



LIGHT for the BLIND

St Joseph's Hospices

Helping the Blind, Dying Destitute and Mentally ill of India

Registered Charity No. 1085698

<http://lightfortheblind.org.uk/>

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FOR 'LIGHT FOR THE BLIND':



This Christmas, it gives me great pleasure to send these words of encouragement to Fr Thomas, his dedicated staff, trustees, and all who support 'Light for the Blind'. During the Year of Mercy, it was my privilege to visit the three St Joseph's Hospices in Tamil Nadu, India. As another hospice, for 300 patients, is soon to open in Pondicherry on 11th December, I extend my warmest wishes and congratulations to Fr Thomas and his team of supporters, both in India and in the United Kingdom.

It is an honour for me to be your new Patron, after the death of your Founder Patron, Bishop David Konstant, and I only regret that my schedule will not allow me on this occasion to come and inaugurate this next milestone in the unending mission of mercy. As the new Patron of Light for the Blind, I wish to invoke God's blessing on all who support the work of this charity. May the Infant Jesus of Bethlehem bless you and all that you are doing in the service of some of the poorest and most vulnerable of Christ's brothers and sisters. I pray that you, your families and all you love and care for, will have a very happy and holy Christmas.

+ Marcus Stock

Rt Revd Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds

As 2017 comes to its close, I have a heart full of gratitude to God, for He has doubly blessed us this year with the opening of our two new hospices in Pondicherry and Vellore. St Joseph's, Pondicherry, which is financed by one wonderfully generous Catholic family from the Midlands, will be formally inaugurated and blessed on 11 December. St Joseph's, Vellore is still far from complete, but even with its as-yet basic facilities, its doors are already open to succour the dying destitute, so desperately in need. When both are fully operational, we will have the capacity to care for another 700 patients. Even now we are nursing 725 dying destitute, with an average of three who die with dignity each day - which speaks volumes about the magnitude of the work. May the Babe of Bethlehem bless you all, worldwide, who contribute to this great work. And may He bring peace, joy and fulfilment into the lives of all of you, our regular supporters and readers.

A very happy Christmas and God's blessings to one and all!

Fr Thomas

Tamil Nadu

Dindigul

Our first hospice, 40 miles north of the historic city of Madurai, opened its doors in 2006. In the environs of its beautiful gardens and fruit trees, it has provided compassionate nursing care for several thousand dying and destitute patients. This year's costs have been considerably higher than usual, as the region was afflicted by a major drought and water had to be brought in by road tanker - at a cost of 3,000 rupees/£40 per day. We have also had to construct additional cemetery facilities, and have created a lovely roof garden which will also serve as a Garden of Remembrance.

Chengalpet

Our second and largest hospice, located within the teeming city of Chennai, capital of the State of Tamil Nadu, has been accepting patients since 2011, though not officially opened until 2016 by, among other dignitaries, our own Bishop Marcus Stock. St Joseph's, Chengleput has the capacity to accommodate 500 patients. As part of the on-going upgrading of this major facility, the original 850 wooden window-frames are being replaced by aluminum

Tambaram

Located close to Chennai Airport, Tambaram serves as a respite center for up to 30 patients in transit. Because of Chennai's insuperable traffic problems, this smaller site provides a valuable resting-place for the many patients too desperately afflicted to survive the longer journeys to our larger hospices.

Pondicherry

On the coast, between Chennai and Nagapattinam, our new hospice, built to accommodate 250 patients, will have been inaugurated and blessed on 11 December 2017. Already, a considerable number of dying destitute have been admitted here, their suffering and wretchedness exacerbated by the scourge of alcoholism that afflicts this former French colony.

Vellore

Vellore is an industrial town, almost equidistant between Chennai and Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore) and it will benefit from a new super-highway now under construction. This district is 'home' to large numbers of destitute persons. Building work for this new 400-bed hospice is well under way, though extremely high temperatures this year have impeded progress. The 3.75-acre site has been transferred to us by the Salesians of the Chennai Province via a Trust, and their Brothers will play a part in nursing our dying destitute patients, the poorest of God's poor.



To help save costs and resources, if you would be willing to receive the newsletter and update via email rather than via UK post, please send an email to: light.4.the.blind@gmail.com

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