



THE HEALING TOUCH

The Newsletter of the Medical Missionaries of Mary

MMM Worldwide News



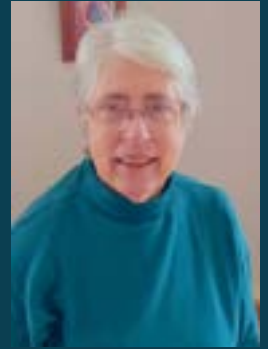
News from MMM Areas

Brazil: On December 9th Sr. Liana de Jesus made her Final Profession of Vows in her home parish in Salvador, Bahia. Congratulations, Liana, and may there be many more young Brazilian vocations.

Ireland: Drogheda - AMRI (Association of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland) are holding a Photo Exhibition "Daring to Hope: Irish Religious Sister Embracing the Unknown 1923-2023" in the MMM Auditorium from January 24th to January 27th, around the days when we celebrate Mother Mary Martin's Anniversary. On 27th January there will be a short talk on MMM contribution to pioneering work

Dear Friend of MMM,

We hope you had a lovely Christmas and New Years Celebration. Here we are starting another exciting year for MMM. January rolled around very quickly. As we look at the year ahead, our world is presently in turmoil with armed conflicts, natural disasters and the never-ending threat to our climate. It can feel daunting, but in spite of all we see, if we look a little deeper we see great prospects for improved health due to advances in science and a deepening desire for international peace and collaboration.



We in MMM, with your help, continue to reach out to those who are "left behind" in our rush forward. As things are challenging in the mainstream, then for those already in poverty and destitution, the fall is even faster and harder. It's important that in our daily struggles we remember how much we have and how sharing in the stories and well-being of others can make us truly wealthy.

As you know, MMM work with the local people to know and discover the community's unique needs. Then we do what needs to be done collaborating and empowering the local people. We never dictate those decisions to them. We work with marginalised women, vulnerable children, and those with little access to health care. The stories we will tell you this year reflect the reality as we find it in our various places of mission. Come with us on this journey and help bring Christ's healing presence into our world today.

Let's build a more beautiful 2024 together.

With blessings,

Sr. Sheila Campbell, MMM

at 3pm. From here, the Exhibition goes to Rome, so visit it with us before it flies away!

The Christmas Craft Fair was held in Drogheda on November 25th and the proceeds are going to a very needy area of Nigeria, Torugbene, in Delta State. Over €6000 was raised, so thank you to everyone who came or donated to the event.



Christmas Craft Fair 2023



*Thank you to everyone who made
the 2023 Christmas Craft Fair such a success!*

Torugbene



By Rose Mogun, MMM

Torugbene is in the Catholic diocese of Bomadi in Delta State of Nigeria. It is a village in the creeks of the Niger Delta. Fishing is a great occupation here. The people do bits of farming wherever they can find a piece of land.

During the rainy season, the roads are quite challenging with potholes filled with water that one stops to think of where to put the tires of the vehicle so as not to get stuck on the road, or where to put one's foot on plywood or jumping from one steppingstone to another used to navigate the muddy and slippery road or footpaths. Although the road (not tarmacked) from Bomadi to Torugbene is completed, you can only drive to a primary school field and park your vehicle before trekking the rest of the way to your house. One essential commodity here is gumboots! The stranger needs a walking stick (or the hand of a resident) for support to navigate the roads.

There is one major road that runs through the market. Others are pathways to homes, private schools and churches in Torugbene which are not suitable for cars. The people use tricycles and motorbikes where it is possible to do so. Otherwise, they trek. The Sisters have a boat funded by a donor agency and it is used for the outreach programme to villages in the creeks. There is no electricity in Torugbene except a few scattered solar panels mounted by the government at some strategic points. The people who can afford them have small generators. The Sister's house and clinic are surrounded by water with fish, tall grass, croaking frogs especially at night, two churches and mosquitoes! Living and ministering here is a great adventure in faith.

A section of the land on which the MMM house is built has been sand-filled and this enabled them to build what is known as a 'Monkey Bridge' with plywood starting from the beginning of our house to the clinic. The Sisters, staff, and the sick use this bridge to reach the clinic. I understand from one of the sisters that the monkey is skillful in its movement and hardly falls off from any height so, humans have to be careful walking on it irrespective of how narrow it is. However, the bridge is wider these days because of visitors for whom it might be their first time to walk on such a creation.



The front of the clinic facing the major road from Bomadi to Torugbene is water-logged with tall grass as you will see in the picture below. This will be another important route to the clinic for clients from neighbouring villages but it has to be sand-filled, a culvert built and two pavements constructed for use by pedestrians, motorbike, tri-cycle and vehicles to access the clinic by neighbouring villages. On one occasion, a very sick patient was brought in by canoe and they made their way through the water covered by grass.

The Sisters do antenatal care, outpatients, and outreach. The six prevalent diseases in the area are Malaria; Typhoid; Diarrhoea; Malnutrition; Measles and Skin infections. There is a great need to do an aggressive campaign about immunisation because they have lost people in the community to Tuberculosis and other contagious but preventable diseases.

The difficulties and challenges:

- It is quite a distance from Torugbene to towns for businesses such as banking, purchasing of drugs, and going to their nearest community which is in Benin City. They need a vehicle e.g. Hilux because of the bad roads.
- Teenage pregnancies and school dropouts are challenges among the youth.
- It is difficult to get professional health personnel and staff to work in the creeks.
- The economic situation of the country is affecting the people badly and they cannot afford their bills even though it isn't much.
- The clinic is surrounded by water, and it is difficult for the patients to access the clinic.
- We cannot store vaccines at the clinic due to a lack of electricity and insufficient sunlight to charge the solar batteries. The batteries are also in need of replacement. Proposals were written for Solar batteries and activities like outreach etc. One Funding Agency has given USD25,000. Another proposal has been submitted for Euro 45,000. Still awaiting a response. There will still be a shortfall as the total cost is Euro 103,625. It is costing more because of the terrain.
- The front of the clinic needs to be sand-filled to create easy access to more people and a proper estimate for the work will be done during the dry season.

The Christmas Craft Fair proceeds are going towards this project.

MMM Staff Talking!



From St. Mary's Hospital, Eleta, Nigeria

The trouble with having our clinics and hospitals in remote areas is the difficulty of recruiting staff to work in areas difficult to access with little or no public transport. This was the dilemma faced by St. Mary's Hospital in Eleta, Nigeria. Without staff how can you run a busy general hospital?

With the generous support of donations from Irish donors, a new staff building is underway. We MMMs could tell you the difference it will make, but what better than hearing the words coming from the staff themselves?

Christiana Elewe: I especially want to thank MMM Sisters and the donors from Ireland for their support towards this staff Building. Having accommodation within the hospital grounds will help reduce the high salary demand from the staff to cover the high cost of transportation from the long distance to work.

Nwaiwu Maureen: Thank you, Medical Missionaries of Mary, and the donors for supporting a staff residential building in our hospital. Until now, staff, especially doctors, who wish to work with us in our hospital could not because the environment is not conducive to stay, and they could not live there. With this building they can now stay, no need to travel a long distance before getting to work. We are so grateful.

Oginni Francis: With this building, our doctors will be able to offer quality and timely services, especially during emergencies in the night, and we will be able to keep top talents and experienced medical personnel who could not work in the hospital due to lack of accommodation. Thank you, Medical Missionaries of Mary Ireland and your donors, for making our dreams come to pass!

Tinuoye Christiana: Living in the staff quarters will help prevent staff having an accident on their way to work and give them peace of mind at work. They will now work with full concentration without any fear of the unknown on the road. Thanks to MMM Ireland.

Nzemeka Tony Martins: The staff will be more committed and focused now because MMM has helped us to take away one of our greatest challenges. We really appreciate your support. Thank you.



Some of the Building Project Team Members and Hospital staff. L-R : Elewe Christiana (Project Book keeper and Accountant), Nzemeka Tony Martin (Building Project Store Keeper), Nwaiwu Maureen (Hospital staff), Oginni Francis (Building Project Manager and Site Supervisor), Tinuoye Christiana (Hospital staff).

MMM Mukuru, Kenya, Wins Award



By Sr. Otibhor Uwagbale, MMM

The MMM Mukuru Health Program is situated in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, a slum in Nairobi. We offer a wide range of services and almost all our clients/patients are residents from the slum where there is abject poverty and deplorable living conditions. Irrespective of our location, we have committed ourselves to guaranteeing the best quality service we can afford at our level. This means ensuring that our services are efficient, effective and up to date with government regulations. To this end, over the years, we have worked hard to ensure that the different recommended policies were put in place and regularly updated. We installed an Electronic Patient Management System to ensure that we have efficiency in the delivery of our services and safety of clients' data. This also means that the waiting time of clients was cut by half. Of course, despite all these, we couldn't have achieved this feat, without the dedication of our highly qualified and passionate staff who continuously challenge themselves to live daily the MMM core values in their relationships with each other and the clients.

In recognition of our efforts, the Kenyan Ministry of Health in 2017, selected MMM-Mukuru Health Program, as one of the facilities for training on the Kenyan Quality Model for Health (KQMH) in Nairobi County. This model is a conceptual framework for an Integrated Approach to improved quality of health care. It holistically and systematically addresses a range of organisational quality issues with the main aim of delivering positive health impacts.

After this training, we identified a Quality Improvement (QI) focal person and QI coach to lead. We formed departmental Work Improvement Teams (WIT) depending on service areas and Quality Improvement Team (QIT) to spearhead. We use the 6S model of Sort, Set, Shine, Standardise, Sustain, and Safety, during our WIT meetings to identify gaps and find ways to improve. The WIT and QIT meetings are held monthly.

MMM Mukuru's journey into Quality Improvement Awards

After the training in 2017, MMM- Mukuru was selected to participate in the Health Service Delivery Award in the whole of Nairobi County in 2018. Some of the parameters for this competition includes: Leadership, Human Resources, Policies and Guidelines, Facility Infrastructure, Supplies management, Equipment management, Transport management, Referral System, Records & HMIS, Financial Management, Outpatient services, IPC (infection prevention and control), Laboratory, Pharmacy.

We competed with other facilities of Level 2 Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) in Nairobi County. We won 3rd position.

In 2019, we were also selected to participate in the same competition and we won 2nd position. Due to COVID19, the competition was not held in 2020 and 2021.

In 2022, our facility did not participate because we were still recovering from the effects of the demolitions that had happened to us.

This year, 2023, despite our challenges, we chose to participate in this year's award and by the grace of God we emerged the WINNER - level 2 Faith Based Organization in Nairobi (1st position). We were awarded a Trophy and certificates.

We feel very fulfilled that our efforts to continue to provide quality healthcare to the people of Mukuru, through the provision of quality Health services guided by our MMM core values have been recognised by not just the people we serve, but also by the government of Nairobi County, Kenya.

We are forever grateful to God for bringing us this far. The journey was not easy but with determination and focus, we made it and we believe that this will only inspire us to do more.



Sr. Otibhor and Victoria



Birthing the MMM Mission in Mato Grosso



For the last few years, the MMM community in Brazil has been researching a new place of Mission. In February, 2023, like the disciples 'we were sent' - missioned to Alto Boa Vista, Mato Grosso! Full of excitement and enthusiasm, after a two-day journey, we arrived...the 'seed' was planted!

The next step was the nurturing of the 'seed' so as to give this new mission the best possible chance of flourishing. We began by committing ourselves to building our small international community. This is an ongoing process...coming from three different nationalities with different languages, cultures and ages. We are committed to keeping our hearts and minds open as we listen to the Spirit. We believe in the importance of letting events and experiences, encounters and people influence our way of being, our relationships and our faith. As our Constitutions rightly say, "Listen to the Spirit in the quietness of your heart, in scripture, the liturgy, persons and events".

The gestation period continued with "Hearts on fire, feet on the move" (we have no car) as we mingled with the people - doing home visits, alternative therapies, youth ministry, catechesis, etc and began considering our ministry focus which is being refined and maturing.

Like every gestation, we have had moments of great joy and a belief that this is where God wants MMM to be at this time. We also have had the 'morning sickness', the unwelcome 'cramps', the unexpected 'contraction' and then the consolation that the 'infant in utero' is still 'kicking'... there is movement. Where there is movement there is life and life is God's Spirit. We are confident that God's Spirit is with us guiding us to bring this mission to birth.

MMM Community Alto Boa Vista



Sr. Cleide Daniel de Silva, MMM & Sr. Bernadette Fadegnon, MMM



Meet the Sisters - Sr. Nuala Horgan MMM



Sr. Nuala Horgan, MMM

Sr. Nuala Horgan is a great storyteller! So, Healing Touch asked her to share part of her own life story.

She was the youngest of six children, four girls and two boys, and both of her parents were teachers. Her two brothers both became priests, one a Columban Missionary and the other a diocesan priest for the Diocese of Florida, USA.

After school, she decided to do nursing and was a qualified nurse and midwife before joining MMM. As a small child she was deeply moved by the MMM film "Visitation". But she was not so keen on nuns and swept the whole idea from her head. But it must have been there as a call in the background and finally, she paid attention. She feels now privileged to be a full member of MMM.

Her overseas missionary experience has been wide and varied. She has worked in Tanzania, Malawi and Ethiopia. In MMM she upgraded her nursing education to Tutorship level and was a very effective tutor in all her assignments. She was also involved in public health work and in palliative care.

A keen photographer, Sr. Nuala has many albums from her time in East Africa. Now based in Drogheda, she also enjoys reading, art and drama.

Her most memorable mission experience was the time she spent in Ethiopia at Wolisso Hospital. It was a diocesan-run hospital and training school. This was the only Catholic hospital and training school in the country of Ethiopia. There was a fully international community of Sisters running the institution. There were Ethiopians, English, Indian and Irish, in our group. The Administrator was American. Everyone got on very well and was hugely enriched by the composition of the group. Nuala loved the culture of the country, and loved the students themselves who were full of life and personality. They were heroic as all teaching was done in English while truly the majority could not speak this foreign language. This was a challenge. Another challenge was a huge shortage of textbooks in each of the countries where she taught nursing. They relied heavily on help from donors.

One thing that life has taught her is to always be respectful to everybody she encounters. Also, it is good to be patient and listen to others. It is a wonderful thing to experience other cultures and learn from them.





“Everyone has inside them a piece of good news. The good news is you don’t know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is.”

- Anne Frank

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