



# KARUNALAYA

## CHRISTMAS TIDINGS

### 2022



Often experience of deprivations in life teaches us many lessons. When deprivation becomes a system, helplessness becomes a way of life. Finding no way to get out of the suffocating experience, the human person resigns to the reality as his or her fate. That is exactly what happens to a person affected with leprosy. 47 years ago, Servant of God Marian Zelazek, SVD appeared as a beacon of light to the 600 odd leprosy victims living on the outskirts of Puri city. In him they saw a person who accepted and respected them as human beings, rather than beggars to be shooed away. That encounter eventually grew into **Karunalaya Leprosy Care Centre**. Karunalaya continues its relentless service of compassion to the residents of Jeebaramji Leprosy Colony, lending an attentive ear to their cries of pain, extending a trusting hand of friendship and a shoulder to lean on. Christmas reminds us that we are called to emulate these core values of compassionate love as we celebrate the birth of a person who changed the face of the earth by his compassion and love. A walk with '**Karunalaya**' will confirm that this commitment to these vulnerable people continues unabated.



### END OF A MOMENTOUS ERA

**DR. SHYAM BANDHU MAHAPATRA** is a legend in Leprosy treatment and rehabilitation in Odisha. He has single handedly changed the way leprosy is perceived and treated, through innovative methods and family based rehabilitation approach that he promoted during his long tenure as a Super Specialist in the field. Upon his retirement from active service, he honoured the earnest request of Father Marian and joined hands with **Karunalaya** to share his passion and expertise. During this period of his association, the Hospital care at **Karunalaya** was standardized, irregularities and indiscipline was set right. His in-depth knowledge of the disease, intuition and compassionate touch healed hundreds of victims. His personal touch endeared him to each and every patient visiting him over the years. His passion and dedication to the welfare of the victims of leprosy was indomitable. With a heavy heart, Dr. Mahapatra bid us farewell in the beginning of August, 2022, as he left Puri for good after rendering a yeoman service to leprosy care and rehabilitation for over 50 years. The patients whom he served for these long years were inconsolable. **Karunalaya** was fortunate to have the services of this illustrious and eminent Doctor for 20 plus years. The void created by his departure at **Karunalaya** can never be filled.



## DOCTOR WITH A HUMAN TOUCH

Blessings of Father Marian have been guiding the pathway of *Karunalaya* over the years. Yet another example of this is finding another eminent Doctor to replace Dr. S.B. Mahapatra at *Karunalaya*. **DR. BASANTA KUMAR MISHRA**, (Rt.) Chief Medical Officer, Coal India, (Maha Ratna PSE, Govt. of India), has joined as Medical Officer at *Karunalaya* in the month of October, 2022. He brings with him immense administrative experience in one of the large medical establishment in the country. He is a medicine specialist. His personal touch has made a huge impression on the leprosy patients visiting the bi-weekly clinic in a short time.

The hospital attended to 2200 OPD cases and had 75 admissions during the year for intense care. The daily dressings of ulcer wounds numbered 4480. These essential cares are a vital contribution to the wellbeing of about 120 elderly victims of leprosy living in the colony. The average expenditure for Medicine purchase for one month amounts to Rs.22,000.00. These are dispensed to the patients at the bi-weekly clinic at the hospital on Doctor's advise, without any cost. *"But for the generous medical care received from Karunalaya, most of the older victims would have gone to Swarga Dwar (crematorium) long ago,"* exclaim some of the grateful victims.



## HEALING MISSION

*"Karuanalya Cottage of Mercy & Compassion"* is the name of our medical facility in the middle of the leprosy colony. 75 persons used the short stay facility and its services to get relief and healing from their ailments. The bi-weekly clinic saw 2200 patients in its OPD and 4480 ulcer dressings were administered to the victims during the year.

## MERCY KITCHEN

The nurturing mother 'MERCY KITCHEN' continues feeding the 30 destitute and elderly persons in the leprosy colony every day of the year. Number of local donors have come forward to patronize one meal during the day, on special occasions or observations in their families. Coming to share food with these less fortunate ones has been a life changing experience for some of them.



## BEATRIX SCHOOL

After the lull of the pandemic, life is back to normal at Beatrix School. Children are once again enjoying life with friends and teachers. Class rooms are full with children, each class having 65 & above on the roll. The time during the closure of the school due to Covid-19 was utilized for the necessary repairs



and painting of the School building. The school looks majestic with the much-needed refurbishment of the class rooms and the exterior.



Beatrix School has 7 approved Grant-in-Aid posts in the primary & upper primary sections. Of these 4 posts are vacant at present due to retirement of teachers. The newly appointed teachers, following the prescribed procedure as given in 'The Odisha Education (Minority Managed Aided Educational Institutions Employees' Method of Recruitment & Conditions of Service) Order 2003, are in various stages of approval. Beatrix High School attained eligibility for grant in aid in 2020 and the application for Grant in aid is pending at the Government level. An early clearance of these will greatly ease the financial burden of managing the school.

## PROUD MOMENT FOR THE SCHOOL

Abhilipsa Rout & Urmila Rout both hailing from the leprosy colony promoted by Father Marian were the school toppers with 94% & 92% marks respectively in the annual matriculation exam held in March, 2022. Both these bright children shining out in the midst of deprivations they have been facing, has been a proud moment for the School. While Abhilipsa wants to be a medical doctor and has taken admission in a Science residential College in Bhubaneswar, Urmila is aspiring to be an Indian Administrative Officer. *Karunalaya* has promised to support both of them in achieving their dreams.

## HOME WITH A DIFFERENCE - BEATRIX HOSTEL

Leprosy colonies are generally situated on the outskirts of city dwellings. When parents go begging to earn their living, children from these colonies waste their childhood in idling around. The luckier ones among them have joined Beatrix School for studies and live in the Hostel attached to the school. This is their home away from home where they are loved and cared for tenderly with affection. They are assisted to get over their inhibitions and inferiority thrust on them by the stigma attached to the illness of their parents or grandparents. 35 of these children are enjoying their childhood with good foundation for their future in Beatrix School.



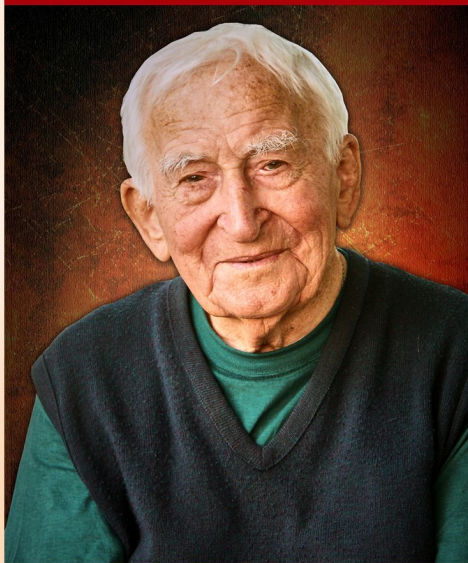
## ISHOPANTHI ASHRAM

'ISHOPANTHI ASHRAM'- *Center of Spirituality & Dialogue* is an integral and vital ministry of the SVD in Puri. Various groups of people utilize the centre for their spiritual search, updating and training programs. The simple yet impressive set-up with its attractive conference rooms and tidy living rooms is a big attraction for NGOs and seekers of solitude. The personal approach of the





Centre to the visitors has been the outstanding feature of the place. 'Cyclone Fani' had caused a lot of damage to the centre. In addition to the repairs, the Centre underwent a major overhauling and facelift during the year, making it a more welcoming home to the guests.



## SERVANT OF GOD MARIAN ZELAZEK

The **FOUNDER** of *Karunalaya*, **FATHER MARIAN ZELAZEK, SVD**, was a man of dialogue with people of all faiths and cultures, the rich and poor, the simpletons and the intellectuals. He has been raised to the status of '**SERVANT OF GOD**' in recognition of his meritorious and compassionate service to the victims of leprosy. Pilgrimage to his work field in Puri is a befitting tribute to the Sainthood person. Visit to the little chapel where he spent long hours in prayer, going round the museum in his name, and praying at the beautiful & impressive Church he constructed in the middle of the city have left lasting memories among the pilgrims. Promotion of his popularity among the faithful is vital for the progress of his claim for Sainthood. Do join us with your prayer intentions. Any request for prayer through the intercession of **Servant of God Marian Zelazek** is welcome and will be duly prayed for at his

Chapel. Compiling of witnesses and documentation towards his Sainthood is in the final stages of preparation. Do use the accompanying prayer in your family for the cause of Father Marian.

### PRAYER FOR THE BEATIFICATION OF SERVANT OF GOD MARIAN ZELAZEK

Loving Father, saved from the brutality of the Nazi Concentration Camp, you led your servant Father Marian Zelazek to be a Religious Missionary Priest, as a messenger of love and compassion to the people in India. In his Obedience, Humility, and Fidelity to Christ and to the Church, he dedicated his life to relieve the sufferings of the sick and poor, especially the leprosy patients. May the inspiration of your servant prompt us to greater confidence in your love that we may continue his work of caring for the needy and the marginalised.

We implore you to grant us the favours we ask through his intercession that his holiness may be recognised by the Church to declare him a Saint. We ask this through the intercession of Mary our Mother, Saints Arnold and Joseph, and in the Name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

## GENEROUS SUPPORT

**Karunalaya Leprosy Care Centre** lives on the generous support of simple and loving people spread all over the world. The trust of the caring donors is the lifeline of this compassionate mission of caring for the under privileged and leprosy victims. Our appeal for help in 'Word Among Us' magazine has been bringing in some help in small trickles. We are humbled by the trust experienced in the sharing of these resources. Karunalaya is deeply indebted to the kind donors for the support and prayerful assistance received during the year. Your kind help however small shall be duly acknowledged and will go a long way in carrying forward this mission of service to the leprosy victims.

Donations from India may kindly be sent to: **KARUNALAYA LEPROSY CARE CENTRE, A/C NO: 20273174975, INDIAN BANK, DAL MANDAP SAHI BRANCH, PURI, IFS CODE: IDIB00P689**

I take this opportunity to extend to each of the supporters and admirers of **Karunalaya**, a very happy and joyful Christmas. The celebration of the event of Jesus becoming a human person is a wake-up call for all to share his compassionate love. Let the sharing begin with this Christmas.

-Fr. Baptist D'Souza, SVD, Director, Karunalaya Leprosy Care Centre, Puri



## Merry Christmas & a Blessed New Year 2023

KARUNALAYA LEPROSY CARE CENTRE, POST BOX 21, BALIAPANDA, PURI-752001, ODISHA, INDIA  
Email: karunalayacare@gmail.com Ph: 7008965334 (Director), 8658748342 (Treasurer)