



RNDM INTERNATIONAL MISSION NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2017 #1

FOR RNDMS
ASSOCIATES
FRIENDS
SPONSORS &
PARTNERS



**RNDM INTERNATIONAL MISSION
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE – ROME**
PROMOTES MISSION THROUGH
COMMUNICATIONS AND FUNDING FOR THE
MISSIONARY WORKS OF 1000
SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE MISSIONS
IN 23 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE

Dear Friends

“When you lose the capacity to dream, you lose the capacity to love, and the energy to love is lost”. These words by Pope Francis are very fitting as we bring to you our first newsletter for 2017. Dreams are essential to living life well; dreams are part of life itself. When our dreams include desiring the best for others, then our capacity for love increases.

As the New Year was welcomed in, perhaps many of us made resolutions. Resolutions about what we wish and pray for, what we want to achieve for ourselves and for others. For many, peace in our world is one of our greatest dreams and desires. Sadly, peace does not reign in many families and communities, peace is broken in so many countries of our world. People are suffering, our world, our planet is suffering.

We as a Congregation have been suffering since the sudden death of our beloved Sr Maureen McBride RIP in late November 2016. But we are also rejoicing as many of Maureen’s dreams have come to fruition. Only days before Maureen’s death, Sr Josephine Kane our Congregation Leader presented Sr Maureen with the first copy of our newly printed Constitutions. The culmination of a four year process which involved every Sister in the Congregation.

In Myanmar, another dream of Sr Maureen’s is about to come true when a new primary school, the first in the new era of Myanmar, is soon to open. Years of praying, dreaming and hard work but also due to the generosity of you, our partners in mission, is to become a reality.

May you and your families be richly blessed

Helen O’Sullivan RNDM *Smitha Thomas Rndm*

RNDM International Mission Development Office

“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humour, and some style”
Maya Angelou

Sister Maureen McBride RIP **8 November 1953 – 26 November 2016**

It was with great sadness that we learnt of Maureen’s sudden and tragic death on 26 November 2016 in France. Since then Sisters, friends and benefactors have been sharing stories about the extraordinary way in which their lives were touched by Maureen. There were thanks for the heartfelt gratitude for Maureen’s love, giftedness and life, for the encouragement and inspiration she was to so many.

As a congregation, Maureen has left us with a huge legacy. To attempt to name them would be futile, but each and every Sister will have her own story, her own memories because Maureen got to know each Sister personally.

Sr Josephine Kane, Congregation Leader commented in her eulogy “there have been many very significant events throughout Maureen’s twelve years of leadership of the congregation and she has expanded the horizons of our missionary hearts ... You have been the light in the darkness and the hope that brings vision and possibility. You have been this for our RNDM congregation and for many others - religious and laity. For us you have ‘fanned the flame’ brightly. May you now rest well in God’s eternal love and peace.”



“Care more than others think necessary; trust more than others think wise; serve more than others think practical” Anonymous

We are so blessed and thankful that you our friends, family, benefactors – our partners in mission – continue to support our projects across the congregation, where our Sisters are working with some of the most marginalised people



Developing Partnership – Kulaman, Philippines and SHGC Oakleigh, Australia

Sr Madeleine Barlow RNDM writes

The staff and students at Sacred Heart Girl’s College Oakleigh have had a strong commitment to partnership with RNDM mission projects for many years. However, in 2010 a new development took place which has deepened our relationship with the mission of the Sisters in the Philippines and not just with the Sisters, but with the people with whom they work and the poor they serve.

In 2010 a group of teachers spent their September holidays on mission in the Philippines. Under the guidance of Sr Kate O’Neill they visited the Kuya Centre in Manila and learnt to understand the RNDM response to the urban poor on the streets of Manila – especially the plight of impoverished women and children. As well they travelled to Kulaman in Mindanao and visited the mission with the Menubo Tribal people.

Since 2010 almost fifty Teachers have been involved in the Philippines project and in the last three years 30 students. The benefits to our school are inestimable. We have forged strong relationships with many people connected to RNDM Philippine Mission. It is a most enriching partnership.

In December 2016 ten Sacred Heart Girls and four Menubo girls met in Manila for an immersion experience. For all of them it was their first time to visit the city. The fourteen students and their teachers enjoyed four days of meeting together. We called it the **Dialogue of Life**. The girls shared stories of life, culture, dance, music and even painted nails! They shopped for food and cooked traditional meals for each other. Together they were introduced to the difficult living conditions of the poor in Manila and together they struggled to understand such poverty and such resilience in the people living on the streets of Manila. Together they laughed, played, danced and made close friendships – an experience that none of them will forget.



Wonderful young women just being together

“What I want to remember the most is what the Menubo girls taught us about their culture and their way of life ... this was the best experience. Those girls brought so much laughter and joy - memories I will treasure!” (Year 11 student 2016)

“You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty” Mahatma Gandhi

South Sudan Sr Margaret Scott RNDM in Riimenze writes

In early January 2017 I witnessed 1,000 people camped around the church compound under the mango trees. Some had tarpaulins strung up and others had makeshift structures. They did not look in any way permanent. **A little more than a week later there were more than 4,000 people!!!** The nights are now cold and people are suffering. Those who do not have a tarpaulin were putting up palm branches which give a little measure of privacy but no protection from the weather (see photo).

As people arrive they register at the church. They are sent to different areas with their own village people. Leaders care for their groups. Latrines are dug by the various groups for their people. There is a shortage of water. It is shocking to see the people having to resort to living like this so they are not killed by the SPLA government soldiers. The people have been told clearly the rebels are to surrender, and no one is to harbour a rebel. Anyone found outside of the restricted area may be killed. They must be a rebel or supporter if they are not at the church. The people are suffering ... A couple of the young men told me that had never witnessed anything as bad as this before. They are horrified and frightened. No one knows what to do.

This is a desperate situation now. Sr Rosa RNDM is doing an amazing job and she is very much appreciated. The presence of Solidarity (*Solidarity South Sudan, which RNDM is a partner congregation member*) is somehow consoling for the people. The government has a lot to answer for. There will be more hell when the rain comes and only death will follow.



Please pray and invite others to pray for ALL the people of South Sudan

United Kingdom & Ireland Sr Rose Mary Harbinson RNDM writes

St Mary, Star of the Sea Primary School, St Leonard's-on-Sea, East Sussex

Each year the pupils of St Mary's are engaged in various activities that engage in cultural diversity programmes. They are great fundraisers for numerous projects: their own twinning with a school in Sierra Leone, One World Week, raising money for UNICEF and with parents produce an International Food Fayre. The school won a prestigious award: International School Award from the British Council 2103-2016. This award was for their work and communication with Queen of the Mission School, Kolkata, which is still on-going.

Their energies for fundraising in 2016 was for the RNDM Christmas Projects and they chose all of them. After a visit to the school talking to representatives of the six classes, each were able to explain who they were going to support and why. Over the weeks leading up to Christmas they engaged in cake sales, and various class projects to be part of an RNDM missionary activity. Thanks to the Head, Mrs Jane Smith and her staff and the encouragement of Mrs Gillian Gubi, the pupils were able to carry out their dreams and raised a significant amount for the four projects. Over the years, St Mary's have raised money for our RNDM missions and welcomed just recently, RNDM Sisters and lay teachers from Bangladesh and North East India during their Euphrasie Barbier pilgrimage.



Children with some of their creative "for sale" signs

“A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work” Colin Powell

Pyay, Myanmar

It is with great excitement that our Sisters in Myanmar are witnessing a dream come true. Who would have believed only a few years ago that the opening of a brand new primary school would have been possible. It is because of that dreaming, coupled with the generosity of you our friends and benefactors – our partners in mission – that funding has enabled this dream to come true.

Work still continues on the building site, putting all the finishing touches to the building and creating a safe and fun playground for the children. The school is expected to open in June 2017.

The new school is a 3-storeyed building and it consists of 10 classrooms for children from Kindergarten to Grade 4, an office room for the school principal and the secretary, a teachers' meeting room, a library, a music room, a wonderful multi-purpose hall (which can also be used for community events), toilets and a playground in the compound.

The school will admit over 250 students from Kindergarten to Grade 4, having 2 classes for each grade. Each student will have a desk and chair. Ceiling fans will be fixed in each room and a 50 KVA diesel generator for the school will be purchased in case of unavailability of electricity.

This project is expected to improve rates of attendance whilst simultaneously improving learning conditions and enhancing education prospects for children in this community.

The Sisters who will teach in this primary school have been the recipients of scholarships to study overseas and they will bring a truly rich and varied knowledge of current teaching practice to really make this school a jewel in the crown of the Myanmar Province.



The beginning – August 2016



Euphrasie Primary School, Pyay, Myanmar
The first in the new regime – February 2017

Thank You to all our partners in mission for fulfilling this dream!!

RNDM INTERNATIONAL MISSION DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

ROME, ITALY — imdo@rndmgen.org

For further information contact: Srs Helen O'Sullivan or Smitha Thomas RNDM
Suore di Nostra Signora delle Missioni, Via di Bravetta 628, Roma 00164, Italy
Phone: +39 0666 158400 Email: imdo@rndmgen.org

Please view our RNDM Website: www.rndm.org

