

Vol xx  
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# TIDINGS *from* TANZANIA

## Dear Sisters and Friends

It is with a deep sense of loss that we endeavour to produce this Volume of Tidings, as we recall our beloved Sr. Adriana who faithfully, together with the community, each time gathered the material for every issue and then with Louis created always a worthwhile and interesting newsletter. We remember Adriana with affection and with gratitude. We want to express our sincere appreciation to Louis for sharing his expertise and for his keen interest in this work and in the mission here in Tanzania. We greet you all and send you our best wishes and God's blessings.



*May the Angels lead you, Adriana, into Paradise*



## Sr. Adriana's Time in Tanzania

Sr. Adriana came to Tanzania first in 1973 with Sr. Aquinas. Together they pioneered Holy Union mission in Maua Seminary and worked closely with the Capuchin sisters as well. Adriana returned to her home province after two years and was assigned to Cheltenham but always wanted to return to Africa. She got her opportunity in 1985 when she took over the administration of the Homecraft school in Msimbazi started the Computer Centre there and despite the heat and mosquitoes and the lack of water she adjusted well to her new home. There she shared community life with Sr. Annemarie for five years.

When the General Chapter agreed to welcome Tanzanian women as members they moved to a bigger house in the compound of the Precious Blood Fathers in Kunduchi. It was here that Srs Bene, Agatha, Eugenia and Dostea had their first experiences of religious life. Adriana started a computer school here too, the technology was new then, much in demand and lucrative. Around this time the AIDS epidemic was raging and Sr Adriana was highly involved with PASADA, helping victims of HIV by providing the data bases needed to attract donor funding.

She also went to Cameroun to help the young Sisters there with computer technology. For the Millennium the congregation built us our first house in Tanzania at Maji Matitu (supervised by Sr Eleonor McNally) and Adriana was a pioneer there too, with Srs Eileen, Annemarie, Annette and Bene, who was then a postulant.

The new house was our first property in Tanzania and acquired in order to facilitate the reception of new members. Building our own house was a further commitment to being present in Tanzania and putting down roots. Adriana took a great interest in every new aspirant and encouraged their formation and education. She was highly supportive of all the activities of Holy Union Mission in Tanzania and fully involved in its growth and development. Adriana was very compassionate and quietly helped many individuals and poor families with education and basic needs.

In 2009 there was a request from women with children who had severe disabilities to provide them with a Centre where they could be helped, instead of having to travel far to Morogoro or Mlali, (Dodoma). Sr Adriana volunteered on behalf of Holy Union to look for the ways and means to help and in 2009 Matumaini Centre was opened to help children with disability and to support their families. This Centre is a tremendous success, not only in helping the children and their parents but also in helping to reduce the stigma around handicap and in fighting against superstition and witchcraft in the society. Sr Adriana did all the management/administration and fundraising for Matumaini until she died in January 2018. She was tireless in seeking government help to run Matumaini, this is not yet forthcoming but we live in hope. Her outstanding effort and dedication were recognized by the Church when she was awarded a papal honour, the Bene Merenti medal in 2012.

May Adriana rest now in Heaven's peace and may her example continue to inspire the next generation of Holy Union Sisters.



*Weep  
Not  
For  
Me*

# MATUMAINI

## THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL AT MATUMAINI CENTER

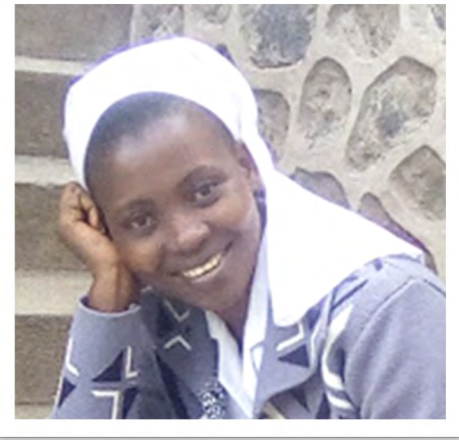
In the Tanzanian church this year, we celebrate 150 years of Catholic Christianity. Inspired by Pope Francis' call we live "The joy of the Gospel". The SPIRITAN Missionaries were the first Missionaries in Tanzania, and it was not easy for them at all. They were burdened with freed slaves for whom they were responsible. They had to cope with different languages, cultures, a different climate and tropical diseases, which killed many of them. To evangelize at that time they even had to translate the Scriptures into the local language.

For me, a missionary of today, it is a blessing to work at Matumaini center where children with special needs are brought for help and care even though it was not easy for me either, at the beginning. It is my fifth month now since I was sent to this mission after making my vows on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2018.

As a young professed, full of zeal and enthusiasm I went to take the position of our beloved late Sr Adriana who died suddenly on 9<sup>th</sup> January three weeks before I made my vows. She was the founder of this Center for children with disability.

I knew that I needed to live the Gospel with joy to bring hope, courage and life to the women, children and workers who were heartbroken after Sr Adriana's death.

With the help of my community we worked hard to raise money in ten parishes of the Archdiocese and the response was generous especially from the Catholic Women's Association (WAWATA) from St Peters' Deanery.



*Sr Fides Peter*

"Even if I die this center will continue," was Sr Adriana's message to the workers at Matumaini center before she went to make her Retreat in Maua in December 2017. All our Sisters are committed to fulfilling this promise.

We thank God for our local benefactors and friends from near and far who enable us to continue the good work. The Center caters for the very poor, the most marginalized and most vulnerable children and families. It has helped a great deal to get rid of the stigma of handicap and to change backward attitudes attributing disability to witchcraft. This is very important in our society and I'm happy to play my part in promoting respect and love for all children, no matter how they are or how they look.

*Sr Fides Peter*



# JUBILEE 150 OF THE CHURCH IN TANZANIA

## 1868 - 2018

This year the Catholic Church of Tanzania will mark 150 years since the arrival of the first Catholic Missionaries in the country at Bagamoyo, the entry point of Catholic Evangelization in mainland Tanganyika as it was then.

The Tanzanian Church is grateful for having a good foundation of faith due to the efforts of the First Missionaries who brought us to the Gospel of Christ. The first Catholic evangelization was by the Portuguese Augustinian missionaries who arrived with Vasco De Gama in 1499 at Zanzibar. They did not last long due to Arab Moslem opposition. Their mission ended in 1698. due to the Oman-Arab conquest.

The second and successful evangelization in the 19th century was pioneered by three religious congregations, the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, the White Fathers and the Benedictine Monks.

These Missionaries will always be remembered. Although they suffered many challenges like the hot climate,

the language barrier and diseases like Malaria and Yellow Fever leading to early deaths, the brothers and sisters established the Mission of Christ which was their main focus.

These missionaries carried out evangelization through education. They established schools, colleges, institutes, seminaries, and catechetical formation centers in Tanzania, which have played an important role in the spreading of the Good News.

### Missionaries of Today

Now we are the Missionaries of today who are working in this broken world; a world which is full of fears, injustice, corruption and many calamities. We Holy Union Sisters are carrying on the task initiated by the First Missionaries by providing quality Christian education to the youth in our own schools and in the parishes. We also share the Gospel joy with the women and disabled children at Matumaini Centre as part of our contribution to the work of the Church of Tanzania.

Although we too encounter many challenges in our Mission today we



*Sr Glory Beda*

have hope, trust and courage. We gain new zeal when we reflect on what the first Missionaries achieved, with great faith and courage in spite of hardships and even persecution. We believe that our contribution to the Church of Tanzania will continue to grow and flourish as we work hard to read the signs of our times and respond to what is needed in our society today.

*Sr Glory Beda*



*Tanzania Area Community Pilgrimage to Bagamoyo*



### In Memoriam

In Tanzania we mourned and prayed for Sr. Margaret Barry, our former Congregation Leader, who was laid to rest on 22<sup>nd</sup> August .R.I.P.

While visiting Maua, Kilimanjaro, before the Millenium Margaret shared and encouraged the dream of Sr Aquinas to build a Teacher Training College in Moshi diocese. Founded as St Joseph's Teachers College, today it is a constituent college of St Augustine's University of Tanzania, with more than 4000 students following courses from Diploma to Ph.D.

'Those that understand will shine with the brightness of the sky. Those who teach others to live right will shine like the stars forever and ever.'" (Daniel 12:3)

Wapumzike kwa amani.

# EDUCATION AND NOVITIATE FORMATION



## Holy Union Student in Kenya

Hello Sisters and Readers of Tidings from Sr. Maria.

I have been studying at Tangaza University in Nairobi since 2017, taking a Diploma in Education, specializing in English Literature. Kenya had an election last year when Uhuru Kenyatta was re-elected as the new President. The opposition party which was under Mr Raila Odinga was not happy because they suspected that the Jubilee party had stolen the votes. Therefore they took their claim to the court of law, where the election was declared invalid and the people were required to revote for the president. Uhuru still won the election and this brought chaos to Kenya where in some areas people were fighting, claiming that they did not want Uhuru Kenyatta but wanted new changes which they claimed Mr. Raila Odinga was well capable of bringing about. For a time, it was seen that there were two presidents in the country as Mr. Raila Odinga declared himself to be the president of the country also. Later on the two men met with each other to make peace and be at one for the good of their country. They met and shook hands as a sign of reconciliation.

Until now President Uhuru Kenyatta is the Leader of the country; life is running more smoothly and people are less worried.

*Sr Maria*

## Doings in Dundani

February 2<sup>nd</sup> was a day of great rejoicing when Sr. Fides made first profession. Immediately after that she was missioned to the ministry of directing Matumaini Centre and transferred to Maji Matitu community house

On June 23<sup>rd</sup> Sr. Monicah joined Sr. Olimpia in the novitiate where they begin and continue respectively their novitiate formation.

The novitiate hosted a week long Seminar in June for novices of different Congregations within the deanery. This was much appreciated and we hope to introduce more inter-novitiate activities, sharing personnel and resources.

The novices take Sunday school each week, and many of the local children attend. We can see a need now to build some kind of shelter or playschool and eventually a kindergarten as the children are many and there are no facilities at all for them. It could be multi-purpose providing a place for the women to meet together as well, for development activities.

## New Entrants

Since joining the pre-novitiate Flavia, Eliza and Sylvia have immersed themselves in the Catechetical diploma course in Sanya Juu, Moshi where they are happy and doing very well.



*Pre Novices: Sylvia, Eliza Flavia*

## Farming News

The Farm continues to develop in Dundani. It is well utilized and yields good seasonal harvests of rice, cassava, maize, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and green vegetables. We also grow various fruits such as pawpaw, pineapples, limes, coconuts, bananas, guava and avocado. Many new fruit trees have recently been planted to provide for the future.

The community is very grateful to the Congregation for this land and the chance to cultivate it – an activity very



close to our hearts as Tanzanian women. The ten acre farm grows crops of varying kinds and these are often intermingled where possible. Not only does this provide food for the community but the monkeys and the wild boars also enjoy a tasty meal when they get the chance!

Our cow, named Black, gave birth to a beautiful calf in June which we called Assembly and she is thriving. There is another male calf a few years older, four goats, (goat manure it seems is vital for good natural fertilisation of the land). In addition to this livestock are some poultry, chickens and ducks for eggs and home consumption. Welcome to our farm!

# EDUCATION

## Debrabant Secondary - Private Education challenged

Private education in Tanzania was never the province of the elite. On the contrary, hard-pressed parents from their own and community resources built schools and tried to find teachers for them. This was when the secondary sector was totally unequal to demand and the government highly encouraged and invited those who could to invest in schools, especially at the secondary level.

The Catholic Church, among other institutions, invested in seminaries for boys, these were among the best schools in the country, where many of our present leaders in church, government and elsewhere got a good start in education.

Debrabant Secondary was initiated in 2005 when Maji Matitu primary was growing at an alarming rate and it was clear that at least one good secondary day school would be needed. This was before the vast expansion of ward schools in response to the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Due to the efforts of several donors,

Holy Union Sisters and a good team of teachers, the school is well resourced and staffed, academically successful, with many extracurricular activities providing a sound holistic education. The fees are reasonable, less than 500 euro per annum and several scholarships are provided for specially needy students, girls and boys.

In 2014 the Sisters also invested in Advanced Level studies having seen the difficulties encountered by High School students: 3-4 hours a day travelling in packed and dangerous 'daladalas' to reach formerly prestigious government schools where now they encountered only shortages of everything, desks, books, even water and worst of all very few teachers.

In the current austerity regime competing with 'free education' is very difficult. Government schools in our area are on the whole under resourced, overcrowded and understaffed. (Those who can afford it seek costly private tuition to supplement their studies, the majority cannot afford tuition).

Parents are led to believe if their children are educated in schools such as Debrabant they will not be considered in the future for government loans to go to



University. This is a serious deterrent for most parents and it doesn't help us to get students.

We want to work closely with the Government to provide the extra places needed at all levels and to model a better standard of education which will equip students of today to face the many challenges ahead. While we're going through difficult times now, we believe Holy Union has already made an important contribution to education in Dar es Salaam, in accessibility, in innovation and in quality.

We are ready, with God's help and the cooperation and recognition of the powers that be to make an even greater contribution in the years ahead.



Debrabant Staff celebrated 150 years of evangelisation when they came together for a day of Retreat and Reflection on 18<sup>th</sup> August. With the guidance of Fr. Raphael OFM.Cap. They committed themselves again to the great work of education in the spirit of Jean Baptist Debrabant.

We are now preparing a school pilgrimage to Bagamoyo, where it all began. This was also a notorious Slave Trading Centre in the past so a visit there entails a pledge to fight against slavery again, in our own time. This year the 'O' level students produced a highly entertaining and instructive anti-human trafficking drama, as part of our third Form 6 Graduation programme.

# MY THIRD VISIT TO HOLY UNION MAJI MATITU

I was delighted to return to Tanzania this summer for my third visit to the Holy Union Sisters in Mbagala. This year I stayed for just two weeks but while there have been some changes especially the passing of Sr Adriana RIP, it is all familiar territory to me.

Galway Education Centre loaded me down with a suitcase of LEGO and many other gifts for the pupils. I had brought some LEGO to COBET last year so this year's haul was for Debrabant. On my last school day the COBET pupils showed me some of their building skills, they have really progressed from last year. The LEGO is a great hit in Debrabant and the school plan to have a LEGO room in one of the empty classrooms.

Holy Union Primary School is opening a brand new computer room this month in their lovely extension. I spent a bit of time devising an ICT policy for them as I am a primary teaching principal myself and it is my area of expertise.

Then it was onto COBET where I first began two years ago. In 2016 on my first visit I helped Rodney set up the computer classes. It was a great experience, so humbling to see children who never even touched any type of electronic device before. We had to put stickers on the left button of the mouse and often had to hold their hands to show how to tap the keyboard. Rodney now works for a bank as he has to provide for a family but his wife Irene teaches the computers. When I called to see her she had a CPU open and was fixing it, when her class arrived she asked one of the kids to finish the job. I couldn't believe it to see this child check the inside to make sure everything was in the right place, put the cover back on and dock the CPU back with the monitor while attaching all the cables. These children who come from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are now confident computer whizz kids!

I spent a few days in Debrabant and I am delighted to report that the first Coderdojo in Tanzania is going strong. The school is still buzzing from the involvement in Africa Code week last year and I know from some of the organisers in Ireland that Debrabant school was their highlight.

I spent two days giving workshops in internet safety to the students and was also lucky to catch the steel band at practice and watch some of the school league.



*Students are fascinated with Lego*

I managed also to get a few quick visits to Matumaini and the other houses in Saku and Dundanni. Every year I am so amazed with all the good work being carried out for the children and families of Mbagala. With the help of God I'll return again next year, it's very hard to stay away!

*Éilis Treacy  
Ballinasloe, Galway, Ireland  
July 2018*



*Irene Rodney Eilis* ►



# MOVING ON

## Louis van den Berg



For twenty years I have helped Sr. Adriana to produce 'Tidings from Tanzania'. Its first edition recorded the momentous decision to set up a Holy Union Community in Maji Matitu, and subsequent issues have recorded each chapter of the Community's history. All the excitement, the inspired initiatives, they are there; the succession of schools founded by the Sisters and handed over as going concerns to the State sector; the parallel foundation of a private educational system, from Kindergarten to Secondary school; the extension into welfare work with COBET and Matumaini.

At the same time, the Community has been setting the foundations for its

own future, with a far sighted programme of formation to ensure its future as a free-standing indigenous entity. One of the pleasures of working on Tidings has been to follow the progress of the women it records from aspirant to professed Sister. One cannot fail to be impressed by their readiness to take over from Adriana in her numerous roles, after her sudden and unexpected loss.

Working with Sr. Adriana has brought home the value of Faith. Never for a moment did she give up. Through all the disappointments, the frustrations, the money problems, Adriana's unflinching mantra was "God will provide". And God has indeed provided. Matumaini itself witnesses to that. She was worldly-wise, too. Here is what she had to say back in 1999 about charity giving: "Just playing Santa Claus and handing out money is not good for anyone. It only encourages people to beg. We have to find a way that will encourage people to make efforts of their own". How many people have listened and learnt from those words!

Now it is time for Tidings to be produced "in house". I wish Sr. Marion, Sr. Fides and all the contributors every success, and I look forward to sharing their Tidings from Tanzania for many years to come.

This Newsletter tells of so much progress (with the occasional set-back), This has only been possible with your help, for which we thank you and remember you in our prayers. However the faster we grow, the more support we need. You can find out more about our life and work, or donate online at our website: [www.holyuniontanzania.co.uk](http://www.holyuniontanzania.co.uk) Alternatively, you can visit: [www.virginmoneygiving.com](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com) and type 'LSU' into the 'find a Charity' box.

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**Dr. Helen O'Connell**, a former student of Sr Annette in Banagher Convent Secondary school, spent a month with us in July. With her background in aid work, community development and clinical psychology Helen helped us to evaluate all areas of our work and made many helpful suggestions for improvement. Helen worked with Concern in Tanzania in the 1990's and still remembered her Swahili. As a young woman she had a major responsibility in one of the first refugee camps set up to receive people fleeing the Rwandan genocide. She regaled us with many stories and some great songs on the guitar and ukelele. Another of her many talents was the making of superlative coffee! We are very thankful to Helen for agreeing to be our Liaison person now with Misesan Cara/Irish Aid. With her ability to manage complicated applications and master the IT requirements we look forward to a brighter future and some good funding opportunities.

Thanks from us all to **Sr. Eileen Morrissey**, who was our Liaison with Misesan Cara for several years and who has now retired from the post.



*We were delighted to welcome William van den Berg – the lovely grandson of Louis – when he came to Tanzania with Louis in June*