



The Raoul Follereau Foundation (Malta) - The Order of Charity
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RAOUL FOLLEREAU FOUNDATION (MALTA): NGO NO. VO/0980

Order of Charity Newsletter

EDITORIAL

December is a month when memories of past Christmases are recalled. I wish to share with you a particular memory which is still impressed in my mind after 50 years: the time I first met with a leper face to face.

It was in December 1970 and with two other Maltese missionaries I travelled from north-east India to the south of that sub-continent for the priestly ordination of a Maltese priest in Bangalore.

After 4 days of travel by Jeep, plane and train, we reached Chennai (Madras) and lodged with the Salesian Fathers. The Administrator of "The Beatitudes Social Welfare Rehabilitation Centre" offered to drive us there to visit this place.

Fr Schlooz showed us various sectors of the place. At one point we were near some lepers who, with simple tools were producing useful household gadgets. As I approached, one of the men smiled at me and extended his hand... and I, automatically, shook hands with him. Then I suddenly realised that that hand had no fingers. I had touched a leper!

Years have passed, but when I recall that episode, I reflect on how Jesus touched lepers (Matthew 8:3), how he let them approach him, how he treated them with dignity and considered them 'human beings'.

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This was physical and psychological healing.

But he would approach also other kinds of persons shunned by certain classes of society of his time: he came near, dined with and welcomed 'sinners', both men and women.

This last month of the year, besides bringing memories to our mind, should also provoke us to reflect upon our attitudes of welcome and inclusion. As we read the many pages of this Charity Newsletter, we may ponder on how wide is our vision of 'others' and how Christlike is our approach.

Christ came for all. Christmas belongs to all. Let us be part of this 'all'.



Patron Saints and Royal Lepers – 1

Saint Lazarus of Bethany

[Feast day 17th December]

There is no doubt that Lazarus of Bethany was a real person, but beyond the scripture references nothing secure is further known about him. Beside the story of his resurrection by Jesus from the dead, Lazarus is reported to have subsequently attended a banquet at the house of Simon, a healed leper. During the banquet, Lazarus sister Mary washed and anointed Jesus' feet. The Jewish priesthood sought to have Lazarus killed. He certainly would have been a persona non grata in Israel after the resurrection of Jesus about a week later. All the references to the name Lazarus in the New Testament can be considered a preparation to Christ's death and subsequent resurrection.

No mention is made in the New Testament of his activities after being brought back to life by Jesus, but several traditions survive. In the eastern tradition, he and his sisters – Mary and Martha – were set adrift in a leaking boat by the Jews at Jaffa. They made a safe landfall at Cyprus. According to tradition he was ordained first Bishop of Kition, modern Larnaka, by Apostles Paul and Barnabas. He lived there for about thirty years, dying at the age of sixty. According to Cypriot traditions, he was buried in a sarcophagus housed in the Byzantine Church of St Lazarus at Kition with an inscription "The four-day Lazarus, friend of Christ". In 890 AD the emperor of Byzantium Leon VI Sophos transferred Lazarus' remains to Constantinople and in return for which he built a church at Larnaca devoted to St Lazarus. The church survives to this date.

The event of the transport of the holy relics from Kition to Constantinople was immortalized by Arethas, Bishop of Caesarea, in two of his famous speeches, made on the occasion. In the first speech he praises the arrival of the sacred relics from Kition to Constantinople, and in the second one he describes in detail the procession which the emperor formed to carry the relics from Chrysoupolis to the great cathedral of St Sophia. Leon, besides the church he had built at Kition after the Saint's name, also built a second one in Constantinople in honor of the Saint. After the capture of Constantinople by the Franks in 1204, the Crusaders, besides the other treasures they carried to the West, they also carried the Saint's holy relics to Marseilles, from where, later on, they disappeared and up to the present day they have not been traced. On the 2nd November 1972, during renovation works on the church, part of the



sacred relics of St Lazarus were discovered in a marble sarcophagus under the altar. The cranium can still be viewed in the Church at Larnaca; while the Order of St.

John brought to Malta with them from Rhodes a reliquary consisting of the right foot of St Lazarus. This was eventually deposited in their Conventual Church of St John the Baptist at Valletta.

A western apocryphal tradition places Lazarus and his family in Provence in southern France. Lazarus proceeded to Marseilles and became Bishop of Marseilles. During the first persecution under Emperor Nero he hid himself in a crypt, over which the celebrated Abbey of St-Victor was constructed in the fifth century. He was martyred by Emperor Domitian (81-96 AD). His body was later translated to Autun, and buried in the cathedral of that town. It is only in the thirteenth century that the belief that Lazarus had come to Gaul with his two sisters and had been Bishop of Marseilles spread in Provence. While Pope Benedict IX in 1040 mentions St Lazarus on the occasion of the consecration of the new church of St-Victor, the Pope speaks only of relics of St Lazarus and does not refer to his having been Bishop of Marseilles. The most ancient Provençal text alluding to the episcopacy of St Lazarus is a passage in the "Otia imperialia" of Gervase of Tillbury (1212). Thus, the belief in his Provençal apostolate is of very late date. The crypt of the Church of St-Victor at Marseilles does contain an epitaph dated to the fifth century commemorating the burial of a bishop named Lazarus. This probably refers to the 5th century Lazarus, Bishop of Aix, who was consecrated at Marseilles about 407, and who, having had to abandon his see in 411, passed some time in Palestine, whence he returned to end his days in Marseilles. The body of this Lazarus may be the one claimed to have been buried at the Cathedral of Autun in Burgundy, destroyed in 1766.

The composite Lazarus personalities depicted in the Scriptures was associated during the medieval period with leprosy and adopted as its patron by the fledgling hospitaller Order dedicated to the care of lepers in Jerusalem. The seal of the Jerusalem hospital of the Order of St Lazarus shows a priest holding a crosier and the inscription "St Laz-

arus of Jerusalem" on one side, and a leper with his face covered in spots holding a clapper and the inscription "The seal of the Lepers". These two sides may have been intended to be depictions of the two scripture personalities or the dual membership – healthy monks and lepers - of the 12th century Order. The Order of St Lazarus expanded its holdings in Europe establishing several leprosaria bearing the name of the Order's titular saint. These eventually became known as lazars or lazarettos, and subsequently adopted as quarantine hospitals against pestilent disease

Baldwin IV, King of Jerusalem (1174-1182)

The film Kingdom of Heaven released in 2005 featured the story of Balaon of Ibelin and the loss of Jerusalem. In the story, Baldwin IV the Leper King of Jerusalem is featured as a successful diplomat who maintains good peaceful relationships with Sultan Salah al-Din. All political negotiations fail with the death of the king, plunging the Kingdom of Jerusalem into turmoil and conflict leading to the disaster at the Battle of Hattin and the Fall of Jerusalem in October 1187. First mention of Baldwin developing leprosy was made in the chronicle written by his tutor William of Tyre who observed the youth's insensitivity to pain caused by the disease.

William of Tyre in his book *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum* wrote that "It so happened that once when he was playing with some other noble boys who were with him, they began pinching one another with their fingernails on the hands and arms, as playful boys will do. The others evinced their pain with yells, but, although his playmates did not spare him, Baldwin bore the pain altogether too patiently, as if he did not feel it. When this had happened several times, it was reported to me. At first I thought that this happened because of his endurance, not because of

insensitivity. Then I called him and began to ask what was happening. At last I discovered that about half of his right hand and arm were numb, so that he did not feel pinches or even bites there. I began to have doubts, as I recalled the words of the wise man: 'It is certain that an insensate member is far from healthy and that he who does not feel sick is in danger'. I reported all this to his father. Physicians were consulted and prescribed repeated fomentations, anointings, and even poisonous drugs to improve his condition, but in vain. For, as we later understood more fully as time passed, and as we made more comprehensive observations, this was the beginning of an incurable disease. I cannot keep my eyes dry while speaking of it. For as he began to reach the age of puberty it became apparent that he was suffering from that most terrible disease, leprosy. Each day he grew more ill. The extremities and the face were most affected, so that the hearts of his faithful men were touched by compassion when they looked at him".

Baldwin IV was born in the early summer of 1161, the son of Amalric and Agnes of Courtenay. He contracted leprosy in childhood, possibly from a member of the Royal household affected with a mild form of the infection, and developed the initial symptom of skin anaesthesia just prior to his puberty (circa 9-13 years of age). There was no mention of any other obvious skin lesions at this stage suggesting a polyneurotic form of the disease. This advanced to a lepromatous form during the pubertal years, so that by his early twenties, the nerve damage had led to severe muscle weakness requiring him to be carried in a litter. Weakness of the facial muscles probably led to corneal ulceration causing eventual blindness. In addition the bacteria had multiplied in the skin of the limbs and face to form disfiguring plaques and nodules, and destroyed the nose. He died prematurely in 1185 at the age of twenty-three years. The general approach to treatment of leprosy during the medieval period included modifications in the diet and bloodletting to restore the body humours; bathing in sulphurous hot springs; and the

use of drugs including herbal syrups, enemas, and topical applications of fatty-based ointments based on quicksilver and herbs. Public health measures included forced avoidance of sexual activity and segregation in leprosaria. In spite of his debilitating affliction and premature death, King Baldwin IV was throughout his reign constantly engaged in warfare against his Islamic foes. In 1180, he obtained a two-year truce during the latter part of his reign, which truce was lost after he relinquished his kingdom to regents because of failing health.



L-istorja ta Awal Inusah mill-Ghana

Awal Inusah ta 18-il-sena, jghix mal-genituri tueghu u ma ghaxar hutu ohra fil-Ghana.

L-istorja tieghu tal-mard tibda mindu kellu biss 6 snin u sab bhal harqa fuq idejh. Il-genituri tieghu ippruvaw jikkurawh bi trattamento herbali imma l-ferita donnha kibret u fil-fatt idejh intefhet. It-tifel beza hafna ghax ma kienx jaf ezatt x'qed jigri.

Eventwalment huwa ttiehed l-isptar. Sar jaf li ghandu marda li tiekol il-gilda li jsejhulha ulcera Buruli. Il-ferita tant kienet gravi li kellu joqghod l-isptar ghal sena shiha. Kellu jaghmel operazzjoni u ma kienx hemm terapija fizika biex ikun jista jcaqlaq idejh kif suppost. Irritorna d-dar meta kellu ghaxar snin. Idejh irqaqet u l-gilda u l-muskolu qieshom bhal wehlu u ma setghax jiddritta jdejh. Is-snin ta wara bata hafna u l-hajja ma kienetx facli ghalih minhabba l-istigma. Xi drabi, l-iskola, tfal ohra kienu jwarrbuh ghax jibzghu li jittiehdu. L-edukazzjoni tieghu waqat lura ghal hafna minhabba l-fatt li ma setghax isuq ir-rota ghall-iskola.

Bis-sahha tad-donazzjonijiet, Awal setgha jaghmel operazzjoni ohra li biha setgha jerga jcaqlaq idejh. Illum il-gurnata jista jithallat iktar liberalment mal-familja u mal-



komunita', jista jsuq rota, jinhasel, jtella l-ilma (ma ninsewx li dawn in-nies jghixu fil-faqar u ma ghandhomx mezz bizzejjed bhalna li biex igibu l-ilma kemm jifthu vit) etc..

Issa ta 18-il-sena jista jerga jsuq rota u nfatti ghalkemm kiber, irritorna lura l-iskola u qighed anke jipprepara ruhu ghal ezamijiet u ghal futur.

Minn jaf kemm hawn bhal dan it-tifel li minhabba l-faqar u l-mard, ma jistghux jaghmlu

futur bhalna kemm minhabba t-tbatija tal-mard, il-finanzi u kif ukoll l-istigma. X'nistghu naghmlu biex nghanu? Kull qatra tghodd!

The story of Jacob INDONESIA

"I was only a little boy of thirteen when I got skin sores on my arms – my skin was red. 'Auntie, my arms look funny,' I said. She was shocked. We went to a hospital on a different island. The doctor examined me and gave me medication, but that didn't work. Why didn't the sores go away? What was I supposed to do?"

I grew up to be an adult with terrible insecurities. I thought I had leprosy, but I wasn't sure. I was ashamed and afraid of being stigmatised. I did not dare tell anybody, not even the woman I married. I numbed myself with booze and kept bad company.

I did not dare tell anybody, not even my wife



I went from bad to worse, I felt so alone. My skin turned darker and darker, my fingers were becoming crooked. But I hid it from everybody. If only I had asked for help sooner. If only I had had the guts to share my discomfort. But in my darkest, loneliest hour, my fortune changed.

I was correctly diagnosed. And with the right medication, I was cured

Somebody appeared at my door. 'I am from the island's new health centre, I am here to help you.' My data had been forwarded, and it was not until then that I was diagnosed with leprosy. And with the right medication, I was cured. Finally, I was cured of the disease. I felt liberated.



I used to fish for tuna in the deep waters around the island, but I anticipated better economic chances for myself as a local boat builder and repairman.

Myself and my family are checked for symptoms of leprosy every year, but I wanted to do more. I am now the chairman of the island's self-care group. There are thirteen of us, and we all have the experience of leprosy.

<https://nlrinternational.org/stories-of-patients/jacob/>



Marina: Rescue in the Rainforest

Marina is 15 years old, but only in the second grade. Her skin is covered in patches.

Marina was found in Pioneer Christian Hospital in the Republic of the Congo .

Marina's mother recently died and her father is out in the dense forest, hunting and gathering. She is nervous as the doctor examines her. Thankfully she doesn't seem to have any nerve damage yet, despite the many patches all over her face and body. Marina clearly has leprosy.

Unfortunately, in the northern part of the country is very difficult to get medicines and supplies.

Thankfully rescue arrived weeks later and they went straight to the warehouse where the multi-drug therapy, the cure for leprosy, was being stored. Working with the Ministry of Health, they made sure that boxes of the cure were sent on a plane to Pioneer Christian Hospital.

Thanks to the help given as charity they were able to get Marina the medicine she urgently needed. The antibiotics will stop this terrible disease before it causes permanent nerve damage and disabilities.



<https://www.leprosy.org/patient-stories/marina-rescue-in-the-rainforest/>

**WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET,
BUT WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE
GIVE.**

WINSTON CHURCHILL

GIVE

Il-bank tiegħek fil-qalb tal-komunità

L-HSBC huwa l-bank li jinsab fil-qalba tal-komunità tiegħek. B'għarfien internazzjonali u esperjenza lokali, aħna nistgħu ngħinuk tiegħu hsieb aħjar il-finanzi tiegħek. Il-fergħat tagħna huma miftuħin kuljum f'diversi lokalitajiet madwar Malta u Għawdex, b'xi whud mill-fergħat joffru wkoll servizz ta' filgħaxija.

Għalhekk ejja żurna u flimkien niddiskutu l-bżonnijiet bankarji tiegħek. L-impjegati tagħna, kollha mharrġa fil-*customer service* u mmexxija minn *branch manager* b'esperjenza kbira fil-qasam bankarju jinsabu herqana biex ikunu ta' servizz għalik.

ĊEMPEL 2380 2380
ŻUR [hsbc.com.mt](https://www.hsbc.com.mt)
MUR fl-eqreb fergħa



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Nimexxu flimkien

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The Raoul Follereau Foundation [Malta] - Order of Charity is a non-profit organisation set up in Malta in 1967 with the goal of collecting monetary support for the assistance of lepers throughout the World. It forms part of the international Raoul Follereau Foundation established in 1946 by the world famous anthropologist who died in 1977. The main aims of the Foundation are:

- to encourage social help to those suffering from leprosy;
- to ascertain that these people are treated as they should;
- to help lepers find their place in society;
- to give financial help to leprosaria and missions working with them.

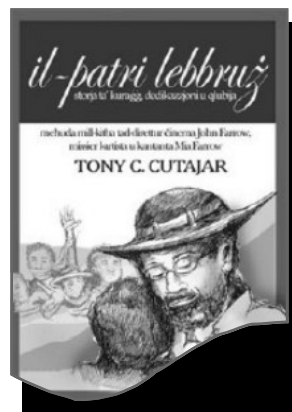


Raoul Follereau

Help us help fight the scourge of leprosy

Kif tista int tghin ix-xoghol tal-Ordni tal-Karità

- Billi issir membru tal-għaqda—dan jiswa biss is-somma ta' €10 fis-sena. Li tkun membru jfisser li tircevi in-newsletter regolari b'mogħod elektroniku jew pubblikata.
- Billi tagħti donazzjoni b'kull ammont li tixtieq int. Sintendi kull donazzjoni tigi rikonnexuta b'rcevuta
- Billi tixtri il-ktieb *Il-Patri Lebbroz* li jipprezenta storja ta' kuraġġ, dedikazzjoni u qlubija tal-qaddis li gie ddikjarat il-patron tal-presuni morda bil-lebbra. Il-Patri Lebbroz Damjan ta' Molokai kien mar jaħdem f'kolonja tal-lebbrozzi abbandunati minn kulhadd. Għalihom kien sacerdot, tabib, bennej, mexxej, habib, missier. Fi ftit kliem kien l-għajn tas-salvazzjoni u t-tama tagħhom. Jum fost l-oħrajn, beda l-omelija tiegħu bil-kliem: "Għez iez ħuti lebbrozzi..." biex hekk qasam mal-kompatrijotti tiegħu fuq il-Ġz ira ta' Molokaj, l-aħbar li hu wkoll kien ittieħed mill-marda. Miet ta' 49 sena. Huwa u gie ddikjarat qaddis sitt snin ilu mill-Papa Benedittu XVI. Il-Ktieb jinbiegħ €6.50 biss inkluss il-posta. Ibghat cekk ta' €6.50 pagabbli lill-Ordni tal-Karita.



Offerta mill-qalb

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⇒ qed nibgħat cekk nru _____ bhala donazzjoni bis-somma ta':

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⇒ Nixtieq insir membru ta' l'Ordni tal-Karità u nibdha nircevi in-newsletter regolarment....€10

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⇒ Nippreferi in-newsletter pubblikata.....

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