

Marist Mission Today

Number 76

Marist Missionary Sisters

Summer 2016

Dear partners in Mission,

*The theme of this newsletter is very close to our hearts as Marist Missionary Sisters. One of the mandates of our General Chapter of 2016 is “Care Of Our Common Home” and we are in the process of looking at ways of doing this. In Pope Francis’s writing of **Laudato Si**, he makes us realize that to care for our common home is to care for each other.*

For this issue we asked Sisters in several parts of the world to comment on how environmental issues are having an impact on the lives of the people among whom they live and serve.

We realize more and more today that we live in a world of interconnectedness, a world of interdependence, and that when we talk about our common home we exclude no one. Protecting our common home means defending the poor amongst us, and building networks of respect and charity where all are accepted and cared for. A question we may want to think about is: What responsibility do I have towards creation, towards the poor, and towards future generations?

In Mary,

Sister Claire Rheume, smsm



Sisters Janet Ninipua, Ruma Gomes, Jhorna Gomez and Jennifer Clarke in Bangladesh.

Effects of Climate Change on Midwifery in Bangladesh by Sister Jennifer Clarke, smsm

A new topic has been added to the health education given by the rural midwives: “Only drink rain water.” This advice has been added to the training given by the Safe Motherhood Project of Caritas Bangladesh, which was developed by Sr. Julienne Hayes-Smith, smsm.

For many villages the usual source of drinking water is ground water drawn up by hand pumps. However, in the villages near the coast, this underground water has become increasingly salty. Research done in Bangladesh showed that pregnant women in these areas had higher blood pressure than in other parts of the country. This is just one of the many effects of climate change in Bangladesh.

The increased salt comes from higher sea levels and tidal surges inundating the land.

Giving advice to drink only rainwater is easy but rain comes mostly from the monsoon and so water needs to be stored. For women from poor families, sufficient storage is a luxury and buying bottled water is out of the question. So they listen to the advice but know their response will be limited. As so often happens, the poor pay the price for our reckless use of resources.



A class for Midwives in Bangladesh.

The Challenge of Recycling...

In Senegal... by Sister Suporna Rosario, smsm

In Senegal the pollution is huge. We seem to be the “rubbish dump” of the first world countries. We receive the things that they cannot use and we try to repair and use them here. You will see garages everywhere. Most of the footpaths are taken up by piles of parts of the cars or motors etc.

Up until recently the roads have been full of plastic bags and were very dirty. The government is now taking action to reduce the plastic bags. It has banned producing and using plastic bags since the beginning of the year. Now if you go shopping you have to bring your own bag. This is a big step for Senegal in improving the environment.

The next challenge is plastic cups. Single-use cups for drinking coffee are thrown everywhere. You see them all along the roads. I hope one day they will stop producing and using plastic cups and help the environment and keep the streets clean.

And in Peru... by Sister Ana Marzolo, smsm

Lurigancho Prison, in Lima, now has a machine to recycle plastics like bottles, plates, broken plastic pails, chairs, etc.

The prisoners have made this machine themselves. It is rather large as you can see in the photo and it is very, very noisy. It sounds like: “Crunchie, crunchie”. The men divide the plastics according to size. After being “fed”, small pieces of plastic are belched out of the machine.

The plastic bits are gathered into big plastic bags, some containing just simple plastics and others holding thicker plastics. The bags are piled up to the ceiling until they are picked up by companies that make products from them, such as blankets, T-shirts, rugs, etc. The profits from the sale are divided among prisoners working the machine and those who collect the plastics from the prison’s 20 barracks, housing almost 10,000 prisoners.



Pedestrians in Senegal have to maneuver around piles of second-hand bikes and car parts.



SMSM Sisters at an Assembly in Senegal. Sr. Suporna Rosario, originally from Bangladesh, is front and center.



Sr. Ana Marzolo (left) has done pastoral ministry with Peruvian prisoners and former prisoners for more than 40 years. Above is “the machine” some prisoners made for recycling plastic.

Effects of Climate Change in Fiji

by Sister Denyse McMahon, smsm

2016 is predicted to be the warmest year ever recorded. Global temperatures shot up by the largest margin on record. This record warmth is a result of global warming with an added boost from a strong El Niño, which spreads warm waters across the surface of the Pacific. These extra warm waters fuelled tropical cyclone Winston, which struck Fiji on 20th February as a category five storm – the highest classification. With wind speeds of nearly 300 kilometers per hour, Winston is the strongest cyclone ever recorded in the southern hemisphere. Winston is also the second strongest cyclone ever to strike land anywhere in the world in terms of wind speed.

The people in many of the areas within the path of Cyclone Winston will be impoverished for at least five years. Cash crops such as *yaqona* take four years to mature and most didn't survive the cyclone. Coconut trees take years to grow. On some islands coconut and copra products were the only source of income. Sadly, many of the trees were completely devastated. This is at a time when the world demand for coconut products is the highest it has been for years.

Need to Relocate Villages in Fiji.

The first of 34 villages forced to relocate from their coastal sites to further inland has begun as the sea increasingly encroaches on land swallowing up everything in its way, making its way in to freshwater sources with the saline water making it impossible to raise crops in numerous coastal areas. The effect on the water supply is



A devastated coastal village after Cyclone Winston (Feb 2016)

also compounded by less rainfall, which is attributed to El Niño, the effects of which are intensified by global warming. The temperature of the sea has been raised and in recent times scores of dead fish and other marine life have been found washed up on beaches.



Above: A coastal village relocates to higher ground in Fiji.

May they rest in peace! ~ Read about the lives of these Sisters at <http://www.smsmsisters.org>



Sister Mary Gerald, smsm
(Rita Parent)
3/5/1918 – 4/19/2016



Sister Hermine Deveau, smsm
(Sr. Mary Hermine)
10/20/1915 – 5/13/2016



Sister Mary Hager, smsm
(Sr. Mary John Cantius)
4/7/1918 ~5/23/2016



Thinking of becoming a Marist Missionary Sister?

Learn more: Visit our website

maristsmsm.org

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Jubilees 2016

On Saturday, June 18th in Waltham, Massachusetts, many Sisters, family members and friends gathered to celebrate the 25th and 50th jubilees of four Marist Missionary Sisters. *Photo at right: Sister Cecilia Legani (25 years) and Sisters Miriam Cripps, Cornelia Fitzpatrick and Virginia Fornasa (50 years). See more photos of this event on our website and Facebook Page.*

READ MORE ABOUT THE MARIST MISSIONARY SISTERS at our website www.maristsmsm.org or on [www.Facebook.com/MaristMissionarySisters](https://www.facebook.com/MaristMissionarySisters)

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