



Jeevodaya Hospice

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Sr. Dhanya Bastian, F.C.C Chairman.

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From the editors desk

The Genesis tells the story of how God created man in His image. Every man, woman and child, very human whether Catholic, Jacobite or Pentecost, whether Hindu, Muslim or Buddhist, whether Asian, African or European, whether rich or poor, whether ugly or beautiful, was created in His image. Not just humans but the entire world is the creation of God. Just as a painting bears the imprint of the painter, a book the imprint of the author, so the world bears the imprint of God. The tiger and the lamb, the cacti and the rose, the mountains and the rivers, all contain within them a spark of the Divine Creator.

Since that first day of creation, since the time of Cain and Abel, man has turned against man. Throughout history, man has killed or committed atrocities in the name of God. Today, at a time when we are almost surrounded by brutality, let this Christmas herald a time of peace and good will towards all men. Let the babe in the manger surrounded by the animals of the barn, remind us once more that every human being in this world, every animal and every plant, was created by God and belongs to God.

We wish all our readers a Joyous Christmas and a new year full of God's blessings.

Sr. Lalitha Teresa



Christmas Celebrations at Jeevodaya



The Crib at Jeevodaya

THE WORLD'S POPULATION IS AGEING!

By
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Old age homes / senior citizen's homes/retirement homes – whatever name they go by – what are they but mere cages where we send our elderly to spend the last years of their lives, away from family and friends and all things familiar. How else will you call a place that isolates a particular section of society from the rest of the world? How would you describe the plight of elders who are suddenly uprooted from their homes and all that they are used to and placed in alien surroundings with new faces all around? Adjust, make new friends you would say; this is easier said than done. The scene is similar (but not the same) to that of a young child being plucked from the lap of his/her parents and sent to boarding school (are not the elders in their second childhood?). Most children do get acclimatised because they have many years ahead of them – our friends do not have that luxury too!

Undoubtedly these facilities, take care of two issues of the elderly – safety and security and also eliminating the hassles of running their own establishment. Most of these institutions are only for the healthy and mobile, once they fall sick, the relatives are asked to take them back. Am I being unfair and critical of the organisers of such facilities? No, not at all! On the contrary, I salute these people who are doing what they think is best for this elderly section of society. It is the concept that I am against. The concept of segregating these elders, putting them into small boxes or compartments, giving them what we think is best for them.....and expecting them to go overboard with happiness. Unfortunately, things don't work that way. The biggest mistake that we make is to assume that all old people are alike. Remember, age is only a number. One can be young at 80 and old at 60! It is only the attitude of the individual to life that is important. To make them all sit together, sing bhajans, listen to spiritual discourses, eat and sleep at the ordained time is what WE think they should be doing, because they have finished with this material world.

Now, on the concept of segregation or isolation- the world is shying away from forming groups, like for example creating exclusive schools for the special children. The talk is about their 'integration' and 'inclusiveness' in society. So, why are we talking about artificially creating a group out of an integral part of society? Isn't it time we did some lateral thinking? I know of one senior citizen home which had an orphanage in its campus and the elders had to adopt one child each and be responsible for their development. Brilliant! I salute the management for their original idea. One of the reasons for the elders to go into depression is their presumption that they are no longer useful to the

family or society and hence be perceived as a burden. Their self-esteem hits rock bottom and the motivation to continue with life becomes negligible. The Govt. should take the initiative of extending the age of retirement commensurate with the increase in life expectancy or at least give the option to those healthy adults who wish to continue. It would benefit both parties mutually. It would help the elders retain their sense of pride and independence and boost them financially and help save for coming years, for after all most parents would have spent their all in raising their children. That it is the duty of the children to look after their parents may be morally correct, but may be impractical in many situations. Health care costs are nightmarish and it appears that no elder of this day leaves this world without one major surgery – coronary by-pass, cataract, hip and knee replacement and so on – or at least one admission into the ICU! The forbidding costs may make the children bankrupt or cause severe disharmony in the family if all the members are not in sync. One of the ways to avoid this impasse, is to educate everyone to put aside some money even as they are earning for use in their twilight years and also encourage health insurance, whether one is working in the Govt. sector or not, for, almost all Governments have stopped paying pensions. I have also had occasion to counsel many elders against transferring their property to their children during their lifetime – believe me, the story of children driving out the parents after securing their property is not something that happens in movies and serials only!

In a time and age where aging is seen as something to be avoided - remember the advertisements "anti-aging miracle cream" and hair regrowth oils? – one that really touched my heart was one where a young couple go to a senior citizens home and ask to adopt grandparents. What a lovely thought! It is those that yearn for relationships, be it children or parents, who are denied the gift whereas the ones that have them do not know the value – such is the perversity of Life!

Loving and dedicated children have their own set of problems. I know of children who have quit their jobs to be near their aging parents, also, children who have refused to get married. I have witnessed the problems of my colleagues who have aged parents at home – always worrying about their safety and constantly calling home from work to monitor their day to day activities – 'Have you switched off the gas? Have you locked the front door? Have you had lunch? Did you take your medicines?' The questions are endless.....these are children who will never leave their elders in old age homes but these are the people who desperately need help. How? Here are some suggestions – getting trained and reliable help to stay with the elderly (more such training centres should be started) when they are away at work, travelling or have to necessarily live in other cities or countries. For those who are fortunate enough to be able to live with or close to their parents, day care centres where the elders can be dropped off in the morning in safe surroundings and

picked up by children in the evening are ideal solutions where the elderly can spend their time in various activities with adequate facilities for rest. Other solutions include house wives who can volunteer to 'baby-sit' the elders in the neighbourhood, respite homes where they can be left when necessary such as when the rest of the family wish to go on holidays, meals-on-wheels..... the ideas can be improved upon no end.

Finally, I would like to reiterate, the elders are here – their problems are not imaginary nor can they be brushed away- it is time for every one not just the Government to act. Make your parents, grand -parents happy, keep them comfortable for you are going to be there one day!

**EVERY PHASE OF LIFE HAS ITS OWN CHARM
ENJOY LIFE, AGE GRACEFULLY!**

DIWALI CELEBRATIONS



HOSPICE DAY 2013



ROSE DAY



I can easily empathise with the segment of elderly middle and upper middle class for the simple reason that I belong to that category! Let us analyse the major problems faced by this group.

1. Safety and Security - Recently I read in the papers that 36% of elders in India are living alone. That would be a huge number indeed! It also explains why there are so many crimes committed against them, including murders. No wonder, many are opting to move out to retirement homes, much against their wishes, for leaving a home which they lived in and loved for decades is not an easy or pleasant task. Those who choose to stay back by themselves must educate themselves on a few safety rules they must follow.

a) First rule - Try not to stay alone, that too in an independent house – especially if you have health problems. Some relatives whom you trust (?) can be invited to stay with you or even having paying guests is an option. In-house servants must be only those whom you know personally for a long time. Even part time housemaid must be a well-known person, or should come highly recommended or from registered agencies – even then, it is better to follow the advice of the police and have their antecedents verified. Unless required daily, drivers can be dispensed with and part time “call drivers” employed. It is useful to remember that most crimes are perpetrated by these “outsiders” who have easy access to the inside of the house. Watchmen, if any, must come from registered security agencies. Dog is a Man’s Best Friend – invest in a watch dog and look after him well, you cannot find anyone more loyal or devoted, and miscreants will think twice before entering your house. Advanced security systems with cameras and alarms are a good investment. All transactions, eg; registered post, courier, payments etc., can be done from behind a locked grill gate. Gas and water cans, can be left outside your locked door to be brought in by your domestic help later. Service technicians – electrician, plumber, AC mechanic – must be allowed inside after prior appointment, giving you sufficient time to arrange for somebody to be with you.

