



THE HEALING TOUCH

The Newsletter of the Medical Missionaries of Mary



Dear Friend of MMM,

It is hard to believe that the year is over halfway gone already and we are in the middle of Summer - though you wouldn't always think it when you look out the window in Ireland! We had a busy Spring and are delighted to share our news with you in this newsletter about our happenings. Unfortunately, some of our news is not so good, as we share with you how families and especially children are being hurt or harmed in the 13 countries we serve. We know that the world is facing many challenges and we continue to strive to share our MMM Healing Charism in the most remote and poorest areas truly in need of our support and care. We allow our faith to guide us and carry us above the obstacles.



We know that it may seem as if there is so much to do in the world to make it better, where do we even begin? There is a wonderful African proverb that says "if you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together". We are sharing with you our continued efforts as part of a coalition globally that started in Ireland called "SafeBirth4All". We are delighted to share the progress that this coalition is making to have a true impact in the lives of girls and women facing terrifying odds of maternal death or injury during childbirth.

We are also taking a look at some of the horrible truths around child trafficking that is going on in our world. It is so upsetting to know that children and families are betrayed by their own loved ones and neighbours. We continue to work with advocacy, education and reunification for families destroyed by human trafficking. Our continuous efforts are making a difference but none of them would be possible without your continued support, prayer and care. We are very grateful to you for helping us continue to grow in our impact despite the immense obstacles we face.

You are also in our prayers and we wish the very best to you and your family. See you in the Autumn.

God bless you,

Sr. Sheila Campbell, MMM

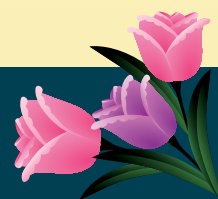


MMM Spring Fest 2026



This year our MMM Sisters, staff and volunteers all enjoyed hosting our Annual MMM Spring Fest. We were blessed with a lovely day and lots of people came out to enjoy the crafts, plants, art, cafe, raffle, ice cream and live music performed by the local Loving Life Choir. The choir made up of local children of a variety of ages, sang several songs to uplift and inspire the crowd. We are very grateful to the choir and also to the volunteers who helped make the day so special. It was a lively day and much fun was had by all who came. Donations and funds raised were much appreciated and were sent to Fuka, Nigeria.

Plans for our MMM Christmas Craft Fair 2026 are already underway, so watch this space for details!



From Vulnerability to Dignity:

A Story from Torugbene



Sr. Modesta and some staff going on a community visit

In the quiet riverine community of Torugbene, life flows with the tides of the Niger Delta. Cut off from the mainland and shaped by the rhythms of water and fishing, the people have built a culture that is both resilient and, at times, vulnerable. It is here that the Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) continue their commitment to healing—not only through primary healthcare, but through grassroots reorientation and human development.

Isolation has its cost. Poverty remains a daily reality for many families, and with it comes difficult choices. One long-standing practice is sending young girls to live with relatives in more “well-to-do” towns, in the hope of securing a better future. Yet too often, this path leads not to opportunity, but to exploitation. It is one of the pathways feeding internal human trafficking within the country.

Ruth (not her real name) knows this reality all too well. Sent to live with a relative, she quickly found herself trapped in a life far removed from the promise she had been given. Rather than education or care, she became an unpaid domestic worker—labouring daily under harsh conditions. Basic necessities were not provided; survival became her personal burden. Caught between the threat of forced labour and the pressure to turn to prostitution just to meet her needs, Ruth made the difficult decision to return home.

Through their primary health program in Torugbene, the Sisters offer more than medical care. Recognising the deep link between poverty and vulnerability, they have introduced a skills acquisition initiative aimed especially at young women. It was here that Ruth found a new beginning. She enrolled in the program, learning practical skills that could sustain her and restore her sense of dignity.

Today, Ruth speaks with quiet strength and gratitude. In her own words, “I and my future generation have been saved from abject poverty because of this skill I have been given”. What was once a story marked by exploitation has become one of empowerment.

Ruth is not alone. She is one of many women whose lives have been transformed through the MMM’s commitment to holistic care - care that recognises that true healing must reach beyond the body to the structures that shape people’s lives.

As the waters continue to surround Torugbene, so too does hope continue to grow within it. Each woman empowered, each life restored, becomes a ripple of change—challenging cycles of poverty and exploitation.



Torugbene shoreline

In this way, the mission continues: not only to heal, but to restore dignity, protect the vulnerable, and build a future where young girls are no longer sent away in search of hope—but can find it, fully, at home.

SafeBirth4All

Annual Conference 2026



Marino Institute of Education, Dublin

As part of the UN awareness for International Prevent Obstetric Fistula Day, the MMMs along with other Coalition members of SafeBirth4All hosted a second annual conference in Dublin in May. The event attracted over 200 people to attend in person and online.

MMMs are founding members of the SafeBirth4All coalition that seeks to address the injustice and growing concern over staggeringly high rates of maternal death and injuries like obstetric fistula that occur in Sub-Saharan Africa. Obstetric fistula is a wound occurring during obstructed labour in childbirth that results in a tearing in the vaginal wall that leads to uncontrollable leaking of urine and/or faeces. It is a condition that brings about not just medical issues, but emotional, physical and social issues for the mother giving birth. Over 80% of cases of obstetric fistula result in a stillbirth.

The SafeBirth4All coalition used the conference to highlight the four pillars of change being used to address obstetric fistula: *Prevention, advocacy, rehabilitation and treatment*. MMM are actively working with women in remote and poor areas to have access to services to prevent and also to treat obstetric fistula. How this can happen was explored in greater detail in the morning part of the conference with guest speakers. Later, participants were grouped into smaller discussion teams to talk about ways the four pillars can be moved forward in the years ahead. It was a lively and dynamic day.

A video of the conference is available to watch at no charge at this link [SafeBirth4All Annual Conference 2026 Recording](https://www.safebirth4all.com) or more information can be found online at www.safebirth4all.com





The Story of *Fafa*

By Sr. Mary O'Malley, MMM and George Matheka
- Mukuru, Nairobi, Kenya

Sr. Mary O'Malley and George Matheka, her co-worker in the work against human trafficking in East Africa, told "The Healing Touch" the following true story.

Earlier this year, in the densely populated informal settlement of Mukuru, Nairobi, Kenya, a quiet family routine turned into a nightmare that no parent should ever endure.

Six-year-old Fafa (not her real name), a cheerful and innocent child, lived with her parents—Matthew and Fatima—and her two siblings, aged 8 and 3 years. Like many families in this community, they struggled to make ends meet but remained deeply bonded in love and care for one another.

One day, Fatima, the mother, briefly stepped out, leaving the children safely locked inside the house. It was a decision made from necessity, trusting that her children would remain safe for the short duration of her absence. However, in that vulnerable moment, betrayal crept in from a place they least expected.

A woman known to the family, a supposed friend, fondly known as Maggie, arrived at the house. Familiar and trusted, she called out to the children and persuaded them to hand over

the keys under the pretense of wanting to enter. Innocently complying, the children opened the door.

Moments later, Maggie lured young Fafa away with a simple but deceptive promise—to buy her chips and return shortly to share them with her siblings.

That promise was never fulfilled. When Fatima returned home, she found her daughter missing.

No child should disappear in the hands of someone they trust.

During the search in the surrounding area, a neighbour revealed a chilling detail: she had seen Maggie walking away with Fafa just an hour or two after Fatima had left the house in the morning. The realisation struck hard; their trusted acquaintance had taken their child.

The family immediately informed the police, and the case is being investigated. But so far there is no word of the child's whereabouts. There is evidence that she might have been trafficked across the Kenyan border into Uganda, possibly for ritual child sacrifice or for organ transplant.

We continue to pray for Fafa and all the other children who are abducted.

High Praise for *MMM Aras Mhuire*



MMM Aras Mhuire Nursing Facility, Drogheda

According to the Dundalk Democrat, a local newspaper, MMM Aras Mhuire Nursing Facility in Drogheda has received a positive report from the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) following an unannounced inspection focused on adult safeguarding.

The inspection, in March 2026, found the centre to be fully compliant across all regulations reviewed, with inspectors concluding that residents were living in an environment where their rights were protected and their well-being prioritised.

Inspectors described the atmosphere within the facility as calm and welcoming, noting that on arrival the centre was “airy, calm and peaceful”.

Well done to the MMM Aras Mhuire Team!

[CLICK HERE TO READ FULL ARTICLE](#)



Residents enjoying the recreation area.

**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



Meet the Sisters -

Sr. Anastasia Essien, MMM



Sr. Anastasia Essien, MMM

Sr. Anastasia is a pint-sized little bundle of joy! She is from Akwa Ibom State in Nigeria, the third of five children born to her mother and father, Ambrose and Anthonia Essien.

She talks about her childhood:

"I lived and grew up in Idah Kogi State, Nigeria. At the time Idah Diocese was still growing and worked together with the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus (HHCJ). As my siblings and I had the local language, we joined in the evangelization campaign as interpreters. These bore tremendous fruit. In some of the houses we entered to share with them about Christ, the parents were touched by our boldness in bearing witness to Christ despite our

age, and some allowed their children to be converted to Christianity as they always put it 'my children will join you because I want them to be bold like you children, but for me, I have known and served this my deity for many years and will not want to part with it'. I have very good and happy memories of my childhood, both at home, at school and at church. I was a member of the Children's Choir of the Diocese and in my secondary school days I joined the Youth Choir, I was a block Rosarian and soon after my First Holy Communion in 1985, I joined the Junior Presidium of the Legion of Mary as well as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Nigeria".

Sr. Anastasia joined MMM aged 21, aware she had a vocation from a young age. After her initial religious formation, she worked in administration in Urua Akpan Hospital in Nigeria and also qualified in Business Administration.

In 2005, she was assigned to Uganda for three years, both to Kitovu and Makondo. But her skills were needed back in Nigeria in 2008, where she worked as a Hospital Administrator in Urua Akpan and Ibadan. Subsequently, she also was missioned to the Republic of Benin, and to Fuka in the North of Nigeria.

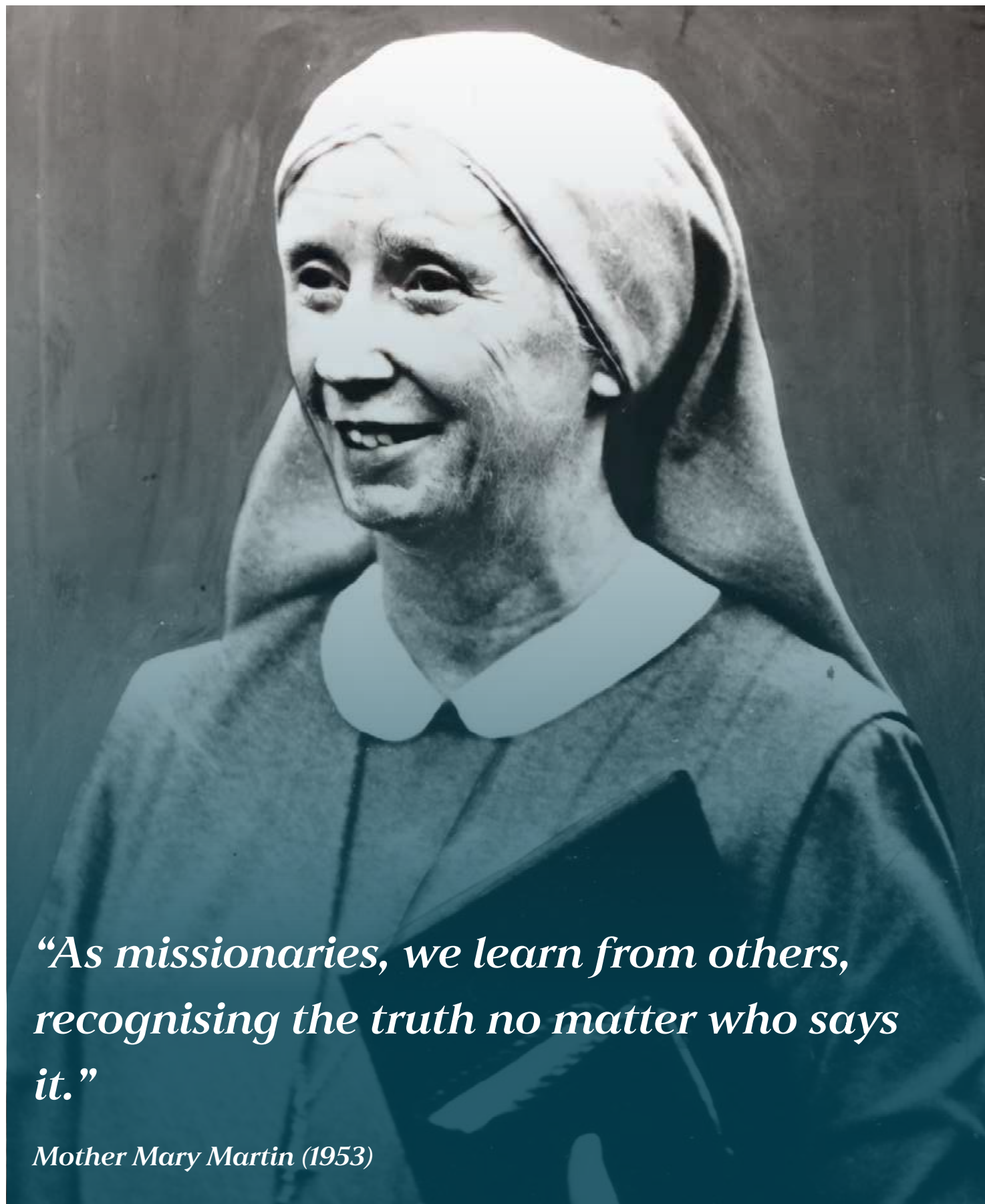
Since 2021, Sr. Anastasia is working in Central Business Administration at Congregational Level in Dublin.

She is an out-going person. Among her hobbies are reading, dancing, farming, listening to music, singing, volleyball, badminton, sewing, cooking and baking!! She enjoys community living, both immediate and extended communities. She makes friends easily and is liked by people who meet her. She enjoyed her time working and living and sharing the lives of the Villagers in all the missions she has served.

"One thing life has taught me, she says, "is to always be grateful, life has offered me so many opportunities and gifts and I am called to share these God given gifts with those I meet. I have so much to be grateful to God for in my life".



Sr. Anastasia in St Mary's Hospital, Urua Akpan Laboratory, Akwa Ibom, Nigeria



*“As missionaries, we learn from others,
recognising the truth no matter who says
it.”*

Mother Mary Martin (1953)

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

www.mmmworldwide.org