



# THE HEALING TOUCH

The Newsletter of the Medical Missionaries of Mary



*Dear Friend of MMM,*

I hope that you had a lovely Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Another year is starting and we are pleased to share so many stories with you about the work of our MMM Sisters in East and West Africa and in South America.

As we know, 2025 was not an easy year for many with challenges in severe weather, political unrest and shortages in food and other resources. It is our prayer that this year will be a kinder one.

Here in Ireland in November we had our Christmas Craft Fair which was joyful. The money raised was donated to our MMM Mission work in Fuka, Nigeria. We were so excited to launch our new Echoes book which features MMM stories, prayers and reflections. Spreading warmth and comfort also came from donated sweaters reaching new, but vulnerable, people! We tell the story of a gift from Armagh reaching Nigeria. You will also read the story of primary health care in Mukuru, Nairobi in Kenya and the legacy we leave behind us in Capim Grosso in Brazil.

For many people January can be a challenge as we face the world again after the Christmas holidays. As we all begin a new year together, let us renew our commitment to bringing healing and health care to all. We hope you will join us in setting our sights on 2026 being a year of growth and progress for our MMM Sisters and the Missions we serve. We are forever grateful to you, our donors and supporters for making our work possible.

**God bless you,  
Sr. Sheila Campbell MMM**



## MMM News

**Republic of Benin:** MMM recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of its Foundation in Zaffe. As part of the celebration, free screening for diabetes, hypertension, breast and cervical cancer were done.

**Nigeria:** Our thoughts and prayers are with the OLA Sisters who run the school where the Kidnapping took place. Our MMM sisters in Fuka are in the same state (Niger State) as them.

**Ireland:** Some MMM sisters joined in the March for Climatic justice in Dublin during the last COP30 in Brazil. We will continue to pray and advocate for justice - climate and humanitarian in all our ministries across the world.

**USA:** Sr Liana de Jesus MMM was awarded the Bishop Cheverus Medal by the Archdiocese of Boston. The award was in recognition of her active participation in St Anthony's Parish, Sommerville Massachusetts.

# MMM Christmas Craft Fair 2025

**Every year, the MMM Communications Department hosts a Christmas Crafts Fair. This is an opportunity for local small craft businesses to meet with the community and share their creativity. It is also an event through which we raise funds for the neediest missions.**

The money raised this year is going to our primary health care project in Fuka, Northern Nigeria. Please pray for them all there, it is close to where the 200 children were kidnapped recently. The Sisters work in a very unsafe environment, presently, but are grateful to their local community who protect the Health Centre, even when the Sisters are away.

A few days before the 22nd of November, the weather had been very cold and frosty. But on the day of the fair, we woke up to a bright, clear morning. Of course, it was still cold, but not as biting as the previous days.

It was a fun day, filled with festive cheer. The atmosphere was alive with Christmas spirit, and the hall was filled with beautiful handmade crafts – ornaments, toys, cards, and more. People came from near and far to support the fair, enjoying the creativity and warmth of the community.

One of the stall owners, attending for the first time, expressed how much they appreciated the atmosphere, saying the vibe was “on point.”

Throughout the day, Sisters, AMMMs and volunteers helped with hospitality, guiding visitors, and keeping the space vibrant and organised.

The MMM Christmas Craft Fair in Drogheda was a great success!! This was due to the many volunteers who, knitted, crocheted, made handmade cards, made candles and glassware, and who turned up on the day to support us. A big thank you from MMM to everyone. We are already looking forward to next year’s fair in the spring.



**L-R: Sr Áine Mc Namara, DC and Sr Mary McNamara, MMM**



**Sr Pauline Amulen, MMM and Sr Isabelle Smith, MMM**



**Sr. Rita Kelly, MMM, speaks to a customer about her book on Mother Mary**



**Nadia Ramoutar, MMM Communications Co-ordinator with Sr Sheila Campbell, MMM**



**Sr Agatha Bakahirwa, MMM, Fr Tommy Hogan and Sr Catherine Grady, MMM**



**Sr Agatha Bakahirwa, MMM and Sr Catherine Fallon, MMM with Santa**

# Finding God in Small Moments at Mukuru

MMM, Nairobi, Kenya

In MMM Mukuru Health Program, every day begins with uncertainty – who will walk through our doors, what needs will arise, what challenges we will face. Yet, in the middle of the unpredictability, we continue to discover God’s gentle presence in small but powerful ways. Starting the day praying together helps to keep us in tune with our mission of healing.



**MMM Mukuru staff gathered in morning prayer before beginning their day of service.**

A patient may come in distressed, tired, or in pain. Often, it is not just the sickness that weighs them down, but also the weight of life’s struggles. As soon as a nurse takes their hand to record a pulse or a temperature, you can almost see a shift – a reminder that they are not alone, that someone cares enough to listen. In that simple gesture, God is present.

In the **Maternal and Child Health (MCH) clinic**, I watch mothers cradle newborns with a mix of relief and joy. These babies represent more than life – they symbolize hope. Each safe birth is a story of resilience and grace, made possible by the dedication of our staff, the trust of the community, and the generosity of our supporters.

Beyond the clinic walls, our community health Promoters continue to inspire me. Walking through the narrow alleys of Mukuru, they carry not just medicines and messages of prevention, but also compassion. They remind families



**A mother at the MCH clinic with her child, a symbol of hope for the future**

that they are seen and valued. The increase in the number of community members seeking treatment in the facility speaks of their effort.

A Community Health Promoter with a TB Client who was discovered in the community and is being welcomed in the facility for her treatment.

These encounters are a reminder that the MMM mission is not only about medicine and health services – it is about being signs of God’s love in difficult places.

In Mukuru, though challenges remain, every smile, every recovery, every word of gratitude reminds us that God is truly present among us – and that with the continued kindness of our donors and friends worldwide, hope will keep growing in Mukuru.”



**A community health Promoter welcomes a TB client into care at the facility**

# Honouring The Legacy of the Medical Missionaries of Mary in Capim Grosso, Bahia, Brazil

MMM, Brazil



The New Centre in Brazil

The 16th of September 2025 was a memorable day for the Medical Missionaries of Mary in Brazil. MMM was remembered as those who selflessly served and joined resources with the local people to work towards socio-economic, political and spiritual growth.

Capim Grosso town is one of the municipalities located 265km away from the capital city of Bahia State, Salvador and has approximately 34.000 people. The town is located in central west region of Bahia state with a semi-arid climate. The people of Capim Grosso are resilient, welcoming and joyful.

MMM lived and worked in Capim Grosso for 27 years. Throughout these years, more than 15 MMM sisters from different nationalities worked with people. The sisters engaged in different pastoral and social activities. In the first years of the insertion process, the parish had no priest and the Sisters with the laity carried out the pastoral activities.

After a few years the Jesuit priests arrived in the parish and continued strengthening the parish administration and joined MMM and laity to work towards socio-economic, political and spiritual development. The group that most benefited from the initiatives and projects were the women,

children, youth and elderly.

Sr. Jean Clare Eason joined the MMM community in Capim Grosso in 2000, her missionary zeal was expressed in her joyful presence and closeness to the people. Her main passion was the empowerment of women. She joined the Movimento de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais. This movement promoted human rights, creating awareness of the dignity of women. Portuguese not being Jean's first language was not an obstacle in her engagement with the people she interacted with. For example: in the nursery school she interacted with the children with a playful and childlike inner freedom.

In 2015, after a short illness which she faced with courage and faith, Sr. Jean died peacefully. In 2025, the Jesuits and people of Capim Grosso wished to honour the MMM legacy. They reopened and named a pastoral Centre as Centro de Terapias Integrativas Ir. Jane Eason, MMM.

The Centre inauguration day was a memorable celebration for people of Capim Grosso whom she loved and served dearly. The centre offers complementary therapies, thus continuing the healing mission of MMM. The people honoured the legacy and initiatives of MMM sharing about the Sisters' giftedness. They brought up memories saying:

*"The presence of MMM in Capim Grosso was very important in my life. I learnt so much with the sisters on how to help people in their need. Sr Jean's company brought about peace and joy. Indeed, it was wonderful to serve people with each Sister"* (Sueli Cardoso).



Sr. Jean Clare Eason, MMM

# When Warmth Became a Sign of Hope

*Anonymous*



**Sometimes, the smallest acts of kindness reach the most unexpected places and become part of something much greater than we imagined.**

Recently, we were privileged to meet some of our valued supporters whose generosity continues to sustain our ministries and enable us to transform many lives. Among them were the Apostolic Workers of the Archdiocese of Armagh, whose faithful support has long been a source of encouragement and hope. Through their kindness, we received thoughtful gifts for the mission - children's sweaters, some financial assistance, and sacramental material. Of particular note were the 46 sweaters entrusted to me for distribution across our various ministries engaged in child welfare in West Africa Area. Yet, as events unfolded, Providence revealed another purpose for these gifts - one that highlighted both the extraordinary resilience of women in crisis and the far-reaching compassion of our brothers and sisters in Armagh Archdiocese.

On 11th August 2025, during a journey from Benue State to Abuja, Nigeria, we were stopped at Yelewata community. The road ahead had been blocked - not by anger alone, but by courage. Women, many carrying babies in their arms and youth of the community sat across the expressway, refusing to move. Fresh corpses of their husbands lay at the road side, covered with palm leaves. Only hours earlier, precisely at 6am on that day, their village had once again come under attack by bandits. This came just weeks after the June 2025 raid that claimed over 200 lives - mostly children - while they slept. Despite the presence of security forces, no help had come.

In their grief, the women took a stand that day. Their silent blockade was an act of defiance and dignity, declaring: "We may be broken, but we will

not  
be ignored."

It was a cry for justice, a demand for protection and a sign of the unyielding spirit of mothers who will do anything to safeguard life. Their message that day was simple and clear, they wanted the State Governor to withdraw the Army, Police and any other security personnel stationed in their community since they were not offering the needed security for their children. At this stage the Commissioner of Police had arrived to negotiate with the community leaders and possibly persuade the women to undo the blockade. Meanwhile, all vehicles on the road that day, stood still for hours.

Not far from the road lay an IDP camp - home to families displaced by the June attack. The sight of the camp from where I was standing beside our car, was heart-wrenching - Most shelters were open and unsuitable for children, especially newborns. I imagined their experiences and the struggle to stay warm at night. At that moment, my thoughts went to the 46 sweaters from the Apostolic Workers in Armagh - a new purpose has been found for them! Instead of distributing them across different projects as earlier planned, they were redirected to Yelewata - to wrap warmth around babies and children who had lost nearly everything. What seemed like a simple gift became a lifeline - soft threads of love linking the compassion of Armagh to the courage of Yelewata's women.

When the sweaters were handed out, the relief and joy were beyond words. Mothers smiled through

tears, whispering prayers of thanks for people they had never met. In that moment, the generous hands of the Apostolic Workers reached across continents to touch lives in the most tangible way - reminding us all that hope is born when compassion meets courage.

Yelewata, a farming community of the Tiv people, stands today as a testament to endurance. Their homes may be gone, but their spirit endures. Their women have shown the world what steadfast faith and unity look like. And through the Apostolic Workers of Armagh - whose quiet generosity continues to echo in distant lands - these families

have felt the embrace of a global community that refuses to forget them.

From my heart, and on behalf of the families of Yelewata, I extend deepest gratitude to the Apostolic Workers in Armagh. Your love became a sign of God's tenderness - turning threads of wool into threads of hope. Thank you!

Anonymous

*Photos of the IDP camps not captured due to security concerns.*

## Send us on your used stamps for vital funds **Please!**

**The Medical Missionaries of Mary urgently need used stamps - Irish & Foreign - loose or in a stamp album**

If possible, please leave a half-inch margin around loose stamps as that greatly reduces the workload in the philately department.

The address is:

**Sister Philatelist, Medical Missionaries of Mary Beechgrove, Drogheda, Co. Louth, A92 XKX0**



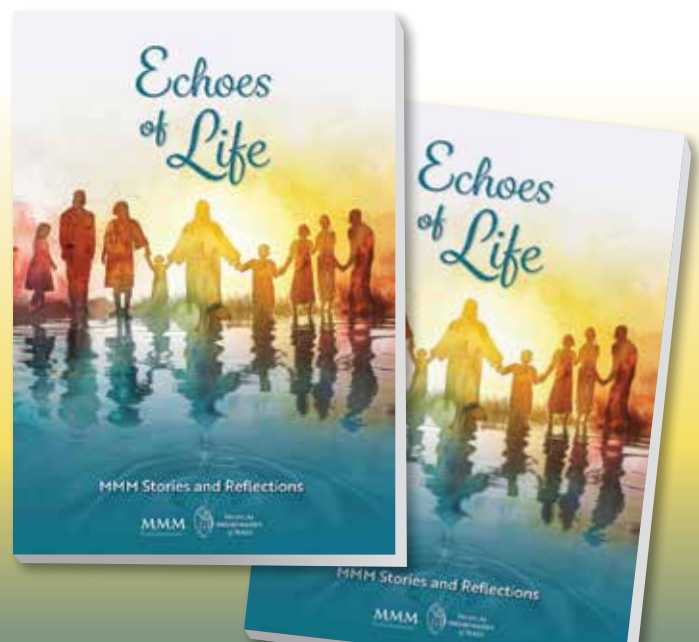
**NEW!**

## Echoes of Life

### MMM Stories & Reflections

A collection of stories from our blogs, enriched with Reflections and Prayers.

Discover Stories of Compassion, Resilience and Love

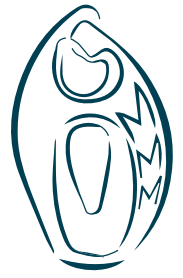


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<< Or scan here using the camera on your phone!

# Meet the Sisters - Sr. Agatha Bakahirwa, MMM



**Sr. Agatha Bakahirwa, MMM**

Sr. Agatha Bakahirwa is from the Kabale District in western Uganda. She grew up amidst the picturesque plateau and cool climate of the Western region, where farming and cattle keeping were a central part of her childhood. She is the seventh child in a family of eight—five boys and three girls. Her parents are still alive.

She grew up with her father and paternal grandmother, surrounded by a large community of cousins, aunts, and uncles all living together. She didn't spend much time with her mother and siblings, who were in another village, but they would visit often. She has fond memories of these

times and continues to share a strong bond with her extended family.

From a young age, Sr. Agatha loved going to church and actively participated in parish life, often tagging along with her father, who was a catechist. She served as an altar server, planted flowers around the church, and met with other servers from nearby parishes.

Her close bond with her grandmother, led to her starting primary school a little late, but she went on to study Business Administration at university. Growing up, she was always around Sisters from local congregations and admired them deeply. She met them again in secondary school where she really wanted to live selflessly like them.

During her university years, she began to ask herself, "Where is life taking me? What do I want to do?" She felt drawn to the Sisters she had long admired. By chance, she visited a printing press and saw a magazine with a short MMM advert. Initially, she thought, "Not for me, I'm not a medic. But it won't hurt to check it out." That visit marked the beginning of her journey with MMM. She was inspired by the hospitality of the sisters and soon began her formation.

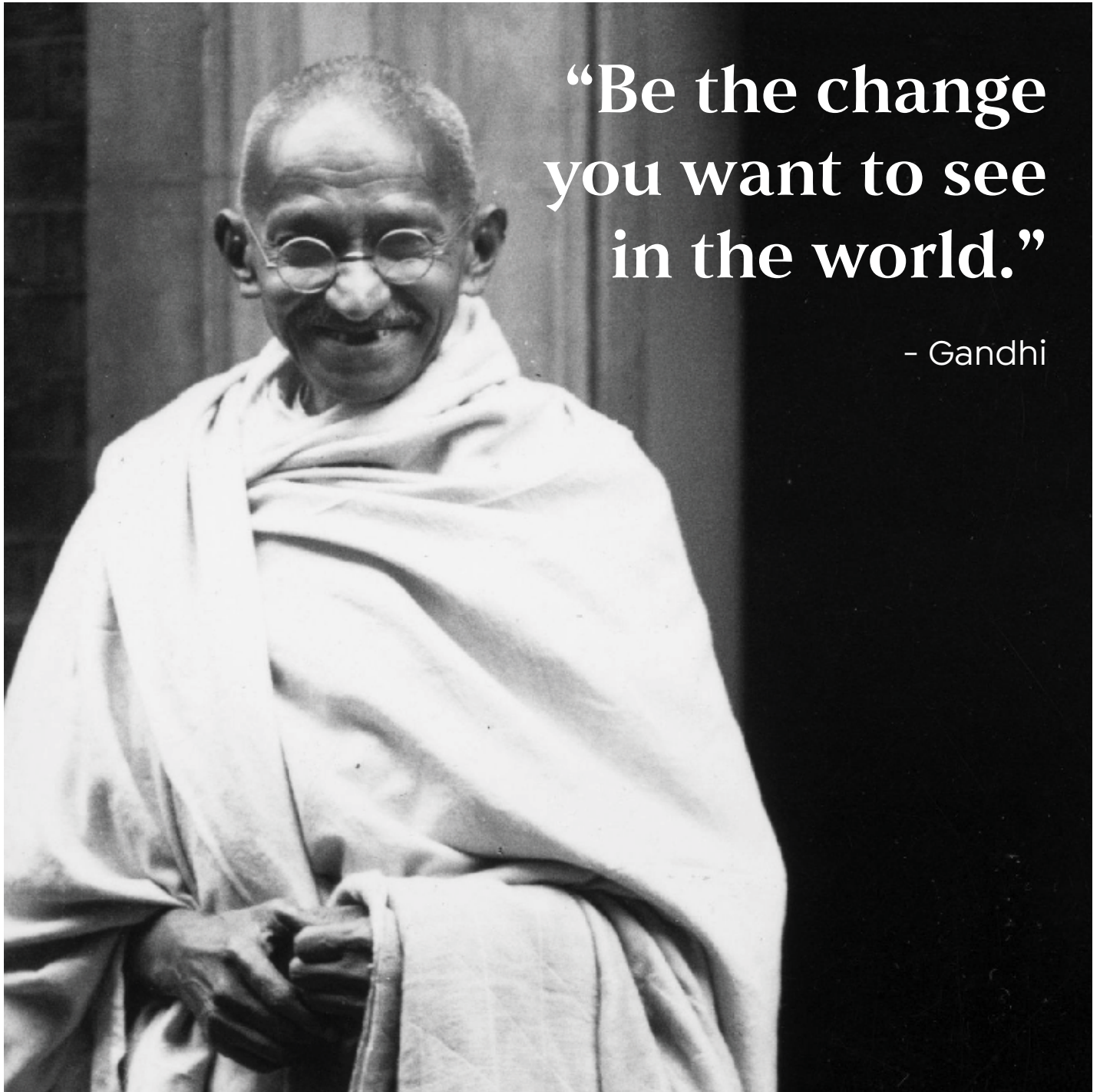
After her initial formation, Sr. Agatha was assigned to the Eldoret Community in Kenya, where she assisted with clinic administration. She also assisted in palliative care and community outreach clinics, interacting closely with the people. This experience gave her a deep sense of what it meant to be a missionary and participate in the healing charism of MMM.

She actively engaged in parish life in Eldoret and worked closely with young people, inspiring some to consider joining MMM. After two years, she returned to Uganda, ministering to the sick and elderly, many of whom were poor or abandoned.

Sr. Agatha is outgoing and loves to bring laughter and joy to those around her. She enjoys visiting new places and meeting new people. One lesson she has learned from life is to stay positive even in challenging times and to create her own happiness wherever she is.

Currently she is studying Accountancy in the Dundalk Institute of Technology.

# Inspiration



“Be the change  
you want to see  
in the world.”

- Gandhi

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

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