



**The Raoul Follereau Foundation (Malta) - The Order of Charity**  
**is a registered NGO [No. VO/0980]**  
**administered by the**  
**Grand Priory of the Maltese Islands**  
**of the**  
**Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem**



December 2018

RAOUL FOLLEREAU FOUNDATION (MALTA): NGO NO. VO/0980

# Order of Charity Newsletter

## EDITORIAL

December 17th is the feast day of St. Lazarus, the Patron Saint of the Order. The miracle of the raising of Lazarus by Jesus actually occurred a few weeks before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection – no wonder the Jews sought to try kill Lazarus after Jesus's resurrection! Lazarus was a living example of Jesus's power over death – a thorn in their side! I have often wondered why the Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of St. Lazarus a few days before Christmas rather than before Lent when the miracle really occurred. Jesus' crucifixion and death is the only event in

the New Testament where we can be sure of the date since we know that this coincided with the Feast of Pesach which occurs in spring [Exodus 23:15]. So why tie the raising of Lazarus to the birth of Jesus rather than the His death?

There can be no resurrection without death, and no death without birth. The birth of Jesus heralded the salvation to the world; a salvation that was only finally achieved through Jesus' death and resurrection. The raising of Lazarus from the dead reflecting the victory over all that is evil could only take place because the Saviour had been born thirty-three years

earlier in Bethlehem. During Advent, it is

right and proper to contemplate on the interrelationship of the birth of Jesus in our hearts and our path to salvation. It is a time for us to analyze our lifestyle – the good, the bad and the ugly. It is a time for each of us to be reborn with new resolutions – resolutions that should redirect us to the path of salvation.

The path of salvation is very clearly mapped out in the Parable of Lazarus the Beggar. It is easy to be complacent in our outlook towards those suffering and in need. This was the "sin" of the rich man in the parable. He never did anything directly to harm Lazarus, he simply ignored him and his state completely - Sins of OMISSION in contrast to the Sins of COMMISSION. That alone was sufficient to merit punishment in the eyes of God. We have to attune ourselves to the suffering around us – suffering of whatever form:

### Inside this issue:

Editorial—H.E. Chev Charles Savona Ventura

1. Centre to Remove Leprosy as Grounds for Divorce

2. India Will be Free of leprosy, Kala-Azar by 2019: Health Minister Nadda

3. 1. R Madhavan Appeals for 'Dignity' of Leprosy Victims  
2. State Funeral for Pakistan's 'Mother Teresa', Ruth Pfau

4. Elementary School Student in Southern California Tests Positive for Leprosy

5. AIIMS Patna launches free surgery service for leprosy patients

6. Need to shed stigma attached to leprosy

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

physical, mental, emotional, etc. Remember Jesus's admonition: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me." [Matthew 25:45]. Let us during advent and Christmas contemplate about what we have done on ignored to do to help our neighbour in need. Let us make a new year's resolution to do more.

H.E. Chev. Charles Savona Ventura



## Centre to Remove Leprosy as Grounds for Divorce

New Delhi: At a cabinet meeting in July, the Central Government decided to remove leprosy as a grounds for divorce under the Hindu Marriage Act.

After the cabinet meeting, the Union Minister for Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad, and while addressing a press conference, said that the decision was being taken to bring "dignity" to the lives of leprosy patients in India.

While the Union Minister stopped short of mentioning the exact instrument by which this will be done, he said the government was going to tackle the issue of leprosy being grounds for divorce.

He said he could not make details of the new law public before Parliament was apprised of the bill.

"In the past, we have seen that leprosy patients have been victimised. If you were a leprosy patient, divorce could be granted (to your spouse).

We have taken a decision that was long overdue.

We are going to grant dignity to leprosy patients. Since this bill has to first be presented in Parliament, we cannot reveal it at this stage. We will do so in the house," Prasad said

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/centre-to-remove-leprosy-as-grounds-for-divorce-1830895.html>

## India Will be Free of leprosy, Kala-Azar by 2019: Health Minister Nadda

Ballia, Uttar Pradesh: Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda on Saturday claimed that the country will be free of leprosy in 2018 and Kala-azar by 2019.

"The country will be free of leprosy this year and of Kala-azar by next year," he told reporters on the occasion of the inauguration of a hospital.



To a question, Nadda said mortality rate in India has decreased and referred to a World Health Organisation report to stress that tetanus and some other diseases concerning children are well under control.

He claimed that Uttar Pradesh, which used to lag behind other states in the health sector, has taken a big leap ahead because of various schemes launched by the BJP government.

"The results of the schemes of the Centre can now be seen on the ground... the results of health schemes need some time to take shape," Nadda said.

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/india-will-be-free-of-leprosy-kala-azar-by-2019-health-minister-j-p-nadda-1773607.html>



## R Madhavan Appeals for 'Dignity' of Leprosy Victims



**New Delhi:** Actor R. Madhavan, who has supported leprosy initiatives, wants victims of the skin and nerve disease to live with dignity.

Japanese photographer Natsuko Tominaga travelled across India to capture examples of leprosy cured patients. Thirty such photographs of cured leprosy patients are the subject of her photo exhibition.

Recognising this effort, Madhavan said in a statement: "Medically, leprosy is a curable disease. Emotionally, it plunders every last ounce of dignity you have - by making you feel rejected and unwanted."

"I congratulate the WHO and Nippon Foundation for this photo exhibition of leprosy survivors, heroes who have a message to give - leprosy is just another curable disease!"



## State Funeral for Pakistan's 'Mother Teresa', Ruth Pfau

**Karachi:** Ruth Pfau, a German nun who devoted her life to combating leprosy in Pakistan, was buried with full state honours on Saturday, in an unprecedented service for a foreign Christian in the Muslim-majority country.

Pfau, who died at the age of 87 on August 10 was known locally as Pakistan's Mother Teresa. She came to the southern port city of Karachi in 1960 and spent half a century taking care of some of the country's sickest and poorest people.

She was the founder of Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre in Karachi, where she was being cared for at the time of her death after a short illness.

Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain attended the state funeral service at St Patrick's Cathedral in the city, where hundreds of people gathered to pay their respects.

The casket, draped in the national flag, was carried by army personnel and Marie Adelaide staff and given a 19-gun salute.

"The entire Pakistani nation pays homage to Dr Pfau's extraordinary work. She will always be fondly remembered. We have lost a national hero," Pakistan's foreign office spokesman Nafees Zakaria said today in a statement.

Working with the government, Pfau expanded leprosy treatment centres in more than 150 cities and towns across Pakistan, training doctors, treating thousands of victims and helping establish a national programme to bring the disease under control.

She was honoured by the state with the country's two highest civilian awards, the Hilal-e-Imtiaz and the Hilal-e-Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi earlier expressed his sadness at her death, saying "she may have been born in Germany, but her heart was always in Pakistan".

It was after the horrors of World War II in her native Germany that Pfau decided to dedicate her life to serving humanity, becoming a doctor and joining the Daughters of the Heart of Mary order, founded during the French Revolution.

Not required to take the veil or live in seclusion, she ended up in Pakistan by chance. En route to work in India, visa complications forced her to break the journey in Karachi, where she visited a lepers' colony.

Pfau was also praised for her work in helping victims of devastating flooding in 2010, which left millions of people homeless across swathes of the country.

<https://www.news18.com/news/world/state-funeral-for-pakistans-mother-teresa-ruth-pfau-1496285.html>

## Elementary School Student in Southern California Tests Positive for Leprosy

**Los Angeles:** A Southern California elementary school student has been found to have leprosy, public health officials said on Friday, though they emphasize that the student's school and community remain safe.

Two children from Indian Hills Elementary School in Jurupa Valley had initially been diagnosed by a local doctor with the condition known medically as Hansen's disease, Riverside County health officials said.

But this week they received results from the National Hansen's Disease Laboratory Research Program in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and they showed that only one of the children had tested positive.

Public health officials emphasize that it is incredibly difficult to contract leprosy and that there is no danger to the child's classmates. The classrooms had been sanitized since the initial diagnoses.

"It is incredibly difficult to contract leprosy. The school was safe before this case arose and it still is," said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, Riverside County's public health officer.

Health and school officials will say nothing about how the child contracted the disease, or



about the identity of either child who was tested.

"The only way to protect the two students is for nobody to know who they are," district Superintendent Elliott Duchon told the Riverside Press-Enterprise.

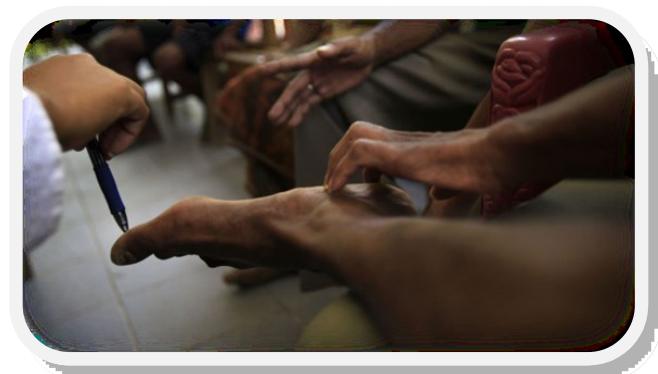
The school district sent an email to parents informing them of the diagnosis, and Duchon was at the school to answer questions from concerned parents.

Leprosy remains a problem in tropical hot spots of the world with some 250,000 new infections reported each year. Similar to tuberculosis, it can stay dormant for years before attacking the skin and nerves.

The disease has long been misunderstood, with false stories of fingers and toes falling off adding to the stigma. Fear led some countries to quarantine people.

Antibiotics typically kill the bacteria within days and make it non-contagious. It usually takes a year or two to fully clear the germ from the body. If left untreated, it can cause severe nerve damage, deformity and disability.

<https://www.news18.com/news/world/elementary-school-student-in-southern-california-tests-positive-for-leprosy-1295223.html>



It is not spread through short-term contact like handshakes or even sexual intercourse.

## AIIMS Patna launches free surgery service for leprosy patients

**Patna:** The All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) Patna on Wednesday launched service of free surgery for leprosy patients.

As part of the programme launched by the institute on Wednesday on World Plastic Surgery Day, a 35-year-old man from Patna was operated for claw hand.

Due to leprosy the patient was not able to use his fingers, an AIIMS Patna release said.

The patient underwent a one-and-a-half hour operation and would be discharged tomorrow, it added. The surgery was conducted by Director of AIIMS Patna JK Singh and the Head of Department of Plastic Surgery Veena Kumari.

She said items needed during surgery have been provided free of cost by the hospital.

Later, a conference was organised at AIIMS Patna on World Plastic Surgery Day in which Director JK Singh was the chief guest and a large number of doctors from the hospital and outside participated in it.

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/aiims-patna-launches-free-surgery-service-for-leprosy-patients-1020850.html>



## Need to shed stigma attached to Leprosy



**Kolkata:** Highlighting the discrimination against the leprosy-affected in India, WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Elimination of Leprosy Yohei Sasakawa has called for extension of support to the patients to overcome the stigma associated with the disease.

"Many parts of India still face the problems of discrimination and a major social stigma is attached to those afflicted with leprosy. After meeting and understanding them, one thing I can conclude is that the leprosy situation in India needs help," Sasakawa said.

Despite the fact that most of them are cured, they and their families are forced to settle in separate leper colonies in India.

"Necessary support should be extended to the leprosy-affected people and their families to change the scenario," he added.

Sasakawa also officiates as the chairman of The Nippon Foundation, Japan.

The Japanese delegate was on a tour of the leper colonies Tuesday at Asansol in Burdwan district of West Bengal.

He was accompanied by Member of Parliament

Dinesh Trivedi, who is currently the convenor of the Forum of Parliamentarian to Free India of Leprosy.

Residents of the Rahmatganj and Kankardanga leper colonies at Burnpur in Asansol subdivision - home to 159 families - mainly resort to begging, and collecting rags and scrap to make ends meet. Many also work as masons.

Many districts in India continue to report cases of leprosy higher than the WHO benchmark for elimination of leprosy. A total of 1.35 lakh new cases were detected during the year 2012-13 in the country, according to National Leprosy Eradication Programme data.

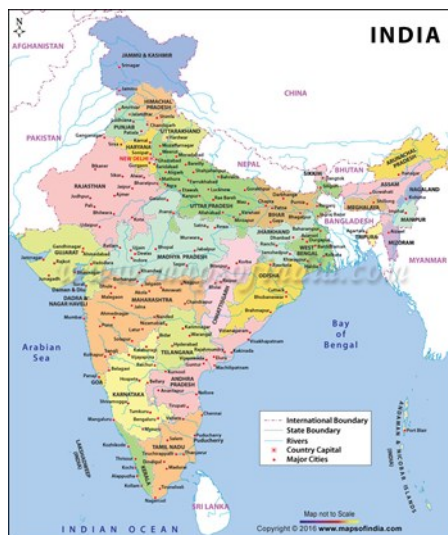
In West Bengal, 11,683 new cases of leprosy

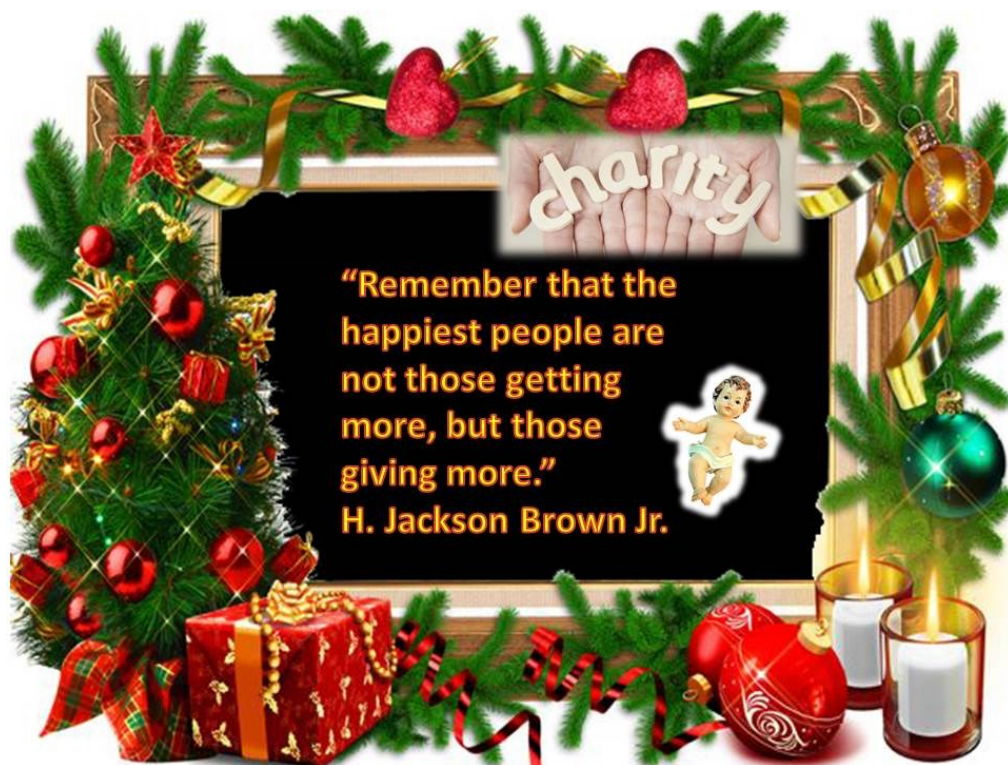
were reported between April 2012 and March 2013. The annual new case detection rate in nine districts (out of the total 19 in the state) is more than 10 per 100,000 population.

Burdwan reported 1,293 cases in 2012-2013.

"We aim to provide them a life with dignity, better education

for their children, pension for the elderly and ensure them acceptance into the society," said Sasakawa, who in 2006 established the Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation in India.





**Merry  
Christmas  
and  
a  
Happy New  
Year 2019**



## 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 nghinuk 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 heqqana biex ikunu ta' servizz għalik.

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



Approvat u mahruġ mill-HSBC Bank Malta p.l.c. 116, Triq l-Arcisqof, Valletta VLT1444. 101009 – 02/2018



Nimexxu flimkien

**Raoul Follereau Foundation**  
[Malta]

Order of Charity,  
Catholic Institute,  
Floriana - Malta

E-mail: [rforderofcharity@gmail.com](mailto:rforderofcharity@gmail.com)  
[http://stlazarusmalta.org/aff\\_0oC.html](http://stlazarusmalta.org/aff_0oC.html)

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.

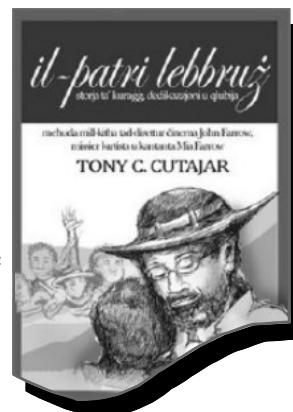


Raoul Follereau

*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-lebbrozi 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 lebbrozi..." 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

Jiena \_\_\_\_\_ Nru tal-ID \_\_\_\_\_ li noqgħod

\_\_\_\_\_ Kodiċi Postali \_\_\_\_\_,

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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

€5  €10  €15  €20  €25  donazzjoni libera € \_\_\_\_\_

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

⇒ Lest nircevi in-newsletter b'mogħod elektroniku.....

⇒ Nippreferi in-newsletter pubblikata.....

⇒ Nixtieq nixtri il-ktieb *Il-Patri Lebbroz*.....€6.50