



Spirit

## About the producers:

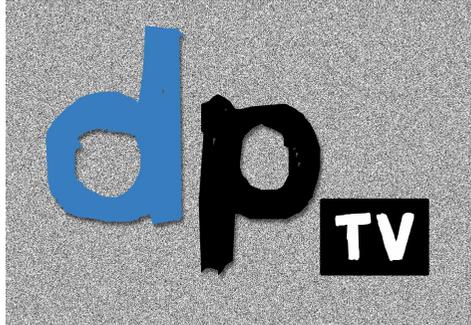
Development Perspectives is an organisation based in Drogheda, Co. Louth. Our work explores, examines and acts upon a range of issues and challenges that face our world. In order for this to work effectively, we use participatory and interactive learning methods to ensure the greatest impact for participants of our programmes.



Development Perspectives' mission is to contribute to lessening poverty, inequality and climate change through transformative education and active global citizenship.

Find out more at <https://developmentperspectives.ie>

Development Perspectives is a company limited by guarantee with no share capital (Number 466659) and has charitable status.



**DPTV** (Development Perspectives Television) is a project of Development Perspectives established in 2013. DPTV documentaries explore issues affecting our communities from a local and global perspective. View more of our documentaries at

<https://www.developmentperspectives.ie/dptv>

*This document is to serve as accompaniment to the documentary **"Spirit"** (Insert link here)*

## Talking points from the documentary.

### Talking points from the documentary:

- From watching 'Spirit' missionary services based in Africa were a positive influence or a negative one?
- At 3.57mins, Justin Kilcullen discusses how the work of the Medical Missionaries of Mary was perceived as 'state of the art' by the World Health Organisation in the 1970s and 80s.
- At 8.27mins, Justin Kilcullen discusses the societal situation for women at the time in which the Medical Missionaries of Mary began their work and how they could be viewed as a 'major breakthrough' for women's rights.

*How do you feel about this statement?*

- At 11.15mins, Gerry Kelly states that "the Medical Missionaries of Mary are a group of women that certain sections of society have possibly tried to airbrush out of history"

*What groups do you think he might be referring to?*

- At 11.28mins, Dr Conor Mulvagh talks about a shift in feelings towards the Church in Ireland from outright reverence towards revulsion.

*What could he be referring to when he says this?*

## Further discussion points about missionary work:

“The **Minister of Trade and Development, Joe Costello**, in his address to the Mísean Cara Annual General Meeting in 2012 said, *“Irish missionaries were the pioneers in the area of development cooperation, predating our own official aid programme. Indeed, you led the way for much of what the Government is now doing in the area of development assistance. The influence of the missionaries is reflected in Irish Aid’s focus on poverty reduction, on hunger, its commitment to avoiding any form of tied aid and its strong solidarity with those in greatest need.”*

Read the full text: <http://www.miseancara.ie/address-minister-state-trade-development-misean-cara-agm/>

*How do you think the work of Irish missionaries overseas impacts on the work of the Irish development sector today?*

*“The Christian missionaries were as much part of the colonising forces as were the explorers, traders and soldiers. There may be room for arguing whether in a given colony the missionaries brought the other colonialist forces or vice versa, but there is no doubting the fact that missionaries were agents of colonialism in the practical sense, whether or not they saw themselves in that light. The imperialist adventurer, Sir Henry Johnston disliked missionaries, but he conceded in praise of them that ‘each mission station is an exercise in colonisation’.” - **Walter Rodney in his How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.***

Read the full text; [https://archive.org/stream/HowEuropeUnderdevelopedAfricaByWalterRodney/3295358-walter-rodney\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/HowEuropeUnderdevelopedAfricaByWalterRodney/3295358-walter-rodney_djvu.txt)

*Do you believe the work of missionaries overseas left a positive legacy or a negative one?*

## Learn more about the The Medical Missionaries of Mary and Mother Mary Martin.

### The Medical Missionaries of Mary



The Medical Missionaries of Mary are an international missionary Congregation of women religious founded in Nigeria in 1937. The **Medical Missionaries of Mary** are a religious institute of the Catholic Church dedicated to providing health care to the underdeveloped regions of the world. They follow a Benedictine spirituality, with its focus on life in community, shared prayer and hospitality. Founded in Ireland in 1937 by Mother Mary Martin, they were originally dedicated to serve the missions in Africa.

Medical Missionaries of Mary website: <http://mmmworldwide.org/>



### Mother Mary Martin: Mother Mary's Story

Marie Martin: Foundress of the Medical Missionaries of Mary

Mother Mary Martin was born in Glenageary in South County Dublin in 1892. She was the second of twelve children. As a child she contracted rheumatic fever, the result of which weakened her heart for the rest of her life. Her life followed a pattern of embarking on various endeavours that had to be cut short due to ill health. She worked as a nurse, along with her sister Violet, during the first World War, based in Malta and France. After the war she went to work in a school in Nigeria. It was here, in 1937, that she professed religious vows and set up the Medical Missionaries of Mary,

### Links to further information.

**Mother Mary:** A radio documentary from LMFm, researched, produced and presented by Gerry Kelly outlining the life of Mother Mary Martin - <https://www.lmf.com/on-air/shows/documentaries/documentaries/mother-mary/>

**She Made a Reality of Miracles:** This documentary from RTÉ Radio 1: Documentary on One looks back on the life of Mother Mary Martin, the foundress of the Medical Missionaries of Mary. It was first broadcast in 1975: <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/2014/0319/647633-radio-documentary-reality-miracles-mary-martin-missionaries-medical/>

**Mother Mary Martin: Her life and times :** This article from [independent.ie](http://independent.ie) is short bio chronicling the life of Mother Mary Martin: - <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/droghedaindependent/entertainment/mother-mary-martin-her-life-and-times-27109642.html>

## Symphysiotomy and The Medical Missionaries of Mary.

One of the most compelling criticisms of The Medical Missionaries of Mary is their connection to the practice of **Symphysiotomy in Ireland and overseas.**

**Symphysiotomy** is a surgical procedure in which the cartilage of the pubic symphysis is divided to widen the pelvis allowing childbirth when there is a mechanical problem. The symphys part refers to the pelvis, the "otomy" meaning separation.

**Survivors of Symphysiotomy Facebook Page:** SoS is an organisation made up of survivors and their families of **Symphysiotomy**. Their mission, as stated by them, is "to secure truth and justice for survivors, whose rights, including constitutional and human rights, were violated in Irish labour wards and operating theatres by obstetricians, midwives, anaesthetists and nurses who carried out or assisted at these high risk operations in the absence of medical necessity without patient consent."

*<https://www.facebook.com/SoS-Survivors-of-Symphysiotomy-173631906029192/>*

**Report on Symphysiotomy in Ireland, 1944 - 1984 from Glasgow Caledonian University:** <https://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Final-Final-walsh-Report-on-Symphysiotomy1.pdf>