



# THE HEALING TOUCH

The Newsletter of the Medical Missionaries of Mary

*'Rooted and founded in love'*

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www.mmmworldwide.org



## MMM Worldwide News

### News from MMM Areas



#### **MALAWI:**

All the money raised from the MMM Christmas Craft Fair in Drogheda last November is being put to good use in equipping the new Maternity Unit at St. Kizito Health Centre. The centre consists of seven rooms and a toilet area. The number of women coming for antenatal care keeps increasing as there are no other maternity services for the poor in the area. Meanwhile the Sisters are

coping with an outbreak of cholera in their catchment area. There have already been several deaths. (***read more on page 3***)

#### **KENYA:**

Joshua Kolo, one of our oldest staff at the Eldoret health facility, has journeyed with the Associates for a long time and finally made his covenant on the anniversary of Mother Mary's death, January 27th.

#### **SOUTH SUDAN:**

"God always remembers his people with humble background." In South Sudan, Pope Francis visited us from the 3rd to the 5th of February, 2023. This was the main topic of conversation in South Sudan for the opening months of 2023 and we are delighted that the Pope's visit went so well.

**ENGLAND:**

Three scholars recently began conducting research in documenting oral histories of our MMM Sisters who worked in conflict zones around the world. Drs Brieger Rafferty, Maria Power and Dianne Kirby share a concern that the important work of women religious in conflict zones,

(with the term conflict broadly defined) have been overlooked in mainstream history and media. The scholars, working under the auspices of Las Casas Institute for Social Justice, University of Oxford, are interviewing ten MMM Sisters to begin with, from Brazil, Ireland and East and West Africa.

**IRELAND:** Recently the Central Leadership Team (CLT) of the MMM met with other key leaders from the Resource Team. Along with discussing various issues about the future of MMM Mission work, the Team were visited by John Moffett, CEO of Misesan Cara.

**MEDIA:**

Sr Chinenye Lumenze, MMM is researching and hosting a Youtube video series called “Let’s Talk Family” that focuses on parenting education. She releases a new episode every Tuesday and by March will be on Episode 20. You can view the episodes on Youtube at Medical Missionaries of Mary Worldwide or at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/@medicalmissionariesofmaryw7488>



*Some of our MMM Sisters and an Associate gathering in Drogheda, at our Motherhouse, for a meeting with Misesan Cara’s Chief Executive Officer John Moffett.*



*MMM Sisters at their parish send off in Salvador, Brazil*



**BRAZIL:** The Sisters in Brazil began their move to the Amazon Region of Brazil, Mato Grosso state on 7th February and were warmly welcomed by the people and Fr Edycarlos, the Parish Priest of Nossa Senhora de Fatima Alto Boa Vista town in the Prelature of São Felix do Araguaia.

# Cholera brings Malawi depressing Moods



By **Pauline Amulen MMM**

Cholera is an annual problem during Malawi's rainy season typically from the month of December to March, with about 100 deaths per year. However Malawi's latest Cholera outbreak has been described as the worst in two decades with every Malawian district affected, 881 fatalities reported, 26,888 cumulative cases as per 18th Jan 2023. The state president on 5th December 2022 declared Cholera outbreak a "public health Emergency".



Blantyre and Lilongwe are the most affected areas in the country. The government declared in the beginning of the year for schools from these two places to remain closed for two weeks after the Christmas Holiday to prevent further infections in schools.

Cholera is contracted by eating foods or drinking water contaminated with the "vibrio Cholerae bacterium". It can affect both adults and children causing severe diarrhoea and can kill within a few hours if not treated. According to the survey carried out by Lilongwe water board, water test results from the nine shallow wells in Area 36, Mtandire and Mtisirisa where our health centre is situated reveal faecal coliforms indicating that the water is contaminated #Times360News.

The afternoon of 19th January was a very sad one at St Kizito health centre, we received two patients respectively a child of nine months old and a youth of about 26 years of age. The youth was very weak and had two people supporting him side by side into the OPD

with signs of Cholera, the nurses quickly made ORS for him and had him immediately referred to the health centre handling Cholera cases. The child was rushed into the clinician's examination room, unfortunately he found that the child had already died before they arrived the health facility. Oh!!! Cholera claimed the life of this innocent child. We had the remains of the child kept in the health centre as burial arrangements were quickly made and the parents, friends and relatives painfully sat in the health centre premises waiting.

Though St Kizito does not directly deal with Cholera patients we cannot deny the fact that we receive and treat some patients with mild symptoms since our facility is the only affordable one present around the area.

The government is trying its best to help curb the situation by providing free Cholera vaccine, Chlorine and health talks. Mtiliza too is playing a very great part in this with daily talks on hygiene and sanitation to all the patients and clients who come to the facility.

# Steps for Hope 2023



The MMM Steps for Hope 2023, our Lenten Challenge, has started. Last year people from all five continents participated and this year we hope the same happens.

We have set out some simple guidelines which we hope will explain all and are encouraging everyone, wherever they are throughout the world, to take part. It is good for your health! So, sign up to join us and walk or run 40 Km or 80 Km over the 40 days of Lent, fund-raising for MMM at the same time if you are able.

## How do I sign up?

Simply go to this link and enter in your information to create your own fundraising page that you can send to your family or friends.

<https://www.idonate.ie/event/stepsforhope2023>

Once you click on here you can set up your own fundraising page or donate.

If you have any issues with this, email Nadia at [mmmcommcoord@gmail.com](mailto:mmmcommcoord@gmail.com)

## Any questions?

Read the information below and if you still have questions, Email Nadia [mmmcommcoord@gmail.com](mailto:mmmcommcoord@gmail.com)

## To make sure you are ready, complete these three simple steps:

1. Register and create your own Walk 40 Km or 80 KM during Lent. Register on the Steps for Hope 2023 Challenge Fundraising Page.
2. Share your fundraising page with family, friends and colleagues and ask them to sponsor you and support you on your journey. You can send them a Whats app message, an email, a text or ask in person!
3. Join our private Facebook group only for people participating in this fundraiser. We can share images and updates here with other people committed to this event.
4. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1177965559517672>

## All you need to know about your Walk during Lent Challenge

### How does the Steps for Hope Walk Challenge work?

- The challenge is to walk or run 40 KM or 80 KM during the 40 days of Lent which begin on 27 February, 2023 and ends on 5 April, 2023
- To get started you will need to create your own Steps for Hope 40KM or 80 KM fundraising page:
- This is a personal fundraising challenge. You do this in your own time and link in with the Facebook

## Steps for Hope 2023 *(continued)*



group or get a group of friends or colleagues involved and take it on together.

- The Walk of 40 KM or 80 KM is done on an individual basis at your own convenience of pace and place. Do it when you can and just track it for the 40 days on your phone, fitness app or even write it down on a calendar!

### How do I track the distance I have done?

- We recommend using digital apps like Strava or most phones have multiple free apps to choose from to help count the distance covered on each of your walks. You can then use the tracker sheet in your fundraising pack to keep track of your progress which you can download at our website.

### If I raise money offline, how do I get that money to MMM?

Once you have collected your sponsorship you can

1. Donate via our website if you prefer not to use idonate
2. Lodgedirectlytoourbankaccountviaourwebsite:  
<https://mmmworldwide.org/resources/donate>

You can post your donation to us at:

**MMM COMMUNICATIONS**

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# Brazil - Walking For Peace



## Sr. Jacinta Ugonma Mahakwe MMM

We live in a world filled with lots of deprivations of basic human needs - food, water, clothing and shelter. These must be satisfied in order to address more complex needs like mental and physical health, relationships and employment. Growing up to adulthood in the neighbourhood of Nordeste de Amaralina in Salvador, Brazil, is more of a miracle. The neighbourhood had experienced violent deaths of a lot of young people related to drugs, domestic and police brutality over the years. Those who experience or witness violence may develop a variety of problems including anxiety, depression, insecurity, anger, poor social skills, pathological lying, manipulative behaviour, impulsiveness and lack of empathy.

The returns on investing in human relationships could avert a lot of damages and bring healing in an environment endemic with violence. A few years back, the Medical Missionaries of Mary Sisters and their staff at Project Consolation in Salvador, Brazil, carried out “Peace walk” in the neighbourhood. This was done in collaboration with some primary and secondary schools in the area in conjunction with the support of the police force. Over three hundred school children with their teachers, some parents/grandparents took to the streets in a peaceful march accompanied by music, calling everyone to embrace the healing beauty of peace and end violence. The young school students shared sweets, colourful flowers, and balloons with the onlookers as symbols of love to demonstrate their quest for peace, with glowing smiles. The walk lasted for one hour and there was a feeling of tranquillity that hovered in the air through the whole period and beyond. With trust and anticipation, mothers, fathers, young people trooped out one after the other in support of this invitation to foster a culture of peace in the neighbourhood. Peaceful coexistence is a healing beauty. What is more healing than the face of a young child saying “friends, our young life matters, we want peace, we want to live”.



With the appropriate technique and approach, almost every behaviour and issue can be resolved by dealing with the root causes. The Medical Missionaries of Mary continue to engage with young people and adults in activities focused on behavioural change and trauma management. These include Coexistence / Well-being Workshops and Integrative Body Therapy. Integrative Body Therapy is a helpful approach of treatment for a range of concerns such as somatization, depression, anxiety, relationship concerns, and the effects of past trauma. It looks at the relationship between the body and mind. For many people expressing what they feel through oral language is very difficult, almost impossible in some cases. Through a body language/expression a scream can be heard, seen, released, and welcomed.

“The body speaks”. This self-care activity awakens in the participants an understanding that caring for oneself prompts one to care for the other. When we expand our range of care, it becomes a collective benefit – a healthy and peaceful environment.

# Plants that Heal



Many of our current medications come from plants and the natural world. Because we take them in tablet form, or as a cream or gel we often do not realise their origins. Can plant-based medications work? Yes, definitely. As a Congregation with “Rooted and Founded in Love” as our motto, we take our natural world seriously! For this reason we are also concerned about the effects of climate change on medicinal plants. Many scientific researchers are warning us about this. <https://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/id/eprint/54348/1/medicinal%20plants.pdf>

Here we present two of the medicinal plants that our MMM Sisters use in their daily lives.



**Aloe vera, or Aloe barbadensis**, is a thick, short-stemmed plant that stores water in its leaves. This forms the gel which seems to ooze out of the leaves. It is best used when rubbed onto the skin. It is widely used for sunburn, for skin conditions and for the healing of wounds. It has anti-oxidant and anti-bacterial qualities.

Some studies suggest that it may also be useful as a mouthwash in inflammatory conditions in the mouth, for swollen or bleeding gums, mouth ulcers and it may reduce the build-up of dental plaque.

Sometimes people recommend aloe vera to be taken orally for conditions like constipation or reducing high blood sugars, but the studies are incomplete and they



may in fact, conflict with other medications. It is best to consult with your doctor before being too adventurous.

**Moringa oleifera** is a plant that is often called the drumstick tree, the miracle tree, the ben oil tree, or the horseradish tree. It is a native plant in India but it also grows in other parts of Asia, Africa and South America. Moringa contains many healthful compounds such as vitamins A, B1 (thiamine), B2 (riboflavin), B3 (niacin), C (folate and ascorbic acid) and many minerals such as calcium, potassium, magnesium and zinc.

It has been used in traditional medicine for thousands of years. However, there are few scientific studies on its benefits. To date, studies show that Moringa oleifera may lead to modest reductions in blood sugar and cholesterol. It may also have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects and protect against arsenic toxicity.

It protects and nourishes the skin and hair, it can treat some digestive problems such as constipation, ulcerative colitis and gastritis.

Moringa leaves, which are widely available in Africa, are also highly nutritious and are beneficial for people who are lacking in essential nutrients.

As with all medicinal plants, use with care and after checking with your doctor.

# Meet the Sisters - Sr. Breeda Ryan, MMM



*Sr. Breeda Ryan, MMM*

Let me introduce you to a sprightly eighty-year-old. She is Sr. Breeda Ryan from Thurles, Co. Tipperary in Ireland. Breeda comes from a large family of ten children. She only had two brothers and the rest were girls. Breeda herself is truly in the middle of the family being the fifth child.

Those who know Breeda will tell you how easy she is to live with in community. She is even tempered, never sulky or cross. Throughout her life she has gained many skills – far beyond her initial training and has constantly put these skills forward for the benefit of the community and the people wherever she lived. Breeda is an out-going person and people find her easy to talk to. She is a good listener.

Breeda was educated close to home and then worked for some years in the business of a family friend. But during these years she was

also discerning about a vocation to religious life. The only Sisters she knew were teachers and Breeda didn't want to become a teacher. By chance she came across an MMM flyer in the local church and saw that MMM could use "all gifts and talents" and she felt welcomed. After seeking advice, she decided to enter.

After her initial religious formation, Breeda had ideas of being trained as a nurse. But Mother Mary had other ideas! She mentioned the need for someone trained in Catering for our hospitals. So Breeda did Institutional Management in a Dublin Technical College (Cathal Brugha Street) and then went to work in our hospital in Drogheda for four years.

In 1975, Breeda was assigned to Tanzania. Her skills in administration were obvious. For the next twenty-two years she worked in Hospital administration in some of our busiest hospitals at the time - Kabanga, and Makiungu. One of the many challenges was looking for funds to undertake the work and all the paperwork and project writing this involved!

In 1998, Breeda's skills at administration were stretched yet again. She was asked to return to Ireland and take

over the financial administration of the whole Congregation. She stayed in this role for the next twenty years, "retiring" finally to the Motherhouse in Beechgrove when she was 76 years age. Is Breeda retired? Of course not! She is now in charge of our Philately Department, which still raises funds for our overseas work. So, if you have used stamps looking for a home, send them to Breeda, and you will receive a lovely "thank you".

Breeda says "I enjoyed all my various assignments in different ways. But Makiungu Hospital in Tanzania was special. The people were so friendly and helpful. We worked well together as a Team in the hospital which was great, and we had a good MMM community with five different nationalities. We received wonderful support from the Singida Diocese." "Life is about seeing and seeking God in all things, and being grateful for the gift of Faith", she reflects.



*Sr. Breeda Ryan in Makiungu, Tanzania with Sr. Benedicta Nannyondo RIP*



# Inspiration



***“Live simply so that others  
may simply live.”***

***- Mahatma Gandhi***

Thank you for your continued support.  
We hold you in our prayers.  
**[www.mmmworldwide.org](http://www.mmmworldwide.org)**