



Living Out My Response in Faith on My Mission

By Sister Mónica Olguín

In my heart, I always harbored a great desire to be a missionary in Africa. When the opportunity was before me, I did not think about it much, but resolved to carry that dream asleep in my heart.

But the dream burned like the fire, the energy, and the light that fuels a personal quest. With my confidence placed in God, I began to walk on these paths of faith, of uprooting, of constant surprises, in the loving listening of God. It sends me to insert myself in another culture, in a world completely different from mine, but still the same people of God and the Church where we are to serve and to extend the reign of God by making it known and showing others God's face as a loving and merciful Father.

I am working at St. Vincent De Paul School, which belongs to the Vincentian Fathers in Songea, Tanzania. I teach English to third graders in primary education and this has been a challenging experience for me. It has made me see another reality and God has guided

me to see how to make myself present as a source of new life, new meaning, and new hope.

I will be teaching the same grade this year, but I feel different now, because I have been able to immerse myself more deeply into the culture of these children. I have learned how to reach them with a simple smile, a kind gesture, a kind discipline, a firm gaze, but above all to have a heart full of love—and to be able give it to them. This is especially important for children who might be lacking love and attention from their families.

The children are very cheerful; it is a cheerful and charismatic culture that enjoys life at all times. They dance and there is no hurry to get things done. As for their faith, both Muslims and Catholics live in harmony here; they respect each other greatly and there are no conflicts of faith. The same is true of the students; they all pray our prayers without a problem. Here they are all treated equally.

My commitment as a consecrated woman is to continue looking for new ways to give life where I am. At this time, I cannot do many things because I have not yet mastered the Swahili language spoken here. But I am working to understand and be able to speak it, to communicate better with the people, and to be able to do more to respond to the call of feeling myself sent by God to fulfill Christ's mission.