

## MMS Empowers Hajipur Communities

For thousands of years, people considered to be in the lowest class in the caste system in India have suffered discrimination, persecution, poverty and many other forms of injustices. This is occurring even in modern India, especially in the rural areas. The Mahadalits (the untouchables) are still considered unworthy of all the benefits and favors accorded to the people in high castes.

The Medical Mission Sisters living in Hajipur are passionate about the empowerment of the Mahadalits and Dalits living near them. They have helped 600 villagers receive testing for HIV/AIDS and with the help of the Red Cross distributed 300 blankets to the poor, disabled and elderly. Sister Smita Parmar has appeared on national TV to speak on community empowerment, emphasizing the need for the government to collaborate with NGOs. MMS have held village meetings and rallies and filed legal cases on behalf of the women in this community.



Local villagers receive food support from the MMS community development project, Swabhimani Bhawan, during Covid-19.

## Statement on Racism

### MMS in North America

We condemn the murders of Breonna Taylor, Floyd George, Ahmaud Arbery and countless others who have been victims of a racism that has raged for generations here in the United States. We understand that the same economic system which rested on the shoulders of slaves continues today. Racism infiltrates our economics, educational system, social structures, politics, entertainment - it is insidious in every scope of our living in America. It is time it is eradicated.

In our call to be a healing presence in the world:

We commit ourselves to deep self-examination, honest conversation, and a spiritual practice that enables us to meet our responsibility as Christians.

We commit to our own education as well as public advocacy in our relentless determination to help usher in a new reality of safety, justice, peacefulness and joy for EVERYONE.

Medical Mission Sisters is an international religious community of Catholic women who commit ourselves to promote healing and wholeness in all aspects of life. Founded in 1925, our Sisters and Associates continue our healing mission in 17 countries on five continents.



**Medical Mission Sisters**

**8400 Pine Road**

**Philadelphia, PA 19111**

**215.742.6100**

**[www.medicalmissionsisters.org](http://www.medicalmissionsisters.org)**



*\*front cover artwork by Victoria Connelly, former MMS*

***“Our work is not Charity.  
It is Justice.”***

- Mother Anna Dengel, MMS



**Medical Mission Sisters**



“How can we work together to make life more wonderful for everyone?” Sister Lucy Klein-Gebbinck articulates a foundational question to Non-Violent Communication (NVC), developed by Marshall Rosenberg in the 1960’s. She notes, “NVC teaches us to slow down, be in the moment, and so be able to better hear oneself and another person. This is especially so when there is conflict. Underneath our expressions of sadness or anger – or any other feeling – are often unstated longings for respect or love or inclusion.”

She shares further, “If I can remember to slow down, breathe, be here, now, I can better connect with myself. I can be more aware of what is happening within me so that it’s not a veil blocking my understanding. Taking that pause also helps me better connect with what might be moving for you. What I am learning is that when we can connect deeply to the need or values of another, there is a level playing field. We can find common ground and from that place take steps to heal or resolve conflict. It is all a process.”

She adds, “Stephen Levine, a Buddhist teacher, used to say, ‘Relationships take you to the edge of yourself.’ I am learning to meet my edges – and also those of another. This is my most significant spiritual practice...I really need it – and do love it in all its challenge.”

*“Justice and Advocacy are  
integral to everything we do.”*

- Sister Lucy Klein-Gebbinck



Associates and Sisters  
join a large protest  
in Peru against  
corruption.

An integral part of NVC is a deep commitment to social change. Sister Lucy believes listening for the need under the words has a valuable place in the conversation around racism. Systemic racism is everywhere – interwoven in many societal structures. Although she describes the desire to have power over another as deep-rooted sin, she believes in our ability to evolve to a place where we are different.

Before Covid-19 forced the closure of access to outside visitors, Sister Lucy used her NVC training working with women who are incarcerated at the federal detention center in Philadelphia. They have shared that these skills have helped them transform relationships with spouses and family members, and even with the prison guards.

Medical Mission Sisters are called to explore the edges of presence, according to Sister Lucy. She adds, “We must be present to whatever happens without an agenda. Except, perhaps, for the agenda of justice.”

Sister Lucy Klein-Gebbinck is currently helping distribute food in the Philadelphia Kensington neighborhood where she lives. She is also serving on several committees for the North American Unit of Medical Mission Sisters.

