



LIKVIDACE LEPRY

Czech Leprosy Relief

„If you are willing,
you can make me clean.“

(Mark 1:40)



www.likvidacelepry.cz



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THANK YOU

Dear friends of Czech Leprosy Relief, it has been 25 years since a few people had this good idea and the courage to get involved in something they knew very little about. There are a few examples in the history where personal courage stood at the beginning of a great piece of work, work that has moved the world. Every one of us can surely think of at least one person that had inspired him or her and thus had a certain influence on that person's life or actions.

Czech Leprosy Relief is not only a non profit organization, it is also a community of people who have decided to help the less fortunate. To help people who are really dependent on mercy of the others. And this compassion must be motivated by love since the concerned people are thousand of miles away and stay practically unknown to the helper.

One will not find any beautiful pictures neither pretty places in the areas where we operate, on the contrary, they are filled with pain and suffering. In our society there is no place for this kind of illness however the fact is, that the affected people are here with all their needs. The intention and aim of our work is not to give plain promises nor to ensure any riches and happy life for those people.

What LL has always been doing and what we also want to focus on in the future, is the treatment and reduction of suffering as well as reducing further consequences of the illness which really does not belong to our current world anymore. Those people deserve a life without fear and stigma – which really come from the unknown. But mainly we want to help to the people to get back to the society, to find the right place.

Our organization is as strong as the people who support it and believe in it. It may sound like kind of an outworn phrase but we are fully aware that the right people supporting those who suffer are YOU – our donors. Without your generosity we wouldn't have been able to build the hospitals in India or treat the leprosy in Liberia or Columbia. We celebrate the 25th anniversary in 2017. All this began with a litte good idea of a few people and it has grown into a great work of love towards the others.

On behalf of the whole LL team with sincere gratitude


Lubomír Hajas
CEO of LL

About us

LL is a christian organization that helps people with leprosis, tuberculosis and buruli ulcer. It is also a missionary organization helping sick people in India, Liberia, Columbia and Tanzania. The primary goal of our activities is fund raising to support leprosy clinics, the leprosy treatment and similar diseases and their consequences.

LL cooperates with DAHW and Action Medeor, German organizations and this partnership allows to deliver help to more and more people.

Our organization is based on experience, cooperation and most of all on our generous donors which enables us to be part of a great piece of work through many smaller gifts. Our aim is to cure not only the disease itself but the person as a whole.

„We know only too well that what we are doing is nothing more than a drop in the ocean. But if the drop were not there, the ocean would be missing something.“

(Mother Theresa)

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President: P. Stanisław Góra
Director: Bc. Lubomír Hajas



Czech Leprosy Relief in the World

Columbia

Our organization financially supports a program called Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) in this part of Columbia. CBR's main focus is on supporting patients who are excluded from the society due to their disease.

This program currently runs in several cities ie Bogota, Cucuta, Neiva, Ibague, Barranquilla, Cartagena, Popayan, Cali a Bucaramanga.

In cooperation with National program for leprosy treatment and Persons Affected by Leprosy association, the CBR tries to provide some kind of privacy to the patients as well as to enable them to return to their community and lead respective lives. The main goal of this program is social support of the poorest people who are or were affected by leprosy. CBR, with the help of the cured patients tries to find out their needs to be able to optimize their life conditions. All these activities are provided by the Czech Leprosy Relief organization.

Liberia

Rehabilitation center Ganta is located in northwest Liberia in the Nimba county. It has been established by the Liberian government however financial support and all other activities are driven by the Czech Leprosy Relief.

Liberia is a country that is still recovering from its war history and only now is in the process of establishing leprosy treatment programs. Those programs mean that the Ganta rehabilitation center is now becoming more visible and more important. There are about 40 leprosy patients on average, 50 TBC patients and patients with buruli, HIV and malaria.

In Liberia, the leprosy patients are still believed to be kind of stigmatized by the disease therefore it is important to focus also on educating the whole society in this area.

Tanzania

In the south of Tanzania, near the Malawi lake Litembo, a diocese hospital is located. It was founded in 1914 as a missionary station. In 1930 with the arrival of Benedictine sisters from Germany, the place began to serve and provide health care to the locals. Currently, this place is a general hospital mainly treating leprosy and tuberculosis patients.

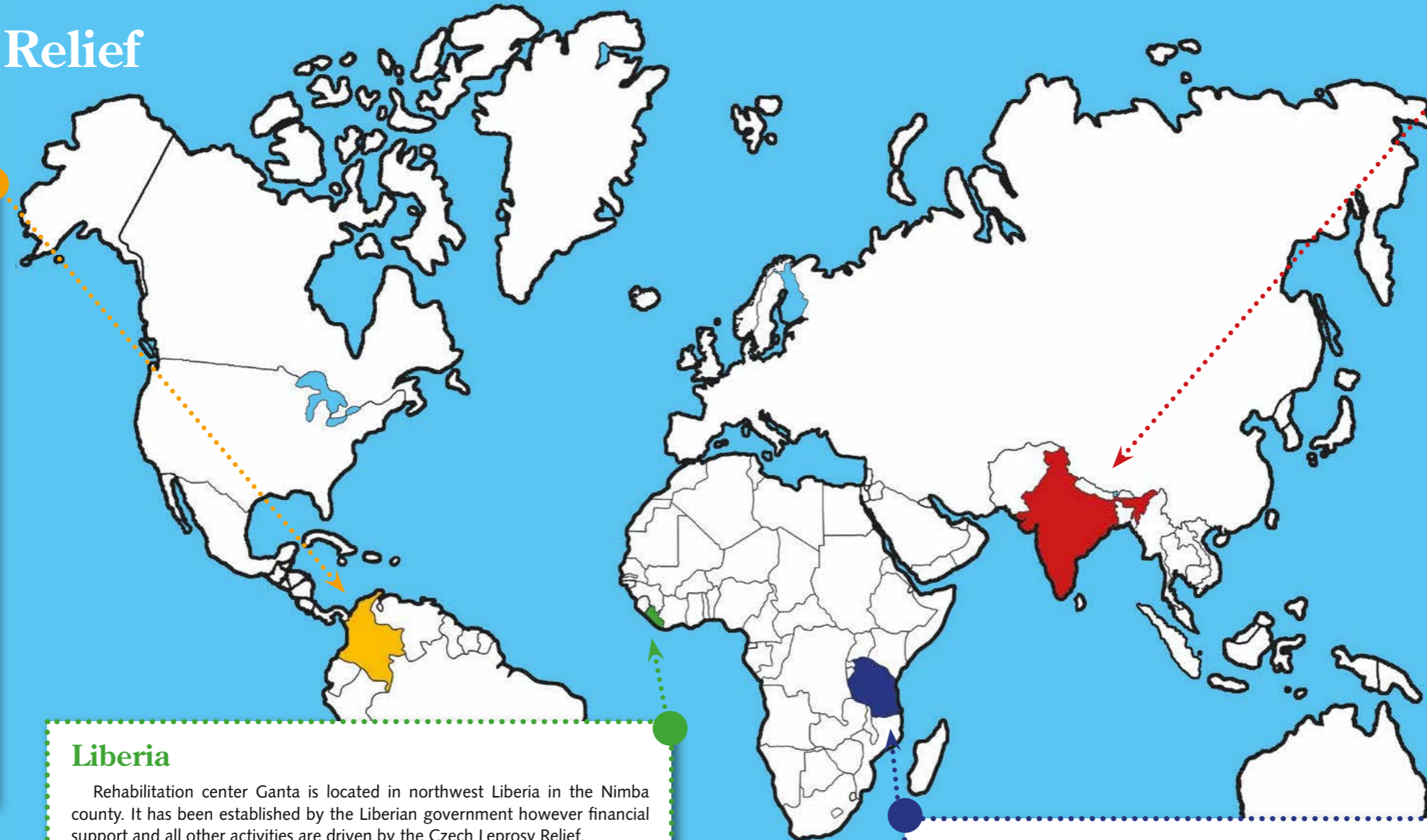
India

Czech Leprosy Relief has helped to build two St. Joseph hospitals in the Bhilari Pahari and Phulpahari (Jharkhand state) and Phulpahari in the West Bengal state near Calcutta.

The hospital in Bhilai Pahari started operating in 2006 like a parish leprosy station, however it can be considered as a center that due to its regular health camps provides health care also to the rest of the region. Bambino orphanage and St. Joseph nurseries also exist under the management of the hospital and children from near villages can find some comfort in those institutions.

St. Joseph hospital in Phulpahari has been providing its services since 2011, it is a general hospital where apart from leprosy treatment, you can find the eye clinic and physiotherapy department.

The hospital also offers work opportunities for people living in the poor region as well as an educational center for nurses.





Introduction to Proceedings of Czech Leprosy Relief

Dear readers,
Czech Leprosy Relief officials, benefactors and friends,

what you are looking at is a journal issued for 25th anniversary of Czech Leprosy Relief foundation. This means it has been already one generation you have been helping to those suffering from such a serious disease that leprosy without any doubt is, or lately those suffering also from tuberculosis. This has been possible thanks to your generosity as well as thanks to Mr. Jiri Holly and his wife Sibyla, the founders of the Czech Leprosy Relief organization.

We all know that these diseases make the patients isolated and excluded not only from the wider community but very often isolated from their own relatives. Therefore a big THANK YOU goes to you, brothers and sisters who have been able to make the physical and mental pain easier. Almost twenty years of sacrifice and love fulfilled work of the founder, Mr. and Mrs. Holy and their closest coworkers who are examples for the years to come under St. Joseph security.

God bless for your solidarity, for your prayers and for your financial and material help.

+ 
+ Cardinal Dominik Duka OP
Archbishop of Prague



Dears,

I am very happy to join a large crowd of those who thank God for the 25 years of the Czech Leprosy Relief existence. I am writing these words on the days when we also commemorate the 25th anniversary of the death of Francis Cardinal Tomášek, who was also known for his big heart open to the poor and needy. Cardinal Tomášek has brought our Church into freedom and kind of symbolically handed over the relay to other generations; the faith which, according to his frequent encouragement, is kept alive through a daily prayer, participation in Sunday worships, a regular Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the observance of the Ten Commandments, but which has to be transferred into the deeds of mercy.

From the very beginning, when I became aware of the Czech Leprosy Relief existency, I have always highly appreciated their work, I have tried to support and recommend it to others. And I have always been convinced that this is the work of God! It's amazing to see the statistics showing how much resources have been gathered for those suffering from terrible diseases in different countries over the past 25 years! How many sufferers have the open heart of our donors helped so far!

I would like to wish the Czech Leprosy Relief especially God's blessing, protection and guidance in the years to come. And also a great number of those who can share with those who suffer and the sick ones!


Fr. Zdenek Wasserbauer
Vicar General of Prague





LL means love

Today, when my era as the LL Chairman is approaching its end , I would like to thank you, our donors and supporters, because my mission will soon be completed in the LL I had founded 19 years ago.

Because we have completed the LL's 19-year mission and our task is now also completed. I was encouraged to undertake this task in the St. Ignatius prayer group in 1992. I felt that it was a higher will, to hand over this organization, which brings help to the lepers, tuberculosis and malaria etc., who would die without this help. I have to declare that LL will now be on Peter`s boat, since it is taken over by fortress, ie the Holy Church.

How was actually LL established ? I used to lead Maria's group every Monday in the church of St. Ignatius. And then, in 1992, we adored in front of the Body of Jesus Christ. And there suddenly I heard a voice: „Help those suffering from leprosy and fast.“ I stood up and told everyone what I heard and that God wishes us to help lepers. And that was the first step to found the LL.

Why am I revealing this secret? Because I want to say that I did not invent anything and it was not me who founded LL but God. And even ever since then, I still felt the hand of God that led me and inspired me to help the lepers. Without God's help this would not be successful. LL is the work of God. I am just a servant and so are my closest co-workers and other helpers. My main co-worker is my wife who has always been helping me to this day.

Something like this it all started - LL's almost feverish activities followed. Very quickly there were a lot of people who were helping. And thousands of devoted donors who began sending money for us to be able to buy medical drugs for the leprosy patients. Also international cooperation has evolved rapidly. This meant that the medicaments were quickly distributed to those missions, we had no idea they existed prior this project, and this continues still till today – the medicines have been sent into the hands of brothers' and sisters' missionaries for 19 years.

(continue on the next page)



The greatest gift to LL was love between us and on the other side of the world in leprosy areas. In the residences of the Lord Jesus in Africa, Asia, South America and Oceania. The global aspect of the Church of Jesus Christ, thousands of Christian churches of the Lord Jesus we fully perceived and experienced. This brotherhood through the love and divinity of our Savior. The medications are sent into the arms of nurses and Sisters so they can give them to all, the poorest in the world, the lepers, whose bodies for thousands of years had been falling apart in terrible pains and those who had been expelled from their own community. God had a mercy on them and had pulled this out of the devil's power. Medicine for leprosy have been discovered. For the first time in human history, leprosy is curable. God's love has prevailed. Mutual love between our God and people. Therefore, let's love our God, Jesus, the whole Trinity, that he has given us the opportunity to help ...

Where LL and other world organizations work, leprosy is very limited. There is no more a skinny Mum, with a baby in her arms ... And you, dear brothers and sisters, our donors with your help, you have your share here ...

LL will not disappear, it will become an independent institution under our Archbishopric. It will not be part of a charity. It will have a president, whom Father Archbishop has appointed. LL will be handed over under the wings of the Prague Archbishopric. Please fully trust the new leadership of LL.

I want to thank you all for your love for our organization, for your trust. Even if we don't know you all in person, we carry all our supporters and donors in our hearts and thank God for all of you ...


(Extracts from an interview with Mr. Jiří Holý – co-founder of LL, Radio Proglas, 10th February 2011)



There is more happiness in giving than in receiving!

The special statement of the Lord Jesus – not given in the Gospels, but in the message of St. Paul (Acts 20:35) – is my main reason for joy when I realize that the Czech Leprosy Relief (LL) has the honour of “giving” for a whole quarter of a century. I am even more respectful of the fact that among the donors – these are really the ones who make donations – there are many who have done so from the very beginning: that is, for more than 25 years!

If it were possible to measure it, one would certainly say how many units of beatitude have already been achieved. But it cannot be measured! - and that's good ... It was for a while – as decided by the Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Dominik Duka – to be in the Czech Leprosy Relief close to this beatitude and to be truly happy about it. Of course, it was work, but work on the mission that goes over you.


The shortest task that needed to be resolved and repeated each year was the administration of all donations according to the requirements of both accounting and tax regulations. This meant making the activity as straightforward and as fast as possible so that it can issue the confirmations as donors need or regulations require. Fortunately, the use of computers and presence of collaborators who helped us with their enthusiasm and professionalism, enabled us to overcome initial difficulties.

The medium term task was to continue the tradition of LL: the way of dealing and cooperating with different mission centres where people with leprosy are helped.

There are leprosy centres, drug dispensaries, or even two hospitals built from funds of LL, i.e. from donations of many individual donors! This task was, in fact, the lightest and most joyous: when I first became acquainted with LL, there was already a large network of supported centres and many professional partners with whom they had long been cooperating. It was a pleasure to continue! Of course, life has brought a lot of changes – some of the priority areas have been changed, but both hospitals in India have always been greatly supported. Many new projects have been added: Colombian project and, above all, taking on the great responsibility for the largest Liberian leprosy centre – hospital in Ganta.

The third task, without exaggeration, touches eternity! The LL was never just a “health or humanitarian” organization, but it has clearly accounted for its Christian roots, from which a great ecumenical cooperation has developed – among donors are groups of different parishes and churches of many different ecclesiastical traditions. The spiritual dimension of LL's identity is its rarity as well: thanksgiving letters sent for each gift are not only an expression of courtesy, but they help to create a spiritual community of those who are united by love of Christ: the love to the most miserable people of the world – those affected by leprosy or tuberculosis – in which we can see the face of Christ. Other activities – such as the weekly Mass celebration in Prague, the annual pilgrimage, and other prayers and shows on the catholic TV and radio – were not just an “accompanying program” but an external manifestation of what LL is really: A TASK OF LOVE!

In the years to come, I wish LL and all its donors and co-workers to success in managing these three tasks in the power of the Holy Spirit as best as possible, so they could really realize that there is more happiness in giving than in receiving!


Fr. Vojtěch Eliáš
(President of LL in 2011–2016)





Dear Friends,

I am pleased to send greetings to Likvidace Lepry and all its supporters for its commitment with the most needed people during the last 25 years.

Congratulations on reaching this important milestone!

All these years, Likvidace Lepry has helped to promote worldwide health and welfare for the most needy by supporting many activities on DAHW projects and by encouraging the people in the Czech Republic to donate in favor of leprosy and TB patients.

This is an occasion to honor the strength of the mission that characterizes your organization. 2017 is a special year during which you commemorate your achievements until now and prepare for future challenges.

On behalf of the DAHW board, I acknowledge those associated with Likvidace Lepry for providing services to the community. By working together, we have help to maintain the sense of wellbeing of healthy individuals.

Please accept my best wishes for continued success in all of your future endeavors.

Sincerely,


Gudrun Freifrau von Widersperg
Supervisory Board President DAHW





Dear Friends,

It is with great Joy that we extend our Congratulations on the 25th Anniversary of one of our more important partners Likvidace Lepry.

Since almost Likvidace Lepry's foundation we have been working together. This I believe is an achievement for both our organizations as we started our cooperation with the same goal.

We know that the growth and success of our organization is largely dependent on having strong and capable partners, such as yourself, and recognize the contribution you make in helping those who are most in need.

Through all these years you have trusted us and our association has matured from work to camaraderie. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for having faith in us and for supporting our projects.

DAHW is proud to count Likvidace Lepry among its partners. We look forward to continuing our association with you and wish you much success.

Sincerely,



Burkard Kömm
CEO of DAHW





Dear Mr. President, Father Góra,

please, accept my sincere congratulation on the 25th anniversary of Czech Leprosy Relief.

We truly appreciate our longterm cooperation in this important area of neglected diseases – leprosy and tuberculosis. A German pharmaceutical help, Action medeor, can distribute medicine and further material to a significant number of projects due to the gifts provided by Czech Leprosy Relief.

Recently, we have been able to support mainly the hospital in Litembo and medical center of the Mbinga catholic diocese in Tanzania.

Action medeor is very thankful to Jiri and Sybila Holy. They have been able to create a well organized and functioning organization working to support leprosy and tuberculosis patients. A sincere thank you goes to you, Mr. President Goro.

We wish a lot of success and blessings to both Czech Leprosy Relief and to you personally. We are also looking forward to our future cooperation.

Sincerely,


Bernard Pastors,
CEO of Action medeor







May our Lord bless you all!

I am very glad to note that Czech Leprosy Relief (Likvidace lepry) is celebrating its 25 years of existence in the field of health. Our association with Likvidace lepry goes back to the year 2004 or so when the Catholic Diocese of Jamshedpur came into contact with Likvidace lepry through Mr. fbi Holy,

Reminiscing those moments, years ago is worth rewarding for all of us. A chain of concrete help started to flow in an unthinkable and surprising ways, many people came from Czech Republic to give their time, their help, and join with their efforts to work for sending relief to the people affected with Leprosy and Tuberculosis.

Yes, we can say, after so many years of our united effort, that what remains vivid in our minds and hearts is not the pain and suffering, but the huge surge of love which reached us when we were most in need of. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all the efforts and the blessings you showered upon us. We never felt abandoned and hopeless!

So we will go ahead sure of your support and, working hand in hand with the many people and organizations from all over the world who are giving their best for the victims of all kinds of diseases, we will surely build them to start a new life.

Again a big THANK YOU and HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS from the Catholic Diocese of Jamshedpur especially from our St. Josephos Hospitalo Bhilai Pahari. We pray that Almighty God may shower His abundant blessings upon the Director Mr. Lubos Hajas and the staff of Likvidace lepry now and forever!

With best wiesh and prayers,

Fr. David Vincent

Vicar general and the Director of Education







Faithful to the mission of Christ

It is with great joy and deep gratitude that I congratulate LL-Likvidace Lepry o.s. on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of this great organization.

Likvidace Lepry has left its indelible mark in more than 60 centres that treat leprosy and TB in Africa, Asia and South America. Truly Likvidace Lepry has successfully lived in achieving its primary aim of treating infectious diseases like leprosy, TB and malaria in the developing countries.

Seva Kendra Calcutta has been a beneficiary of the goodness of Likvidace Lepry. The generosity of Likvidace Lepry and the courage of Rev. Fr. Reginald Fernandes, the former Director of Seva Kendra Calcutta made possible the establishment of St. Joseph's Hospital in Phulpahari in Midnapore in the state of West Bengal, India. We remain indebted to Likvidace Lepry and its numerous benefactors. It was on 10th May 2008 the corner stone of the Hospital was blessed by Most Rev. Lucas Sircar, SDB in the presence of Czech Ambassador, Hynek Kmonicek. The same was inaugurated on 13th November 2011 and the Hospital has been fully operational since then.

The realization of a project of this kind would not have been possible if it was not for the massive financial support exceeding 3 million CZK. Ever since the Hospital is serving numerous people in the district of Midnapore especially the poor.

Likvidace Lepry has boldly embraced the healing mission of Jesus. When a man full of leprosy came and knelt before Jesus and pleaded to him saying, "Lord if you will, you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand, touched the man and said, "I am willing, be clean." You have demonstrated that you as an organization and individuals are carrying forward this Healing Ministry of the deadly disease of leprosy.

On behalf of all the lepers, those affected by TB and malaria and other sicknesses in the Archdiocese of Calcutta we thank you and pray that this mission of yours might bear abundant fruit in the years to come and thereby bring glory to God.

Rev. Dr. Franklin Menezes
Director of Seva Kendra Calcutta





Dear benefactors,

I am glad to hear that Czech Leprosy Relief is celebrating 25 years of Service to the humanity. No sufficient words to express our gratitude to your great work you have been doing to give human dignity to those people who are marginalized by the society and considered outcast.

On this occasion we greatly remember late Jerry Holly, Holy man who thought of doing continuing the Work of Jesus. He Has sacrificed his finance, time and whatever he could .He has seen Christ in the people whom he has served. MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE.

I congratulate, the President, Director and the members of this great institution for continuing this beautiful work.I understand how difficult it is to convince people to be generous and to contribute to this MISSION OF HEALING. We assure you of our prayers and support.

Please accept the good wishes from our children, BABINOS.I have spoken to them about the celebrations. They will remember you for giving them NEW LIFE, to live with human dignity.

Once again Congratulation! And all best for the celebrations.



Fr. Edward J.Saldanha
Director of St. Joseph Hospital
(2015–2017)





25 years of service to humanity

It is my great pleasure to congratulate you on the occasion of completion 25 years of service to Humanity. The people of this part of the world, West Bengal, India, is grateful to the supporters, Benefactors and administrators. Within 25 years we have been able to achieve great success in developing this Hospital to the people who are affected by Leprosy, TB. and other sicknesses.

A small seed planted by Likvidace leprosy is growing fast and has given new life in this area, specially to the people who live Below Poverty Line and no where to go.

We are grateful to God for this gift to the people of West Bengal, India. We congratulate all those who dreamt this dream and took trouble to plant this seed.

With lots love from the people of Midnapore District.

Yours Sicerely,



Fr. Reginald Fernandes,
Director of St. Joseph's Hospital Phulpahadi, Midnapore.



INDIA

She was suffering from tuberculosis for years.



Sister Manikam, a tiny smiling woman, is one of the most capable employees of St. Joseph hospital in Phulpahari, India. She belongs to the St. Anna daughters Congregation. Even though she looks completely healthy today, she almost died from a rare form of tuberculosis.

“I had a lot of health issues – for a long time I suffered from diarrhea, kept on losing weight, I was always tired and didn’t feel like eating. It was about five years I had these kinds of problems but none of the hospitals in West Bengali I visited, was able to help me. They simply could not find the reason, the

root cause of my problems. At last, it was in one Christian hospital where they found out that I suffer from a rare type of TBC, which is located not in the lungs, but in the muscles. When one has a tuberculosis, usually there is a cough that is characteristic for this kind of disease, but not in this form. Therefore, it did not occur to anyone, it could be this kind of illness.

Manikam knew the director of St. Joseph hospital, Mr. Reginald Fernandez so she got a place in their program. “The treatment began as usually, I started to take medicines and I was on a diet, ate a lot of fruit, eggs and almost all the time I used to drink milk. I spent six months in that hospital. Side effects have also appeared, so for some time I became partially deaf, but it is much better now, “she says. During the time when she was getting better, she slowly started helping in the hospital, helping to P. Reginald. So she got cured from the TBC, but further health complications appeared. Finally they found out she also suffers from Crohn disease, which affects the digestions organs.

“I feel ok and healthy but the Crohn disease is incurable, so I will always have to take medicaments. However, I am very glad that I have been cured of TBC. I cannot work physically hard and also I need to avoid spicy food, which is difficult especially in India (smile), but I feel good, “adds the smiling sister.

Now, she helps others.

Manikam had experienced difficult situations even prior her illness. She comes from Urisa state, where, being a Christian, she lived under a lot of pressure – just like the rest of the Christian community.

“The Hindis wanted us to give up our faith, otherwise they would burn our houses and they would make us leave. Unfortunately, that is exactly what happened, ten, maybe twenty people had been killed. The rest fled and had to move to another area, “Manikam recalls.

Her family also decided to run away. Along with other people from the village, they spent five days hiding in the jungle, with no food or water. Her brother was badly beaten up but he managed to escape in the end. Finally they settled in a place about 30km away from their village. This area is much poorer than the

previous one, there is a very little chance to get a job, and kids cannot go to school. The family approached the police but they did not help. “My sister used to work at a police station as an admin support and could see what was going on there. Several times the angry Hindi came to the station and announced their violent plans. So the police knew in advance however they never did anything. On the contrary, they silently supported the guilty ones. We knew what is going to happen only because my sister informed us and we could prepare for the attacks. Later, she was sacked and since then her family has a lot of financial issues, “describes Manikam.

She is very happy to work in the hospital. Despite the fact there is always a lot to do, she does not complain. “I get up around five in the morning, one hour later we have the morning Holy Mass in our chapel. Then I take care of our students, I usually tell them what needs to be done in the garden. After breakfast, around 8:30, the work in hospital starts. Later in the afternoon, I work in the garden again, I tell our students what to do and kind of supervise them, “this is how she describes her day. In the hospital, she helps to arrange patients’ medical appointments and answers patients’ queries. She also works with the RSBY system – which is health insurance administration.



Peace and goodness,

I would like to congratulate to Czech Leprosy Relief on their 25th anniversary on behalf of Francis's sister missionaries of Maria Auxiliadora (Virgin Mary, the help of the Christians), helping in Villa Bernarda, Cienaga de Oro project. Our cooperation is not a long one, no more than two years. However, even during this short period of time, Czech Leprosy Relief has shown their great sympathy with all the leprosy affected people.

It is with great joy and enormous love that we perceive your activities performed through Christian love which help to change lives of a lot of people with Hansen disease.

Due to your support and with the DAHW cooperation we have been able to build a project that truly helps the sick ones and their families. It is because your help is not simply only a medicaments distribution but it is based on getting together, on gaining knowledge and sharing life experience. By doing this you are helping to create a better life space in the society and thus help to destroy the "mark" connected with leprosy.

Our commitment to help the poor and vulnerable ones demands a lot of sacrifice, but it also invites us to have a share of the good with those who are forgotten by the mighty ones and forgotten by the government. With those who are in need and are discriminated due to their illness.

Czech Leprosy Relief celebrates 25th anniversary and together with them all the people with Hansen disease also celebrate. Your organization is a hope for them, hope for a better life without social exclusion.

Our wish is that Czech Leprosy Relief has more and more supported with good heart, and so they are the hope for those suffering from leprosy and similar diseases.

At this point I would like to send a big hug to all Czech Leprosy Relief workers and their supporters as well as I would like to express my deepest appreciation for what they have done so far and what they are still doing.

With love and gratitude

Sr. Gladis Estela Huadich

Sr. Gladis Llano
Project coordinator
Cienaga de Oro



COLUMBIA

Agua de Dios

A place, that is the symbol of discrimination in South America is a Colombian leprosarium called Agua de Dios. It is located in forest valley about 120km from the Columbia capital, in Alto Magdalena province. As its name already suggests, there are thermal spa (streams) very near in this beautiful forest nature.

The first hospital for the leprosy patients in the Agua de Dios area was founded in 1870 on a property bought by the regional government from a local person. It was at the end of the 19. Century that Salesians were already present in Agua de Dios. We are talking about era where leprosy was not treated because people did not know how – the Salesians only served the lepers.

People were often put over there against their own will. A usual practice was "a hunt for lepers" : for every person with leprosy there was a payoff, and so people with skin diseases that had nothing to do with leprosy were also placed there. This is how a place for the lepers, who were never allowed to leave, was established. It was not even possible – the road was separated by a river, people were send in the net basket over, it was only a many years later when a bridge was built. The leprosy patients got special permits, sometimes names were exchanged and some kind of a state in a state with their own police and institutions was established.

Luckily the Salesians still had a chance and a space for their work and so gradually, a plan how to improve social help in this center was introduced. The plan was based on Christian love. One of the priests even founded a musical band with leprosy patients as members. In 1985, the base stone of the new house for the ill ones, called after the founder "Miguel Unia", was laid.

An interesting thing happened in 1970. Based on the government decision, a special currency used only for internal purposes was introduced and it was called "coscoja" (koscocha, which means: all you don't want). This fact reflected isolation of the local leprosarium, which in this case was not only social, but also geographical and economical.

In the first years of the 20. century, Agua de Dios experienced a great progress. Sisters came to work here and during several years six buildings were built – four hospitals for female and male patients, campus for ill girls and a school for healthy children of the patients. Apart from this, the Salesian community was still present here and they were responsible for local parish and two other schools. In 1923 a local theater group was set up.

Since 1961 the institutions in Agua de Dios have officially stopped being hospital and have become nursing homes. This decision was related to the fact that Columbia government, based on their statistics, defined leprosy as disease that is under control. Two years later, almost a century after its foundation, Agua de Dios was officially announced an independent village. Apart from the nursing home, there are also several settlements all located on 86km² in total. In 1994 a state social organization was founded.



There are about 14 thousand of people living in Agua de Dios area today, this number contains the leprosy patients as well as their healthy offsprings, sisters and immigrants. Due to exceptional nature and attractive places for the tourists nearby, there are a lot of visitors especially during weekends and holidays. It is remarkable that this place, originally especially excluded for the leprosy patients, is now a very attractive area and available to all without any exceptions. But still – one can feel the social stigma and it is not easy for the locals to economic migration or travelling to work. If you come from Agua de Dios, you have hallmark of somebody related to leprosy.

Czech Leprosy Relief support a local shoemaker workroom, where a special footwear for the leprosy patients is made. At the same time it is also a place where they can also find a work and by doing this, making the special shoes, they relieve the pain of the others. It is also thanks to our donors that Agua de Dios is a home that is taking care of the lepers.



Dear,

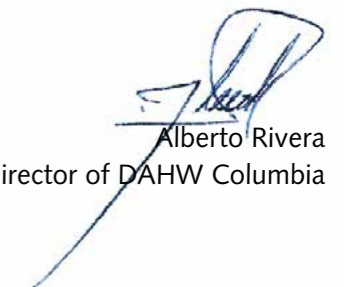
I would like to congratulate on the 25th anniversary, a big thanks for the excellent work you have been doing. You are improving lives of many people by supporting them in places where a lot of people do not feel like helping.

You are helping those that suffer from leprosy and consequently from social exclusion.

We have to say a big THANK you to people behind the Czech Leprosy Relief for your cooperation and help you are providing to Columbia.

With all my heart I wish you a lot of strenght and courage into the years to come so you can bring more hope and joy to those who need it most.

With gratitude and appreciation



Alberto Rivera
Director of DAHW Columbia



LIBERIA – help from Czech Republic...

...treats thousands of kilometers away



Samira (18) from Ivory Coast

She lived in a refugee camp in Liberia where they have diagnosed leprosy on her right foot. It was when she was pregnant with twins. When her partner found out about the leprosy, he left her and literally threw her out. Fortunately, Samira managed to come to Ganta two years ago, where she started treatment and her foot was operated on just on time. She has been living in our center for two years now and she and both girls are doing well. Her recovery is good according to the doctors, she has been learning sewing children's clothes and dreams about going back to her homeland.

Stanley (8)

Malvin, one of the cured patients of doctor Sri, brought Stanley to Ganta when he was not able to walk due to terrible pains. He had to learn to use the wheelchair which was the only option for him to move around safely. Safely for him, but not for the others since Stanley, according to doctor Sri, was "a very cute and lively child" and even in his wheelchair, he was constantly competing with everyone. His reaction to the treatment was very good and responsive so within a short time, the wheelchair was replaced by crutches and within following three months he could play football. Now he lives back with his family.



A young man called Saturday.

Workers from the rehabilitation center in Ganta (Liberia) often go on „Field trips“ to offer and provide care to a lot of their patients in their homes (give medicines or a regular healthcheck) because the center is responsible for the whole Nimba County region healthcarewise. These field trips usually take place twice a month in cooperation with local volunteers.

One of the patients found in the bush was twenty-two years old Saturday – he was affected by serious advanced form of leprosy which has mutilated his face and limbs.

He lived in a remote place, ashamed of his appearance. Saturday was taken to the center, his state as well as his visage has significantly improved, despite visible scars.

He does not stay aloof and he left his fears behind!

before
the treatment



after
the treatment



And last but not least...

Czech Leprosy Relief celebrates 25 years of its existence. We are receiving a lot of congrats and letters of gratitude from all over the world written by our partners, supporters and well-wishers. It is a great joy and encouragement because it assures us that LL work makes sense and it is needed.

I would like to say thank you to the founder and first chairman of, then so called LL-Likvidace Lepry o.s. Mr. Jiri Holy, without whom there would be no such great work and there would be no celebration of the 25 years today. If he were here with us, he would surely say that it was not him „who founded LL, but God“ . God had given this task to Mr. Holy in his prayers and he accepted. There is no doubt that this is the work of God. This organization has been functioning like no other similar organization. It has been fully dependent on non profitable and devoted work of volunteers and it has been a God's instrument – God that has had a mercy with the suffering ones.

With all my heart I wish and pray for LL to remain the same, as it was when its founder was actively participating, I pray for LL to keep on bringing help and hope to the sick and poor ones, I pray that through this work the name of our Lord Jesus Christ is glorified.

I sincerely thank to those who worked with Mr. Holy, first of all, to his dear wife and all who have been working for this organization once the Archbishop of Prague took over in 2011. I believe we are all connected through our common wish to help people and in this way to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. And lastly, I thank to all new as well as our old, longterm faithful donors – without their sensitive heart LL would not be able to fulfill its mission.

God bless.



Fr. Stanislav Góra
President of LL
Episcopal Vicar of Prague







HELP THEM TO LIVE!

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