

MEDICAL MISSION NEWS

Winter 2015

Peace and justice

As I begin to put this magazine together, many different groups and not all Roman Catholic are holding meetings to understand the importance and implications for mission of the latest encyclical "Laudato Si". Against the background of major concerns about the future across the world, Pope Francis' own concerns for ecology, climate change and justice for those living in poverty are particularly vital to address at this time. As Medical Mission Sisters we have long been aware of the need to work for justice as integral to our mission of healing. The biggest cause of disease in the world is poverty and poverty is always the result of injustice of some kind and there can be no peace without justice.

English MMS Daphne (editor)

At the United Nations in Addis Ababa



At the conference on financing for development

Indian MMS Celine represents us as one of the NGOs at the United Nations. Here she is in Attat, Ethiopia. She finds UN ministry to be a way of participating in the dream of Jesus for a just world. A world in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where the entire community of life, the climate, the environment, the ecology is protected..

The CHALLENGE to Set up a Justice and Peace Desk



With Belaynesh at the conference

Ethiopian MMS Belaynesh set up the Justice and Peace Desk for the Archdiocese of Addis Ababa in 2006.

Belaynesh' work at the pastoral office of the Archdiocesan Catholic Secretariat for justice and peace involved giving input in many places in the archdiocese about social justice and also in government schools and groups. There is an effort at this time to develop pastoral committees in different places in the various dioceses.. At some of these meetings Belaynesh was the only woman present. There is a mandate to coordinate and to plan for the committees. Much is still to be done.

Recently Belaynesh has joined the teaching staff of the new Lay Theological School of the Addis Ababa Diocese and is teaching ecumenism.

Conference on Financing for Development



Celine and Senait at the conference

African MMS Senait shares her thoughts: As the reports are readily available, I would like to share only my personal feelings. I was very happy to be part of this important event and learning the future direction of our world concerning sustainable development. It is a very different feeling being physically present and being part of the crowd, getting to know some participants and what they are doing in their respective countries. The efforts of the Civil Society Organizations to bring forth the needs of the poor and the suggestions/solutions they put forward to the government especially that of taxation was very challenging. My feeling is that though that answer is not for now, provided that the issue is made known widely to the ordinary citizens of the world, there will be a change in the near future, especially for those who are living in poverty.

I learned the future direction of the world must involve sustainable development. The issue of empowering women in order to achieve gender equality is still a long way to go in spite of the efforts made so far. However the commitment to bring about gender equality was very high and this is very encouraging.

Sustainable development does not come about through aid. Local commitment to resource mobilization is vital. For this it needs the commitment of all to make it a reality. In our country there is a proverb that says “one hand cannot clap. To make the sound it needs both hands”. So it is for any change for the economic social and spiritual betterment of humanity.

*We must protect mother earth and the
environment*



Indian MMS Biya sees the importance of educating people to raise ecologically sound crops organically and how to keep farmland healthy for generations to come. She plans to interpret anew the agricultural experience and tradition that is a precious part of our nations inheritance to protect mother earth and the environment. Here she is in the vegetable garden.



Jane working with a peasant farmer

Filipina MMS Jane worked with Rural Missionaries, founded by the Association of Women Religious in the Philippines which supports peasants' quest for justice, freedom, access to commons and genuine agrarian reform. Jane is now a member of Rural Missionaries and very committed to working for justice with them.

Fostering Leadership among youth



Gisela with a group of young people in Lima, Peru

German MMS Gisela has been working with an NGO in Peru that focuses on **ongoing education of young people in leadership**, integral human development, organisation and democratic and civic responsibility. Through workshops, retreats and training programmes we foster leadership founded on a deep and broad understanding of ecology, gender and empowerment. Needed social transformation will take place only as young people can raise their voice for other ways to live and work.



Alternatives to Violence

American Medical Mission Sisters Barbara Ann and Mary Ann with their **team leader** for a programme on **Alternatives to Violence** for recovering addicts. The team leader has taken the programme himself. He has been free from drugs for more than 14 years. As an ex-criminal he knows exactly what our participants are going through and being African American, also speaks "their language" which we will never completely understand!

Changes in Mission in India



Indian MMS in their own community garden

Indian MMS Joan writes about the changes in mission in India as we look at what justice requires of us.

MMS in India had nine well developed hospitals running efficiently but the majority of people could not afford hospital care. With more medical facilities available, there was less need for so many hospitals. It was felt that we who believe in option for the poor need to invest more of our personnel and financial resources to tackle the root causes of diseases. We moved from professional medical care to community centred care, grass roots involvements and taking the side of the poor for justice.

Challenging steps were taken and within the next few years more than fourteen involvements were started in poor village areas and many sisters moved out of the hospitals and other institutions. Alcoholism and drug addiction is very prevalent among the youth. Poverty and injustice are on the increase in spite of modernization, industrialization and rapid development of technology in India. Very many people are deprived of their basic needs. The ecological crisis also is in a critical stage with increasing natural calamities. We are doing our best to demonstrate good ecological practice in our own garden. As in many other parts of the world, we have joined with NGOs, civil society organisations and other like- minded groups to be effective in our mission.

Empowering people to develop and live sustainably in Kenya

Dairy farming – care for the calf

Growing crops ecologically



Ugandan MMS Roselyn is taking a three year agricultural course that focuses on empowering people with knowledge and skills which will support them to live sustainably and develop rural areas. Agriculture is a key support for humanity and all creation and needs to be sustainable. We need to appreciate mother earth which has generously served the whole humanity. God has blessed us with all the resource on this earth for us to use to live happily but these resources need to be utilized responsibly: developed and sustained for coming generations.

We too must be developed and sustained to be able to care for creation. For this we need healthy food that we ourselves produce and this in turn requires care of the environment. We need ecological healing. It is also important that we educate others on how to make best use of what we have, however little it may seem. It is especially important to work with the youth, many of whom are unemployed, so that they can create their own work. This will create the importance of agriculture and appreciate how God has who blessed us with this gift of the earth.

*Campaigning in England
Climate Change - Trafficking*



English MMS Rita, German MMS Agnes, Indian MMS Elizabeth and English MMS Nichola participated in a Climate Change march and rally.

TRAC (Trafficking – Raising Awareness – Campaigning)

MMS Rita writes: We meet regularly to plan campaigns, produce materials for parishes, schools, prison chaplains and prison governors and update our understanding of the issues. We have given talks at workshops and conferences, developed a website and worked hard to contribute to the development of the UK's Modern Slavery Act. The Act is a beginning but there is still much to change, especially the demand that fuels sex trafficking.

OBITUARIES

Mr. Jack Austin, Hounslow, Middx.

Mrs. Ella Pirrie, Ealing, London.

Ella was secretary to Medical Mission Sisters in London for the past 15 years and is greatly missed.

Thank you for your support and concern. Please pray for Medical Mission sisters in Belgium, England, Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, The Netherlands, Uganda, USA, Venezuela

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