



THE HEALING TOUCH

The Newsletter of the Medical Missionaries of Mary



Dear Friend of MMM,

We are glad to welcome you to our Spring Newsletter which brings with it longer days and a sense of hope with new flowers blooming here in Ireland after a dark and challenging winter for many. We have an early Easter to look forward to and we have been enjoying the reflection time of Lent. Over 500 of you have been online with us doing our MMM Lenten Reflection Retreat weekly and it has been a joy to read your comments on how it has benefitted you. If you missed it you can still access our content <https://linktr.ee/mmmworldwide>



The past few months have not been easy for many people in the world with the reality of warfare and violence spreading with very little relief in sight. We know too that the challenges of war now will continue to be felt for a long time. Having faith at times like this can be difficult so we hope this newsletter will fill you with some hope that good people are still making a difference in our world.

We are looking forward to our MMM Spring Fest here in Drogheda on the 18th April, 2026 and if you are near us we hope that you will join us for a special day. We have to find ways to focus on what we can do positively at times like this. Our kind words to one another, our prayers and our ability to have compassion are more important than ever. Please know that without your support and constant care, we could no longer do the important work we do for some of the world's most vulnerable people living in remote and often dangerous places.

Thank you again for your continued devotion and love. May the light of Spring open your heart to new possibilities. Happy Easter from our family to yours,

God bless you,
Sr. Sheila Campbell, MMM

MMM News

At this time of conflict in the Middle East, all our MMM ministries are being affected as a consequence.

- The World Food Program estimated on March 17th that its shipping costs are up 18 per cent so far. They have thousands of trucks on the roads every day, now running on much more expensive fuel, due to the oil prices.
- Higher costs mean that the Agency can buy less food for beneficiaries.
- **Food rations for people in famine conditions in Sudan** are reduced. Another major concern is related to the disruption of global fertilizer markets “just as sub-Saharan Africa heads into a planting season”, Mr. Skau said.
- A quarter of the world’s fertilizer supply comes through the Strait of Hormuz, now at a virtual standstill.

Mr. Skau, Deputy Executive Director, stressed that the spike in global food and fuel costs “could leave millions of families priced out of staple foods, particularly in import-dependent countries, like sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.”

“If the Middle East conflict continues through June, an additional 45 million people could be pushed into acute hunger by price rises.”

In **USA**, fuel prices had increased by 90c a gallon by March 20th and they were spending 1 billion dollars a day on the war, to the detriment of social programmes for the poor.

Both **Brazil** and **Nigeria** tell us the rising fuel costs means food prices have also risen, and some workers have been laid off.

MMM Spring Fest 2026

Every year, the MMM Communications Department hosts a Christmas Craft 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.

Following the continued success of our Christmas Craft Fair, we also host our much-loved Spring event - Spring Fest! It’s a vibrant day filled with crafts, art, mini workshops, music, plants, food, and creative activities for all ages.

We are delighted to invite you to Spring Fest 2026, on **Saturday 18th April** from **10am to 3pm** at the Auditorium in the MMM Convent, Beechgrove, Drogheda.

Visitors can enjoy a vibrant mix of activities throughout the day, including:

- Craft vendors and local makers
- Art displays and creative activities
- A bake sale and raffle
- Plants, flowers and garden inspiration
- Family-friendly fun and music
- Sustainability and eco-focused talks

Free Mini Workshops & Demonstrations on CPR & AED, Drawing for Beginners, flower arranging demonstrations

These sessions are informal, a chance to learn something new in a friendly setting. **Register your interest on our facebook page www.facebook.com/Sheilacmmm**

Free parking available at the Lourdes Church (next door)

For queries please contact: commoffice@mmmworldwide.org or visit <https://mmmworldwide.org/spring-fest-2026/>



My Mission Experience in *Mary Martin Hospital, Uselu* **Sr. Keresifon Ekanem, MMM**



Sr. Keresifon Ekanem, MMM

Mary Martin Hospital is a Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) Facility located in Uselu, Benin City, Edo State in Nigeria. I arrived there in September 2023. It was a new community and ministry in its evolving stage then, few sisters and few staff. When I arrived, I understood that it was going to be a multifaceted mission. I was handed over the office of the Hospital coordinator and the mission commenced almost immediately. I had barely arrived when we had an emergency in the Hospital. We were two Sisters only in the community that day, the other sister was not medically inclined but was helpful as she had ideas on basic things she could help out with and we pulled through.

Being a Nurse/Midwife and Sonographer, I also worked in all the other units of the Facility as the need arose; being involved in all these activities widened my knowledge and I am grateful for the additional skills – administrative, pharmacy, cashier, consultation and laboratory. I had a deep sense of satisfaction being with patients; some of them shared their stories with so much openness and trust and at the end, it would be evident that not all sicknesses required medications. Some of them just needed someone to talk to and to be listened to patiently and with understanding, which gave them so much relief after they shared their concerns.

Meanwhile, medications and presence alone did not suffice in all cases and therefore, incorporating Capacitar (*a self-healing technique*) into our services was a good initiative. Among others, I had a young person who suffered from severe sleeplessness due to anxiety and fear which did not improve with a series of treatment but ameliorated with Capacitar. When he walked into the consulting room, his fear and anxiety was so obvious. However, when I noticed his state, I engaged him in some conversations and he shared his concerns. I taught him a simple finger-hold technique for fear and anxiety. He went home and continued with it and over a short period of time, he came back and acknowledged that he felt more peaceful and was able to sleep and concentrate on his business; he was happy with the result.

It was a Mission of establishing relationships with other healthcare workers in the neighbourhood for collaboration, positive presence to and holistic care for those who availed of our services as well as in our Chaplaincy, capacity building for staff by teaching them liquid soap and jik making skills and Capacitar. I feel fulfilled by my contribution in the Mission and I am thankful to God for what He accomplished through me!



Sr. Elizabeth Ogar at the Antenatal Clinic



Invitation

The MMMs along with other members of the SafeBirth4All coalition invite you to attend our upcoming Annual Conference on **Wednesday, 27th May, 2026.**

“Hope, Healing, and a World Without Obstetric Fistula” is our theme.

It will be held from **10am to 1pm** in the **Marino Institute, Dublin.** Coffee and tea will be served at 9:30 AM during registration.

A hybrid attendance is available online. Please email ***safebirth4all@gmail.com*** to confirm your attendance or get more details.

There is no charge for attendance. A light lunch will be shared for those attending in person.

A Life of Compassion - the Story of "Asha"

By Sr. Marian Scena, MMM - Faraja Centre, Singida

In Singida, Tanzania, we first met Asha in February 2017 when our palliative care volunteer found her and asked us to see her. Asha had been diagnosed with cancer of the cervix in April 2016 and was advised to go to a specialist hospital, an Ocean Road Cancer Institute in Dar es Salaam. She had no money and didn't go. In January 2016, her husband, who was a night security guard, had been killed by robbers while he was at work. They had received no compensation for his death. Asha was struggling to keep the family together and put her four older children through school. The youngest boy was only three years old. She said that, before her husband's death, they had managed to pay school fees and daily expenses but since his death she had tried making mandazi "local donuts" and selling them. Once she became ill, she had no energy to work, and she was very anxious about how her children were going to stay in school and be fed! Her own family lived in a country village and didn't realize Asha was ill.

Asha was examined and found to be very anemic from blood loss. Even being examined she got very dizzy and fell over. Ordinarily we do not recommend giving blood to patients with terminal conditions because it prolongs dying and the quality of life can be worse. But, on further questioning we learned that no one in her family even knew that she was ill! So, Asha was referred to the local Regional Hospital and had two units of blood. During that time, her mother, sister and two brothers came to visit her. They were carefully informed about Asha's condition, the poor outlook, and the plight of her children who would soon be orphaned! They rallied and her mother stayed with her and cared for Asha at home until her death. It was decided to inform the two older children, who were in secondary school, of the diagnosis because their help was needed as there were going to be changes occurring in their lives.

Asha started on oral morphine solution (OMS)



Sr. Marian with a patient

and her severe pain was controlled after a day. She was discharged home where her mother cared for her and prepared meals for the children with the help of the older girls. Palliative care involves the medical, psychological, spiritual and social aspects of a patient's life.

Our PC Team visited Asha 42 times before she died. These visits involved bringing her morphine and other medications that she needed, providing food at one stage as there was NO FOOD in the house, encouraging her and listening to her anxieties and trying to make preparations with her family about who would care for the children. She didn't want the family to be split up and we searched for a way to carry this out.

"Compassion", an NGO that helps children, was contacted about providing food. Faraja's Social Worker was able to promise that school fees and uniforms would be covered. Her PC Volunteer agreed to take the 7-year-old child to her home and raise her. Asha's younger brother said he would keep an eye on the three older children in a rented room. Asha's mother decided she would need to take the small boy to her home.

FHPCP cared for Asha for four months providing medications, trying to prepare the family for her imminent departure, and supporting her mother and the children and counselling them.

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Asha died on 3 July 2017. Her burial was at her mother's home in the country, and we saw off the funeral procession which, in the last-minute preparations, they almost forgot to take two of the children from Singida until we prevailed upon them! Since then, the two older girls have stayed in a room with a local family but lack of supervision of them is worrying. We fear that there is a risk of them being trafficked as money is always short. Their uncle is paying the rent and brings them food. The small boy has gone to live with the grandmother who is poor but has a small subsistence farm. The oldest boy is 19 and is living with an aunt in another village and continues his last year in secondary school.

This story illustrates the complexity of human lives and that hospice and palliative care are not just about giving medications and visiting. This family still faces many challenges that our PC Team and Faraja Social Worker are trying to meet!



MEDICAL
MISSIONARIES
of MARY

Would you like to leave us a lasting gift of health and healing?

Remembering us in your will or giving a donation in memory of
a loved one will help in areas of great human need.

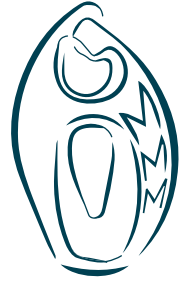
You can specify how your gift will be used.

Please include "the Congregational Leader, for the time being,
of the Medical Missionaries of Mary." Thank you!

**To set up a standing order please contact our
Communications Office in Drogheda, Ireland**

call **01-288 7180** or email **commoffice@mmmworldwide.org**

Meet the Sisters - Sr. Keresifon Ekanem, MMM



Sr. Keresifon Ekanem, MMM

When you first meet Sr. Keresifon you encounter a small package of energy, passion and joy! But let us start at the beginning.

Sr. Keresifon was raised in a devout Catholic family in Ikot Ekpene, Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria. She comes from a family of nine children, two boys and seven girls. Two of her sisters, and her father have since died. Her father was a teacher and Catechist in his local church and taught all the children about God, good morals and planted a solid foundation of faith in God.

Keresifon trained as a nurse and midwife in a hospital run by MMM but then worked for four years in a private

clinic. All this time she was discerning her vocation and deciding where she could contribute most to the work of God. As a teenager, the film "The Passion of Christ" inspired her and when she heard of MMM and them met them, she knew she had found her home. She visited the Sisters in Urua Akpan and says: *"I was at captivated by their simplicity and hospitality."*

After joining MMM in 2014, she had her initial formation period in Nigeria and took her First Profession of Vows in 2017. She was then assigned to the Republic of Benin and the community in Zaffe. Her second assignment was to a new community in Uselu, Benin City, Nigeria, where the Mother Mary Martin hospital was being established.

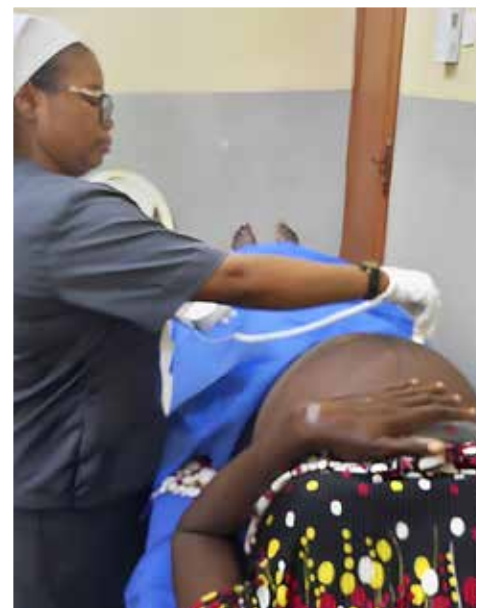
Knowing the need to keep professionally updated always, she has studied Ultrasonography with focus on the Obstetrics and Gynecology Module. She is currently studying in Cork University in Ireland to obtain her B.Sc. in Nursing.

Her hobbies are wide-ranging, and include singing, making hand-made cards, reading and writing. She is a very sociable person, easy

to relate to, hardworking and with a good sense of humour. She describes herself as "soft but outspoken" but has a great sense of responsibility.

She enjoys life! She feels that she has grown in her relationship with God and people. She appreciates the opportunities and experiences she has had so far, especially experiencing different people and cultures, caring for and being with people, especially the poor, sick and less privileged and empowering others.

We wish Sr. Keresifon well as she continues on her MMM journey.



Sr. Keresifon checking fetal heart rate of a pregnant woman

A New Beginning

By Glory Obiekwe - MMM novice

The sun rises slowly at dawn
At the break of a new day
The cock crows loudly at dawn
To announce the news of a new day

I must get up, I must arise.
I must stand up with strength and vigour
I must clean up my sleepy eyes
I must face today with a strong spirit

Yesterday was rough and tough.
It gave me wrinkles and pimples.
Yesterday was thorny and crooked.
It gave me a hard time walking through.

Today is a new day
Today is a new beginning
I shall rise to this new dawn
I shall stand up to this new era

I will not let the fear of yesterday
To hinder my Joy of today
I will not let the worries of yesterday
To stop me from shining with the sun of today

I will walk in the path of today with trust
I will flow with the sweetness of the new day
I will sing along with the happy birds
A new day has come, A NEW BEGINNING.

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

www.mmmworldwide.org