

SCARBORO missions

May-June 2013 \$1.00

Mission to Brazil 1964-2013



Cecile Turner
1964 - 1974



Mary Mona Kelly
1964 - 2010



Therese MacDonald
1965 - 1995



Doris MacDonald
1965 - 1979



Rosemary Hughes
1975 - 1985



Clarice Garvey
1975 - 2013



Yolanda Cadavea
1994 - 2010



Lucy Lee
1995 - 2013



Mac Janet MacDonald
1964 - 2002



Mary Deighan
1964 - 1971



Pauline Doherty
1965 - 2007



Mary Hughes
1967 - 2008



Vivien Kearns
1980 - 1986



Verma Samay
1987 - 1992



Leticia Nuñez
1998 - 2013



Antonieta Montejo
2010 - 2012

SPECIAL ISSUE

Our Lady's Missionaries

Dear friend of
Scarboro Missions...

Thank you for your faithful prayers and generosity to us. We will continue to be good stewards of all your gifts as we put ourselves at the service of others. Please note our envelope inside this issue for your convenience.

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COVER: Our Lady’s Missionaries, Mission to Brazil, 1964-2013

GUEST EDITORIAL



By Sr. Suzanne Marshall, O.L.M.

Searching for God
in everyday life

I wonder if it’s possible to even want to search for God in the events of our daily lives unless we have first been found by God. Scripture tells us that “the love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:5) So why is it that we don’t recognize that we have already been given this greatest of gifts? Jesus has promised that if we search we will find, and we sense that this is true, but finding God or being found by God, our deepest need, our truest love, takes great courage and many of us run from this relationship into the busyness of life and the many distractions on offer. If we do look for God we find evidence of the Divine imprint everywhere. For many people, God’s activity is more easily seen in creation—the beauty of sunrise and sunset, the power of the oceans, in clouds and rocks, in animals big and small. If we are truly mindful, we see God in family, friends, and strangers; in the courageous, the fearful, the lonely, and the people we meet daily in our various ministries. If we look with trust we see God in ourselves and we are overcome with gratitude that God does live in us and through us, touching the lives of all we meet each day. Searching for God in all of life is the one thing necessary.∞

THANK YOU!
Our Lady’s Missionaries are grateful to Kathy Gillis, editor of Scarboro Missions magazine; to Patricia Kay, OLM, and Goya Caronan, an OLM partner, who worked with Kathy to prepare this issue; and to all at Scarboro Missions for this and the countless other ways they offer us friendship and support.

Your Christmas letter



By Sr. Rosemarie Donovan, O.L.M.

Searching for God in everyday life was made easier for me when in November I was asked to help acknowledge the Christmas letters and wishes of our faithful benefactors. I had been living a somewhat sedentary life since having hip surgery last spring; a life very different from that experienced in Nigeria while working with the physically handicapped there. So now, every day some of your cards and letters arrive in my room. Your wishes and encouraging words for the lives we were living in our missions have been a great boost for most of us who must now remain in Canada. I was deeply touched by some of you who wrote of family difficulties, major illnesses, and loneliness, but your words were always hopeful, often funny, and most welcome. And I haven’t even mentioned your financial help! You must know that we have never been flush with funds since our beginnings in Alexandria in 1949. But you have continued to support us spiritually and financially since then and your constant love and belief in us is truly a gift from God. Every evening we gather in our chapel for communal prayer and you and your needs are always with us. I am deeply grateful for finding God and you in a special way in your warm Christmas letters.∞



Sisters Lorie Nuñez (4th from left), Lucy Lee (6th), and Clarice Garvey, with friends at their farewell celebrations. March 2013, Fortaleza, Brazil.

Amigas para sempre... Friends forever

OUR LADY'S MISSIONARIES IN BRAZIL 1964–2013

By Sr. Clarice Garvey, O.L.M.

"I know the plans I have in mind for you—it is Yahweh who speaks—plans for peace not disaster. Reserving a future full of hope for you." (Jeremiah 29:11-12)

As I look back over the history of Our Lady's Missionaries in Brazil, I feel enormous gratitude for the gift that God gave us in calling us to leave Canada and go to a strange country to share our lives in mission. Forty-nine years ago, four young Sisters,

Mona Kelly, Mary Deighan, Maejanet MacDonell, and Cecile Turner were invited to assist with nursing services in a newly built maternity hospital in the city of Fortaleza situated in the northeast of Brazil. As the years passed, other OLM Sisters came to share in this ministry.

In 1979, the Latin American Bishops guided by liberation theology, urged the Church to make an option for the poor. As a result, our

Sisters felt called to minister to the people in the rural areas of the state. Over time many of us in Brazil went up to the hills of Aratuba, Mulungu, and Palmacia. In these towns and surrounding areas, we carried out an amazing variety of ministries such as nursing, health teaching, home visiting, and community development in answer to the needs of the people. We were able to help them see the great value of their Base Christian communities as they gathered together to reflect on their lives in the light of the Gospel. In return they made us feel we were part of them.

In the early 1980s, 80 percent of the land of Brazil was held by rich landowners. As the Base Christian communities came together, they discovered their own power to oppose this unjust system. Many people supported them in facing the injustice of this unfair distribution of land. Sr. Maejanet MacDonell and I were already involved with the landless, having worked among them for some time for the liberation of the land and the people. It was their faith and courage, and their united struggle for just land distribution that brought



Sr. Lucy at the drop in centre for AIDS patients where she regularly visited.

the farmers to where they are now as I leave Brazil in early 2013. And the struggle will continue so that every landless person there will one day be able to say the words spoken by a previously landless woman: "Thank God, I will never again be put out of my own home."

Over the years, our Sisters continued to work in and about the city of Fortaleza in a variety of ministries. We accompanied street kids, taught English and arts and crafts, and worked in the Little Libraries where children in the community are taught to read and write. We visited homes and hospital patients especially those affected by HIV/AIDS at a time when antiretrovirals were not yet locally available.

As the cost of living steadily increased in the city, housing became more and more difficult to obtain especially for the poor. Sr. Mona was aware of the existence of a huge tract

of unoccupied land on the outskirts of the city, in a district called Pici. The area had served as a landing field during World War II. In 1990 she began to encourage and then organize homeless people to go there and stake out a lot for themselves by leaving something on it, a chair, a large stick, and so on. She and Sr. Norma Samar did the same. Gradually many other courageous people followed suit. Finally the local mayor conceded to the occupation and today there are about 5,000 families living on that land.

Brazilians are noted for their amazing capacity to celebrate. Nowhere has it been more evident to me than in the joyful farewells for the last three OLMs, Sr. Lucy Lee, Sr. Lorie Nuñez, and me, as we represented each one of our Sisters who served in mission in Brazil. There was a mutual outpouring of gratitude and love between us and the

Visiting the farm. L-R: João, Sr. Clarice, and Bob Thomas, project manager for SHARE.



Sr. Mona with Scorro and her baby in the district of Pici.



Sr. Lorie with her English students.

Brazilian people who had taken us into their hearts and homes.

We read in the Book of Revelation that in the heavenly Jerusalem all tears will be wiped away. But might it be possible that our founder, Fr. Dan MacDonald, had at least one tear of joy left to weep at the great gift given to Our Lady's Missionaries in our many years of mission in Brazil?∞



The first OLMs to arrive in Brazil in 1964. L-R: Sisters Cecile Turner, Mona Kelly, Mary Deighan, and Maejanet MacDonell.



The trail of grace

Sr. Mary Alban's journey with the people of Haiti

Sr. Mary Alban Bouchard of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto often asked herself what was the trail of grace that led her to her long years of mission in Haiti. Her earlier research of "least developed countries" while at the UN had a profound influence on her. She realized that if she wanted to work for justice and peace she would have to get hands-on experience. Having a working knowledge of French and knowing that Sr. Rosemary Fry, another member of her congregation, had preceded her there, she chose Haiti. The other language of Haiti is Kreyòl or Creole, a mixture of French, African, and other languages.

After much discernment and a powerful dream of Saint Joseph, she asked Saint Michael to protect her, Saint Gabriel to help her bring Good

News, Saint Raphael to keep her healthy, and then headed for Haiti. That was January 25, 1989. Once there, she was advised by a Haitian Jesuit not to do anything the first year except "learn Kreyòl, get used to the food, walk among the people."

A French branch of the Sisters of St. Joseph directed her to an area of the poor where she could be of service. On All Saints Day she arrived at Le Dortoir in the pouring rain. Once a shelter for those bringing produce to market, it had become a refuge for homeless aged people, homeless families with small children, handicapped persons, and persons with AIDS with no place to go except the grave. The roof leaked, the yard was a mix of charcoal dust and mud, and there were no services.

"The people of Le Dortoir became our people," Sr. Mary Alban said. And they took care of her as well.

Those were post-Duvalier days featuring a series of military dictators and protests that were brutally squelched. Nevertheless, joy and hope became palpable in the preparation for the first democratic election when Jean-Bertrand Aristide won by a landslide. It was Sr. Mary Alban's privilege to be an accredited observer for those elections and to share in the joy. But alas, the high hopes were short lived as the coup d'état came seven short months after the inauguration and the new president was sent into exile. This battering and buffeting seemed to her to be the mark of life in Haiti not only politically but by nature in the form of hurricanes, mudslides, and earth-

Our Lady's Missionaries, recipients of THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDAL



Sr. Mona Kelly



Sr. Elaine MacInnes



Sr. Susan Moran

On June 18, 2012, a Diamond Jubilee Gala was held at Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's life of service. Diamond Jubilee Medals were presented to individuals, many of whom had already been invested with the Order of Canada. These were persons who have contributed greatly to Canadian society in significant and important ways and represented excellence in their chosen endeavours. Among them were three members of the congregation of Our Lady's Missionaries, Sr. Mona Kelly of St. John, New Brunswick, Sr. Elaine MacInnes of Moncton, New Brunswick, and Sr. Susan Moran of Toronto.

quakes.

At the time of the great earthquake in 2010, it became necessary for her to be evacuated back to Canada since she had no home, no money, no ID, no future really. In a poem written about her experience she wrote:

*But on the day the Earth
beneath my feet
Failed me
Not I nor anyone could save me,
Only God...
That day guaranteed
When my time comes
I shall recognize
The approach of death
When things fall apart.*

Since then Sr. Mary Alban has been back and forth to her beloved Haiti a number of times and in early 2013 she returned. This time she hopes to

concentrate on an education project called *Lape Gaye* (Sowing Peace) coming forth from the International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World, an initiative of UNESCO for the new millennium. Sr. Mary Alban has already adapted this project for Haiti based on six principles: peace built on truth, the search for the common good, learning nonviolence, prayer for peace, learning alternative thinking, and belief in the gift that every person has for peace-making.

The method is to practice what has been taught through games, play-acting, exercises, discussion, materials, participation, sharing ideas, and so on. Sr. Mary Alban herself has written 17 booklets in the Kreyòl language for this project. These include cultural analyses by Haitian profes-

sionals, booklets of peace stories and about model peacemakers. She and her peace workers have conducted sessions around the dioceses of Haiti, travelling by car, small aircraft, and even motorcycle when necessary. They have waded through rivers and climbed hills to carry their message of peace.

Sr. Mary Alban truly enjoys teaching a culture of peace to people of all ages and no doubt she will continue to do so until "things fall apart" to quote her poem written at the time of the earthquake.∞

(Compiled by Sr. Patricia Kay, OLM, from the writings of Sr. Mary Alban, CSJ)



HOPE through art

By Mary Sanderson

The young woman in her 20s was serving time for manslaughter, her second federal offence. As a baby she had been abandoned by her mother and had been in and out of foster homes throughout her childhood and adolescence; she had witnessed the murder of her grandmother; her only child had been taken away from her and her partner had left her. What could I possibly do to give this woman some reason to live?

As an Art Therapist I carry with me to this medium security federal penitentiary a life-giving force that has the power to bring hope. Whether it is dancing, singing, playing a musical instrument, or painting—any creative act taps into the soul, makes the *artist* realize her Spirit's uniqueness and reminds her who she really is. For me, witnessing that creative spark is like finding a single hot red coal in a pile of cold ashes. I blow on it and fan it with my hand and suddenly it explodes into flame.

That moment of truth is a wonderful shared experience for both the woman and for me. My job then is to protect and nurture that delicate, fragile flame—feed it with affirmation and encouragement until it becomes a strong fire. Then gradually but miraculously, the woman begins to think better of herself: *Perhaps I am more than a wife who got drunk and stabbed my husband to death. Maybe I am more than a woman who sold illegal drugs to support my habit.* Her art gives her perspective from the pain of the past and allows her to see her life in a new light. She begins to dream of new possibilities and to use the art to depict things she cannot articulate.

Although she had never used art materials, the young woman before me instinctively understood the symbolism of art. In each of the paintings she did in our art therapy sessions, she placed a spider. *A spider's web is always being broken, she explained, but the spider never gives up trying to fix it.*

As Thomas Berry reminds us, *it's all a matter of story*—not only the big story of the unfolding of the universe, but the unfolding of our own individual stories: our past, our ancestors, our culture, our land. The stories of the women I work with in this remote penitentiary are stories of alcohol, abuse, violence, and poverty. Through art they begin to see a larger story and to understand that they can write a new story that is their very own.∞

Mary Sanderson's work at The Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, is made possible through generous grants by The Basilian Fathers Human Development Fund and The Donner Foundation of Canada.

*A spider's web is
always being broken,
she explained,
but the spider never
gives up trying to fix it.*



By Sr. Marie
Clarkson, O.L.M.

Today

How to wait
in eagerness
with expectation
when a struggling multitude
flashes across the screen
earth-shattering upheaval
seen today
are we not one

there too
nations with pageantry
colour galore
or clock-like precision
these voiceless people
are we not one

and closer still
those scrambling for more
more ever more
causing deluge and divide
the ever widening gap
are we not one

and so
from some inner depth
comes forth a longing
a yearning
for readiness to believe
to welcome
the goodness in me
the God-ness
in you

Today
we wait with eagerness
in expectation
for we are one



Joanith House

Sr. Margaret Walsh visits Srs. Frances Brady and Noreen Kearns who recently moved into a rented bungalow at Joanith Drive in Toronto, not far from the OLM central house on Leander Court. Having this house makes it possible for the community to welcome our returning missionaries.



By Sr. Mary Deighan, O.L.M.



Ihugh revisited

Last fall Our Lady's Missionaries received a visit from an old friend, retired missionary Fr. Peter Ward, a Holy Ghost Father now living in Kent, United Kingdom. It was his first time in Toronto, so it became an opportunity to renew old acquaintances especially for those of us who were working in the new St. Thomas Hospital in Ihugh, Benue-Plateau State, Nigeria, in 1974.

Bishop Donal Murray, then bishop of Makurdi Diocese, had asked Fr. Peter to leave his parish and come to the village of Ihugh to help plan the official opening of the hospital. His was the task of inviting state dignitaries, local chiefs and religious leaders, as well as sisters and priests of the diocese. The program was to include everyone and required much sensitivity in the planning.

Our Lady's Missionary Sr. Mona Kelly was the matron of the hospital and I was also part of the staff along with our valiant volunteers from Canada. We were all involved in setting up the hospital and organizing the departments. Fr. Peter moved to the hospital compound in order to be on hand for all the major decisions related to the big opening. He soon became a friend to each one of us working there.



Sr. Mona Kelly and Fr. Peter Ward at a gathering to welcome Fr. Peter during his visit to Toronto last fall.

Those were exciting days to remember. Our volunteers now living in Toronto came to our central house last fall to greet Fr. Peter and reminisce. It had been a privilege to be part of a project that provided such an improvement in health care for the people of the area. And it was appropriate for us, nearly 40 years later, to celebrate once again the opening of St. Thomas Hospital.∞



Hidden treasures

By Maria Teresa M. Velasco

In grade school we were taught a song, “Persons are Gifts”, which became a favourite of mine as I grew older. The song is about how we can recognize the Christ-gift in all persons we meet, whoever they may be, and in whatever circumstances they may be placed.

I have learned a lot of lessons in my 50 years on this Earth, not least of which is the grace of thanksgiving and prayer. Most especially as a partner to Our Lady’s Missionaries I have learned that prayer is a powerful gift to give and to receive.

The OLM partners and their relationship to the Sisters call to mind the line in the Creed: “I believe...in the communion of saints.” How wonderful to describe the relationship in this way and what a joy to think that the communion of all saints is contemplated in the mind of God, and that God means for this to be. God is in all things.

We are all partners; we are all gifts. Christ is at the root of OLM life just as the OLM community is the tree’s trunk, sprouting branches, twigs, flowers, and seed, which are the partners and the ministries. It is good to be a part of this community; it is good to pray together as God commanded. The relationship is dynamic—in the same way that we are “the communion of saints,” we all support each other through prayer and good works.∞

Grace, courage, and gentle humour

Advocating for Indigenous women



By Christine Gebel, O.L.M.

As she introduced herself, Denise Booth thanked us for the honour of speaking to our group. But truly, the honour was ours.

Rosemary Williamson, OLM, had invited Denise to a gathering of Sisters and our group of Partners With OLM on a Sunday afternoon. A mother of two young girls and coordinator of culture at the Native Women’s Resource Centre of Toronto, Denise generously gave of her precious weekend time.

Through stories and video clips, and by answering our questions, Denise gave us a glimpse of what it means to be an Indigenous woman in Canada today. With

grace, courage, and even at times gentle humour, she spoke of abuse and oppression, past and present...



Denise Booth speaks to the OLMs

*...of residential schools, which were used to try to kill the Indian in the child;
...of Native people as Canada’s dirty secret;*

...of her own children being the first in three generations of her family to be raised by their birth parents;

...of society’s silence and lack of response to violence against Indigenous women. She asked: Why is the disappearance of more than 600 Indigenous women in Canada not a national emergency?

But she didn’t leave us there. Rather, Denise chose to highlight the strength and resiliency of the women who walk through the doors of the Native Women’s Resource Centre every day. She focused on healing and hope. She told us that she is studying midwifery. In fact, she is already a midwife as she daily helps bring to birth the hopes and dreams of Indigenous women for new life.



Naturally, the Idle No More movement was mentioned. Founded by four young women, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, this is a movement around which all Canadians can unite for the common good. As Denise mentioned, the eyes of the world are now upon us. What will be our response?∞

VIDEO CLIPS PRESENTED BY DENISE BOOTH:

“To The Indigenous Woman,” a poem by 1491s
www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4Up0drnXX4

“I’m Not the Indian You Had in Mind”

a poem by Thomas King

www.nsi-canada.ca/2012/03/im-not-the-indian-you-had-in-mind/



All Saints Catholic Secondary School Development & Peace group with teachers Lauren Zakoor (far left) and Jean-Marc Tessier, with visitors Sisters Mary Gauthier (standing far right) and Christine Gebel. Whitby, Ontario.

A great big Thank You!



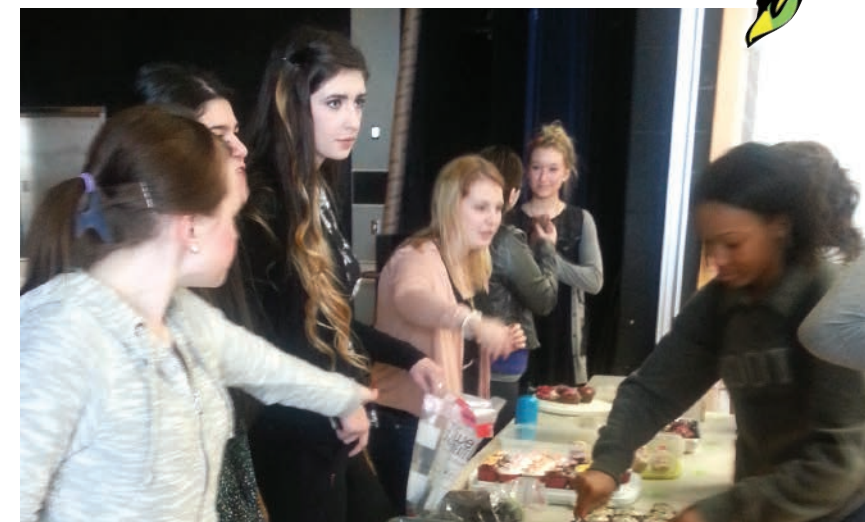
This past Valentine’s Day the Development and Peace group at All Saints Catholic Secondary School in Whitby, Ontario, held a bake sale. The following day was a non-uniform day, which meant that each student paid a Toonie not to wear the school uniform. The proceeds from both of these activities were donated to Our Lady’s Missionaries. For this we are grateful—but we are also grateful for so much more...

Sisters Mary Gauthier and Christine Gebel, OLM, were invited to the school a week later to accept this generous donation and attend another Development and Peace activity. Students in grades 9 and 10 gathered to watch a presentation by Courtney and Rob, speakers from *Me to We, We Live the Change*, the movement started by Craig and Marc Kielburger (www.metowe.com). Through stories, video clips, and their high energy presence, we were led through a thought provoking reflection on water as fundamental to life. After the presentation students lined up to talk with Courtney and Rob about becoming more involved. The energy in the room was electric. It was a gift to be present and also to hear teachers Jean-Marc Tessier and Lauren Zakoor tell of the many other ways in which their students have worked to make a difference in our world. A banner with the words, “I will not stand by, I will stand up!”, signed by students and hanging in the foyer says it all.∞

Report by Sr. Christine Gebel, O.L.M.



CANADIAN CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION FOR
**Development
and Peace**



The school’s Development and Peace group held a bake sale on Valentine’s Day 2013 with proceeds going to Our Lady’s Missionaries. Below: Banner, signed by students, hanging in the foyer of the school.



Coffee and companionship

Interacting with the men and women in the coffee shop provides a sense of being more closely connected to their lives and interests

By Sr. Noreen Kearns, O.L.M.

Transition is a word commonly heard these days as we are all forced to adjust to such things as climate change, economic uncertainties, and even shifting attitudes toward democracy in our own country. We Sisters have had to face transitions in our community, especially with the closing of our overseas missions, and in our own personal lives as well.

I was the Directress of our Maryglen Residence in downtown Toronto when we closed our doors there after 44 years of communal ministry to women. I then took a mini-sabbatical including a few precious months at a spiritual centre run by the Benedictine Sisters on the banks of the Red River outside of Winnipeg. Coming back to Toronto, I moved to our central house on Leander Court and became available to help with the many tasks that life with nine other elderly people entails.

As I had always been interested in some part of ministry outside the community whenever possible, I was delighted to be invited to do pastoral visiting in the long-term nursing unit in one of the seniors residences in our neighbourhood. Not long after, I was asked to help out as a volunteer in their coffee and gift shop. Having enjoyed my past years at Maryglen Residence where I could listen to and chat with the residents, I soon agreed. Interacting with the men and women in the coffee shop has given me a sense of being more closely connected to their lives and interests.

Every Wednesday afternoon I look forward to my volunteer hours. The



Volunteers Sister Noreen Kearns with her friend Eliza Landry work in the coffee and gift shop of a neighbourhood seniors residence. Noreen also does pastoral visiting in the long-term nursing unit.

All the tables are filled and the coffee shop hums with chatter and laughter. It is about more than drinking coffee.

clientele are mostly between the ages of 80 to 97. They gather together each afternoon for coffee and muffins, but mostly for companionship and to hear the latest news, views, and gossip. Many drop in daily for a hot cup of coffee and to chat as they try to solve the world's problems about politics, religion, and even the weather.

All the tables are filled and the coffee shop hums with chatter and laughter. It is about more than drinking coffee. It is a warm, friendly haven where people are able to meet together

and feel they are accepted for who they are. My "coffee time" gives me the opportunity to share in the lives of the residents who seek only to be acknowledged as friends, not just as aged seniors. And my pastoral visiting continues to give me the privilege of offering a listening heart and consolation to those who can no longer visit the coffee shop.∞



"I am with you on the journey, always with you." With the words of this song in my heart I was carried to my new mission with the Scarboro lay missionaries in Guyana. Little did I know how those words would care and comfort me in my time of need.

In the yard of St. Paul's Seminary where I was living in Guyana stood a big old tree. Each morning as I prayed I would look at the tree and ask myself, "Why am I attracted to this tree?" It seemed to be dead with many gray branches reaching to the sky. Then one day I saw something different. I had been looking but not seeing the mystery unfolding before me.

Yes, the tree was speaking to me. The branches at the top that seemed dead were of different lengths and sizes, and they spoke to me of the limbs of many older people who are still able to sway gracefully in the breeze. I also noticed new shoots of green branches sprouting from the same roots. There was new life. The tree was calling me to watch it, observe it, and cherish the new life.

So also in our communities, even in the midst of aging, frailty, and physical decline there are green

One day I saw something different. I had been looking but not seeing the mystery unfolding before me.

branches in each of us. As I looked out my window each day I felt new life growing in me. And just as the roots of the old tree were deep and able to provide the nourishment the tree needed, so too is the spirit of us older folks nourished by our faith.

Now I am back in Canada recovering from an accident. I was side-swiped by a truck and suffered a comminuted fracture of my right elbow and a hairline hemi pelvis fracture. During the month I spent in bed in St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Georgetown, Guyana, I heard daily in my heart, "I am with you on the journey, always with you." And so, despite the frustration and anger, my resilience stayed with me. Now I can walk slowly and though I still cannot straighten my arm, hopefully in time I will regain full use of it—especially since I am right-handed. The memory of those green branches still gives me hope.

I received loving care from all at St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital, from the CEO, Helen Browman, to the cleaning staff. My surgeon, Dr. Gisel Del Toro Placido, was extra cautious because of my age and was reluctant to let me walk or travel. Despite this good care I felt the need to return to Canada since I didn't have health insurance in Guyana.

I am most grateful for the love and support of Kate O'Donnell, the Scarboro lay missionary who visited me daily and filled my every need. I welcomed visits from the Mercy Sisters and the Guyanese folks who encouraged me in my recovery. My own OLM community phoned me with kind wishes and worked hard to get me moved to St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. Joan Missiaen, OLM, came down to accompany me back to Canada, and with the help of Scarboro lay missionaries, Miriam Wheeler and Bev Trach, packed up my things. Bev has continued to pick up the pieces.

As we left the hospital and began the long journey, I knew and believed that God is and always will be with us.∞



By Sr. Frances Brady, O.L.M.

Intercultural ministry

Building vibrant communities in culturally diverse settings

Canadians are blessed to be living in one of the most multicultural countries in the world with many ethnic groups represented and numerous languages spoken within our nation's borders. We know that with this blessing comes responsibility—to welcome, to be open to differences, to make the effort to understand and communicate. Religious and church groups are among those constantly looking for ways to live with greater sensitivity and appreciation of the cultures that make up their particular area of the mosaic.

One group responding consciously and actively to Canada's diversity is the Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministry. The Forum is an ecumenical partnership of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Presbyterian Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, and Scarboro Missions. Since its founding in 1921 the Forum has assisted member churches to prepare people to engage in ministry outside of Canada and to reintegrate back into Canadian culture.

The Forum has 90 years of experience preparing people for ministry in intercultural settings. It recognizes that the privilege of living in a country with a rich cultural diversity compels an active response from our churches. It is aware that effective ministry in our Canadian churches requires training that is faith based as well as culturally sensitive. These elements have come together to inspire the develop-



Scarboro missionary Fr. Dave Warren and Adele Halliday, core facilitators of the Understanding for Intercultural Ministry (DUIM) program. Below: Training session for the ecumenical and diverse team of facilitators and designers of the DUIM program.

ment of a new program, Developing Understanding for Intercultural Ministry (DUIM).

The DUIM program has been launched to assist leaders in church ministry to build vibrant communities in culturally diverse settings. The six

day (or three weekend) residential program focuses on mutually respectful relationships across cultural differences. It provides theory and practice and draws on the skills and experience of the participants as well as those of resource persons. The facilitators are



experienced in intercultural ministry and are themselves representative of the ecumenical and intercultural community.

DUIM is open to persons engaged in some aspect of church ministry who wish to respond more effectively and with greater appreciation for cultural diversity. This program is valuable for clergy and lay leaders, foreign born clergy, and persons preparing for ministry or engaged in pastoral care, and will be beneficial for anyone involved in organizations serving a culturally diverse community. Having begun in Toronto and conducted in English due to availability of resources, it is intended that the program will expand to other parts of Canada and be offered in other languages.

Canadians are blessed. We have what we need to build a truly vibrant intercultural society that celebrates diversity and respects differences, that brings people together as a microcosm of the global community. Our churches, as communities committed to respect for all of God's creation, can guide us in this endeavour. The Deepening Understanding for Intercultural Ministry program is an expression of hope as well as a significant movement toward the reality.∞

More information about DUIM is available on the Forum website: www.ccforum.ca.



IN MEMORY

Sr. Therese MacDonald, O.L.M.

1927-2013

By Sr. Patricia Kay, O.L.M.

Sr. Therese MacDonald died on the 26th day of February, 2013. Born on Panmure Island, Prince Edward Island, she received all her education in P.E.I. and graduated from Charlottetown Hospital as a nurse in 1948. Even in childhood, Therese had been fascinated with the lives and works of the missionaries she read about in *China* magazine (later named *Scarboro Missions* published by Scarboro Missions. After three years of practice in her chosen nursing profession, she decided that she too would become a missionary. In December 1951 she set off for Alexandria, Ontario, to join the congregation of Our Lady's Missionaries.

After making her first vows in June 1954, Therese worked in Hotel Dieu Hospital in Cornwall, Ontario, as a clinical supervisor of student nurses until her appointment to Okene, Nigeria. After leaving Nigeria, she worked in Hotel Dieu Hospital in St. Catharines, Ontario, and at St. Joseph's Hospital in Toronto until June 1965 when she was missioned to Brazil. After language study, she worked at the *Maternidade Escola* (Maternity Hospital) in the city of Fortaleza in the northeastern state of Ceara. She then worked in the town of Mulungu in a rural area of the state, after which she was invited to do the parish secretarial work in the hills of Aratuba. She remembered those years, particularly in Aratuba, as among the happiest of her missionary life.

In 1996 Therese was appointed to the community Finance Office at Our Lady's Missionaries' central house on Leander Street in Toronto where she lived and worked until late October of 2012 when her health began to decline. Her last months were spent at Providence Healthcare in Toronto where she was very well cared for, as she herself acknowledged.

For the last six years, Natalia Tavares has been working with the Sisters at the central house where Therese lived. Deeply saddened by Therese's death, Natalia had this to say:

"Sr. Therese was a very good and patient person. She was always busy crocheting, embroidering, or knitting cotton bandages to be sent to leprosy patients. She also loved to do crossword puzzles. And she excelled in cooking and baking and was so happy to teach me how to prepare special dishes. It delighted her when I would go and ask her a question. She kept me company sitting in her chair by the window facing the ravine while I did my work in the kitchen. I already missed her so much when she left for Providence Healthcare and I will miss her even more now that she has gone."∞

The scent of bread



*I saw a country embrace me with morning hands.
Be worthy of the scent of bread.
Be fit for summer flowers.
Your mother's brick oven is still blazing.
Her greeting is still warm
like the loaf she bakes.*

These few lines of Mahmud Darwish, a beloved Palestinian poet, express so well my feelings about Palestinians and their country. Their gracious welcome, deep love and attachment to the land, and yes the delicious bread they bake and share so readily. In particular I remember waking in the village of Susiya after spending the night in one of the village tents along with other Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) members. There was a beautiful sunrise colouring the sky and already one of the women was busy baking the morning bread.

Despite the fact that Susiya, like many Palestinian villages in Area C, existed prior to 1948 and prior to Israel, they are now under threat of demolition because the Israeli government has declared this area a Firing Zone for military training. It is home to 1,800 people living in 12 villages.

In August 2012 when I was last there, we were invited to participate

in a nonviolent action beginning in the village of Mfagera. It was on the very day when the Jewish court was to announce its decision regarding its responsibility in the death of Rachel Corrie. She was the young American woman who was killed by a bulldozer while resisting home demolitions in Gaza.

Gathered that day in Mfagera were villagers living nearby and a group of young people from Ramallah who brought posters of Rachel Corrie. Also present were Israeli supporters and internationals. We learned that demolitions had taken place earlier that morning in Susiya. As we made our way up the road we could see a military jeep monitoring our progress. Finally the jeep drew near the gates of the Jewish settlement of Abigale, where a large number of soldiers were stationed. Demonstrators placed their placards on the windshield of the vehicle, slowing down its progress. Various local leaders gave speeches

Facing page:
Villagers of the South Hebron Hills take part in a nonviolent action, walking to the gates of a Jewish settlement where soldiers are stationed. August 2012.

Palestinian woman making bread.

and the protest concluded peacefully.

These villagers of the South Hebron Hills have suffered from demolition of their dwellings, periodic attacks from settlers, killing of their livestock, and blockades of their roads, but they remain steadfast in their determination to remain on their land. As one villager expressed it, "I was born in this area; home is like a symbol of life, your values, your identity." They have grown in their ability to organize and resist nonviolently, but it is an ongoing struggle. In late December these villagers were given a 30-day reprieve from the occupying power's plan to evict them and make the area a bombing range.

Yet hope persists, like that claimed by Palestinian-American writer Ibtisam Barakat in her memoir, *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood*:

***To Alef, the letter
that begins the alphabets
of both Arabic and Hebrew—
two Semitic languages,
sisters for centuries.
May we find the language
that takes us
to the only home there is—
one another's hearts.∞***

To find out more about the work of Christian Peacemaker Teams in Palestine, go to www.cpt.org/work/palestine.



By Goya Caronan

The spiritual in breadmaking

I recently attended a workshop called "Spirituality and Bread Making." I always wanted to learn how to bake bread, an activity that seemed to me to be as time-consuming as it is challenging. Intrigued by the name of the workshop, I found myself signing up.

What a wonderful revelation the workshop turned out to be. The easy and amiable approach of the wife and husband team of Bethany and Ed Osborne made the participants feel at ease and confident as we started to mix water, yeast, flour, salt, lemon, and sugar—the basic ingredients for a white bread. Under their watchful guidance we learned the proper way of kneading and adding flour as needed until the texture of the dough was of the right consistency, testing the dough when it was ready to rest and rise (and shine if I may add).

While anxiously waiting for our dough to rise, we were asked to share memories associated with bread. Most of the participants shared experiences of bread being a focal food item in family affairs that evoke festive memories. My own experience is of growing up beside a bakery. When the sweet smell of freshly baked bread wafted in the air, my siblings and I would run to the bakery to beg the old baker to spare us some. He was not supposed to sell the bread until it was displayed on the shelves, but he always accommodated us. Since there were four of us sharing, one loaf was not always enough to go around. Thus did I learn to save my allowance so I could sneak out and buy a loaf just for me alone to savour.

The breadmaking workshop was organized by Becoming Neighbours, a companion program that matches immigrants and refugees in Toronto with members of Catholic religious congregations and their associates and friends. We act as friends, guides, and mentors during the newcomers' adjustment to Canadian society. This workshop fit well with Becoming Neighbours' vision of presence, prayer, relationship, and solidarity.

With the scent of baking bread filling the room, Fr. Peter McKenna of Becoming Neighbours announced that our bread was ready. We all excitedly looked for our individually-labelled finished product. As I looked around I could not help but notice that each bread was different in size and colour despite our having used the same amount of ingredients. The variety of the finished product somehow reflected the diversity of the participants' either by ethnicity or professional backgrounds.

Each one of us brought our passion and individuality, which made for the uniqueness of our baked creation. I felt deep gratitude for finally learning to make bread and becoming mindful that bread is such a nourishing gift from God meant to be shared with others.

I am particularly thankful to Bethany Osborne for her passionate sharing of her skills and experience as a baker, and to the staff of Becoming Neighbours for arranging this event. Not only did I make my first baked bread (which I proudly shared with ten people who were generous with their praises), but now I am inspired to make more bread for my waiting neighbours.∞

Reigniting a sense of dignity

The new Lazarus House provides a safe place for women in crisis

By Kimberley Curry

Lazarus House—First Step in Toronto had its opening on January 31, 2013. An initiative of the Seeds of Hope Foundation, Lazarus House is a response to a major gap in providing assistance to women with chronic homelessness and mental health challenges. Women with such challenges often need immediate help and have difficulty or inability staying in a shelter environment.

Located on Yonge Street near Wellesley, our new First Step home builds on our existing work of helping people re-ignite their sense of dignity and self esteem, which in turn allows them to create a path forward to health and to becoming a contributing member of society.

Our community and peer-support model allows women to encourage the strengths and gifts of each other in friendship and mutual support. At our existing houses, residents take an active role in managing the house and each person contributes to the operation of the house. As residents regain their health, they have the opportunity to connect with a wider community and participate in meals, life skills programs, and creative arts activities that are offered at our Seeds of Hope centres and through our Passport to Health partnerships with five other centres.

Our safe places



Sister Susan Moran, OLM, founder of Out of the Cold, and Kimberley Curry, Rosarian and Executive Director of Seeds of Hope Foundation, at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Lazarus House. February 8, 2013, Toronto.

Below: Sisters Mary Hughes, Joan Missiaen, Susan Moran, and Cecile Turner at the opening ceremony. Photo by Michael Swan.
Right: The second floor media room at Lazarus House. Photo by Binoy Lugkoo.



“Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space, where change can take place.”

*Henri Nouwen
 Reaching Out: The Three
 Movements of the Spiritual Life*

have helped many women afflicted with addiction or suffering abuse, mental illness, or tragedy in their lives find a new way forward. Because our volunteers are creating relationships with people based on care and friendship rather than trying to “fix a problem,” there is a new sense of trust created. Trust is a cornerstone for people in vulnerable situations, helping them feel safe enough to seek professional help with facilities that can address issues directly.

By working with supportive housing providers such as Houselink, we can help transition individuals to long-term housing as their condition stabilizes and improves. We accompany them along each step of the process.

Our effective peer-based model relies on the involvement of caring communities and has enabled Seeds of Hope to be responsive to community needs and to operate without government funding. This initiative will demonstrate how the benefits of a community model can complement traditional medical and institutional models. The model has been pioneered by Seeds of Hope Foundation in its past projects and is expanding with Rotary support.

We at Seeds of Hope are deeply grateful to the Rotary Club of Toronto and the Anglican Diocese of Toronto for the funds provided for this latest initiative. We are also grateful for the great contributions from others, including Sr. Susan Moran, O.L.M. who gives ongoing support.∞



By Sr. Patricia Kay, O.L.M.

Tobias and the Archangel

My blind father, Tobit, an exile in Nineveh, had carried out the works of mercy tirelessly especially among our own people. But now he, my mother, Anna, and I were destitute. So he sent me with a man named Azarias, who supposedly was his kinsman, to be my companion on a journey to distant Rhages where 10 talents of his were stored. So we set off followed by my little dog.

Azarias proved to be knowledgeable and extremely wise. Once in Media he advised me to marry my kinsman’s daughter, Sarah, and showed me how to banish forever the demon Asmodeus who tormented her. He also collected all my father’s money.

Azarias and I returned to Nineveh as Sarah and her entourage came close behind. My parents were overjoyed to see us. Azarias had also taught me the way to cure my father’s blindness. So holding my father steady, I blew in his face and rubbed his eyes with fish gall, which we had collected, and peeled off the film from each eye. He joyfully cried out, “I can see! I can see again!” and praised God with all his heart.

My father held a great feast for all the Jews of Nineveh to share our happiness. He and I began to discuss how we might ever repay Azarias for all he had done. But Azarias drew us aside and said to us, “Bless God, utter his praise before all the living for all the favours he has given you. I am going to tell you the whole truth, hiding nothing from you. Tobit, when you did not hesitate to get up and leave the table to go and bury a dead man, I was sent to test your faith; and at the same time God sent me to heal you and your daughter-in-law, Sarah. I AM RAPHAEL, one of the seven angels who stand ever ready to enter the presence of the glory of the Lord.”

We were overwhelmed with awe and fell down in terror, but Raphael said, “Do not be afraid; when I was with you, my presence was not by any decision of mine, but by the will of God. You thought you saw me eating, but that was appearance and no more. Now bless the Lord on earth and give thanks to God. I am about to return to the One above who sent me.” And he rose in the air.

When we stood up again, Raphael was no longer visible. We sang in praise and thanksgiving to God for having performed such wonders. Had not an angel of God appeared to us?∞

Based on the Book of Tobit, The Jerusalem Bible.





Memories of Biafra

By Sr. Mona Kelly, O.L.M.

I was home on leave from our Brazil mission in 1968 when I heard of a request from the Catholic Relief Services for medical volunteers to go to Nigeria. The Biafran war of secession was already raging there. Since I had been missioned in Nigeria before, I asked for the approval of our leadership to offer my services. I applied saying that I could drive any kind of car or light truck and had worked previously in the country. Though my age was above the average of the other applicants, I explained that with all my experience I couldn't be much younger. And so I was accepted.

Life during the war was dangerous and seeing the terrible condition of so many people, especially the children, was heartbreaking. Yet I had so many amazing experiences and so much joy in seeing families finally able to be reunited.

I remember driving a jeep one night when I came too quickly to a check point. An angry soldier with his gun and his lantern jumped out yelling, "Are you trying to kill me? I am not even from this place!" So I asked him where he was from and he answered, "Okene." I had worked in that very town years before so I greeted him in his own language. "Tao tao wadi ka." (Hello! How are you?)

"You are speaking my language!" he said.

"Was I not the first Matron of the Okene hospital?" I replied, after which my passengers and I went peacefully on our way.

Another time toward the end of the war, I was driving from one refugee camp to another. On the road waving me down was an old woman with two boys aged six and 14. The older boy was carrying half a yam. They had come out of the bush and were trying to reach the refugee camp. The boys' parents had already run from the federal troops. The three got in the jeep and I dropped them off at the camp.

About three months later I was at this same camp when I was asked to carry some people on my way home. Two boys got in the "motor" as the Nigerians call it. After we went along the road a bit, the older boy spoke up and said, "Sister, you do not remember us!" Then he told me about the time I picked them up and dropped them at the refugee camp. Now the war was over and the Red Cross had located his parents and the boys were going to meet them at a river along the way. Unfortunately, the grandmother was not well enough to travel. We came to the river, got out, and sat down to wait for the grand reunion of the boys with their mother and father.

During those war years I worked with many volunteers from a number of countries. We had the privilege of serving the victims of the conflict and of experiencing the resilience and courage of a people facing unspeakable hardship, loss, and suffering.∞



By Sr. Myra Trainor, O.L.M.

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. As I sort and file Our Lady's Missionaries' photos of the past 60 years in our archives, I am grateful that we have captured and preserved some of our work and life in mission. These pictures show a little of our story with the people we were privileged to know and accompany. On the facing page are just a few highlights.

I frequently ask myself if anyone in the future will be interested in the life and ministries of Our Lady's Missionaries, or does it all die with us? I am comforted by the thought that if our mission endeavours were of interest to people in our active years, maybe our work will be of interest to some in the future.

The Church continues to document great events of the world, but what of our little histories? We were very fortunate to be in overseas mission in our time, living mostly in remote, isolated areas that were generally very underdeveloped, but with tremendous unspoiled natural beauty. In our later years of mission, improvements came and so-called economic progress—electricity installed, roads upgraded, and big shopping malls that replaced open air markets.

My next endeavour is to sort photos of our various ministries in Canada. As our overseas missions close, these pictures will also feature our returning missionaries continuing to serve in Canada in a variety of new ways.∞

Our story in photos

Photo snapshots depicting highlights of Our Lady's Missionaries' history in mission



Sister Myra Trainor in the Philippines... training dedicated and generous catechists and health workers eager to acquire skills to help their people.



Sister Doris MacDonell in Guyana... visiting and consoling the elderly in their sickness at home and in hospital.



Sister Maejanet MacDonell in East Timor... welcoming and supporting Timorese people as they return to their country after being exiled in Indonesia for many years.



Sr. Suzanne Marshall in Nigeria... accompanying people with AIDS at a time when antiretroviral drugs for preventing the advance of the disease were unavailable.



Sr. Clarice Garvey in Brazil... supporting farmers who struggle for rights to the very land they laboured on for many years.



Sister Cathy Peco in Japan... nursing in a tuberculosis hospital.

Keeping up-to-date with the OLM blog

www.ourladysmissionaries.ca

Visit our website to keep up-to-date with the latest news about OLM including write-ups on recent events, articles about the lives of Our Lady's Missionaries and others, and ways to support our ministries. Comments and feedback are most welcome!



International Women's Day

As has been our custom for quite a few years, several OLMs joined the annual CNWE (Catholic Network for Women's Equality) action to raise awareness regarding human trafficking. The action is held on or near International Women's Day. [Read more...](#)

An afternoon with Denise Booth

A gathering of *Partners With OLM* at the Central House. The guest speaker was Denise Booth, Family Violence Prevention and Cultural Co-Ordinator of the Family Violence Project sponsored by the Native Women's Resource Centre, Toronto. [Read more...](#)



In memory of Sister Therese MacDonald, OLM 1927-2013

Sister Therese MacDonald died in Toronto on the 26th of February, 2013. She had worked as a missionary overseas, first in Nigeria and then for many years in Brazil. [Read more...](#)



Pages of interest

- Poet's corner
- Prayer & reflection
- About us
- Canadian ministries
 - ♦ *Out of the Cold*
 - ♦ *Becoming Neighbours*
 - ♦ *Freeing the Human Spirit and more...*



By Sr. Gwen Legault, O.L.M.

Planting a seed

The seed I planted in Vandeikya, Nigeria, 39 years ago continues to grow. St. Francis School for the Deaf/Blind began in a grass-roofed roundhouse, was moved to a three-room building, and finally to a permanent site outside Vandeikya.

Recent good news brought great joy and gratitude to all of us here in Toronto. The occasion was the blessing and commissioning of the school's new classroom block by the auxiliary Bishop of Makurdi Diocese, Most Reverend William Avenya. I remember the day of young Fr. William's ordination when I brought some of the deaf children to attend the ceremony. And now he continues to bless and support the school so generously.

I want to quote the school's principal, Sr. Eucharia Ugwu, in her speech at the commissioning:

"Since its inception in 1975, the objective of the school has been to provide the children with basic education for independent living. The arrangements for boarding for the students became a necessity because of the great distance from Vandeikya for many of the children. Most of them come from poor families and some are orphans and all are vulnerable. Because of this, and in order to make education available to all physically challenged children, the diocese and my community, the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus, have continued to run the school on a charity basis. Thus up until now, the students have not been paying school fees. But this policy has not been without great challenges.

Providing feeding and maintenance of the children on a daily basis has been very difficult. Physical structures are lacking, but the population is steadily on the increase as more parents become aware of the need to educate their deaf and blind children. In view of this, the diocese can no longer continue to offer the children free educa-



Sr. Eucharia Ugwu, principal of the St. Francis School for the Deaf and Blind with the students who danced during the blessing and opening of their new classroom block. October 2012, Vandeikya, Nigeria.,



Students Senenge, Winnifred, and Mimidoo dancing for the guests. The school is located in Tivland and the black and white striped cloth worn by the dancers is the traditional cloth of the Tiv people.

tion without further government aid, especially for staff salaries...

It is really our hope to see the motto Sr. Gwen left for this school, "Equal Opportunity for All," realized in Benue State and beyond, where our graduates can apply for jobs and their competence be tested based on what they can do; where nobody throws a 20 naira bill at them instead of helping them to live a decent life through honest work. And how can we give them the opportunity if we don't receive the necessary support?

That is why we are here today to thank the members of a children's organization in Germany who sacrificed to help sponsor this new building you see before you. They give us great cause for this celebration of a dream come true.

It is our hope that with your group and individual support, we will continue to nurture and sustain these children both academically and morally, building on the foundation laid by our predecessors..."∞

Our Lady's Missionaries

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Scarboro Missions

L-R: Scarboro missionary Fr. Mike Traher, Our Lady's Missionary Sr. Mary Gauthier (seated), Scarboro lay missionaries Kate O'Donnell and Bev Trach (far right), and a Guyanese friend Kay Defreitas. Guyana.

Our thanks

Our Lady's Missionaries depend on the support of family, friends and other benefactors. Once again we wish to express our gratitude for your thoughts and prayers and for the monetary donations we receive from estates, donations in lieu of flowers at the time of death, parish collections, the Catholic Women's League, the Ladies' Guild annual donation as well as personal contributions. All donations are tax deductible. Please note that government regulations do not permit us to receive donations for ministries in countries where we no longer have Sisters present, namely Guyana, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Brazil.