

MEDICAL MISSION NEWS

Winter 2012

Moving To The Future

Seeing the importance of a gathering of newer members, twelve of our younger Medical Mission Sisters came together in Philadelphia from their areas of mission in India, Germany, Venezuela, Ethiopia and the United States to experience international living and share experiences with each other and with our older Sisters in mission locally. Sadly, five Sisters were unable to get visas: one from the Philippines and four from India. This was bitterly disappointing and the others felt their loss very much. While the means of travel is certainly easier today, political realities continue to make travel more and more difficult. Visas seem to be ever harder to obtain. We have to face what that means for us as an international society seeking to create community across borders? What does it mean for us to be a healing presence in the world, with the advantage that we come from many different cultures, in the face of this great challenge?

Before the official programme began all the younger MMS had a week experiencing mission in different MMS communities in different parts of the United States.



New generation MMS and support staff.

Indian MMS Regy experienced the Peace and Justice Ministry of American MMS Janet in Washinton DC She writes: I went to various gatherings with partners in mission which were most enriching and informative and visited other NGOs working for peace, justice and the empowerment of women. I was able to participate in some of their discussions and activities. Janet and Ms. Susan Thompson, her coworker in the Alliance for Justice, work together on issues on global economic justice and help to develop workshops at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington DC. Janet is part of the group that continues to provide an MMS focus in justice and peace involvements. This group is currently focusing their efforts on migration from a planetary and global perspective.

Indian MMS Anita and Eugene Mary had a chance to be with American MMS Lorraine and Isabel in Florida. They write: We were able to experience work for the betterment of lower income women by 'Women Circle' a non-profit organization and to visit other non-profit organizations with whom our sisters network to empower women. Lorraine established Women's Circle in 2000 after a community assessment surveyed the greatest needs of women and families in the area. The women wanted to learn English, receive computer training and find help with job placement. Women's Circle has developed a comprehensive program to address concerns among ethnically and culturally diverse lower-income women of the County. The program empowers women to be "all they can be," while promoting an acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Experiencing Mission across the United States



Anita at Woman's Circle

Indian MMS Ethel and German MMS Anke Felicitas, visited American MMS Margaret and the New Jerusalem Now project. They write: This was a wonderful opportunity to get to know Margaret and to experience her living in a simple container and being a healing presence for so many homeless addicted people. Margaret settled in a very poor area of Philadelphia in 1989. There she founded the New Jerusalem treatment and housing center for recovering drug and alcohol addicts. New Jerusalem's recovery programs attempt to meet the growing need for effective and affordable recovery programs for the poor, offering both residential and out-patient services to those in need of them without regard for one's ability to pay. The mission of New Jerusalem is to facilitate transformation and recovery from drug and alcohol addictions for marginalized populations by providing an affordable, spiritual and holistic approach to enhance the quality of life. Indian MMS Goretti and American MMS Mary Ann Tregoning also participate in mission at New Jerusalem. We took part in the Alternative Violence Program with around twenty African American people and this was a real highlight of the visit. The rest of the participants visited later and Margaret, her staff and community presented the history of NJN and what they found special about it. The residents told how it has been a community that had helped them recover from addiction. They were all touched by their testimony to the importance of having the Word of God as their daily foundation and in the afternoon joined the residents for an outdoor bible study.



with residents of the rehabilitation centre.

Looking at the future

Back in Philadelphia all took part in the celebrations of 50 years as MMS for American Pat, the final vows of Indian MMS Abhaya and first vows of American MMS Christine. It was a real international blend of colours, cultures and sounds! The chapel was filled with sisters dressed in their traditional costume, which added a special flair to this festive mass.

Indian MMS Biya and Ethel and German MMS Anke continue the story:

"In the first week we told our stories of how we came to join MMS. With American MMS Suzanne and Maria we were invited into a journey into God in ourselves that deepened our understanding that we are all at one table of God's creation where everyone has a place and enough to live on. We recognized our differences: the cultures, values and perceptions we hold. We looked at our gifts and the shadow sides of our culture and the commitment we need to move into the future. This week we grew in the sense of interdependence and multiculturalism and became aware of the importance of caring for the earth. We looked at the different aspects of our life and mission through role plays which resulted in feelings and difficulties that challenged us to make life-giving decisions."

*with multicultural
commitment*



Indian MMS Dominica & Eugene Mary and German MMS Kristina continue: “In the second week of our gathering we had an intense personal process, facilitated by German MMS Agnes and Indian MMS Usha. We experienced individually the influences of our thoughts and emotions on our life and on the flow of energy within and among us and expressed our reflections in art. We shared our reflections and got feedback from the group. At the end of the week we affirmed what was helping us on our life journey and where we see the potential for personal growth. In personal and group sharing we experienced more connectedness and being community. We were grateful for the time for this life giving process that was only possible because we risked being truthful to ourselves and to one another. We were privileged to spend one evening with five Associate Members who told us about their life and mission and briefly introduced the history of Associate Membership, women and men who share our values and mission.”

On another day we discussed areas of special interest: the fact of less women joining, the importance of encouraging our peers, the challenge of multiculturalism and making MMS and our mission better known. In the afternoon, Indian MMS Celine who represents us at the United Nations told us about her role there. We had all visited the UN and had heard how important it is to get evidence from Sisters’ reports from “mission countries” that can be used in arguments for policy changes at an international level.

In mission together



Meeting with MMS Associates

Drawing to the end of their time, the young women went to the big MMS complex in Philadelphia for a day to get a glimpse of important pieces of our Society roots. Through films, a power point presentation, talks from various Medical Mission Sisters and archival material and pictures they heard about the early beginnings. Sisters and Associates added their stories and memories. The finale was a re-creation of a mission send-off, with the sounds of joyous bells ringing out over the compound and they felt that they were indeed being sent for mission. They said "It was like passing the flame to the younger generations and telling us that now the future is ours to respond to the needs of our time. We feel strengthened, encouraged and supported with the love of the older MMS to move the Society forward into the future."

Coming to the closing of the gathering, the "newer members" reflected on the impact of their journey together and shared their personal reflections on the four week journey. They made recommendations and suggested concrete steps for the future. They had all felt warm welcomes from the communities giving hospitality and when experiencing mission in different places. The common theme was how vibrant and inspiring our (mostly older) sisters are in their various expressions of mission. They really felt that they had been through a journey of transformation and were leaving with fire and flame in their hearts.

Bells ringing - Sent for Mission!



New mission in England

On Pentecost Eve, May 26th 2012, Sisters from the UK and the Generalate as well as Sisters from Germany and Netherland/Belgium gathered in Hanwell in London. They joined Indian MMS Jyoti and German MMS Simone in the Sector Europe celebration of the new beginning of an International Community with the particular purpose of intercultural living. We have always prized and realised the value of intercultural communities, valuing the different gifts brought to us from members of other cultures. Admittedly living together with people of different cultures having different values is often not so easy but now we are finding that in many parts of the world, due to visa restrictions, establishing multicultural communities is becoming more and more difficult if not impossible. Hence the importance of starting such a community here and we value the courage of these young women to come to a country that is foreign to both. We began with a quotation from our Foundress Anna Dengel: (since the beginning of our Society, MMS want to go where the needs are) "going out on the wings of selflessness to cross the barriers of ocean and mountains, of nationality and race, of language and culture." (Anna Dengel, 1957). Everyone was invited to plant a seed in the garden that she had brought along and to share her wish and prayer for this new community.

Jyoti



Simone

*Medical
Mission
Sisters
want to
go -*

*- where
the
needs
are.*



"to the new community"

OBITUARY

*Mr Edward George Winder, Bolton,
Lancashire - Former MMS Sr Bernadette
- Dr Horvath Csongorne, Hungary*

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Netherlands, Uganda, USA, Venezuela.*

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