



Jeevodaya Hospice

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Sr. Lilly Maria F.C.C., Chairman and President

From the Editors Desk

Why do we need **PRAYER** in our lives?

If asked what we want out of life, the replies may vary from money, success, health, good looks and other myriad things, but again why do we want all this? Because we want to be happy. That is a universal ultimate goal. Today, happiness is an industry. We have happiness coaches; there is a course in Harvard on happiness; there are numerous books and talks.

Scientists have identified four hormones that trigger happiness – Oxytocin (released when we are with close friends and family, when there is shared laughter, when we hug each other, when we are in a resonant relationship), Endorphin (released with physical activity like sports, exercise, walking in the middle of nature), Serotonin (released when we are involved in meaningful activities, when we help someone, when there is sense of purpose), Dopamine (when we are doing something we enjoy, hobbies, music, creative pursuits). Sounds simple. And yet, in spite of all the advances Science has made, in spite of all the ‘progress’, more and more people are depressed and the suicide rates are spiraling upwards. Daid Thoreau’s words written in 1854 that “most men lead lives of quiet desperation” continues to ring true.

In contrast, studies have shown that people with a strong spiritual, prayerful life are among

the happiest people in the world. There is a common misconception that spirituality means eschewing enjoyment or fun, that a holy person is serious and stoic. When St. Francis sang joyfully as he lay on his death bed, another clergyman was worried that singing was not seemly at a moment when he should be praying, not reflecting Christian dignity, what would people think. St. Francis is purported to have replied “But there is so much joy in my heart, I must sing!” and sing he did, praising Sister Death.



Prayer can take many forms. It can be meditation in the presence of God. It can be a freewheeling chat with God. It can be purposeful work. It can be a help rendered. It can be singing.

May prayer help us to face our unhappiness when it strikes us, and may prayer lead us to a joyous life.

After serious prayer and deep discussion Jeevodaya family is putting a step further, adding one more milestone in the journey of Palliative Care - Jeevodaya Geriatric Hospice at Nemallur attached to Ashirvad Bhavan.

It is really a challenging field! Yet strong faith in Divine Providence and the support and care from our benevolent benefactors and well wishes push us to go further.

Sr. Lalitha Teresa
Editor

MISSION (IM) POSSIBLE !

By Dr. Manjula Krishnaswamy, MS

GERIATRIC HOSPICE IS THE SECOND MILESTONE IN JEEVODAYA 'S JOURNEY

On the 10th September, 2023, Jeevodaya reached its second milestone by inaugurating the Geriatric Hospice at Nemallur, in the Gummidipoondi Taluk, Thiruvallur District of Tamilnadu. Thirty three years back, Jeevodaya established the first hospice of South India, second in India, to cater to the pressing need for pain relief in cancer patients with incurable, advanced disease and to give solace to the body and soul of patients nearing the end of life. Today we find this as an even more pressing need to come to the rescue of another neglected category of patients – the elderly, especially those who are bedridden and those in need of assistance for their daily living. All of us are aware that the average life span of Man has risen considerably in India and all over the world. However, unfortunately, old age has brought along with it, multiple problems relating to aging. I am reminded of a saying “Don’t ask for long life. Remember it is your old age that will be prolonged “. The crumbling down of the traditional joint family system and the emergence of the western concept of Nuclear family, has thrown up the million dollar question – whose responsibility is it to look after the elderly?

The well to do, opt for hiring outside help (which is pretty costly) and the very well to do, especially the NRI’s who cannot keep their elderly parents with them opt for nursing homes which offer assisted living (which cost a bomb). The rest seek cheaper or free old age homes. The hitch here is that generally these homes look after the inmates only as long as they are mobile and can look after themselves. Once they fall sick, the family is asked to take them back. When this happens or those who have continued to be with the family, when they become bedridden, face neglect and sometimes even abuse; both physical and mental. In some parts of

South India, a peculiar form of Euthanasia called ‘Thalaikoothal’ exists, to eliminate the elderly. (There is a recent Tamil movie with this title). I don’t think it will be too much to ask you to imagine the plight of the worst category of such patients - the homeless, the destitute and the abandoned. It is for such unfortunate patients that Jeevodaya wishes to extend a helping hand through the Geriatric Hospice. It may not be much in term the population out there who need such help; nevertheless’ it is a beginning. At this juncture we, from Jeevodaya, would like to thank each and every those who have walked the journey alongside us; sometimes cheering, sometimes holding our hand, sometimes lifting us up but definitely being for us. We solicit your esteemed support as always. In confirmation with philosophy of Jeevodaya, we would like to reiterate that all services in this Hospice also will be free of cost.

One can call this Hospice, a dream project, but on paper it looked a mammoth project and filled us with all misgivings. However, it was, as usual Sr. Lalitha’s philosophy “Don’t worry Manjula, God will Take care” that has seen us through. Without that invisible hand guiding us, we all know that not an atom can move அவன் இன்றி ஒரு அணுவும் அசையாது. we can at best call ourselves only His messengers to carry out His work and thank Him for choosing us. As much as we celebrate this day, we must remember the real work starts only now and we pray to the Lord to guide us through this timeless journey.

Now a few details about the Inaugural function we had on the 10th September, 2023. The forenoon was dedicated for solemn prayers and thanks giving. The Holy Eucharistic Celebration was led by His Excellency Mar. Sebastian Pozholiparambil, Bishop of Hosur Diocese. He was joined by delegation of FCC sisters from Kerala led by senior sisters... Sr. Rose Anitha (Vice General of FCC) and Sr. Lilly Maria (Provincial Superior of Alvernia Province,



Irinjalakuda) Sr. Laliitha Teresa led the delegation from Jeevodaya Cancer Hospice and Ashgirvad Bhavan. The Bishop along with his Secretary Rev. Fr. Josey and Fr. Benoy (Vicar General, Hosur Diocese) concluded the morning session with the formal blessing of the building.

A sumptuous and tasty lunch was provided for all by the builder Mr. Xavier. In fact he was the star of the show, for everyone, without exception congratulating him on the beautiful design and execution of a building of such excellence.



A public Meeting was arranged for the afternoon. Since the District Collector of Thiruvallur, Dr. Alby John Varghese IAS, whom was invited to be the chief guest could not attend due to some emergency duty, the District Revenue Officer Mr. Rajkumar was deputed to do the honours. The traditional lighting of Kuthuvilakku was followed by a welcome address by Sr. Laliitha Teresa who outlined the origin and progress of Jeevodaya since its inception in 1990. In the chief guest's speech, he offered to do whatever

was in his capacity to support the cause of care of the elderly. The other Dignitaries on stage Mar Sebastian Pozholiparambil, Sr. Rose Anittha, Sr. Lilly Maria, Fr. Benoy, Mrs. Govindammal (Panchayath President) and Dr. Sharmila Krishnaswamy offered their felicitations. Dr. Jabbar, Our Chief Medical Officer, Jeevodaya was requested to honour the Bishop who was the guest of honour. Mr. Xavier, the builder and Mr. John K John, MD, Johnson Lifts, were honoured with shawl and mementos along with the dignitaries.

What followed was a heart warming entertainment performed by children from the surrounding villages of Budur, Saraswathy Nagar and Pappankandigai-right from the band welcoming the dignitaries to several dances to lilting music. All credit should go to Sr. Alin Rose and her team these children and also providing them with colorful costumes and gift for them. Little Caroline, a favourite with the sisters and the Granddaughter of Fathima who spent her last days in Jeevodaya, stole the show by her Bharathanatyam performance. The program ended with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Ponni, Joint Medical Director, Jeevodaya.





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