



Heart's Home USA

A work of compassion and consolation

Newsletter
December 2006

Editorial : Why Christmas?

by Fr. Thierry de Roucy

As I travel the world, I realize that all children ask the same question: "Why? - Why is the sky blue?", "Why do the birds fly?", "Why this?", "Why that?" As we grow, many of us change our focus from "Why" to "How" - "How is this working?", "How do you do this?", "How do you make friends?", "How can I lose weight?"

Christmas is an invitation to think like children again and to wonder "Why?" "Why Christmas? Why should we celebrate this event?"

Christmas happened because we had lost the way to the Father, and the only way to help us back to His source is through the Son. Christmas is because we cannot live without Christ. We celebrate Christmas because it is the starting point of a new era for humanity... because Christmas helps us to better understand who we are, where we come from and where we are going... because Christmas is the birthday of a very small child who became the companion of every one of us because, in the end, Christmas is our own birthday.

On behalf of the Heart's Home missionaries working in the United States, those we have sent out, the people that we serve, and myself, I wish you all to be dazzled by Christmas, and to discover that every day of your life is called to be Christmas.

News from our Heart's Home in the Bronx

We - the community - have been visiting Perla for approximately three years. For longer than that, this woman has been in the Bronx annex of Fulton Hospital, which accommodates long-term patients, either because they are mentally ill, or because they cannot take care of themselves and have nowhere else to go. In this particular room, there are two beds and two women: one who sleeps the whole afternoon; the other, Perla.

The first time that I entered the room with Alexandre, I did not know anything about this woman, sitting on her bed. She looked East European. She appeared to be blind. Her bed was impeccably made. Around it, everything was very tidy... But then again, there was really nothing too tidy. She has nothing. Not a photograph over her bed, not a picture, nothing on her night table, not a single personal object. She was sitting on her bed, waiting.

Then Alexandre started to tell her a little about our week. She barely reacted. Then I asked her where she was from... I tried to make her smile. She answered timidly. But the words which she pronounced were measured. She seemed impenetrable, untouchable. However, at the end of the visit, Alex was totally impressed. It was a victory! She spoke! She had never spoken as much since Alex began visiting her a year earlier! I rejoiced with him, realizing that sometimes a little ignorance allows you to be bolder. This said, for me, it was all the more shocking!

I now go back to see her each week, and depending on the days, we have the right to a



The Heart's Home in the Bronx

few words or practically nothing. Other times, she asks questions herself. But still I feel that it is only through patience that our friendship can continue to open her heart.

One day, when I asked her how her week was... "Still the same, of course"... But this time, after some hesitation, she did not stop there. She let out what she had been holding back so fiercely... "I am like a pawn. They do what they want with me, they take me and put me here, then there. They took all that I had. I am mistreated. I am treated like a piece in a chess game." She spoke with surprising forcefulness.

However, her cry is already a victory. Because her cry means that she knows someone has heard her. Because her cry is proof that her humanity wants to be expressed, that her being aspires to something else. And this aspiration is hope...

Heart's Home USA expands to ...Canada !

Since Olivia Tai, from Waterloo, Ontario joined Heart's Home in India, our outreach to Canada has greatly expanded.

It is with great joy that we welcome Robby Dupuis, from Rimouski, Quebec in the Heart's Home family. Robby is currently in his training period and will be sent into mission in the newest Heart's Home located in the Ukraine. We hope to welcome more Canadians soon and entrust this intention to your prayers.

A Wine tasting to benefit Heart's Home

On September 30th, Mr. Patrick Baugier, board member of Heart's Home, and his wife Hombeline hosted a cocktail party and wine tasting in their Greenwich, CT home, to benefit Heart's Home.

About 90 guests enjoyed a unique wine tasting featuring "cabernet sauvignons from all around the world", with wines generously donated by Metrowine Distribution. The event was not without a silent auction which offered different kinds of wines, luxury items and travel tours.

We thank all the guests who attended this special evening for their participation, which enabled us to raise \$22,600 to support our work in the Bronx.

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HHUSA is a 501(c)3 organization.
Thank you for your support.



Focus on Heart's Home in the Ukraine



Last September, a new Heart's Home opened in the beautiful city of Lviv, in West Ukraine, just a few miles from the Polish border.

"We have been invited in Lviv by a professor at the ecumenical University, and Fr. Thierry thought this Heart's Home should be a "student's Heart's Home", which mission would focus on welcoming and supporting students, who would come and visit us anytime during the day, to share their joys and problems. Some students could even live with us, sharing our life of compassion at the same time as they would go on with their studies. Some others would simply join us to share our mission of compassion, visiting sick or lonely people.

Since we arrived in Lviv, we have been very warmly welcomed by the people of Ukraine.

We started to take classes at the university, as well as to build friendships with students and professors.

A Greco-Catholic Priest recently told us about the need for a true education of the youth. As the country is going through a period of transition, a lot of new trends influence young people. Even if religious feelings are still strong, there is a need to help the young towards a more personal faith. He told us the only way that our mission would bear fruit is if our love and desire to follow Christ are true. "If you truly love Christ and want to follow Him, then half the city of Lviv will be with you!"

We also spend time visiting families in need of friendship and consolation. Everywhere we go, we are struck by the openness of the people. We keep hearing "Come in, come in! Here there is room and work for everyone!"

It is also very interesting for us to discover the "eastern lung" of the Church, ie the Greco-catholic church which liturgy (of Saint John Chrysostome) is so rich. This church also went through very hard times and had many martyrs during the soviet era."

Right now, the Heart's Home community counts three missionaries: Sister Isabel and Aude, from France, as well as Patrick, from Switzerland. Aude and Patrick spent several years at Heart's Home in Kazakhstan, and Sister Isabel has been the "visitor" of the Heart's Home in Romania for over three years.



Sr. Isabelle and Patrick in Lviv

Testimony of Olivia , Heart's Home missionary in India



" After 4 months in India, I really begin to feel at home here. I know our friends and the children better, I am more comfortable with our prayer life, I have forgotten that we don't have running water and the weather (now just at the end of rainy season) becomes finally bearable. The one thing that still remains incomparably difficult is: the language. Tamil is composed of extremely complex sounds that are nothing like English. And after months of studying in the house and a few classes in Chennai, I am now able to make only a few short sentences.

However, in my first few months of nearly sitting in silence for all the apostolates, I began to see that a beautiful conversation or a time of joy could be shared without many words. I realized that although it is fully part of my mission to speak with the people, it is first important to be present for them."

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