

PHILADELPHIA, PA, USA

Medical Mission Sisters in Philadelphia were honored late last year by a visit from Pennsylvania State Representative Thomas Murt. He came to our North American Headquarters to present a special "Citation," passed unanimously by Pennsylvania's House of Representatives, to honor and congratulate our Community on its 90th Anniversary. Over 50 Sisters and Associates were present to hear of Representative Murt's long commitment to women's health and long admiration of Medical Mission Sisters.

SPECIAL AWARDS

Medical Mission Sisters around the world have been honored for their special contributions to the lives of the people among whom they serve:

Sister Rose Kayathinkara received the North East India Award for her efforts to uplift the people in Garo Hills. She founded the Mendipathar Multipurpose Cooperative Society in North East India to enable farmers living on the margins of life to circumvent the unjust practices of middlemen and money lenders.

In Hajipur, North India, Sister Smita Parmar received an award from the District Magistrate for being the best social worker for women's empowerment.

Sister Elaine Kohls was awarded a Certificate of Merit for her commitment to providing water to the people of Ethiopia. Ensuring safe and clean water has long been an important part of her ministry. More than 140 tube wells which started as hand-dug wells can be credited to Sister's leadership.

CLIMATE CONFERENCE

Several of our members participated in the COP21 in Paris in December, 2015. This "Conference of Parties" (more commonly known as the UN Climate Change Conference), was a gathering of 40,000 people from 195 countries working together toward a worldwide agreement on a legally binding reduction in

greenhouse gas emissions.

NEW COMMUNICATION

Medical Mission Sisters in North America have launched an E-Newsletter to share--via short personal profiles--how our Canonical and Associate members are present to others in a healing way. It invites readers to share how they, too, are a healing presence in their own lives and circumstances.

Medical Mission Sisters E-News is sent every two weeks directly to E-mail addresses. In addition to sharing examples of healing presence in our world, it invites readers to send their special requests for prayer.

If you would like to be on the mailing list, contact us at: mmsorg@medicalmissionsisters.org

Into the Future

Every six years, Medical Mission Sisters in mission around the world gather together for a special meeting called a General Chapter. With elected delegates representing our internationality and many areas of service, Chapter, as it is commonly known, has as its duty to interpret our charism in a changing world. It acts as an evaluative and decision-making body and sets the direction for our Community's next six years of healing presence among those in need.

From September 30 to October 29 this past Fall, 27 of our Canonical members and three Associate participant-observers met in Pune, India, for our 14th General Chapter. Because it began on the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Medical Mission Sisters, it was a wonderful opportunity to both look back and to take, in Society Coordinator Sister Agnes Lanfermann's words, "a long loving look at the signs of the times, the realities in our Community and where we are on the journey of our Renewal...what we hoped for...and in what direction we would like our Community to move."

The Chapter Process

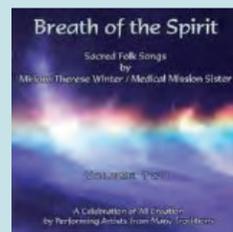
With such significant issues to explore, Chapter delegates divided into six interest groups: Spirituality, Mission, Governance, Integration/

Formation, Communication and Finances. Each group reflected on and discussed these areas based on background material and insights from each Sector, or geographical part of the world in which we now are in mission, and the Community overview presented by our current international leadership. As recommendations on each topic were shared with all, there was a clear recognition of how interconnected and inter-related the topics are to us.

The Chapter Spirit

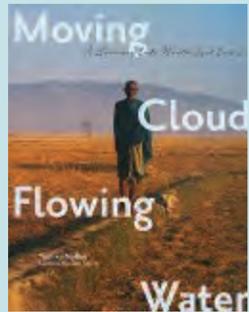
This Chapter had as its theme: *Freeing the Potential of Healing Mission: A Journey of Mutual Transformation*. And, so, it became that. With special input from Sister Mary Sujita Kallapurakathu, SND, on the threefold elements of Religious Life: spirituality, mission and community, Chapter delegates found themselves encountering the creative Spirit of God in new ways. Instead of focusing on where there is a problem and how to solve it, there was a felt reorientation to where there is life and how we are called to be present to it. As the Chapter Report says, "The more grounded we are in this practice, the more strengthened we are to be in the world amidst its pain and promise, to live in hope because love is stronger than death."

Medical Mission Sisters are pleased to offer two special items for sale



"Breath of the Spirit," Volume 2 of a 5-CD set of music of our Sister Miriam Therese Winter, is now available. Its 21 songs are sung by performing artists of many music traditions. Through the generosity of Dan Paulos of St. Bernadette Institute of Sacred Art in Albuquerque, all proceeds benefit Medical Mission Sisters.

Cost is \$15.00 plus \$3.00 postage and handling. To order, email: mms@hartsem.edu



"Moving Cloud, Flowing Water," a beautiful photo book produced by Medical Mission Sister Yumiko Nobue, shares the unique cultures and realities of the people of North East India. A special coffee table book to enjoy, it costs \$35.00 and can be ordered from: ericam@medicalmissionsisters.org



Our new Medical Mission Sisters' Leadership Team

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Printed on recycled paper

Mutual Sharing and Recommendations

When Chapter delegates came together in plenary sessions to share their group discussions, a number of areas for further reflection and implementation by the entire Community were presented. The following are a few of the ways we see ourselves moving into the future together.

Our Spirituality

Living in prophetic obedience to the healing charism urges us to listen to God's healing and wholeness already present in the whole of creation, in all people and realities. Grounded in a contemplative attitude in searching for God in all, we commit ourselves to discern together how to live the right relationship with all of creation, in solidarity with the global community and the worldwide Society. Such a communal process becomes a transformative journey in laboring to bring forth new life.

At this transitional moment in our Society we celebrate the spirit of Anna Dengel and her obedience to the evolving charism. We want to lift up again the pioneering and missionary wisdom which we gained from her heritage and that shaped our charism.

Our Mission

We are impelled by the local and global realities that face our world today. As we have grown in our understanding of healing mission, we realize the following issues which are interlinked and interconnected:

- *The negative implications of globalization and its effects on Mother Earth and all of creation;*
- *The tragic increase in migration in various parts of the world;*
- *The displacement, up-rootedness and exclusion of many, mainly the poor;*
- *Health and well-being for people at all stages of life not being realized;*



Sisters Agnes Lanfermann, Society Coordinator, and Elizabeth Vadakekara, Assistant Society Coordinator, raise the Chapter candle



A warm Chapter welcome



Discussion of Finances



Associates share their comments

- *Poverty and limited access to education and its effects on children and youth;*
- *The growing exploitation and all forms of injustice and violence especially against women;*
- *The negative impacts of changing value systems and the challenges of living in secularized societies.*

All of these call for a radical commitment to a fresh focus and new responses in mission. Our global mission as MMS, together with our Associates and many like-minded people, is to witness to the integration of those marginalized and to the cry of the Earth, our common home.

Our On-going Formation/Integration

Formation/integration in today's globalized world invites us to become global citizens who are deeply rooted in God. "Being present to the present" is a key to become and remain aware of God's presence in the reality of oneself, the other and the realities of the world...

Whenever we change our perspective towards the potential, we find new ways to relate and to build witnessing communities...

Becoming women with a contemplative attitude towards life is essential for our way into the emerging future, freeing the potential of our healing mission.

Meet Our New Leadership Team

At the Medical Mission Sisters' 14th General Chapter in the Fall of 2015, the following women were elected to our new Leadership Team for six-year terms.

Sister Irene Fernandez, our new Society Coordinator, grew up among Chinese, Malay, Indian and European people in Singapore. She moved to India and entered the Medical Mission Sisters in 1972. After working at Holy Family Hospital, Mandar, India, in its community health department and in a variety of support services, she was involved in ministry to youth and then to refugees in Germany. Sister Irene earned a Master's Degree in Pastoral Counseling in Chicago and has been very involved in formation and Community leadership. She initiated the new partnership venture at Kurji Holy Family Hospital, Patna, India, between Medical Mission Sisters and the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth in 2003. From 2013 until early 2016 she was our Sector Asia Coordinator.



Sister Irene

Born and raised in Ghana, West Africa, **Sister Edith Dug-yi** was trained as a public health nurse and worked in this capacity for 10 years before entering the Medical Mission Sisters in 1991. She has been in mission in a number of our ministries in Ghana, Uganda and Kenya. In Kenya, she was very involved in formation ministry for our Community. In 2010 Sister Edith returned to her Ghanaian homeland. For the past five years she has served on the staff of the Medical Mission Sisters' co-founded Center for Spiritual Renewal in Kumasi.



Sister Edith

Sister Bernadette Rini Dwi Astuti worked as a secretary and with youth, the elderly and the sick in Jakarta, Indonesia, before entering our Community in 1996. From 1999-2003 Sister Rini was on the staff of an organization devoted to micro socio-economic development, focusing on family economic management. She then studied at the East Asian Pastoral Institute in the Philippines in preparation for formation work. Sister Rini also has been involved in vocation promotion and peace and justice activities. Last year she was elected East Asia Sector Coordinator by our Sisters in the Philippines, Pakistan and Indonesia.



Sister Rini

A native of Colombia, **Sister Maria Fernanda Ramirez Rivera** (better known as Sister MaFe) studied medicine and then worked in a remote jungle between Colombia and Ecuador. Her experiences taught her how to serve as a doctor in the midst of horror and death. She joined the Medical Mission Sisters in 2002 and for many years served as a pediatrician in a large slum area of Peru called Pachacutec. Sister MaFe also started a program there to serve the hundreds of children living with disabilities and their families. Last May she was elected to leadership in our Sector Latin America.



Sister MaFe

Sister Rosemary Ryan entered the Medical Mission Sisters in 1964 after graduating from high school. She earned her MD from Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia and did her Residency in Internal Medicine at Faulkner Hospital in Boston. While a Resident, Sister Rosemary helped start a hospice program and soon realized her calling was to end-of-life care. She has provided medical direction for the hospital's hospice program and directed outpatient training for Medical Residents. Sister also served over 35 years as Medical Director for several Boston area hospice programs and many years in Medical Mission Sisters' leadership.



Sister Rosemary