

By Marc Massery

Ever since Thirteenth of the Month Club member Nermine Rubin of Clearwater, Florida, consecrated herself to the Blessed Virgin Mary through the do-it-yourself retreat *33 Days to Morning Glory* by Fr. Michael Gaitley, MIC, the Blessed Mother has slowly but surely changed her life.

It began with something unusual four days into her retreat. For years, Nermine's daughter Samantha had been begging to go to Tanzania, Africa.

"Every time she asked, I said 'no,'" she said. But on day four of her retreat, "the word that came out was 'yes.'"

So she and her daughter volunteered to help at an orphanage in Moshi, a village at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro. Since then, Nermine's faith has intensified. She began to financially sponsor several orphans. She started volunteering for the Marian Fathers in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. And she even began attending and helping to organize Marian retreats.

Later, she returned to Tanzania interested in promoting Marian consecration. She also hoped to see the fruits of her years of financial support. But this second trip opened her eyes to something that she said broke her heart.

She said, "I saw a lot of men sitting around doing nothing and a number of kids being born, many with no sense of responsibility, and I was saying, 'Why?'"

She wanted to empower these villagers, not enable them.

"Ultimately, they're in the same situation year after year, always having to ask for more money," she said.

Then, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, she discovered an organization called "innovation: Africa" (iA), an Israeli Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), that builds advanced, solar-powered water wells to help resolve drought. Drought is



Yes, that's a copy of the *Thirteenth* in her hand.

## CLUB MEMBER CLIMBS KILIMANJARO

at the root of poverty in much of the impoverished world.

So she reached out to this NGO, confident that their work could provide a permanent, sustainable solution to poverty that empowers the poor countries to overcome their difficult circumstances.

Currently, iA has more than 200 projects in eight countries in Africa, helping to provide 20,000 liters of clean water per day to each village.

With access to clean water, farmers can sustain their crops and feed their livestock. Finally, villagers can take advantage of a local economy.

Nermine has since worked tirelessly to start her own non-profit she calls "Water4Mercy." She has successfully established a partnership with iA in the hopes of bringing water — and jobs — to villages across Tanzania.

"What I love about [iA's] technology is that everything is monitored remotely," she said. "iA has an application that can monitor their water levels anywhere in the world so that they make sure everything's in working order."

Nermine believes so much in her non-profit that this past summer she and her daughter climbed 19,341 feet to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro to "bring exposure and attention to Water4Mercy," she said.

They endured frigid temperatures for six nights and seven days — one of which included 11 hours of hiking.

"What kept me going was I knew the Blessed Virgin Mary was helping me along the way and wanted me to make it," she said.

When she reached the top, Mary greeted her in the form of a prayercard of Our Lady of Guadalupe frozen in the snow.

"That was the first thing I saw when I looked down. She was waiting for me," she said. ❖

## THIRTEENTH OF THE MONTH CLUB

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As a member of the **Thirteenth of the Month Club**, you show your love of Our Blessed Mother and help us spread devotion to her. Answering the call of Our Lady of Fatima, you pray the Rosary daily for peace in the world and make the Five First Saturdays devotion. You include the Club's intentions in your Rosary on the 13<sup>th</sup> of each month and are remembered in a special Mass that day offered by the Marian Fathers in Fatima. Your monthly pledge helps support the Marian Fathers' ministries and you receive this monthly newsletter, published by the Association of Marian Helpers, Stockbridge, MA 01263.

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