

# MMM

*'Rooted and founded in love'*



MEDICAL  
MISSIONARIES  
of MARY

Easter  
2025

SUPPLEMENT TO HEALING & DEVELOPMENT - VOLUME 86

## Answering the call of the *Earth*





# Welcome

## ***Hello Friends of MMM,***

This year for our Lenten appeal we selected the theme of 'Answering the Call of the Earth'. In "Laudato Si", Pope Francis alerts us that our current ecological crisis is a wakeup call. What we need, he writes, is an "ecological conversion," whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them". As MMMs we are taking this call seriously

in almost every step of how we serve the world's most vulnerable people.

In our work in the world, we seek to bring healing to the people most in need. This involves -

- Caring for the sick and to minister to them,
- Promoting the health and wholeness of persons and communities
- Proclaiming the sacredness of life, the dignity of each person, and the meaning of human life and death.

The current trends in the climate crisis make accomplishing these goals even more challenging. In addition to poverty and a lack of education, the people

we serve have even greater obstacles to overcome including flooding, drought, famine, failed crops, disease, lack of sanitation and a sense of being overwhelmed. In order to meet the needs of the remote communities, our MMM Sisters work with the community's biggest challenges. We find ourselves solving problems in harvesting water, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, solar energy, sanitation along with other health concerns.

In this Lenten appeal we share with you how we continue to bring hope as darkness threatens the lives of some of the world's poorest children and families. We are deeply grateful to you for your continued support which makes our mission work possible. This year we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Mother Mary Martin, Our Foundress' death. So many decades after her death, her vision stays alive with your generosity and prayers. Thank you

***Sr. Sheila Campbell, MMM***

# Answering the call of the *Earth*

## Themes:

### **Overcoming Famine**

It is tragic when vulnerable people can find no way to feed themselves and their communities. Allowing unused land to help is a worthwhile effort. In Abakaliki Mile Four, Nigeria, MMM also provides farmland for patients who are able to engage in subsistence farming to support whatever aid they receive. We also employ some patients when they are fully recovered and their family members if needed. This allows people not only to have knowledge and dignity but literally allows them to feed themselves and their families

when they otherwise would not be able to do so. Teaching people these skills has a ripple effect into the community as they can show other people how to also help themselves.

***While climate change can bring drought and famine to some areas, it can also bring severe problems with flooding.***

### **Coping with Water, Water Everywhere**

Torugbene community, one of the creeks in Delta state, experiences annual flooding and this affects every living and non-living creature. During



the flood season, local bridges are made for a walkway. The greatest surprise is that as much as the majority of the people are always affected by the flood through displacement or destruction of properties which could lead to their relocation, they still believe that it's a blessing to them, that the flood comes to wet the land and make the soil fertile for planting. (Although this year's flood was too much!). Also, the flood brings about unity. During that period families come together for shelter in a safer environment to eat and do things together. Looking at the negative effects, it causes restriction of movements, because everywhere is covered with water and makes it very hard for people to be able to distinguish between the riverside and the road.

Here in Torugbene climate change is causing serious harm. There is a high rate of skin diseases and malaria, due to the constant exposure to mosquito bites. Most people sleep outside their houses due to the heat of the room and children are the ones suffering most. The heat is causing rashes, though this has helped most people to learn how to take good care of their bodies by bathing at least twice a day, thereby



*(Top) Sisters paddling their way to home based care in Torugbene (Above) Water pumps and tanks in Abakaliki*

protecting personal and environmental hygiene.

Due to the infrequent rainfall we are experiencing this year, the river is more contaminated, and it is drying up. The people are faced with diarrhoea and vomiting, which has taken about 20 lives (though 18 were not under our care) and many are under treatment in their home and going to the chemist shops. From this experience and with what we are seeing and have been told, we are stressing more on hygiene and consumption of good water sensitization. Some people now boil their



*A handmade dam in Kenya*

drinking water, while some are learning to drink good water rather than their river water which they have always claimed to be pure and natural.

### **Saving Lives with Clean Water**

In Uganda, MMM live in Kansiira, a remote rural area, 180 kms from the capital city, Kampala. It is an area that includes ten villages, with mud houses and thatched roofs. The people are poor, with subsistence farming, cattle rearing and fishing in nearby Lake Kyoga as the main sources of income. Most people have one or two meals a day, but the main problem is the lack of clean, safe, drinking water and electricity.



*Watering in Kansiira*

There is no piped water; sources are primarily Lake Kyoga and hand dug holes (dams) serving people and animals. Neither are safe for drinking. Previously small boats allowed people to go 1km inside the lake to fetch cleaner water, but in 2019, these boats were destroyed by the military. People were provided with big boats which are too heavy for women and children. There are only five functional hand pumps in the area. Women and children suffer as fetching water is their responsibility and involves long journeys.

As the young girls and women walk to fetch water they are vulnerable to sexual harassment and even rape by local men.

After listening to the local people, MMM has decided to work on two main fronts, clean water and maternal health.

They are working to pipe a bore hole to provide clean, safe water. This can also be used in activities of the health centre, with patients, caregivers and staff, promoting better hygiene and guarding against cross infection and disease. The health centre provides preventive/curative health care services, community development programmes (IGA's and women/youth empowerment).

### **Water Pollution**

For decades, the people of Mukuru, Nairobi, Kenya have lived alongside the Ngong River, their homes



*Mukuru slum*

vulnerable to the flooding exacerbated by climate change. The clay-rich soil, the poor drainage, and the overwhelming rains have created a dangerous cycle – one that the community has learned to endure.

The floods badly affected our environment in the last rainy season. Children fell sick, stopping the day to day activities. Many didn't have homes and those that had their homes were full of water. The government came and demolished the houses in an attempt to control the floods. These were homes people had known all their lives. They were mentally and emotionally tortured. Security was

compromised. Some had cows in the slum and they were killed by water and other diseases. They lost everything, including important documents.

The youth trained by MMM's WASH project, the local leaders, and neighbours have been instrumental in providing relief. They have learned that, like Christ, they are called to serve those in need – to heal the land and the people. Just as Jesus healed the sick and comforted the afflicted, these brave souls are offering hope in a place where despair could easily take root.

The Ngong River, which once provided nourishment and life, now threatens



### *Fires in Brazil*

to drown the community. But through ecological restoration – repairing damaged ecosystems, improving drainage, and replanting trees – the land too can heal. It is a sign of how creation itself mirrors the divine promise of renewal. Just as the Earth is revived after seasons of destruction, we too can find renewal in Christ. This is our message to the community as we mobilize young children and youth to engage in tree planting.

### **Facing Wildfires and Hurricanes**

In December 2024, wildfires destroyed a large area near Los Angeles in the

USA. But these phenomena due to changing weather patterns are happening elsewhere as Sr. Maria Jose from Brazil recounts:

“I was in Parana in September this year and the smell of the smoke from the fires around the country was very strong and it affected many people who had their lungs affected. I visited one of the neighbors in my hometown. They shared with me how the fire came very close to their farm. This family used to have some cows to milk and depended on them for their survival. When they heard and noticed that one



side of their farm was on fire, they got desperate. The whole family are very active in the church and used to sell milk to many other families in the town. I heard from Vilma, that one day the farm was surrounded by the fire, and many other small farms got burned. Her own farm was prevented from being burnt; they believe by prayer. They started to pray and to entrust their property to God's protection and our Mother Mary to care for their only means of living. By the end of that day their farm didn't get burnt and she attributed that as a miracle. She said to me. "It was God's hands that protected us from fire." It is amazing the faith of the people and how much their trust is placed in God's hand and Our Lady, Mother Mary, for their protection.

I believe that our planet needs people with that faith and commitment to life to protect our planet from dying and being destroyed from all kinds of damage. Our planet is crying aloud for help and many creatures and nature are dying from lack of care. I am deeply convinced that if each one keeps trying to make a difference in caring for nature, life will last longer. Let's join hands and start with small actions and care for the earth."

### **UNDER A TREE**

Here in Wau, South Sudan it is important to invest in taking care of the earth. Trees are important.

We can't survive without nature. We need nature so much that without it we suffer gravely.

We have long dry seasons every year. Temperatures go beyond 40 degrees between the months of February and May. Our weather consists of short but heavy rains where we get floods, and a long dry season.

During the dry season having a tree in the compound is a blessing. It is where one goes to cool off from the scorching sun and even the hot wind.

During our visits to the chiefs in the different villages lately, all our meetings have been under a tree. We sit and have our discussions at ease, enjoying the solace from the shade of a tree. Most of these trees were planted a long time ago, they have grown so much to shelter human beings from the sun and harbour the birds of the air. Under that tree is peace and enjoyment, it is blissful.

Besides us having our meetings there, the villagers use those shades to have their gathering too, having their tea and discussing matters. It is where people come together. "Under a tree is our hall"

Most of these trees are fruit trees which offer fruits in due season like mangoes, shea butter, almond, etc. The trees can be used for income generation, medicine, food etc. We have started



### *Under a tree in South Sudan*

encouraging those we meet to invest in planting trees and taking care of the existing ones.

Charity begins at home. In our clinic the sisters planted Neem trees behind the clinic which are medicinal. This type of tree grows so well in our locality. They are everywhere. And for us in the clinic wherever they swing we get a cool wind that is fresh and nice.

We have now started planting other trees. We planted umbrella trees in the middle of the clinic compound hoping that when they grow our patients can

cool off from the heat as they wait to be served. Many walk long distances under the scorching sun. We have started with two and more are yet to be planted. It is hard to get them here but from Juba as this kind of tree is not available in our Area. “One by one makes a bundle” - we will get there.

# Bee Hotels

**By Sr. Ruth Percival MMM, Drogheda**

Do you know what a Bee hotel is? I used to believe that all bees lived in hives but they don't. For many of our bees are solitary. So I went out into the garden to look for the hollow stalks I needed, 8-10", large enough to develop larvae. They need to be strong to withstand the rain and wind. Wrap them in a bundle. Hang them somewhere sheltered, and wait for comments, questions, and fears, most of all for a bee to go in and seal one of the tubes. A Bee Hotel!



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# Obituaries *Entering into the Fullness of Life*



## **Sr. M. Lucia Lynch, MMM**

Sr. Lucia, baptised Margaret Mary, was born in Callan, Co. Kilkenny, in March 1932. Three years after qualifying as a nurse in Jervis Street Hospital

in Dublin, Margaret Mary joined MMM in Drogheda. At Profession she took the name Sr. M. Lucia. She trained as a midwife and was almost immediately assigned on her first overseas mission, to Tanzania. Sr. Lucia spent five years in Tanzania, nursing in both Dareda and Kabanga Hospitals. In Kabanga she also taught nursing and was the hospital Matron. From all accounts she was a gifted nurse and was known for her gentleness.

When she returned to Ireland in 1967, she had the opportunity to specialize in the nursing of sick children in Belfast and then she was assigned to Malawi in 1969. Malawi was to be her main place of ministry for the next thirty-four years.

Sr. Lucia finally left Malawi in 2003. After a period of rest and renewal, she worked in Kilmacow, near Waterford where MMM ran a residence for the elderly. She returned to Drogheda in 2012 where she had five more years of active retirement in the Motherhouse community before transferring to Aras Mhuire Nursing Home for extra care in 2017.

Her death came peacefully on December 16th surrounded by family members and several Sisters.



## **Sr. Monica Prendergast, MMM**

Sr. Monica Prendergast, baptised Margaret, was born in October 1925 and comes from Clogheen, near Cahir, Co. Tipperary. Sr. Monica became one of the pioneer Sisters of the young Congregation.

Sr. Monica trained as a nurse, Part One in Drogheda and Part Two in Dublin at St. Vincent's Hospital. On qualifying, Monica returned to the hospital in Drogheda as a staff nurse, but very soon was appointed Ward Sister, Assistant Matron and Matron of the new I.M.T.H. Hospital (now our Lady of Lourdes), all in quick succession. Her administrative skills were noted early, but more importantly she knew how to relate well with the staff, with the patients and with everyone with whom she came in contact. She was a good listener and always had a word of encouragement.

Sr. Monica remained in Drogheda for fifteen years and it was only in 1968 began life in Africa. She went to Kampala Hospital in Uganda and over the years there developed a deep love for the country and its people. Within MMM, apart from her nursing duties, she was soon asked to take on Leadership roles, being responsible for three countries in East Africa.

In 1973, she returned to Drogheda as Sister in Charge for a seven year period but then worked in Uganda right up to 2006 when she was 81. She had an active retirement in Drogheda, taking charge of the Stamp Department. She was known as a great letter-writer, and all sisters returning to their missions would certainly be carrying letters from her!

In the early 2020s she went to Aras Mhuire Nursing Home and died peacefully on January 12th, 2025, after a brief illness.

## Obituaries (Continued)



### **Sr. Pauline Dean, MMM**

Sr. Pauline Dean was born in Liverpool, England, in 1921. She qualified as a medical doctor from Liverpool University in 1945. After gaining experience, she went to the U.S.A. for post-

graduate studies in Paediatrics. It was there that she became interested in Religious Life and met MMM.

Sr. Pauline joined MMM in 1953. During her formative years, Pauline worked for four years in the International Missionary Training Hospital (IMTH), (now Our Lady of Lourdes) and then in the Paediatric Unit on the 5th floor for another four years.

In 1967, Sr. Pauline was assigned to Nigeria. She first went to Anua, a busy general hospital, but also worked in Urua Akpan and Ibadan at different times. She spent a total of eleven years in Nigeria, including the years of the civil war.

Family commitments and health issues brought her back to England in 1978 where she cared for her elderly father for a total of nine years. During this time, she was busy producing the PHC Link. This was a monthly publication, presented attractively with drawings (done by herself) and explaining the intricacies of Primary Health Care.

In 1988, Pauline was assigned to Nairobi, Kenya. Here she became involved in HIV/AIDS ministry fulltime and worked for thirteen years in Kenya.

Back in England, in Solihull, Birmingham, she was a part-time pastoral carer in the local hospital; became involved with asylum seekers in a Centre in the parish and she also helped with mission appeals throughout the U.K.

She finally retired to the Motherhouse in Drogheda in 2013, moving to Aras Mhuire Nursing Home in 2020. She died peacefully on February 3rd, 2025.



### **Sr. Ursula Cott, MMM**

Sr. Ursula Cott, baptised Elizabeth, was born in Ballyclough, County Cork, in August 1940.

She joined MMM in 1959 when she was eighteen. Soon after her initial formation period, she went to Dublin and studied at Cathal Brugha Technical College for an institutional management certificate. Then she was the Catering Supervisor in the IMTH Hospital (now Our Lady of Lourdes) for three years. After this assignment she transferred to Waterford and was Catering Supervisor at Airmount Maternity Hospital for a further three years.

In 1971, Sr. Ursula went to Nigeria, to Abakaliki and Ogoja, where she was responsible for Womens' Training Programmes. In 1978, she went to Chicago, and coordinated Mission Development in the Midwest region for four years.

In 1984, Sr. Ursula went to Brazil, first to the city of Sao Paulo, and later to the northeastern State of Bahia. In Bahia she worked both in urban and rural settings. In all the communities in Brazil, Sr. Ursula worked in pastoral care and human development. Her particular attention was to the empowerment and on-going education of women. She was known to be a tenacious campaigner for women's rights and yet, knew how to relax and she had a great sense of humour. She was a practical, down to earth person with a great love for the poor.

In 2012, Sr. Ursula went to the USA, where she cared for our elderly and frail Sisters in the Somerville MA community. In 2016, she returned to Ireland and continued caring for the elderly until her own health needs became more pressing.

Finally, she transferred to Áras Mhuire Nursing Home in 2020 and her death came peacefully on 6th February 2025 during the night.

# Mission

Mission is patience with myself and others.  
Mission is being creative with ways to reach the people.  
Mission is compassion, and it is friendship and collaboration.  
Mission is learning to listen to myself  
and the people I work and live with even in the loudness of their silence.  
Mission is courage to act in the midst of challenges and fears.  
Mission is the openness to begin each day anew,  
not letting the fears of yesterday hold me back.  
Mission is an adventure. It is freeing myself to take gospel risks.  
Mission is faith, believing that ‘...I am worth more than a sparrow.  
Mission is love; it is Christ.

*by Sr. Ese Idogen, MMM*

## MMM Places over the years Wordsearch

- Clonmel
- Ealing
- Taiwan
- Leon
- Collon
- Itam
- Winchester
- Addis
- Singida
- Kasina
- Benin
- Sudan
- Liberia
- Gambo
- Aror
- Lodwar
- Angola
- Abakaliki
- Afikpo
- Chiulo
- Nangwa

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A	I	R	E	B	I	L	E	M	G	L	T
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B	E	N	I	N	A	D	U	S	L	F	H
U	N	I	D	G	A	M	B	O	P	A	C
A	F	G	A	B	A	K	A	L	I	K	I

*"For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Isaiah 55:12*



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