



MERCY
GLOBAL
PRESENCE

Distinct Mercy Voice from South Sudan

Ailish O'Brien (The Congregation)

I was wondering why I received an invitation to be a distinct Mercy voice, “to participate in an exploration directed towards finding new images, new language and new theology to ground Mercy Global Presence”, until I reflected on the mission I am part of in South Sudan, with the organisation ‘Solidarity with South Sudan’.

Being one of only two Sisters of Mercy in the whole of South Sudan might well be enough to make the voice ‘distinct’, but the particular shape of the everyday context of my ministry ratifies it and will hopefully contribute something to the exploration.

Sisters of Mercy have always been involved in education. That is our tradition. My ministry here in South Sudan, to assist the South Sudanese through education, is at the same time old and new. The difference is that in this place I am doing it in collaboration with lay and religious men and women, called by God from all parts of the globe, living together in a mixed, intercultural, inter-congregational community, in partnership with South Sudanese people, supported by agencies worldwide, and with the one vision of bringing about positive change in the newest country in the world.

To me, that is the new.

To tell my story of people and deep social change, I have borrowed the words and images of Nicole Moran and Nyokabi Kahura (with permission). Nicole and Nyokabi visited Solidarity Teacher Training College, Yambio, South Sudan, where I live and work, in February 2019, and gathered the testimonies and images in this document. The stories speak for themselves. There is deep social change taking place because of our work here in South Sudan.

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