



Ann-Marie Wilson

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Location: Britain

- What I do: Working to end FGM and violence against women and girls, specifically across Africa and the diaspora where FGM is practised.
- **Empowering** people pushed to the edges
- 🖥 🗗 of life to reach their God-given potential

Dear colleagues and friends,

As we close another rich and eventful quarter, I reflect on the journey from May to July, a season marked by learning, ministry, connection and travel and renewed clarity in my calling. From meaningful pilgrimages to energising conferences, each aspect of this season has shaped and strengthened my vocational path and the vows I reconfirmed this summer at Malling Abbey and Church Mission Society (CMS).

Work with the Orchid Project continues to positively impact communities and unify efforts to end FGM. February and March were especially active, with the International Day of Zero Tolerance (6 February) and our attendance at the 69th Commission on the Status of Women. We launched a campaign calling for global action through stronger commitment and investment to end FGM. In April, the Horn of Africa dialogue series led to three new resources: Signs of Change, Accelerating Change, and Evidence of Change, all available via webinar at fgmcri.org



All Nations Christian College 60th Celebrations

In May, our advocacy team launched the miniseries Changing the World One Moment at a Time, using TikTok, Spotify, and Apple Podcasts to try and engage a younger audience. We continued to collaborate with the University of Birmingham to amplify awareness that FGM contributes to over 44,000 deaths annually, equivalent to one girl dying every 12 minutes. We developed a policy brief that aims to reframe FGM as a public health emergency and a major contributor to child mortality.

By July, we completed fieldwork and reports for Malaysia (fgmcri.org/country/malaysia/) and delivered the final report to the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). We have almost completed the Indonesia report and will launch it in the next few months.

I recently joined the Diocese of London's disability group and took part in Edmonton's Diocesan Disability Awareness training day. We explored access, equity and dignity in healthcare, alongside the theology of disability. This experience reaffirmed the importance of inclusive design and joined-up policy, particularly for those with visible and invisible disabilities, aligned with my recent neurodiversity training.

In mid-May, I spent a few days at Malling Abbey, Kent, where I serve as a lay sister. The retreat included spiritual guidance, reading, and six daily Benedictine services called offices, with the community of nine sisters. The peaceful rhythm of the Abbey was a chance to pause and reflect.

I was honoured to celebrate 60 years of All Nations College with over 500 alumni. I studied there from 2007-



2009. The event included praise in many languages and reflections on global mission, including my own work on eliminating FGM and writing a paper on the parallels between ending FGM and ending footbinding.

In June, our Diocesan Disability Group gathered at The Royal Foundation of St Katharine for strategic planning and relationship building. It was uplifting to meet in person after months of online collaboration and to work together on our Diocesan Disability Statement.

I also visited WWII memorial sites in France and Belgium, marking the 80th anniversary of VE Day. An emotional and poignant experience which I shared about at the Precious Women breakfast. Let us remember those who served and never returned, and pray for peace in current global conflicts.

I joined New Ground Cohousing's summer party, where I am a Friend of the members, and support modelling for art classes and end-of-life care. The gathering was full of joy; stories were shared and energy was renewed for this vital community work.

A particular highlight of the quarter was attending the Ordination of Deacons at St Paul's Cathedral, especially supporting my friend Hélène from the Caleb Stream at St Mellitus College, who serves at St Paul's, Hammersmith. Please give thanks for all newly ordained deacons and priests from my intake as they begin their ministries.

In July, a return visit to Malling Abbey brought deeper insights and time to reflect on the Rule of Saint Benedict as it applies in 2025. As we celebrated our annual oblate day, it was good to catch up and pray with the other oblate sisters and friends made in the local church community and renew our vows. We remain grateful for the spiritual community there. Please pray for everyone at Malling Abbey. I've now been attending for 18 years!

July ended at All Nations Christian College with the CMS Summer Gathering. It was a time to connect with global colleagues, reflect on shared challenges, and welcome our new CEO – my fourth. This year I mark 15 years as a mission partner, 20 years of researching to end FGM, 13 years of chaplaincy, 10 years of lay ministry and 25 years of pastoral care.

Looking ahead, this season has been filled with significance, planned and unexpected, including three more loved ones now in heaven. From sacred spaces to strategic gatherings, each event has offered an opportunity to grow deeper in calling and connection. I remain grateful for the opportunities, the people I have met along the way and the ongoing clarity of my calling that continues to unfold.

Sadly, I'm still over £6K short of my 2025–2026 budget. If you feel moved, please consider donating the cost of a cake and cuppa (or two!) monthly, to my CMS fund churchmissionsociety.org/annmariewilson.

Thank you. Your support will help me finish our research work in the Middle East. Wishing you all a blessed summer.

Blessings, Ann-Marie







Photos from top to bottom: The Vatican in Rome; WWII graves in France; Hélène and me at the Ordination of Deacons at St Paul's Cathedral; some of the oblate sisters with Sr Mary Michael at Malling Abbey



Empowering people pushed to the edges of life

It builds my faith when I hear stories from other CMS partners working with people pushed to the edges of life. I hope that you're inspired as you read about indigenous women training for ministry in Argentina, and about children receiving trauma support in DR Congo. Read more at churchmissionsociety.org/empower

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