



# THE HEALING TOUCH

The Newsletter of the Medical Missionaries of Mary



## *Dear Friend of MMM,*

Things are certainly heating up here in Ireland, as we like everywhere else experience side effects of Global warming.

We had a busy Spring and we are happy to share our progress in lots of areas. We hosted a new Community event at the convent in Drogheda celebrating flowers, food and arts with the community. It was a joyful day. See the photos and read more in this newsletter



We also hosted a conference in Dublin in May as part of a global effort to end and eradicate Obstetric Fistula and keep women safe during childbirth. You can read about our new effort and how you might want to get involved.

At a congregational level, we MMMs are gearing up for our Chapter. It is a time of great reflection for our Sisters all over the world to contemplate our future and our leadership moving ahead.

We ask you to join us in praying for our MMM Sisters and the people in their communities who are subjected to injustice frequently due to economic hardship created by circumstances outside their control or choice. We especially think of the Visitation Gospel that inspired our MMM Sisters from the very beginning to rush without haste to the side of a woman in her hour of need.

We thank you for your continued and cherished support that makes our work possible.

With the kindest of regards,  
*Sr. Sheila Campbell, MMM*

## MMM News

### News from MMM

We welcome and express our prayerful support of our new Pope Leo XIV, a missionary Pope.

#### **SafeBirth4All:**

The Campaign to end obstetric fistula held an event in Dublin on May 21st. Our own Sr. Ursula Sharpe gave a talk and also Dr. Shane Duffy, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist in Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, who has volunteered and trained surgeons in Kitovu, Uganda. Eva Kyeni, a woman who was treated for this condition, and is now an advocate for others, was interviewed by Nadia Ramoutar.

# MMM Inaugural Flowers and Fun Fest

In early May we held our first “Flowers and Fun Fest” in Drogheda.

It was a very enjoyable day at the fair, with vendors selling their wares, talks on various horticultural issues – seeding, composting, care of the environment as well as a place for a great cup of coffee, ice cream and burgers. We were grateful that the Irish weather was pleasant (no rain!) and we had both indoor and outdoor activities.



**Sr Maureen Brennan, MMM showing us the vegetables she grew**



**Sr Agatha Bakahirwa, MMM enjoying an ice-cream cone**



**Srs. Brenda Swan, Ann White and Irene Balzan, MMM**



**Lovely art by Dr Nadia Ramoutar, Communications, Co-Ordinator**



**Plants and flowers from An Grianán Garden Centre**



**Sr Angela Katalyeba, MMM chatting to one of the fair vendors**



**Anthony McCluskey at his stall**



**MMM crochet**



**Some of our vendors setting up for the day**



**Flowers and fun!**



**Lauren Smith's earrings**



**Jolene Matthews from Communications with Sr Jo Anne Kelly, MMM**



**Sr Breeda Ryan, MMM**



**Matthias from Bunz cafe**



**Srs Anastasia Essien and Carol Breslin, MMM**



**The Loving Life choir singing**



**Cushions designs**



**Amy's Trinkets**



**Pat Smith**



**The ladies looking after the raffle**



**Janice Kelly from Communications with her two boys Noah and Oisin**



**lovely coffees from Bunz Bakery**



**Southgate Florists**



**Sr Rita Kelly, MMM with Dr Briege Rafferty**



**Basil**



**Jolene at her stall**



**Sr Agatha gets her face painted**



**Painting of a rose by MMM Communications Co-Ordinator, Nadia Ramourar**



**The ice-cream man setting up**

# Ministering in the Mud!

*By Sr Goretti Nalumaga, MMM*

In Uganda, near the shores of Lake Victoria, lies Katoogo, a swampy, impoverished neighbourhood where provisional houses are often swallowed by floodwaters during the rainy season. Most dwellers in Katoogo are individuals who grew up on the streets or migrated there seeking cheaper living options, often unaware of their ancestral roots. The submerged pathways force residents including volunteers and visitors alike to wear long boots just to reach those in need. Two heavy rain seasons make access impossible, prompting us to call residents to meet us in safer locations.



These photographs capture the challenging environment we visit, the waterlogged areas where our vulnerable beneficiaries live. You can see residents including volunteers carefully navigating the flooded paths, risking slips and falls, to reach families in desperate need. Many homes have been compromised by the rising waters, facing daily dangers, from the risk of their houses collapsing to health hazards caused by unsanitary conditions. This forces residents, including children, to squat in unsafe conditions with neighbours. Despite the hardships, risk of house collapse and health hazards, they remain resilient, trusting that, with divine guidance, better days will come.



# Associate Medical Missionaries of Mary Silver Jubilee in Tanzania *31st May 2025*

**Prepared by Grace Shayo and Moira Brehony.**

The feast of the Visitation of our Lady to her cousin Elizabeth was a very special day for MMM associates in Tanzania as we celebrated our silver jubilee.

In the year 2000 nine women and one man made their first one-year covenant as associates. Since then, five of our associates have gone to their eternal reward and all of them were ex staff of Dareda Hospital where MMM sisters managed and trained people for years. May they rest in peace.

Two associates were unable to attend the celebration due to ill health, while three associates Francesca Maselle, Moira and Eamonn Brehony celebrated with the MMM community in Nangwa. Sisters from Ngaramtoni and Mangua communities joined us too.

It was a truly joyful occasion which began with Mass in the Sacred Heart Parish church Nangwa with celebrant Rev Fr. Emmanuel Mallya a Pallotine father who preached a very meaningful sermon. Many people from the local community joined in the service.

At the beginning of the Mass, the three jubilarians were called forward to renew their covenants and made a commitment for a

further three years. This was followed by two associates who were renewing their covenants for one year and four for three years. Fourteen associates were present at the celebration and one associate who is in orientation.

The Nangwa church choir sung the Mass while eight children performed beautiful liturgical dancing. Two choir members led us in the congregation in the singing of the Magnificat in Swahili and it was truly joyous and wonderful occasion.

Many MMM sisters joined us for this celebration from Ngaramtoni, Mangua and Nangwa communities including our mentors Sr. Marian Scena and Protagia Slaa. Sr. Natalia Mashalo was our MC and she gave a short briefing of the associate movement in Tanzania from the early days when Srs. Theresia Ladislaus and Marcellina McCarthy introduced the associate movement to Tanzania.

The celebrations continued at the MMM convent grounds at Nangwa. The children were treated to juice and biscuits while the young girls who are Children of Mary dressed in blue danced and sang and entertained us under the direction of Sr. Sekunda Sekundi Kimaria. People from the local community joined

us too including a special group of wazee (elderly)

We all shared a special meal prepared by the local community under the supervision of associate Theresa Jacob.

The jubilarians were presented with gifts of specially printed mugs, traditional dress and rosary beads. As is traditional in Tanzania we had a 'shika kono' whereby all who are present come forward shake your hand and give a little donation which was then given to the associate fund.

Two beautiful cakes specially decorated were cut and enjoyed by everyone present.

The associates thank Sr. Maria Borda and the Nangwa community for their warm welcome and amazing hospitality for everyone.



**Francesca Masalle, Eamon & Moira Brehony**

# Gratitude with a deep sense of healing.

*Sr Liana de Jesus, MMM, Brazil*

Eidilair is deeply grateful for the help she received from MMM. How beautiful it would be if everyone who received assistance displayed such humility to express their thanks! I see her as a figure in the passage of people from Egypt to the Promised Land; she has suffered her whole life, but her faith in God has always remained strong. She waits for a day of transformation and resurrection, when she will be completely healed. The physical healing might not have happened, but the inner peace will bring her to a healing place to be.

Even amid pain and suffering, her closeness to God perseveres. Remarkably, she never stopped smiling, even in her most challenging times. Eidilair dos Santos is a single mother. She is

“*Even amid pain and suffering, her closeness to God perseveres.*”

in her mid-40s, she has suffered from diabetes since she was 30 years old and epilepsy since childhood. She lost her job when they discovered that she had epilepsy and diabetes. After this sickness, she has lost one leg and her vision.

Eidilair's life was so miserable that the MMM Sisters started helping her with food and medication. At the end of last year, 2024, she was able to get her (INSS pension) permission like a sick person, and she informed the MMM Sisters that she doesn't need the help anymore, that she and her daughter now will be able to survive with this salary from the government. She is admitted to the hospital, she needs to get her second leg amputated and now all of her teeth have come out because of diabetes.

This woman represents many people who are in the same situation as her and do not have anywhere to go to seek help. If not for someone like the MMM Sisters, who follow up with some financial assistance with the generosity from our donors, their suffering would be even more severe, I see her story inspiring in terms of transparency, together with

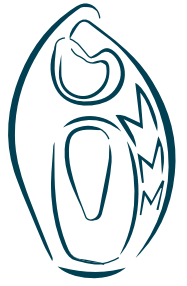


**Eidilair dos Santos**

being accountable for what she has received. Her faith in God is tremendously strong. In fact, it is what gives her strength and determination. She also has deep trust in God that her life will be transformed according to His plan for her life.

The person who trusts and believes in God, like Eidilair, even in the pain and suffering, continues to be close to God. She always has a smile on her face despite her constant pain.

# Meet the Sisters - Sr. Nina Underwood, MMM



**Sr. Nina Underwood, MMM**

Sr. Nina Underwood was born into a large family of seven children in Boston, Massachusetts. Even at a young age, through the Sisters at school, her extended family, film and stories of the needs of the poor and sick in faraway places, she felt drawn to service. But she resisted being a “nun”. It was only when the family came to be living next door to the Sisters that she was drawn to their openness and hospitality. She loved playing with their dog!

Sr. Nina entered MMM after finishing High School and after her initial formation period she travelled to Ireland to begin nursing studies. She began her studies but then the vision and insight of Mother Mary Martin, our Foundress, stepped in. Mother Mary saw the need of the Sisters, struggling to respond to the suffering in

the Turkana Desert in northern Kenya. The distances were huge. Our MMM communities were dotted over the 32,000 sq. miles of desert. There was a famine raging at the time and Mother Mary decided that the only way to get around was by plane. That was the vision. The insight was choosing Sr. Nina to train as a pilot. Nina is such an intrepid adventurer! Even to this day she will turn her hand to anything. There is no such thing as “man’s work” or “women’s work”. There is a job to be done, a problem to be solved and there is Nina taking up the challenge to fix it.

So, as a young 24-year-old woman, off she went every day to train as a pilot. She gained her pilot’s licence in 1967 and then headed off to East Africa. The plane she was flying was a gift by a donor in the U.S. Her training consisted of mechanics and servicing of the plane, i.e. oil changes, tyre repair etc. She flew in the desert for over twelve years. Taking to the sky on a daily basis was most often an emergency situation or visiting clinics, health centres, dispensaries and eventually the two hospitals which were established over the years. Every day was an adventure and sometimes there were hair-raising moments.

In 1982, Nina returned to the

USA and did several courses in pastoral ministry and massage therapy. She had a period caring for her elderly mother and a chance to return to Africa in the 1990s with the Maryknoll Sisters in Southern Sudan. During this period, she was abducted by the SPLA and held with rebels for a week or so and then deported “persona non grata”. Fortunately, with the help of the local bishop, she was able to return a month later.

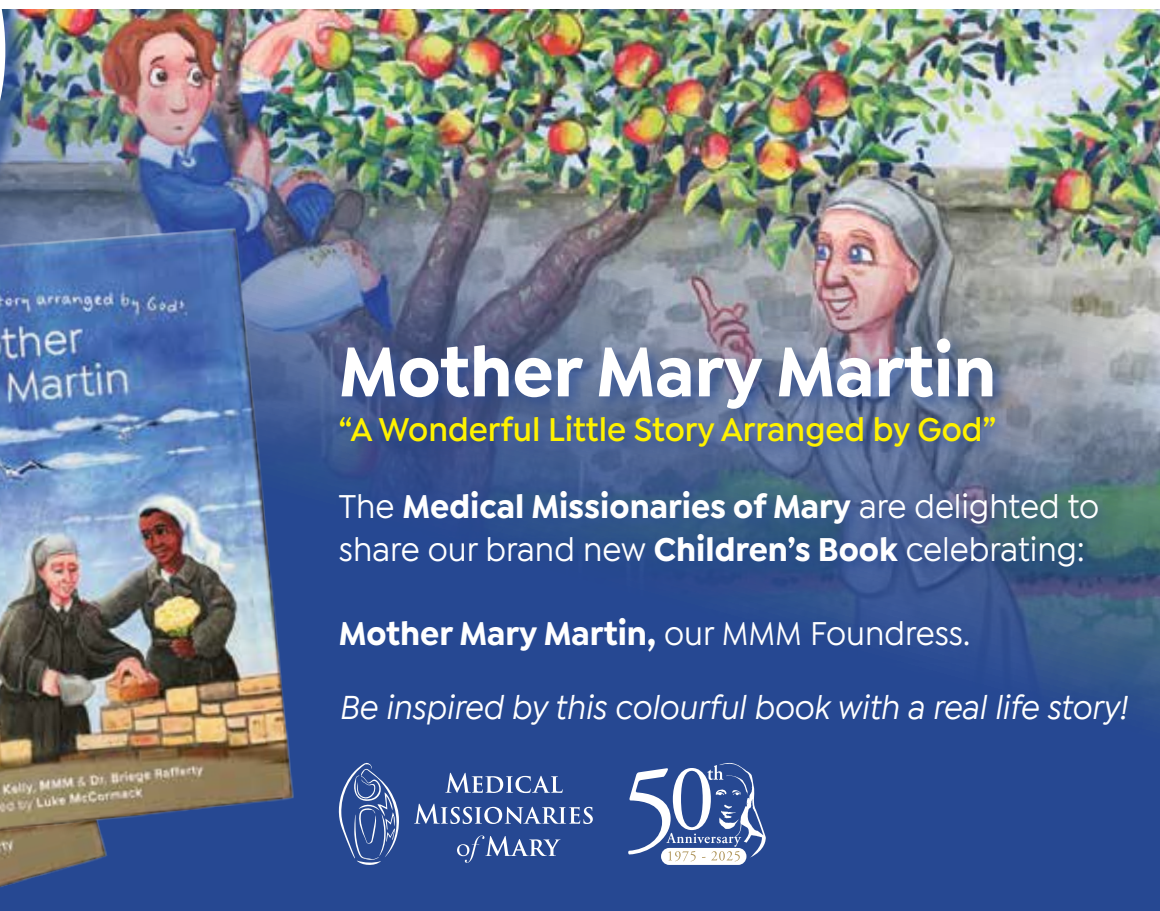
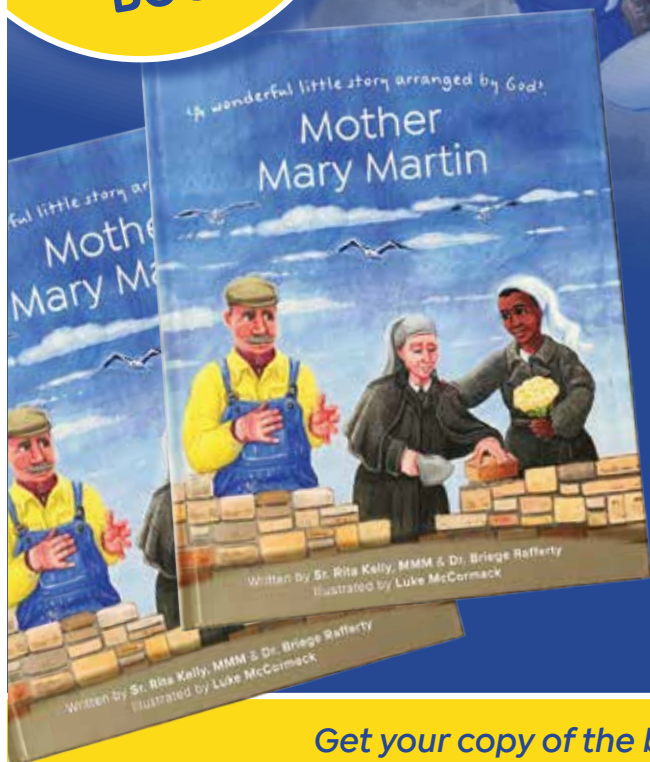


**Sr. Nina flying her plane**

In 2006 she also responded to a crisis famine situation in Niger.

Currently Sr. Nina lives in Somerville MA, continues her pastoral ministry and massage therapy. One thing her experience in South Sudan taught her was that embracing insecurity and uncertainty in a new and different way she really tasted the plight of the poor and marginalized, and this was a real conversion experience for her.

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!*



MEDICAL  
MISSIONARIES  
of MARY



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.

AVAILABLE ON:



# My Shadow

It follows me in moving light  
A silent friend  
It stretches along with the rising sun  
And shrinks away when the day is done.

It dances when I jump with glee  
It copies every part of me  
Though it is always by my side  
It never speaks but it cannot hide

At dusk it blends with the evening's hue  
A shade of black  
But still I know when night is through  
My shadow waits to walk anew.

***Sr. Berna Nakimuli, MMM***



# Inspiration

“Wonder is God’s way of getting our attention.”

- Joan Chittister OSB



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

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