

1. THE CANDLE MAKERS

Bernadette came to us for counsel and prayer. She supported her family with the meagre income she acquired by making and selling candles. We sponsored her totally for the Inner Healing Retreat and subsequently have extended support, financial and otherwise. This is a story of misery and hope.

Bernadette father being alcoholic and violent, her mother placed her in a foster home where she was put to hard work, beaten by the man of the house and often burnt all over her tender body with cigarette butts. As time went by she was even subjected to Molestation and Abuse by others. She was later married off to a man who turned out to be alcoholic himself and a waster. She has been the single bread earner for the family over the years, subsisting on handouts and aid from the church as well.

The retreat enabled Bernadette to deal with life's hurts and brought about a semblance of purpose to her life. However her problems were in no way over and she has kept in touch with us over the years. Her two daughters suffered from epileptic fits, which reduced as they dealt with emotional issues. However they found it difficult to get employment owing to the seizures which could come on anytime and which was frightful to the onlooker.

The elder one Agnes married and had one child. However her husband found her inept at taking care of the home and sent her back to her mother's house. The husband subsequently died in an accident leaving Agnes dependant totally on the mother once again.

The second girl attempted working in beauty parlours but her jobs were short lived. She was gang raped and later found to be expecting not one child but twins. Through the services of a prayer group she gave birth to twins in a municipal hospital. She had initially decided to give the children for adoption but after their birth, no amount of counsel or advice could separate her from her twins. We were amazed at her tenacity and the bonding she displayed with her children.

Bernadette with her two daughters, grandchildren, alcoholic husband and aging father lived together in a tiny chawl. The father and husband have since passed away. The grandchildren are now schooling. Bernadette herself has aged and keeps poor health. The daughters help with the candle making to bring in the meagre income.

Life has been tough for this family - poverty and its aftermath have wounded them in many ways. But the smile on Bernadette's face is living proof that some people have the ability to bounce back despite the circumstances that constantly try to destroy them. In some way she has edified our lives. A simple illiterate woman who teaches us that **loving may be tough but worth it.**

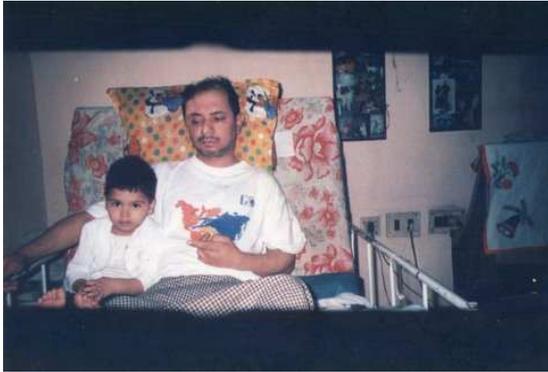
2. HANDICAPPED BY THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE...

Euphemia has lived her life in the city of Calcutta with her two younger sisters, in a tiny room which was drastically inadequate for the family's needs. Her father earned a small income from tailoring and her mother died prematurely having succumbed to tuberculosis, due to lack of proper ventilation and poor nutrition. She finished her schooling and procured a small time job.

She married Noel, had a son and thought that they would be happy together...but their happiness was short-lived. Noel had a stroke, was incapacitated, had to have a shunt put in his brain and was confined to the bed. In one swift stroke all their financial resources came to an end. Noel could no longer work and had to be taken care of as he was unable to do anything for himself. With an elderly father who is asthmatic, a husband rendered physically incapable and a little son who had to be cared for, Euphemia had no alternative but to give up her job and attend to three dependants. As there is no earning member at present, their medical requirements have drained them of their small savings and rendered them helpless. Friends, relatives and church agencies have been helping them with costs towards physiotherapy, tests and medication. However this is never enough to become self sufficient

and since the assistance is often not long term, Euphemia has constantly to be on the look-out for financial aid.

Her son is now of school going age and since her husband's health is now improving slowly with physiotherapy, Euphemia is of the hope that perhaps he could take some home-based tuitions to support the home. She as yet cannot take up a job as there is no one to tend to the three helpless individuals who are in her care. Yet, she carries on struggling looking for avenues to keep her family going. **Some people never give up.**



Picture of Noel living with the hope that one day he will start life again...

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