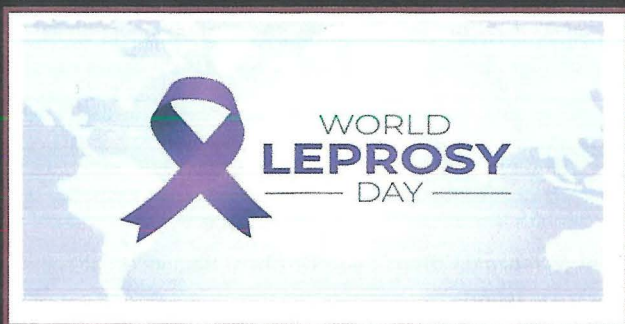
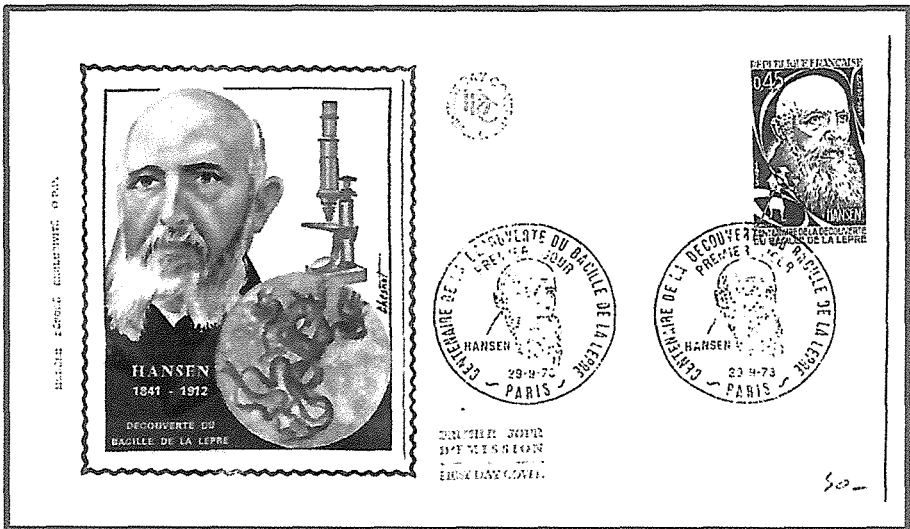




A Brief History of
Leprosy
(Hansen's Disease)
Through Stamps

Carmel Lino Cutajar

LEPROSY (HANSEN'S DISEASE)



LEPROSY is a chronic infectious disease caused by *microbacillus lepre*, discovered by G. Hansen, which affects the skin, soft tissues, nasal mucosa, eyes and nerves, causing severe disfigurement.

The name is derived from the Greek word "*lepra*" which means "scaly".

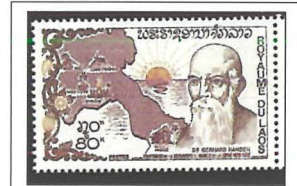
In the past leprosy was considered a highly contagious and incurable disease and sufferers became social outcasts.

LEPROSY

LEPROSY IS ALMOST AS OLD AS CIVILIZATION.

It is mentioned in ancient Egyptian papyri (*Hesi ra and Ebers*) and in the bible. (*Leviticus, 13:1-46, old testament*)

It was probably introduced in Europe by the returning armies of Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC, and later by the knights returning from the Crusades. It reached its peak about the 14th century when more than 300 leprosaria were established in northern Europe. After the 16th century, leprosy started to die down. It is now a curable disease and segregation of sufferers is no longer a necessity.



LAOS 1973. SG 372



INDIA 1984. SG 1118

LEPROSY. CARE OF LEPROSY SUFFERER

In the Middle Ages, several saintly characters dedicated their lives to the care of the suffering lepers who were often social outcasts. Some were catered for in dedicated *leprosaria*.



ST. GREGORY OF
TOURS (AD 538-594).
ESTABLISHED A 500
BED HOSPITAL FOR
LEPERS



ITALY 1926. SG 196



ITALY 1979. SG 1590

ST. FRANCIS TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES TO NURSE LEPERS



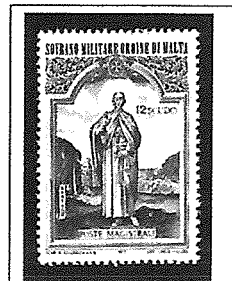
MALTA. 1967. SG 385. ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA.
DOMINICAN NUN WHO NURSED LEPERS IN
THE DELLA SCALA HOSPITAL



France 1956. SG 386

HOSPITALIER KNIGHTS OF
ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM

TOOK AN ACTIVE ROLE IN
THE CARING OF LEPERS
DURING AND FOLLOWING
THE CRUSADES



1976. Order of Malta

LEPROSY (HANSEN'S DISEASE)

Leprosy causes severe, often hideous, deformities affecting the face (skin, nose, and eyes), hands, and feet. As a result, people avoided contact with them. They were marginalized and ostracized.



The Monaco (1961) stamp shows a disfigured leper hobbling down the deserted street, clapper in hand forced to alert the neighbours of his unwelcome presence.



In the Middle Ages, lepers led a miserable existence, banned from contact with society, often isolated in remote peripheries. Eventually, the opening of leprosaria gave them some relief. The disease is now recognized as only mildly infective after prolonged physical contact.



LEPROSY. THE LAZARETTOS/LEPROSARIA

Over the years it was felt that those suffering from leprosy should be isolated in hospitals, built for them, where they would be looked after. These venues were named *leprosaria* or *lazarettos* (after St. Lazarus, patron saint of leprosy). Many were represented on stamps. Some are reproduced here.



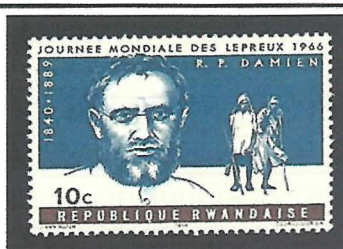
BELGIUM. LEPROSARIUM



HUNGARY 1965. ALBERT SCHWEITZER BUILT A LEPROSARIUM AT LAMBARENE, GABON



BELGIUM. DR. FRANS HAEMERIJCKX. FOUNDED A LEPROSARIUM IN TSHUMBE, CONGO

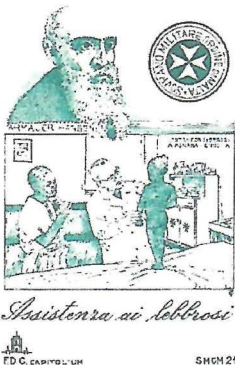


RWANDA 1966. SG 140. FR. DAMIAN. MINISTERED THE LEPER COLONY IN MOLOKAI, HAWAI

LEPROSY. THE ORDER OF ST JOHN



Alla Direzione
L'Ufficio Stampa
Palazzo Magliocca



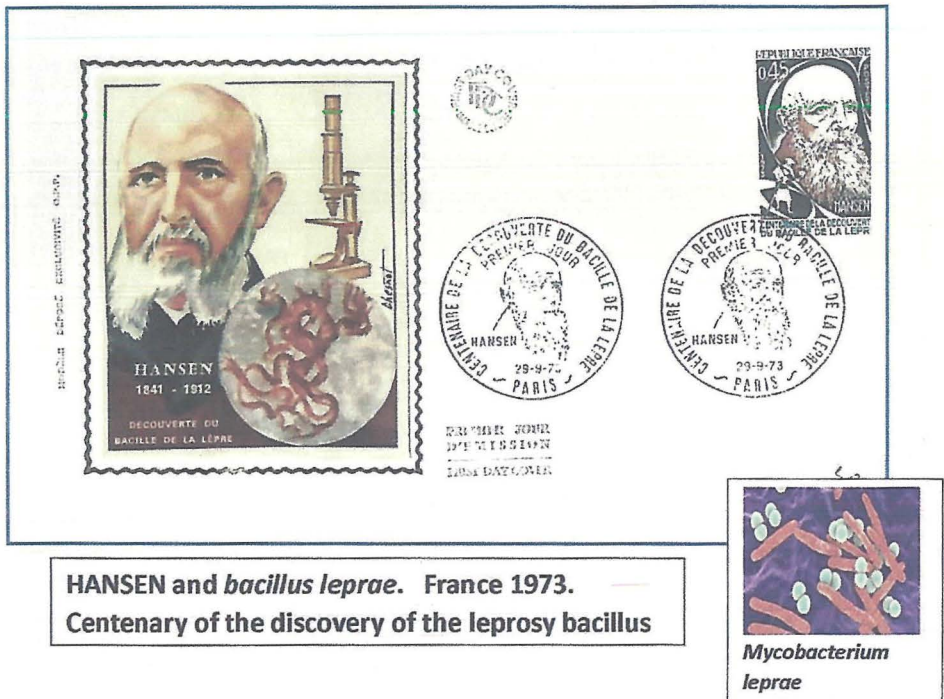
Alla Direzione
L'Ufficio Stampa
Palazzo Magliocca

THE ORDER OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM, RHODES AND MALTA WAS LAUNCHED IN THE 12TH CENTURY DURING THE CRUSADES. ITS PRIME OBJECTIVE WAS HUMANITARIAN. IT DEVOTED MANY OF ITS RESOURCES TO THE OPENING OF HOSPITALS. AMONG THESE WERE MANY LEPROSARIA FOR THE CARE OF LEPEERS.

Another Order, that of St. Lazarus, is also engaged, in our times, in the welfare of leprosy patients

PIONEERS IN THE CONQUEST OF LEPROSY

GERHARD ARMEUR HANSEN (1841-1912)



GERHARD HANSEN was born in 1841 in Bergen, Norway. After obtaining his medical degree in Oslo he returned to Bergen which, like the rest of Norway, had a high incidence of Leprosy. He was appointed director of the Belgian Leptosarium. Hansen's research convinced him that leprosy was a specific disease spread by an organism which, in 1873, he identified as a rod-shaped bacillus which he named *bacillus leprae* and is now known as *mycobacterium leprae*.

The disease was named after him

HANSEN IS COMMEMORATED ON MANY STAMPS ISSUED BY VARIOUS COUNTRIES

1973. MANY COUNTRIES ISSUED STAMPS COMMEMORATING THE CENTENARY OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE LEPROCY BACILLUS BY HANSEN IN 1873.



FRANCE



ORDER OF MALTA



PARAGUAY



BELGIUM



NORWAY



CUBA



NIGERIA



GABON



LAOS

PIONEERS IN THE CONQUEST OF LEPROSY

FATHER DAMIEN (1840-1889)

Born Josep de Veuster in 1840 in the quiet village of Tremolo in Northern Belgium.

He entered a monastery, and in 1864 he was sent to the island of MULAKAI in Hawai to minister to the leper colony there.

He worked incessantly with these unfortunate people. He treated them as human beings. He even organized singing groups and a band.

He remained in Mulakai all his life and died there of leprosy.

Many countries have issued commemorative stamps.



RWANDA 1966. SG 140.
Fr. Damien. World Leprosy Day



BELGIUM 1964. SG 1886.
Fr Damien in Molakai



BELGIUM 1989. SG 3006.
Death of Fr Damian



BRAZIL 1952 SG 836/837. Fr. Damien. Leprosy Research Fund

PIONEERS IN THE TREATMENT OF LEPROSY

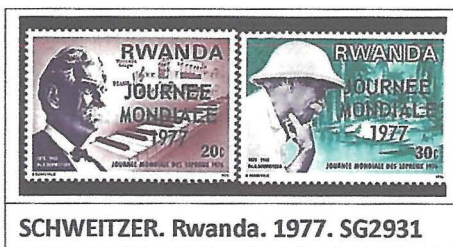
DR ALBERT SCHWEITZER

(1875-1965)

Physician, theologian, expert musician, Nobel Prize winner, Schweitzer was above all a humanitarian who dedicated his life to peace and the welfare of patients in Africa.

He founded a leper colony in Lambardene, Gabon.

He pioneered the use of Dapsone, one of the first effective drugs for leprosy.



VICTOR BABES

(1854-1926)

Romanian serologist whose studies contributed greatly to the knowledge of Leprosy.



EUNICE WEAVER

(1902-1969)

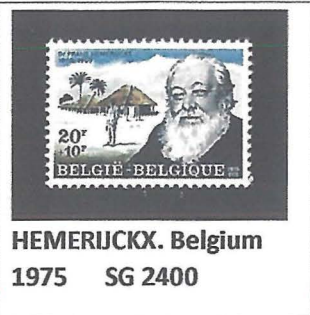
Brazilian philanthropist who headed leprosy charities in Brazil 1930-1960



PIONEERS IN THE CONQUEST OF LEPROSY

DR FRANZ HEMERIJCKX

Flemish leprologist, humanist, and the founder of the Damien Foundation in Belgium. He engaged in providing treatment and rehabilitation services to people affected with leprosy.



RAOUL FOLLEREAU (1903-1977)

A famous French journalist and humanitarian. He raised considerable funds to build a leprosarium in Adsope, Ivory Coast. He established *World Leprosy Day* (the last Sunday in January each year) and worked tirelessly for the dignity of the poor and the marginalized. He has been commemorated on several stamps by various countries



LEPROSY PIONEERS



AN UNUSUAL ITEM FROM THE REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI.

Follereau and Hansen are honoured with a perforated wooden stamp.

Underneath is an inscription: "*Lutte contre la lèpre*" (Fight Against Leprosy).

Also included are the emblems of Rotary and Lions two international humanitarian organizations.

LEPROSY PIONEERS COMMEMORATIONS



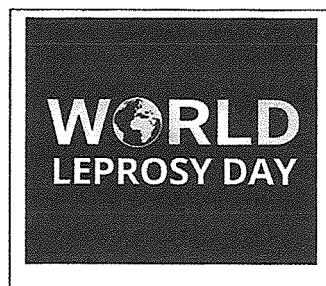
MALI 1987. SG 1115 DEATH ANNIVERSARIES
GERHARD HANSEN (75) RAOUL FOLLEREAU (10)



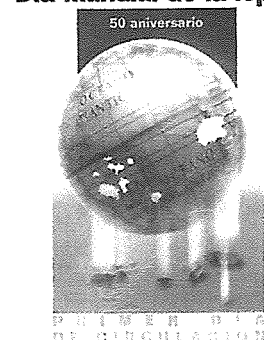
RWANDA 1960
FR. DAMIEN and DR SCHWEITZER
PIONEERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST LEPROSY

UN. WORLD LEPROSY DAY

World Leprosy Day is observed internationally every year on the last Sunday of January. It aims to increase public awareness of leprosy (Hansen's Disease). This date was chosen by French humanitarian Raoul Follereau as a tribute to the life of Mahatma Gandhi who had publicly expressed compassion for lepers.



Día Mundial de la lepra



Correos y Telégrafos

S.F.C. 2003



XVIII JORNADA MUNDIAL

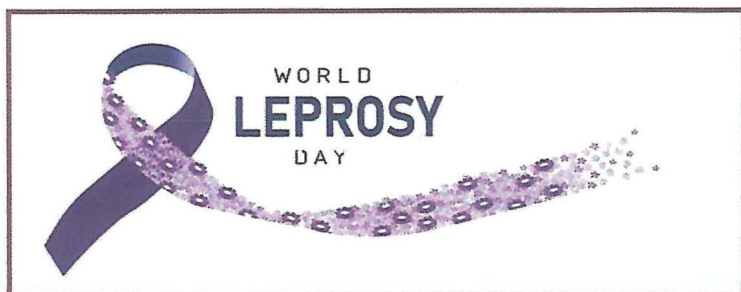
de los
LEPROSOS

*
JOVENES
AMIGOS
de los
LEPROSOS

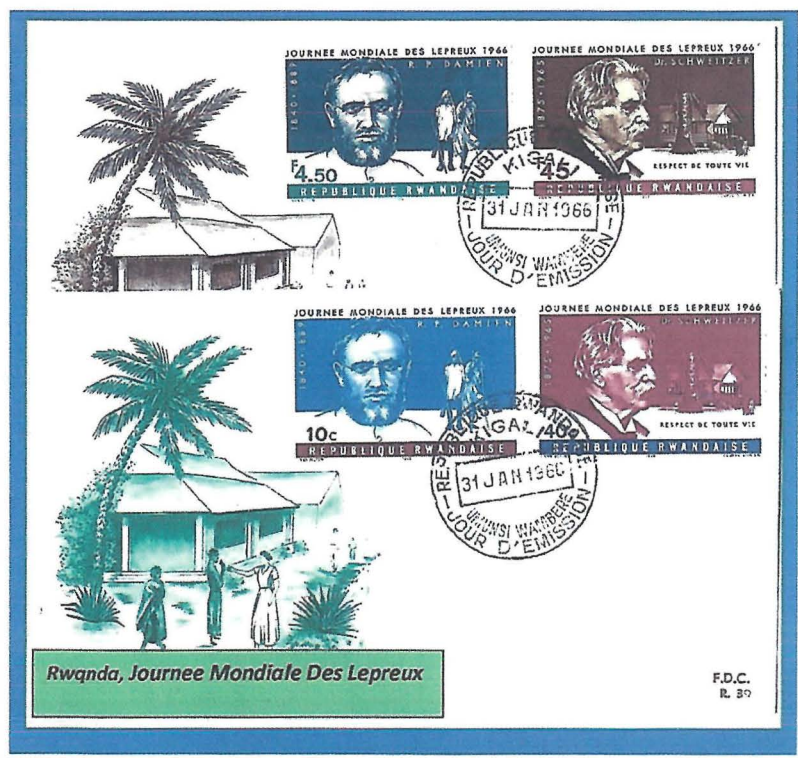


BARCELONA
30 ENE. - 1 FEB. 1971
.....

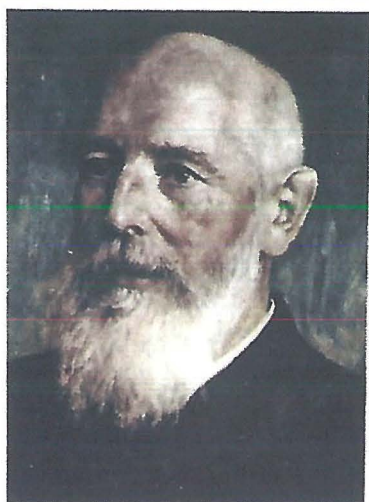




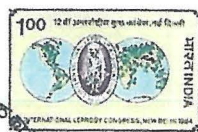
WORLD LEPROSY DAY is an opportunity to celebrate the lives of those affected, raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of the disease, and tackle the stigma that too often surrounds leprosy. It is also an opportunity to raise money so that we can be the generation that ends leprosy transmission.



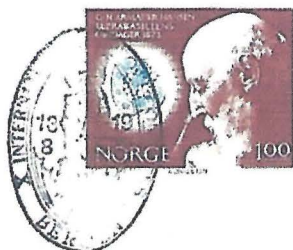
LEPROSY CONGRESSES



12 वीं अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कुष्ठ काँग्रेस, नई दिल्ली
XII INTERNATIONAL LEPROSY CONGRESS, NEW DELHI 1984

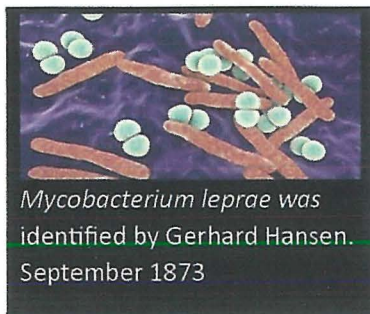


**BOMBAY, INDIA
LEPROSY CONGRESS 20-2-84**

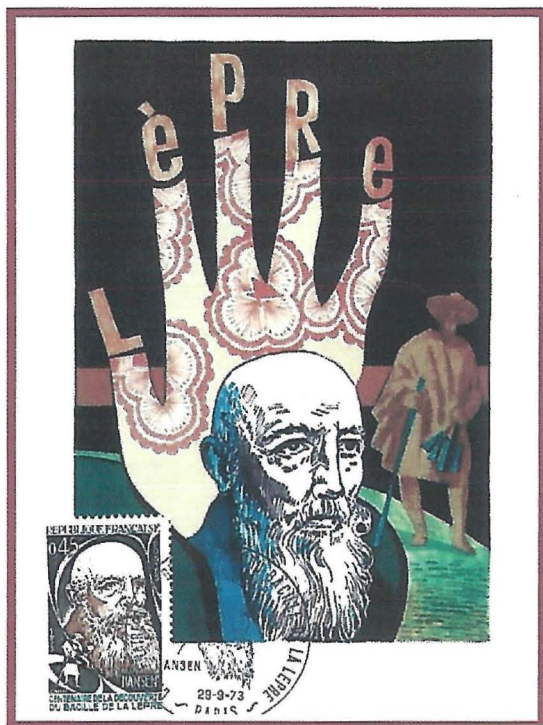


**INTERNATIONAL LEPROSY CONGRESS,
BERGEN 13-8-1973**

CENTURY OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE LEPROSY BACILLUS BY GERHARD HANSEN



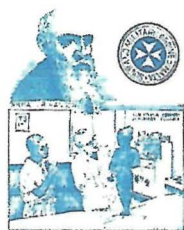
On 29-9-1973 many countries celebrated the centenary of the discovery of the *Mycobacterium leprae* with the issue of commemorative stamps (see also page 8)



France. 29/9/73. SG 2013. Hansen and Leper.
Anniversary of the discovery of the Leprosy bacillus

CENTENARY OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE LEPROSY BACILLUS

On 29 September 1973, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta issued five stamps to commemorate the centenary of the identification of the leprosy bacillus by Hansen



Assistenza ai lebbrosi
FDC CAPITOLIUM
SMD 21



Assistenza
Dell'Ufficio Stampa
Palazzo Mari 1973



Assistenza ai lebbrosi
FDC CAPITOLIUM
SMD 21



Assistenza
Dell'Ufficio Stampa
Palazzo Mari 1973



Assistenza ai lebbrosi
FDC CAPITOLIUM
SMD 21



Assistenza
Dell'Ufficio Stampa
Palazzo Mari 1973



LEPROSY: SEEKING A CURE

In olden times there was no cure. The disease was thought to be highly infectious. Lepers were marginalized and forced to live outside communities or in leprosaria

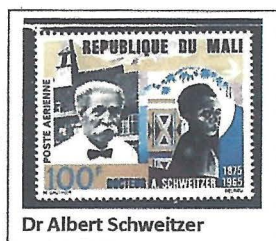


Until the 20th century, the only partially effective drug was CHAULMOOGRA OIL made from the seeds of *hydrocarpus wightiana* which grows in tropical forests. However, its use was limited due to toxicity.



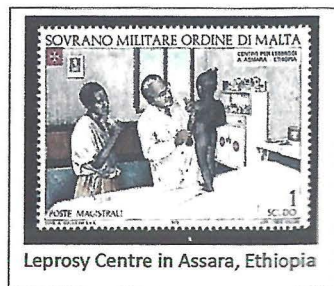
Hydrocarpus wightiana

In the 1950's Sulfone ("Dapsone") was used with good effect in leprosy. Dr. Schweitzer pioneered the drug in his hospital in Lambredene, Gabon.



Dr Albert Schweitzer

More recently, MULTIPLE DRUG THERAPY has been very effective in curing the disease, especially if treated early, and has been a major factor in the eradication of leprosy worldwide. Malta was an early user of this therapy and succeeded in eradicating the disease locally.



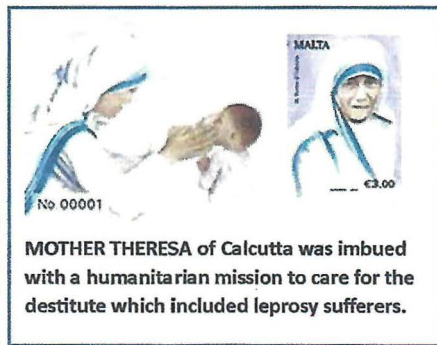
Leprosy Centre in Assara, Ethiopia

LEPROSY: ERADICATION EFFORTS

Although eradicated in many countries, leprosy is still widespread in certain areas, particularly in India, Asia, and Africa. Many high-profile individuals have given their support to leprosy care and eradication.



MAHATMA GHANDI gave all his personal support for the welfare of leprosy patients. In India, World Leprosy Day is celebrated to coincide with Gandhi Memorial Day



MOTHER THERESA of Calcutta was imbued with a humanitarian mission to care for the destitute which included leprosy sufferers.

THE FIGHT AGAINST
LEPROSY CONTINUES



Princess Diana joined Mother Theresa in supporting Leprosy patients and campaigned for their welfare.

