

12 May 2021

International Nurses Day – Wednesday 12 May 2021
Our unsung heroes - Catholic missionary nuns

It is humbling to think that, throughout the world, in remote or poverty-stricken locations, Catholic missionary nuns, without publicity or applause, are quietly nursing the sick and the poor back to health.

Well-known nuns that spring to mind include those who saved the Von Trapp family from the Nazis in *The Sound of Music* or, the talented art historian, Sister Wendy Beckett. But most Catholic missionary nuns are not in the public eye.

Probably the best-known Catholic missionary nun in recent times, is Mother Teresa, founder of the *Order of Missionaries of Charity* and much-loved confidante of Diana, Princess of Wales.



“It is not about how much you do, but how much love you put into what you do that counts.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta
(Gonxha Agnes Bojaxhiu)
1910 - 1997

More recently, there have been scenes of terrible violence in Myanmar. Sister Ann Rose Ny Twang went down on her knees in front of policemen in the northern Myanmar town of Myitkyina. She pleaded with them to stop shooting protesters in March’s coup. Ultimately and despite assurances to the contrary, two protesters were brutally killed, and several others injured.

Nun kneels in front of police to stop Myanmar violence, but in vain



“Our clinic floor became a sea of blood. We need to value life. It made me feel so sad.”

Sister Twang who runs a clinic in the town of Myitkyina.

So, today, on International Nurses Day, we are delighted to applaud these dedicated Catholic missionary nuns, who commit their lives to nursing the sick and in the service of others.

Throughout its history and as part of its operating strategy, SFLG has partnered with several Catholic Orders; missionary nuns who devote their careers to nursing people affected by leprosy.

“It is impossible to quantify how much our dedicated Catholic missionary nuns have transformed lives, caring for people with leprosy and leprosy stigma. Their legacy of love and care is immeasurable and, thank heavens, continues unceasingly. We feel privileged to support the great work of these unsung heroes” SFLG, Chief Executive Officer, Clare McIntosh.

Our respect, appreciation and thanks go to the following Catholic Missionary Orders:

- Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, Holy Family Hansensorium, India.
- Assisi Sisters of Mary Immaculate, LCU Pushpa Hospital, India.
- Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Poorna Sukha Leprosy Project, India.
- Congregation of Samaritan Sisters, Dhori Mata Samaritan Seva Kendra, India.
- Sisters of St Joseph Cluny, St Rock’s Hospital, India.
- Assisi Sisters of Mary Immaculate, St Catald Dermatological Centre, India.
- Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, St Joseph’s Leprosy Hospital, India.
- Salesian Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, Sacred Heart Leprosy Centre, India
- Missionary Sisters of St Theresa Of The Child Jesus, Ganta Rehabilitation Centre, Liberia.

- Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, St Theresa Orphanage and Leprosy Colony, Myanmar.
- Medical Missionaries of Mary, St Patricks Hospital, Mile Four Hospital, Nigeria.
- The Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, Marian Home, Nigeria.
- Comboni Missionary Sisters, Ediofe Health Centre, Uganda.
- Little Sisters of St Francis of Assisi, St Francis Hospital, Buluba and Nyenga, Uganda
- Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Badulla Centre, Hendala Centre and Manthivu Centre, Sri Lanka.

Chronic tropical ulcers caused by leprosy, if left untreated, may lead to the loss of limbs and amputation. Leprosy ulcers do not readily heal, especially in a tropical climate, even when leprosy infection has been treated. Untreated ulcers may also be the cause of leprosy stigma. Missionary nuns may spend a lifetime cleaning and dressing ulcers caused by leprosy.



Assistive devices being given to a patient at the Marian Home, run by the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, Ebubu, Nigeria.



Healthcare providers receive medical training at Ediofe Health Centre run by Comboni Missionary Sisters, Arua, Uganda.

“Effective, compassionate, Christian care is hard to beat.”

Dr Gosia Brykczyńska, RN/RSCN, European President of The International Association of Catholic Nurses (SICIAMS), SFLG Trustee.