



# THE HEALING TOUCH

The Newsletter of the Medical Missionaries of Mary



*Dear Friend of MMM,*

We are delighted here to have the sun finally shining and flowers blooming in bright colours after a long and somewhat stormy winter. We hope things are bright where you are too. In this time of climate crisis, many parts of the world are struggling and suffering. For this reason our Easter efforts revolve around "Answering the Cry of the Earth". In Drogheda this year we are introducing a special event "MMM Flowers and Fun Fest". We will be having some educational events on how we can care for our planet along with arts, crafts, entertainment and food. If you are nearby, we hope you will join us. We try to find creative ways to fund the many needs of our MMM Sisters in the field as this newsletter exemplifies.

The first part of the year has been an outstanding celebration of the 50th Year Anniversary of Mother Mary Martin, our Foundress's death. It is wonderful to see the legacy that she created still growing in strength in Africa and in Brazil. We meet some of our MMM Sisters in this newsletter and see the incredible work that is being done in face of tremendous challenges. We are fortunate to have such inspiringly brave MMM Sisters who find solutions to difficulties and grow in their faith.

We are in a dark time in our world where there seems to be a lot of hatred, misunderstanding and violence. It is important that like the Spring flowers that were once bulbs in the ground, we don't give up hope. We have to grow and push through to find the warmth of the sun. We have to remain faithful in our efforts so that darkness will not prevail. As we celebrate the 50th Year of Mother Mary Martin's death we are grateful to the local people for gathering the funds and commissioning a Statue of Mother Mary across from the local hospital. We frequently quote her in our office as saying "If God wants the work, God will show the way." We are faithful in her trusting words. We are grateful to all of you for keeping her vision and work alive.

With kind regards,  
**Sr. Sheila Campbell, MMM**



## MMM News

### News from MMM

**Ireland:** A Statue of Mother Mary Martin has been erected on Boyle O'Reilly Terrace, Drogheda, near Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital. This was an initiative of a group of townspeople and local residents and coincided with the 50th anniversary of her death in 1975. Thank you to everyone involved.



# Mother Mary 50th Anniversary



**Sr. Irene Balzan speaking at the event**



**The Loving Life choir enchanted the audience**



**Drogheda Male Voice Choir celebrated Mother Mary with us**



**MMM Sisters with the new statue of Mother Mary at Beechgrove**



**International MMM Students - Srs. Nneke Nwanze, Cecilia Kanulor, Alice Joseph, Nkiru Agunura and Chinyere Iwunze MMM with Sr. Catherine Dwyer, MMM**



**Sr. Irene Balzan, MMM, meeting Paddy McQuillan, Mayor of Drogheda**



**Sr. Ursula Sharpe, MMM, with the new statue of Mother Mary**



**Local people of Drogheda and MMMs gather for the unveiling of the Mother Mary Statue.**

# Sharing our story of the Mother Mary Martin Hospital, Benin City, Nigeria

**By Srs. Ufuoma Ogigirigi  
& Elizabeth Ogar, MMM**

It all began in July 2021. It was set up as a home based and mobile outreach clinic working in 5 Local Government Areas, providing preventative, curative and rehabilitative care, elderly care, palliative care, maternal and child health, health education and awareness raising through sensitization. It has a strong collaboration with MOH, local government, community leaders and education boards. The Hospital has a geographical link with Teaching Hospital and University of Benin. As such, 40% of the local population is made up from these 2 institutions (students, academics, medical and paramedical staff). The remaining 60% of people are socioeconomically vulnerable, they lack affordable access to health services; of these 10% are children under 5 yrs, 12% are young people vulnerable to rape and abuse, 22% are women of childbearing age.

Uselu is a densely-populated neighborhood of Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. Benin City is the capital and largest city of Edo State, southern Nigeria. It is the fourth-largest city in Nigeria according to the 2006 census, after Lagos, Kano, and Ibadan. Benin City is the centre of

Nigeria's rubber industry, and oil production is also a significant industry. The indigenous people of Benin City are the Edo people (the Benin People), and they speak the Edo language or Bini Language. The people of the city have one of the richest dress cultures on the African continent and are known for their beads (the beads stand for royalty and usually stand out during the traditional marriage of the Benin people), body marks, bangles, anklets, raffia work. They survive on subsistence farming of yam, plantain and cassava. In 2022, the population of Edo State was 4,777,000.

## **The main focus of our work**

The Mother Mary Martin Hospital is a secondary Health Care facility that runs general outpatient, maternal and child welfare clinics which aim at providing quality and affordable health care to the general population as well as ensuring that pregnant women go into labour and deliver their babies safely. The Hospital offers holistic health care through preventive and curative services facilitating the people to be more health conscious and so, make informed decisions about



**Medical Outreach**



**School Health Programme**

**Antenatal care**

their health. We have a robust yearly medical outreach plan for our different catchment areas where we create awareness about medical conditions like Hypertension and Diabetes. During these outreach programmes in the rural communities, women, children, the poor, the marginalized and people with disabilities avail of our waiver scheme on the medical screening tests/treatment for Malaria, Diabetes, Blood Pressure and Weight checks.

Children are admitted in an open ward in the company of their attendants. The ward is made up of 3 paediatric cots with rails to prevent the children from falling off the cot and sustaining injuries. The cots are arranged in a way that babies receiving care do not come in contact with each other. The newborn unit also has a separate ward for babies delivered outside the Facility to prevent cross infection. There is a Phototherapy machine, Continuous positive airway pressure machine (CPAP) Oxygen supply etc. The maternity area

**Newborn care****Surgeries**

has three open wards and 1 private room with a total of 9 beds. The wards accommodate women in labour, post-natal, sick antenatal and other obstetric and gynaecological cases. The beds are spaced very well for easy movement and to prevent

hospital acquired infections. There is constant electricity and water supply in the hospital and maternity area which is generated from solar energy, Power Holding Company (the national grid) and a standby generator. There is constant effort to maintain the buildings, make the wards hospitable and keep patients safe while admitted. There are separate wards for male and female patients for proper patient management. Each employee signs the staff code of conduct which spells out all that is expected for everyone for the maintenance of a safe environment. Generally, there are 24 hours staff supervision and monitoring of care administered to patients.

Some vulnerable adults are attended to in their homes and familiar environment during home-based care and visitations. Their family members are trained and guided on the needed care and support.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

- Procurement of X-ray machine
- Registering with NHIS
- Continuous capacity updating through serial training for personnel.
- Recruitment of additional staff (5 at least)
- Commencement of weekend laboratory services

# Letter from Nairobi, Kenya

By **Sr. Mary O'Malley, MMM**



**Sr. Mary O'Malley, MMM**

Dear Reader,

Warm greetings from Nairobi from where we struggle 'day and night' and try to alleviate suffering in the best way possible. At times it's very overpowering but we still carry on as best we can. You have often been at our side and great things have been done through your tremendous generosity, especially in Education which continues to transform lives.

Let me tell you the stories of two young people I met recently and how your support has changed their lives.

Victor is a teenager I met two weeks ago; he is/was due to sit his Kenya Certificate Secondary Education (KCSE). He has only attended school erratically, the reason being that his mother works by scavenging on the largest dump site in Nairobi. When she can make 500 Kenyan Shillings which is the equivalent of Euro 3.70. He takes it to school where he is allowed in for a week to ten days. What I find most sad is that Victor is a B+ or an A student, but I've ensured that at least he can sit his Form/4, by paying the balance of school fees up to the exam in November. We will follow up on him and see

if we can put him on a better 'footing' in life.

Daniel came into our office about two weeks ago also. This young man is a 'high thigh' amputee. He has struggled with major injury for more than two years now. He had come off a local transport (matatu) and was hit by a high-speed motorcycle. It tossed him into the ditch, and he landed in a drain - rather dank due to the presence of open sewage and the driver sped off. He lay there for some hours in & out of consciousness. Finally, a good Samaritan took him to the national referral hospital where he lay there most of the night unattended. In this condition it was understandable that he required an amputation.

Afterwards he went back to his rural family upcountry but there was nothing in that remote area to assist him. Finally, he returned to a friend in Nairobi slums, but it was not easy, and he felt a burden to a childhood friend who lived in a subsistence way also. Struggling with his crutches someone told him that he should try going around to churches as he might stumble on some form of charity. Well,

it turned out that he arrived at the office where Mutuku and I were engaged in a planning meeting for the ten Victim/Survivors who came to our office the previous evening (at 4.30pm), 'never rains but it pours'

Happily, life has changed for him, and he believes that his prospects are good. In consultation with him we set him up with a food trolley business. He sells cooked sausages and hard-boiled eggs which are kept hot with a small charcoal grill at the bottom. We got him a chair and umbrella as he will need to sit and also have shade from the burning sun. We have put him on the list of the Association of Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK) to be measured and supplied with a prosthesis. He has found a niche close to the CBD where he can leave his trolley secured with a strong padlock. We are very confident that he will do well and there is no reason why he cannot have a family of his own in the future.

# The Only Way to Heal is to Be Healed

by AMMM Josephine Namutebi, Uganda

In John 14:27, Jesus tells us: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

This peace is a healing gift, but we must first receive it ourselves before we can pass it on to others. Healing is not a one-time act; it is a continuous journey, and on that journey, we find the capacity to heal others.

There are two kinds of people in this world: the patients and the healers. Yet, the healers cannot truly heal if they themselves remain wounded. We can only share what we possess—our experience, strength, and hope. For many of us who struggle, whether with addiction or other burdens, prayer has been a source of relief and renewal. But more than that, it reveals a deeper truth: healing is not only a personal responsibility but a



collective one. We must “carry the message,” not just for others but for our own growth.

Only by tending to our wounds can we guide someone else down the path we’ve travelled. If we focus only on others—their crises, their struggles—without attending to our own healing, our capacity to help is limited. The challenges we face are not obstacles; they are our greatest teachers.

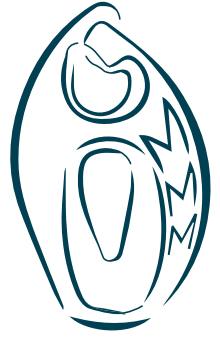
Today’s world is filled with immense adversity: poverty, famine, grief, broken relationships, chronic illness, financial struggles, and the weight of uncertainty. These hardships are universal, yet how we choose to respond to them defines the healing we bring into the world. The more we accept healing for ourselves, the more we contribute to the healing of the world.

For me, as Josephine, I find this healing in prayer, faith in God, and sharing my journey with others. As Hebrews 11:6 reminds us, “He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Healing comes when we seek it earnestly, and when we allow ourselves to be healed, we become living examples for others. In today’s world, many are sinking into despair. Depression is widespread, and isolation deepens. We need each other more than ever. By lifting others up and encouraging them to continue despite the weight of the world, we become enablers of hope.

We do not heal alone; we heal together. When we rise, we help others rise as well. The only way to truly heal is to first allow ourselves to be healed.

“There are two kinds of people in this world: the patients and the healers. Yet, the healers cannot truly heal if they themselves remain wounded.”

# Meet the Sisters – Sr. Jacinta Mahakwe, MMM



**Sr. Jacinta Mahakwe, MMM**

My name is Jacinta Ugonma Mahakwe. I am a Nigerian. I come from a large family of ten children, five males and five females. I am the seventh child and third daughter. Both of my parents were civil servants and are retired. My father was an Accounting Officer while my mother is a Nurse/Midwife. Besides being civil servants, my parents engaged in different activities and businesses to cater for our family needs. My parents were concerned with our education and for this, we are thankful to them. My parents taught us to do things ourselves and instilled in us moral and religious values. My family is a Catholic family; my parents were actively involved in the Church and some of my brothers were altar boys during their youth. We spent most holidays together,

sharing our different stories and experiences. We have a cordial relationship among us and support one another in different ways. My father died in June 2020 after a brief illness. We trust that he is enjoying eternal life in heaven.

Growing up, I loved taking part in Church activities. I learnt about religious life and started thinking of becoming a Sister during my secondary school education. This led me to have a conversation with two distant cousins, one a religious Sister and the other a religious brother. They furnished me with books and information on religious life, and the Medical Missionaries of Mary in particular. I read about the Medical Missionaries of Mary and was attracted to the Charism of the MMM which was medical.

After my secondary school education, I trained in Microbiology at Imo State University in Nigeria. I joined MMM in August 2005 and had my Postulancy and Novitiate formation. During this period, I learnt about MMM way of life, Charism and Religious life in General. My prayer life, community living, faith, commitment, sense of responsibility and many other values were deepened. I made my first profession

alongside my six colleagues on 22nd September 2009. My first assignment was MMM Mile Four Hospital Abakaliki in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. I worked in the Laboratory department for two years collecting and examining test samples of patients who came for treatment. Subsequently, I was assigned to MMM Ikeja Community Lagos in 2012 where I worked in the Laboratory for six months before moving to Nairobi, Kenya, for further studies.

At Tangaza University College, Nairobi, where I studied Theology and Philosophy for four years. I learnt a wide variety of skills through theology, such as critical thinking, clear writing, problem solving and analysis of social and historical trends. The time I spent as a student in Kenya studying Theology and Philosophy exposed me to living and engaging in a different culture.

At completion of my studies, I was assigned to MMM Salvador Community, Brazil, in 2016. I returned to Nigeria to process my visa to Brazil and prepared for my final vows as well. While waiting for a Brazilian visa, I worked in MMM Primary Health Care and Maternity Clinic (PHCMC), Abuja. I made my final vows on 24th February 2018, and left for my new mission in

## Continued: Meet the Sisters – Sr. Jacinta Mahakwe, MMM



**Sr Jacinta Mahakwe with Sr Chibuzo Aloka, MMM**

Salvador, Brazil on 2nd March 2018.

I worked as a pastoral care agent in our MMM Ministry; Project Consolation. The aim of Project Consolation is to support families that have experienced trauma caused by violent death, in Nordeste of Amaralina, Salvador Brazil and its surroundings, promoting awareness on human rights, the reduction of risk and the culture of peace. I worked with different women groups in the project offering arts therapy, craft skills, massage and participated in a behavioural change program for the youth in schools. I joined the Salvador Archdiocesan Prison Pastoral Care and took part in prison pastoral visits. Likewise, I was a member of the Pastoral Health Care group reaching out to the elderly in care centres and street people. I appreciate and enjoyed the cross-cultural and intercultural missionary experience I had

in Brazil. I felt safe working and living among the people despite the violence in the neighbourhood because of their full acceptance and support. I have had the exposure of working in a hospital setting and also in community-based services and so have seen some of the diversity of ways the MMM charism can be expressed in service of others.

In 2024 I participated in the Religious Formation Ministry Programme (Loreto House). This is a one-year renewal programme offered by the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI). What I enjoy most is helping people find solutions to their problems, protecting vulnerable people from harm or abuse, supporting people to live independently, empowering young women and youth through skill acquisition and participation in behavioral change programs.

When people think of me, they think of the commitment and cheerfulness with which I carry out

my activities. They also share that I am easy to work with and enjoy going out to participate in working with the people at grassroots level and advocating for people's rights and dignity.

Over the years, life has taught me that religious life is not self-seeking but faithful commitment to God's will in service of humanity. I have experienced joy in giving myself in the service of those in most need through MMM Healing Charism. I find a synergy in living the religious life in community because we care for and give support to one another. Challenges are in every lifestyle, but prayer and community support helps me to sustain my commitment.



**Sr Jacinta helping the community in Brazil**



MEDICAL  
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The Medical Missionaries of Mary  
(MMM) are hosting

# Flowers and Fun Fest



ADMISSION  
FREE!



**FREE PARKING!**  
At the Lourdes Church, next door

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2025, 10–3pm**

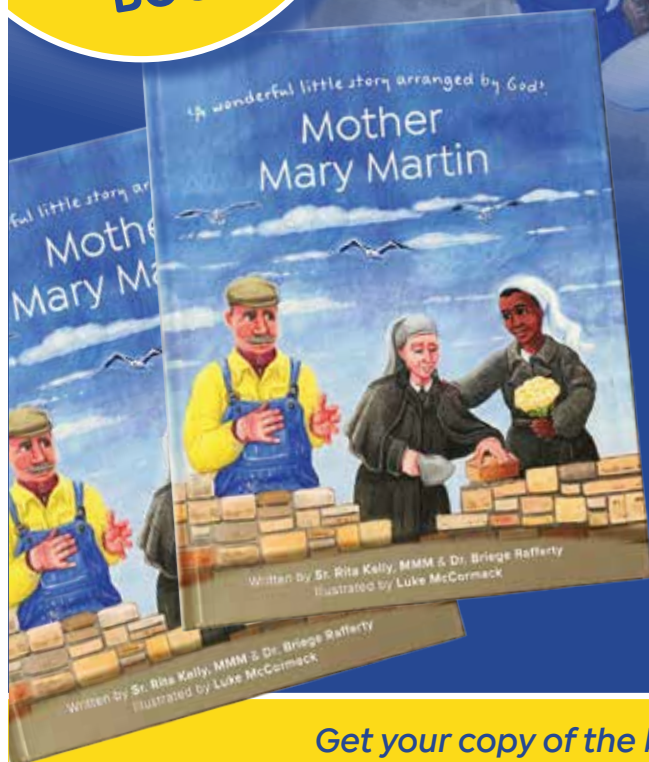
**The Auditorium at MMM Convent**

Beechgrove, Hardman's Garden, Drogheda, A92 XKX0

**CRAFT VENDORS | ART | RAFFLE | FOOD | PLANTS | FLOWERS**  
**BAKE SALE | FAMILY FUN | FREE ECO-TALKS**

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**NEW!  
CHILDREN'S  
BOOK**



## Mother Mary Martin

*"A Wonderful Little Story Arranged by God"*

The **Medical Missionaries of Mary** are delighted to share our brand new **Children's Book** celebrating:

**Mother Mary Martin**, our MMM Foundress.

*Be inspired by this colourful book with a real life story!*



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Get your copy of the book here: [www.mmmworldwide.org/bookdonation](http://www.mmmworldwide.org/bookdonation)



MMM  
Sisters' Stories Podcast



*Caring Hands and Healing Hearts*

## NEW EPISODES!

**MMM Sisters' Stories Podcast** features the Medical Missionaries of Mary Sisters, talking about why they decided to become a missionary, the kind of life that was attractive to them and what they pray for in our world today. Each interview is as unique as the MMM Sister herself. They talk of their journeys to far-off places, all the wonderful people they have met, and who are now part of their life's journey.

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# Inspiration

“As MMMs we must keep  
our flexibility, our spirit  
as apostles among the  
women.”

- Mother Mary Martin (1962)



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

[www.mmmworldwide.org](http://www.mmmworldwide.org)