

From Sr. Paula Healy

Just a brief history about my life. I am from a farming community  
And during high school I read an article on the Franciscan Missionary Sisters For  
Africa and was touched by their Missionary work in Africa. I joined the Congregation  
in 1965 and trained as a Nurse/Midwife. My first mission was to our mission hospital in  
N>Eastern Kenya to a small remote town. We first learned the language and then worked  
in different departments in the Hospital We had no phones, electricity or TV. Light was  
supplied by a generator for 4 hours each night, we used kerosene lamps for the  
remainder of the night. The generator was only switched on when we had an emergency  
operation at night. We had mobile Clinics out to the surrounding villages to carry out  
vaccination for Polio Measles, whooping cough etc, also to provide good ante natal care  
for the Pregnant women. Water was always scarce and a problem as we depended on  
the rainy season to fill the Dam which supplied water to the hospital. After 6 years I was  
transferred to one of our very remote health clinics. Here we had to go 40 miles to get  
fuel for the generator and the lamps, water was scarce, we collected water in tanks  
during the rainy season, when the rains failed or were not sufficient we dug deep into the  
dry river bed waited and let the water seep in and then filled our buckets and walked back  
to the mission. The water was very salty and attempts to drill for water was not  
successful. Since it was a remote area, women did not come in for ante natal care and  
this lead to a lot of difficult obstetric cases which required transfer to the Government  
hospital 25 miles from us. We had a Lepersarium where new cases of leprosy were  
treated and old cases came for reviews. We also went out to the surrounding areas to  
educate the people and provide vaccination programmes ante natal care and mother and  
child care we also had the first High School for girls in the area After 12 yrs in Kenya I  
was transferred to Ethiopia. The first mission was 10, 000 ft in the hills., it was very  
cool and could be very cold sometimes I worked here teaching Traditional Birth  
Attendance and supervising them at ante natal clinics in the village, later I went on to  
train In Home Base Care for HIV AIDS patients at our Hospital in Uganda, returning to  
set up Care Centers at our various Missions and Education for Life Programmes . After 13  
yrs I came to Zambia to work first on a Home Based Care Program and later with the  
orphan children here. I visit Ireland every 2 years for 2 months, my brothers and  
sisters live in Ireland, my mother is 95 yrs old, she is very active, able to care for  
herself, go to Church, shop and cook. The family look in on her and this year I will  
go end of March to mid April for a visit. As I said this is a brief summary, I have  
been happy and fulfilled in my religious life and have no regrets