



Keeping in touch

Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
OVERSEAS AID INCORPORATED

MAY 2020

SOUTH SUDAN

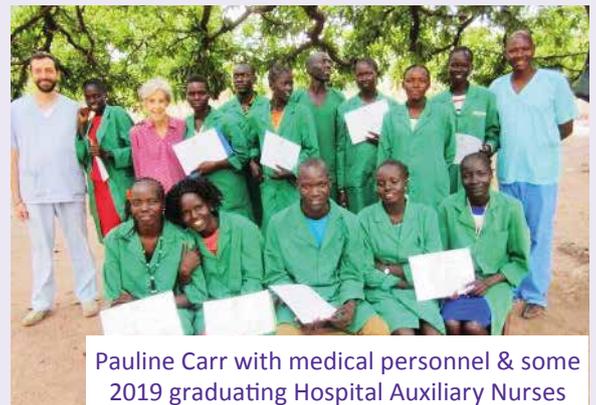
Celebrating 25 years of OLSH presence

It is with great joy, pride and gratitude that we celebrate this year the Silver Jubilee of the continued presence of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in the Mapuordit Mission, Diocese of Rumbek, South Sudan. In 1995, two intrepid Daughters set out from Australia to work with the Jesuit Refugee Service in the then war-torn land of Sudan, arriving in Mapuordit on 24th February. (South Sudan gained independence from the Republic of the Sudan in 2011). Bishop Cesare Mazzolari MCCJ welcomed Srs Jo Kenny and Moira Lynch (both nurses) with some misgiving, believing their sixty years of age plus a little would not withstand the tumultuous demands of a refugee centre. Very soon he was to learn that the recruiting Jesuit's comments "These ladies will run rings around many of your staff" were to become a reality! Today we stand on their shoulders, as well as on the shoulders of the many who have committed themselves to the work here since their arrival.

Sr Jo Kenny wrote soon after she and Sr Moira arrived: *We were welcomed by a group of singing women and children who walked beside the truck – the women showing their joy by a high screeching trill. Then we walked with Bishop into the large fenced compound which is within the school compound.... This holds store houses, living quarters, kitchen, shower room, toilet and eating house – all made of bamboo slats with grass roofs and all circular (tukuls). Some are completely walled with mud. Moira and I have one each. There is also a chapel – the poorest place in Sudan, I'm sure. The cathedral is under the trees outside the school rooms.*

In this war-torn wilderness of displaced people, Sr Moira set up a clinic – a couple of bamboo huts, no doctors or qualified medical personnel of any kind apart from herself and Sr Jo, and limited supplies of medicines – no power, no running water, no sanitation, no refrigeration, no nothing. This clinic is now a hospital with 113 beds.

Ms Pauline Carr has been a faithful, highly skilled medical worker, ministering with us for many years as a faithful partner in mission. She wrote in 2010: *The present hospital – opened in 2002 – has rapidly developed from the pioneering and courageous efforts of a small band of OLSH Sisters back in the mid-1990s, whose rudimentary dispensary functioned under a tree where all comers were treated with the best that these Sisters could offer. In 2001, Dr Rosario Iannetti, an Italian Comboni Brother and surgeon, was asked by the diocese to take over the health care of the area. With his enormous energy, drive, vision and passion for the work, he has developed the hospital to the point where patients travel for days to Mapuordit, hearts full of hope that this hospital will offer them the help they are searching for.*



Pauline Carr with medical personnel & some 2019 graduating Hospital Auxiliary Nurses

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The year following the first arrival, 1996, welcomed another two Australian Daughters – Sr Mary Batchelor, a teacher, and Sr Maureen Carey, a nurse. At the time of their arrival, exploding bombs were still a reality but since Mapuordit was bushland, the mission never became a major war target; however, the usual dugout shelters were available, and all civilians and even school children knew the ominous sound of the approaching Russian Antinov, the sign of live bombs on the way.

With the arrival of Sr Mary Batchelor, the OLSH involvement in Education commenced. She wrote in 2013: *The school began in 1993 with 200 pupils, but the numbers rapidly increased; the pupils kept coming, walking long distances on empty stomachs – no matter how hot, no matter how wet, no matter how sick, no matter how hungry. They were starved for education. The teachers, with little education of their own, taught from textbooks and received only food in remuneration – all committed to the education of the young.*



2012 - Sr Mary with some women



A classroom in the early days

The classrooms were bamboo huts – grass roofs, dirt floors and a log to sit on if you were lucky. A few bamboo sticks separated classrooms, but they sure didn't separate the noise! I taught in those classrooms for many years, with termites eating away the building and snakes dropping down from the roofs...

Secondary school opened in 1997 – a giant step in faith. We started with literally nothing, but the impetus which drove us to open was to save the year 8 leavers from being drafted into the army. (There was no such thing as freedom to enlist.)

Sr Wendy Violet, a teacher, and Sr Koreti Terrimoa, a nurse, began the trickle of Sisters entering the mission in the 21st Century. Following their arrival in 2001, another 13 sisters arrived in the ensuing years from Australia, Kiribati, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. Both Wendy and Koreti guided the setting up of our present compound.

In the 25 intervening years, the education infrastructure progressed from small thatched buildings or open classrooms under trees, to fully permanent structures – a desk for each pupil, painted walls, available textbooks. The current primary school enrolment is 1,452; the secondary 427, including over 65 female students. All structures are permanent. Sr Philippa Murphy's valued intervention secured the change over from thatched and semi-permanent structures to the now sturdy, permanent structures.

The passing years and new personnel have witnessed an expansion of our works to include women's and agricultural development, borehole provision to access water, involvement in the parish nursery school, 20 satellite schools where we provide minimal supplies to enable the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills, Sunday school, and home and hospital visitation. The future is an open horizon but certainly holds hope of further development, especially among the women, continued creative support for education and hopefully resumed involvement in the medical field.



Sr Wendy with some lepers



2010 – Sr Philippa & students
in permanent classroom



2009 - Sr Rita with a family

I conclude with a quotation from one of Sr Mary Batchelor’s letters written February 1996.

Our compound is full of tukuls – there is a tukul for everything. We have our own private domain, but not totally private – snakes, scorpions, rats share the tukul. If I could pinpoint one thing I find hardest, it would be the weather... heat has never been my great love Eating is not an attractive pastime in this climate drinking water has to come from Akot, a distance of 27 kms. I go for a walk each day and along the winding tracks I find broken down tukuls, small groups of friendly people, destitute but welcoming. But these people and the lovely children far outweigh any physical inconveniences. I am happy here.

Here is a list of missionaries serving or who have served in South Sudan:

Sr Josephine Kenny	1995	medical
Sr Moira Lynch	1995 – 2001	medical
Sr Mary Batchelor	1996 – 2014	education
Sr Maureen Carey	1996	medical
Sr Wendy Violet	2001 – to present	education
Sr Koreti Terrimoa	2001 – 2004	medical
Sr Rita Grunke	2004 – to present	pastoral/education
Sr Jeanne Futwembun	2005 – 2010	education/pastoral
Sr Jeviana de Araujo	2005 – 2010	education/pastoral
Sr Ernestine Tandisebok	2005 – 2010	education/pastoral
Sr Agnes Maino	2008 – 2009	pastoral
Sr Philomena Ani’isa	2009 – 2015	medical
Sr Philippa Murphy	2009 – 2014	education
Sr Christine Raotitei	2009 – 2010	education/pastoral
Sr Virginia Supartini	2010 – 2015	education
Sr Valentine Pawarangan	2010 – 2014	education
Sr Lorraine McCleary	2011 – 2012	education
Sr Bernadet Sidok	2018 – to present	education
Sr Francisca Suwari	2018 – to present	pastoral



Current community – Srs Wendy,
Francisca, Bernadet & Rita

To all our loyal donors who, over the 25 years, have trusted our efforts and supported our involvement in health and education services, in women’s development and family life issues, in feeding the poor and destitute, we owe deep gratitude. It is to you we owe the success and expansion of our continued development and the many services we are able to render. Yours are the hands, you are the people enabling our mission in Mapuordit to continue.

Sr Rita Grunke



Cazombo, Angola – girls learning to sew



Tzaneen, South Africa – Early Childhood Education certificates

Dear Donors,

I cannot let this issue pass without mentioning the coronavirus pandemic. It goes without saying that it has affected all of us in various ways. We are all currently living in a very different world – perhaps, as some are wishing, when all this is over it will be a better world. Hopefully, you and your loved ones are managing and coping with the change that the pandemic has brought to your daily lives.

At the time of writing, the people whom our Sisters care for in Angola, Kiribati, Philippines, South Africa and South Sudan are at least virus-free. As you would be aware, because of their poverty and health condition, they are susceptible to contracting any disease. We pray that they and the Sisters will stay well during this health crisis.

And I pray the same for you and your families. May God be with us always.

*Sr Bernadette Koning
Executive Officer*



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