued fidelity of so many of you. Each day, a new surprise awaited us! A phone call, a card, a letter, an email that brought us affirmation and gifted us with the resources to walk into the new year with hope for our 25 health projects and the lives of our sisters. We are deeply grateful to each of you!

This year, many of your mailed in responses took about three weeks to arrive. For some reason, our USPS had a difficult time but though not timely, all did arrive. Thus, our responses may have seemed slow to come, but that was the reason.

The image on the front of this newsletter is that of the front of our home in Somerville MA. It is an image of welcome and warmth. That is our hope in all our MMM houses and ministries . . . that each person feels a welcome and warmth when they come to us. Hospitality is one of our core values, a strong value in the rule of St. Benedict and a value so needed in our world today. As the words of Pope Benedict proclaim so clearly, *"Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed. Each of us is loved. Each of us is necessary."* It is both a gift and challenge to live that out each day.

In this newsletter there are updates from some of our ministries where we are trying to be welcoming and hospitable to whomever and whatever comes our way. It is not always easy! But you are with us in our attempts!

We also lost two wonderful women in our lives who embodied the healing charism and gift of hospitality in their lives and will tell you more about them. They join so many of our sisters, families, friends who watch over us from their new home in the kingdom of God.

We say it often, but you need to know that without you and your willingness to share this charism of healing with us, the world would lose a little light and be less hospitable to others.

Wherever you are, whatever you do, let there be in your heart a space for others to be, so that, unafraid, they may experience themselves as loved and so be healed.

(MMM Constitutions 7.3)

With deepest gratitude,



Sister Joanne

Sister Joanne Bierl, MMM
Mission Development Director

We Celebrate the Lives of Two Wonderful Women



Sister Jeane Lynch MMM, 86 years old, died peacefully at Sancta Maria Nursing Care Facility in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on December 11, 2022. Jeane's early years were lived with her family in Saginaw, Michigan. When she finished high school, she moved to Kansas to attend the Ursuline College earning an Associate Degree in Arts. It was at this school that she came across a leaflet about the Medical Missionaries of Mary and began the discernment that would eventually lead her to enter MMM on September 17, 1955, and made Perpetual Profession of Vows on March 17, 1964. Immediately following the novitiate, Jeane enrolled at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Boston School of Tropical Medicine and then transferred to Emmanuel College in Boston where she earned her BA in Biology. After these studies, she spent a year at the MMM International Missionary Training Hospital (IMTH) in Drogheda, Ireland, where she gained more experience in biochemistry before being assigned to Dareda Hospital in Tanzania.

Jeane lived a full life mostly in Tanzania and the USA with stints in Sudan and Ethiopia. She excelled in lab technology, tropical medicine, earning a master's degree in epidemiology and then a Dr. of Sc. in hygiene (epidemiology) from Tulane University. She was a member of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists. Jeane administered numerous projects in nutrition education, supervision of village health care workers while also engaging in social services for the poor. Throughout her years in the USA, Jeane was engaged in Vocation Ministry, volunteered with the Red Cross, as well as being a caregiver for her mother in Florida for several years. In later years, Jeane transitioned to the ministry of pastoral care/counseling. She became an active member of the Boston Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA), completed a facilitator training course, and spent a number of years as a support group facilitator for DBSA.

She spent the last years of life living our MMM Healing Charism at Sancta Maria Nursing Care Facility, grateful for the skilled and loving care she received. She lived as she always had, simply and respectfully. She was esteemed and dear to other residents who elected her Vice President of the Residents' Counsel. We were recently told that the staff so loved Jeane that everyone wanted to be assigned to her care. May her dear soul rest in the peace of Christ.



Sister Joyce Zarnik, OSF, age 81, passed away November 15, 2022. Meeting Joyce in 2006 at an interview for a job as an administrative assistant in our Mission Development Office (MDO) that had just opened in Chicago, Sr. Mary Ann MacRae, MMM, sensed she would be a great fit with MMM. During the 15 years that she worked with MMM this proved to be true. Joyce was also true to her name and was a great joy, to not only work with but to just be around or as they say now, just to hang with. Joyce was a great teacher (she taught in schools for 35 years before coming to the MMM MDO). She was often on the other end of the phone when many of you phoned. She helped both Sisters Mary Ann and Joanne create and edit our newsletters and letters to you. She was skilled, committed, and full of fun! Another great joy for us was how Joyce embraced the MMM mission and made it her own and she persuaded many of her Clinton Franciscan friends to also embrace this mission. It has been a wonderful time of friendship and collaboration not only with Joyce but also her own Franciscan community. We MMMs have been blessed by this friendship with Joyce and her Franciscan family. She stayed

with us until she was 80 years old and was there to pack up and send Sisters Kathie and Joanne off from Chicago to Boston with a great party. There were important lessons learned in our time working with Joyce. One of the most significant was that even in the highly competitive field of fundraising there can be collaboration and friendship with others. Perhaps more of this would bring more peace in our world.

Sister Joyce's talent in both voice and guitar enriched many liturgical services with the sisters of St. Francis and the schools where she served. She was a member of the "Singing Sisters" who recorded the album *Come Along* in 1972. More recently, she was a member of "Circle of Song for Women," a non-auditioned chorus in the Chicago area that uses their voices to send healing, compassion, and joy into our world. I am sure Joyce, who loved to sing, is now singing with the angels wherever she is and enjoying every minute of it. Sing your heart out Joyce, we miss you.

News Updates from MMM Ministries around the World

From Salvador Bahia in Brazil



Sr. Cleide Daniel da Silva shared her experience visiting the **Prelature of Sao Felix do Araguaia** where MMM will soon begin a new mission. She shared the challenges both in urban and rural area where there is a high incidence of domestic violence, a high level of rural urban migration—especially among the youth—and a high investment of agribusiness, which has resulted in skin problems and lung cancer related to the high pesticide usage.

Other problems include increased drugs, substantial pressure from drug traffickers and dealers (called Red Command), and prostitution brought about by the increase in truck drivers. Church pastoral agents offer guidance to the women, but have suffered intimidation from both truck drivers and some members of the police force, which has made progress difficult.

Two movements within the church in Brazil, land and human rights, try to work in the Prelature, but they have a lot of challenges to face every day.

- The Land Pastoral Team: The team works with the reforestation of the trees and motivates people to plant vegetables and fruits as a way of self-sustenance. They are doing very good work and have the support from the church as well as the people.
- The Human Rights Team: The team gives workshops about violence especially for women who suffer a lot of violence in the Prelature. There is a psychologist who accompanies the team and supports the groups. They have many challenges, however, due to the long distance between places and poor roads.

The Catholic Church tries to support these groups, but it is a long process. There is a lot of tension between agribusiness and the church, especially when the church speaks out about the pollution and the effects of pesticide use. **It is into this environment that MMM will bring our own healing charism in the near future. We will keep you updated.**

From Mukuru Slum in Nairobi



Sr. Ursula Agge, MMM, writes from Nairobi that they are grateful to you for the donations you made to the MMM Mukuru Health Program, which enabled them to relocate 20 families at risk (households) from the slums and reintegrating gender-based violence survivors back to their families in their areas of origin, and for those who were affected by the demolitions, they had the opportunity to choose where they would like to be relocated for safety. We were also able to support these families with basic amenities like food, essential medication, psychological counseling, drug refills and placement of other most at-risk children in safe spaces. We are most grateful for your donations that have helped us to reach out the mentioned families with the interventions they needed. We were also able to purchase drugs for patient use and to pay some staff salaries. We are indeed grateful for your contribution to making our work better in the slums of Mukuru.

From Fuka in the North of Nigeria



Sister Florence Njoku, MMM, tells us that the bandit's activities in Fuka and the communities surrounding Fuka during the early part of 2022 were indeed challenging. Families fled for safety and the MMM ministry in Fuka was temporarily closed. Both staff and the sisters moved out of Fuka. However, while the permanent clinic remained closed, patients kept visiting the clinic seeking for medical attention despite the tension in the area. Consequently, on April 4, 2022, an outreach clinic was opened in two safer locations to reach out to people with special health needs especially children with Sickle Cell anemia, those on TB and diabetic treatment. Initially, the services were offered twice a week in each location. The sisters coordinated the services from afar and this involved lots of packing as well as movements on rough roads. It was not easy to keep the two locations running so eventually one was closed to reduce the strain on our limited resources. Most of the services usually offered at the permanent clinic could not be offered in the outreach clinic, however, with persistent request from the people who kept coming to them, immunizations, almost full laboratory services, school health program, Sickle Cell care, diabetic care, general consultation and treatment and referral services are now available at the outreach clinic. It has been a challenging time but finally, they were able to return to our permanent clinic where the sisters and staff are much better able to meet the needs of the people.

From Singida in Tanzania



Sr. Marian Scena, MMM, tells us that apart from direct work and ministry that occupies much of her day they had a new event in 2022. She has been in touch with the Lutheran Church who have a highly developed Palliative Care program in TZ since 2010 before they started our own Faraja program. They have about 27 PC programs based in their hospitals in many parts of the country. *"I have been in touch with the doctor in charge of the Lutheran PC program on the national level and have visited him many times in Arusha over the years. This year the Lutherans decided to include non-Lutheran PC facilities when they were making a comprehensive plan for PC in TZ. This is because PC is not well organized in the government health system. So, Faraja was included, and I have been to four meetings and training sessions since May. It has been a wonderful ecumenical experience for me, and I think for all the participants. It meant that I was included in a special meeting in June to make suggestions for the National Guidelines on PC in TZ, which was a great honor. We worked for four days on those Guidelines to supplement the work of the members of the Ministry of Health (National Dept. of Health). Our Faraja PC program is community based, working in Singida town and 18 Wards of the Municipality, and none of the Lutherans have had the experience of developing a PC home-based program in the rural areas. It was very humbling but also exhilarating to be able to contribute to health care on the national level after my 39 years here in TZ!"*



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National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is recognized each year on January 11. To raise awareness of human trafficking, all are invited to take photos of themselves, friends, family, and colleagues wearing blue clothing and share them on social media. Right: Our MMM Sisters in Brazil are "stopping human trafficking" in our Facebook post."

