

MEDICAL MISSION NEWS

Spring 2014



A Ship is Coming, Loaded with God

German Medical Mission Sister Agnes Lanfermann began the process of preparation for our 14th General Chapter which will take place next year. The following uses some ideas from the material that she sent out.

Wisdom songs in the middle ages used this image for the pregnant Virgin Mary. The ship is set in motion under sail by love. All understood that the ship stands for the soul of a single person or a group being pregnant with God. This is a promise as well as a challenge for our Medical Mission Sisters Society.

A teenage girl and engaged, to be pregnant before marriage would have been a great scandal, but Gabriel greets Mary with "The Lord is with you." At that moment Mary was among the powerless people of her society. Young in a world that valued age. Female in a world ruled by men. Poor. But Mary, God's favoured one, was blessed with having a child out of wedlock and that child will be executed as a criminal. This is a scandal but Mary says "yes," letting go of her concerns for herself and trusting God for the outcome.



Village meeting to facilitate self-help groups

Coworkers for a fuller life

People living on the margins are excluded from the progress and development designed by the people at the centre. We know that God is with them and believe that in loving them, these vulnerable brothers and sisters will become our guide to the mystery of God. Our challenge is not only to serve those who are poor, on the margins, but to relate to them as bearers of God's Word and Promise, as sacraments of God's love. To see them not just as objects of our mission but co-workers in the struggle for a fuller life.

People living on the margins

Migrants, informal settlers, people with disabilities, victims of human trafficking, indigenous people, all those who are excluded from resources and opportunities for a fuller life are our partners in mission. This way for our life and mission may take us where we might not want to go. Only with real hope can we have the courage to attempt to change the future, alongside all the poor and oppressed of our world. These days women from different cultures and educational backgrounds are joining us. They call us to broaden our horizons and be happy with their different strengths and approaches to the life and mission of MMS, to their way of community, to understanding their relationship with God and to their understanding of religious life.

indigenous people are also our partners in mission



American MMS Katherine is a psychiatric nurse working among the Lakota with an elder of the White Clay people in Montana.

People at the margins yearn for social justice

The Earth is crying and the effects of climate change are bringing tremendous suffering. People at the margins yearn for social justice, equal access to resources and the ability to live with human dignity. We need to leave behind what is no longer helpful or life giving and find ourselves in the pangs of labour in giving birth to new life since we are pregnant with God. We are asked to prepare ourselves to listen with the ears of our hearts and to respond with joyful hope, trust and non-violence.

We want to be relevant today and in the future



Pakistani Medical Mission Sisters Shahnaz and Pauline treat many women and children in need of basic care

As a Society we see ourselves as being pregnant with God. God knows the right time for new life to be born, but we need to play our part. The ship of Medical Mission Sisters is sailing through the rough waters of our time. We need everyone on board. People will recognize how we “love each other” and those we serve and be able to see how they can become our partners in mission. We want to be relevant today and in the future. We Sisters and Associate members must find new ways in mission, widen our circles by networking and collaborating with others in order to free the potential for healing.

The Spirit will continue to be our guide

It is God's mission we live and the mission of Jesus the Healer in which we participate. The Spirit will continue to be our guide on the journey of our Society. The Chapter Prayer can be a guide for us.



Chapter Prayer

God – Creator of all Life
Our Hope and promise through all time,
Grace us to bear witness to your unconditional love.

Jesus - Cosmic Christ
Show us the path to our true mission,
To be your presence in the here and now,
Awaken our hearts to hear the cry of the Earth,
And to join our lives with those made poor.

Spirit - Holy One
Move us to turn our hearts to you,
Open us to face our prejudices and assumptions,
Melt the barriers of resistance and heal our wounds,
Counsel us to grasp the depth of your vision.

Triune God – interconnected and interdependent
Help us to free the potential of healing mission:
Be with us on path of mutual transformation

As we walk the journey of our 14th General Chapter:
Bless us with courage and joy
And fill us with your love to birth new life
According to your will
Amen

Kath – Medical Mission Sister a friend much missed



English MMS Daphne Norden, editor of this magazine, writes about Kathleen Brown who died earlier this year.

We were very saddened by Kath's death in February of this year. She will be known to many of our readers and benefactors because after her return to England from Africa she edited and sent out Medical Mission News for some years. Even after I began to edit and produce it, Kath still organised the distribution of the magazine and kept in contact with many of you.

A pharmacist by training, Kath spent many years in India where she set up and ran the pharmacy in Holy Family Hospital in New Delhi. She did the same thing in our hospital in Nangina in Kenya where she later became the hospital administrator. In the middle of her time in Kenya Kath came back to England and was made District Coordinator. She returned to England finally in 1987 as coordinator of our

largest community in London and after the six years that she had committed to, joined me where I was living alone in another MMS house also in London. She had many stories to tell and put them to good effect in mission promotion in parishes across England and Wales. Always very committed to issues of justice & peace, Kath worked as a volunteer with people living with HIV and AIDS and as treasurer of an organisation campaigning on behalf of people living in poverty in Africa.

Sadly she had a very debilitating disease that got worse as she got older and eventually she had to give up her work with the magazine and later also had to stop travelling. She moved into sheltered housing and eventually into a residential care home. In spite of increasing disability Kath never lost her humour, her twinkling eyes or her determination to be as independent as possible. We had always sat together to prepare the talks that we gave in the parishes and even when in the care home she continued to help me with ideas to prepare what I was going to say. The last talk that we prepared together was for the last weekend of her life, so Kath proved that she was in mission right to the end.

Indian Medical Mission Sister Rosamma explains how her nursing profession helps her wherever she is:

I became interested in nursing while I was in school and also wanted to join a religious community. I studied nursing in the MMS hospital in Patna from 1981 to 1987. My special field of interest was midwifery, especially working with the pregnant mothers. I heard some stories of sisters going to the villages to be with the very poor but after my studies I went to Muscat to help my family, being the eldest of six children. I was in a small rural hospital and found people were very friendly and simple.



Now Rosamma is in England taking a programme at the Institute of St Anselm in Kent to prepare her to work with young women joining MMS in India. Here she is with Indonesian MMS Agustina who is also taking some courses at St Anselm's.

She continues:

I joined Medical Mission Sisters in 1993. My exposure to different expressions of mission deepened my desire to be with the poor in a radical following of Jesus. I was assigned to be part of Women's Collective, an NGO in Tamil Nadu. Initially the struggle to be a part of a networking group without knowing the language and also being part of the struggle of the women was a big challenge.

It was a mutual growth process to discover the power of women and my own strength and potential. Being with the very poor Dalit women made me

It was a mutual growth process to discover the power of women and my own strength and potential. Being with the very poor Dalit women made me stronger and being a nurse I was able to take care of their health needs too. After six years of village involvement I went to be a staff member of a health centre in Bihar, North India. Here I again became involved with rural women. Now I am back in South India but I feel that my nursing profession has taught me to be compassionate, to be able to effectively enter into the lives of people and to be a healing presence wherever I am.



OBITUARIES

*Mr Joseph Feeney, King's Lynn, Norfolk
Sr Kath Brown, Medical Mission Sister
Dr John Christopher Kelly, Edgbaston, Birmingham
Miss Pamela Reynolds, Banchory, Scotland*

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