

സാന്ത്വനം

SANTHWANAM




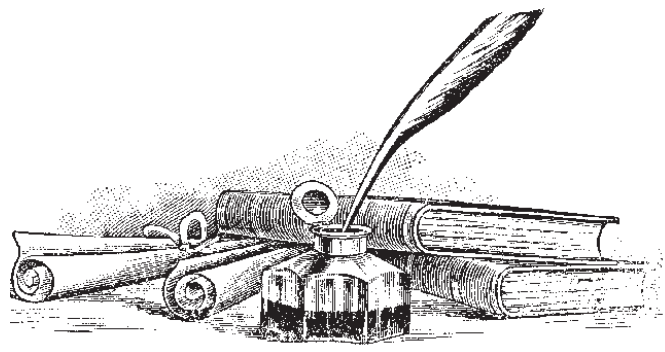


Jwala 2013



*Dedicated To
My Memma who has moulded me up
by throwing light into the
pathways of my life!*

A decorative illustration in the bottom right corner of the page, featuring a cluster of small, delicate flowers with long stems and leaves, and a few small butterflies fluttering around them.



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TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

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Santhwanam
FOR DISTRESSED WOMEN AND CHILDREN

(Reg. No. IV/130/2007)

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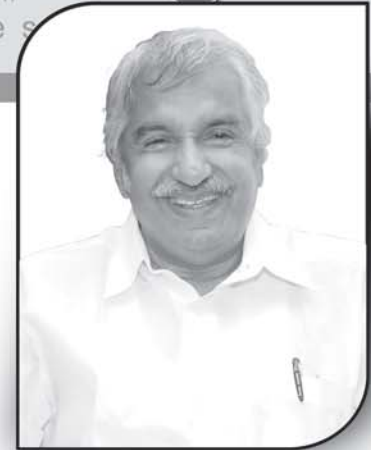
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Oommen Chandy

Chief Minister
Kerala



No.582/Pre-Sec/CM/2012

19/03/2013

Message

I am very happy to know that Santhwanam situated at Gandhi Nagar in Kottayam District, is bringing out a Souvenir on the occasion of celebrating its 6th annual day. I am aware of the great works that Santhwanam is doing.

This government believes that there is no better service than wiping off the tears of the suffering and work accordingly. Reflecting upon the obligation to the poor, the UDF Government has increased all the monthly welfare pensions. We continue with the Palliative care desks and consolation projects; started the Cochlear Implantation Project; brought in conditions to cut off up to Rs. 75,000 from the loan of bed-ridden cancer patients. I hope that Souvenir of Santhwanam, being published at this juncture, will provide great strength to its charity works and help in rendering help to many more.

All the best wishes,

Oommen Chandy

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Message



Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan
Home Minister, Vigilence Minister
Kerala



Date: 18-03-2013

Felicitation

I am happy to know that Santhwanam which is rendering great service in the field of social service, is entering the 6th year of birth. I have a personal, hearty relationship with this institution that is serving as an abode to the sick and destitute women.

I extend all the best wishes to all the future activities of Santhwanam.

Shri Thiruvanchoor

Off: Room No. 532, 3rd Floor, South Sandwich Block, Secretariat, Thiruvananthapuram-695 001
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Message



Mar Mathew Arackal.

Felicitation

I share with you the happiness that I feel on the solemn occasion of Santhwanam, getting into thousands with the heart-touching care, is publishing a Souvenir of its activities. The aim of the 'Messiah was not anything different. Jesus proclaimed, *"The spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has consecrated me to give the good news to the poor. To free those who are chained, to give light unto the blind, to set free the downtrodden and to declare the age agreeable to the Lord."* The Church continues to do the same mission of wiping away the tears of those who are heart-broken today also.

The Church has stood behind those who are destined to stay behind the curtain of the society, yesterday and today. I can proudly say that Santhwanam is such an ideal institution. I express my gratitude and blessings to all those who have worked behind till date, in order to render the godly experience of love, mercy and care to others.

In the Love of Jesus,

Mar Mathew Arackal
Bishop, Kanjirappally.

Message

C. RAJAGOPAL IPS

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MESSAGE

I am delighted to understand that “swanthwanam” is publishing its “souvenir” for the first time ever since its emerged. Swanthwanam is a refuge for the hapless and helpless its a charitable trust run under the management of Ms. Annie Babu. I have personal knowledge about the way she manages the santhwanam to the impoverished and destitute.

My earnest prayers are always with “**santhwanam**”

(C. RAJAGOPAL IPS)



FR. JOSEPH KALARICKAL
President-CHASS - CHANGANACHERRY

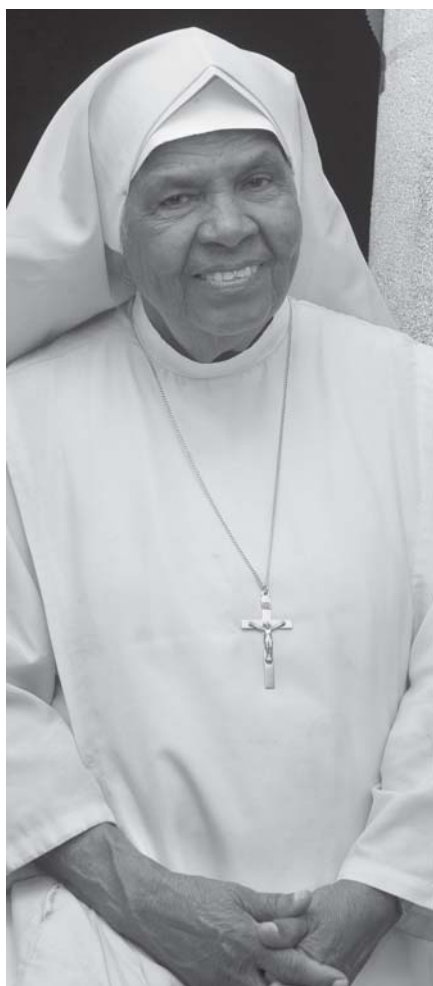
Santhwanam is both a question mark and at the same time a challenge to the society. If the question is about our social family life, especially of the Keralites, the challenge is that the system should be changed. When the families are shattered due to alcoholism and drug abuse, the children who are the sufferers, stand and stare at the false face of the society with fear in their minds. The young ladies who had dreams and hopes of a good future, have fallen into pits of despair. There is something going on wrong with our social set up. It is convenient for us to pretend that we have not seen it. Just as the dust and litters are swept and put under the mattress, there, the Santhwanam poses its challenge. The vision of the society based on falsehood and pride, must be changed and for its realization, all good people should be united.

I wish let Santhwanam remain as such a cooperative body. I pray that this forward march under the leadership of Ms. Annie Babu be a model to the society as a whole. I wish all success.

WITH FIRE IN HER HEART & WINGS ON HER FEET

Sr. Josita Myladiyil

Sr. Michael Thakadiel, is one of the great gifts of God to Medical Mission Sisters, through Thakadiel family, Palai.



Sr. Michael Thakadiel

Sr. Michael Thakadiel began her earthly journey on February 17, 1924. Hailing from a traditional Catholic family in Poovathodu Pala diocese, Kottayam District, she was the 4th child in the family of 8 children. After completing her basic education, she joined the Medical Mission Sisters, Kottayam in 1941. She made her 1st Profession in 1951 and final profession in 1956. As she was very much interested in alleviating the physical suffering of the people, she did general Nursing in Holy family Hospital Mandar and Midwifery course in Holy family Hospital Patna and served as a staff Nurse for the next 4-5 years, after which she did post basic Nursing and Counseling. Michalamma was a life giving person. This was also a time when young independent India was faced with sickness, malnutrition, communicable diseases etc. among the rural poor people who lived in unhygienic conditions in slums and villages –a challenge faced by the young nation. Public Health was given much importance by the nation to tackle these issues. As a response to the society's call to work among the poor in rural areas, and the Nations' call to alleviate the sufferings of rural masses, Sr. Michael took Public health nursing from Lady Reading College, Delhi. She was the first Religious Public Health nurse in India. This was a turning point in her life. She made use of every opportunity that came on her way to make the people aware of health and hygiene and their responsibility to take care of their own health. While teaching public health nursing in I.H.M school of Nursing, she imparted her knowledge about public Health to the students and people during village visit. She began Public Health department in IHM hospital

and later on introduced Public Health nursing as part of Nursing Curriculum in India.

Sr. Michael worked in IHM Hospital, Bharanaganam for many years as a staff Nurse, Public Health nurse, Nursing tutor and Principal of School of Nursing. Sister also worked in Thuruthipuram Hospital, Cochin for three years. She played a vital role in promoting the dignity of the poor, especially women and children in all her involvements. She collaborated with the Social Service Societies of Pala and Kanjirappally dioceses. She conducted integrated health training for girls in Nallathanny, an interior Village in Idukki District for 15 years. Sister lived in Reddiapatti, Ushus and District House Communities also. When she died she was the Patron of "Santhwanam", a home for the battered women and children in Kottayam.

Sr. Michael was Known for her quick way of doing things and her "super fast" walks. It seems like she was in a hurry to cross the boundaries of Life and to be with her God singing 'halleluiah' face to face with Him during the season of Easter. She was hospitalized in Marygiri only for four days (From 7 to April 2012) with pneumonia and she joyfully and repeatedly said that "I have completed my work and I am ready to go to my God". As

she was a bit disoriented we did not take her seriously. Afterwards we realized that it was a sign of her total surrender to God. She was restless during 10th night and became bad on 11th morning and slowly surrendered herself in the arms of her Lord at 9.40 am, surrounded by her relatives and many MMS.

A person so fully alive to God and to His people, a very impressive MMS and a strong witness, she was a real pioneer who contributed much to MMS mission especially in the field of Public Health. The words of Mother Anna Den gel" if you relay love you are inventive"One does not spare oneself if one loves" was lived fully by her in its true sense. Her passion for the poor and oppressed was remarkable and she always found time, ways and means to respond to their needs. She was a life giving presence to all who came across her life. Her confidence in the providence of God carried her throughout her life. She was a valiant woman who had touched the hearts of many. Her spirit remained fresh and young till the end. A true missionary with fire in her heart and wings on her feet!!! Her light continues to shine as a loving presence among us.

May she rest in peace in her eternal home!

OBITUARY



To love the poor in compassion,
To uphold the weak in weariness,
To be a help to the helpless,
'Memma', my mother had taught me.

Seeking the depth of God's love
I was advised to seek him, the Love
In the weak, the helpless and orphans
As the best way to experience His love.

When you give your love to others,
The holy hand of Mercy will be with you.
You should abandon the 'self' to live for him
And you should have a compassionate heart.

The flame that burned within you,
Ignited into me and where have you gone?
I can still feel your love and regard within
Though you are far far away from me!

Annie Babu

THE YESTERDAYS



Annie Babu
Managing Trustee

When Santhwanam was inaugurated on 28th October, 2007 we just had in mind that we would be able to provide shelter and food to about 10 people. As I have been working as the Secretary to 'Thanal' (means, shade, refuge, etc.), I understood that the trials and tribulations of women and children in the society were not little, especially, the wives and children of the alcoholics. It is still an unforgettable wound as two women who had come there, committed suicide due to the assault and alcoholism of their husbands. I felt that something should be done, but I had no idea where and how. I resigned my post with Thanal when the management had decided not to accommodate more people there. I

realized that there should be an abode for the women and children. I thought of doing something later on. But a few women, whose problems were settled and sent with their husbands, had returned with their children a few days after. I had to accommodate them in my house as they had come late in the evening.

When I resigned from Thanal they had asked me to continue there till they got another Secretary. The very day I had resigned, Vanaja, who used to assist me, went home. It is then that the Railway police brought a little girl of about three years, who could speak little of Tamil only. They found her abandoned in a train. There was nobody there to whom I could entrust the child who was not talking or eating but only crying. So I took her home

with me. Probing deep into the case it was found that she was abandoned on the ground of mere superstition, from Tamilnadu. All in our family developed a good attachment to the child. So we, who had only two sons, decided to adopt her and therefore brought her before the Chief Judicial Magistrate. We were granted the custody of the child. Our age was a barrier for adoption. Then the court ordered the child to be transferred to an orphanage. By the time we had reached a stage that we could not part with her. So we approached the High Court and obtained a 'stay' to the court order. Originally we had intended to do something for women and children, but this girl induced us to go beyond and start a section for children. Thus Santhwanam was registered as per the Charitable Trust under Indian Trust Act. So she was safe in Santhwanam.

Then onwards the police started to bring the wanderers and beggars from bus stations and railway stations to Santhwanam. Within one year, the number of inmates increased to 35 in a small house rented on Rs. 5,000/-pm. We started experiencing financial difficulties. When, whatever I had in my hand and in the bank got over, the hands of God started to intervene. It was one amazing experience to see that we received the rent amount on the due date and when rice got over, getting rice on the same day.

After sometime it was clear that the children of Santhwanam will not have to bother about what they would eat or wear but just do their duty. Everyday wonderful experiences...as if an unseen hand is controlling everything....!

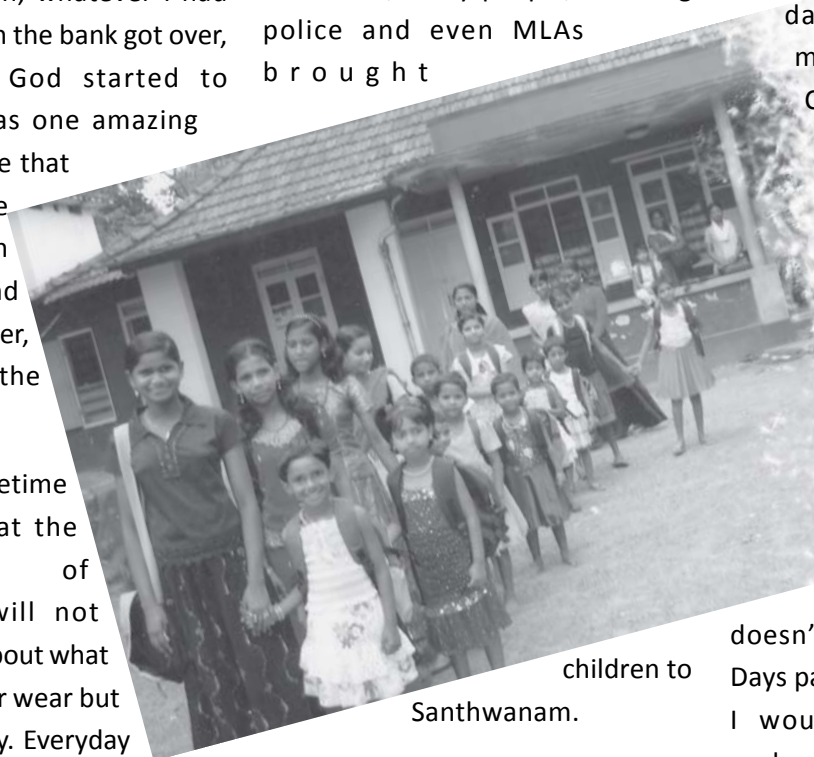
In the third year, the institution which could accommodate 15, was loaded with 52 members. Such institutions needed the recognition of the Orphanage Control Board. Even though we had applied for the same, it was not granted on the grounds that our building was rented. Once Shri V.N.Vasavan, M.L.A of Kottayam came to Santhwanam with two children. Their mother died in the

Medical College Hospital and their father was going to sell them. This news appeared in the papers. In the same week, there was a meeting of the State Orphanage Control Board. In the meeting, a responsible officer said that though Santhwanam was not a recognized institution, many people, including police and even MLAs brought

sketched by the engineer, needed about Rs. 60 lakhs!

In the following four months, I and the Patron Rev.Sr. Michael went out to collect a fund. It was a hard task and a big headache every evening! We could collect only Rs.75,000/- in the four months. That day Rev.Fr. Mathukutty, member of Orphanage Control Board phoned up and asked how far we had progressed in the building of the house. I replied that we could not even start as we couldn't get enough money. He told that it would be a problem and that none of them could help me.

Then I said to myself that 'if God doesn't want, I also don't want. Days passed. I told my children that I would send them to other orphanages with recognition. And their faces would sink – because Santhwanam was a 'house' to them. One day one Mr. Ajeesh came to Santhwanam with a caged parrot to gift it to our children. I told him that Santhwanam may have only two more months of existence. Through him I came to know of a house put for sale, near Medical College. The very next day we went to see the house. I was wonderstruck! It was a house fulfilling all the specifications directed by the Board! It was a beautiful house situated by the bank of a river and



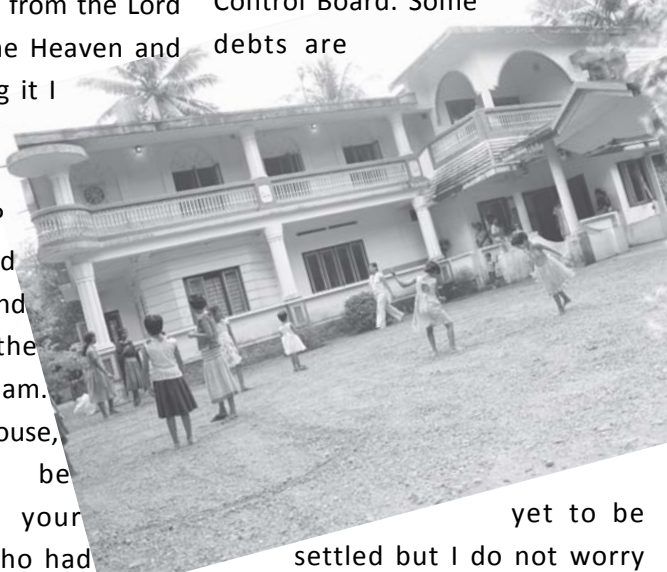
children to Santhwanam.

After the meeting 7 people came to Santhwanam and they told us that we should have our own building within six months and that each child should have 40 sq.ft. in the bed room; one bathroom to 10 members; should have separate rooms for studying and eating. We had no option before us. Then Mr. Mathew uncle and Rosamma, whom we lovingly call Romanty, gave 20 cents of land in the name of Santhwanam. To make a building there as per the specifications of the Orphanage Control Board and

belonged to Shri. Balakrishna Pillai of Onattu. It was one acre and 16 cents, full of fruit trees- chikku, mangosteen, rambutan, nutmeg coconut and the like! When I reached back Santhwanam Office, I opened the Bible. I got Psalm 121, "I raise up my eyes to the mountains; where will I get help from? I will get help from the Lord who had created the Heaven and Earth." After reading it I closed the Bible.

Then I thought, 'why should I worry'? Immediately I called up all the children and told, "I have seen the house for Santhwanam. If we don't have a house, there will not be Santhwanam. It's your father in heaven who had taken care of you till now. Our urgent need is a house. You ask the father for the house. I got the word of God in Psalm 121. Let's pray reciting the psalm. From that day onwards the children started praying thus. I paid an advance of Rs.25,000/- out of the 75,000/-. That day I went to see Shri. Oommen Chandy, the then leader of the Opposition. As per his instructions we went and met Shri. K.M. Mathew of Malayala Manorama. Help came from Malayalees all over the world through Manorama online. Following suit, help came through Deepika daily and clubs like Inner Wheel, and Round Table. Institutions and individuals came

with help. When the date for registration neared, my husband Babu sold 2.5 acres of rubber plantation out of the 4 acres bought 28 years back. Now the house is owned by the children of Santhwanam through wonderful means. Santhwanam obtained registration from the Orphanage Control Board. Some debts are



yet to be settled but I do not worry about that. All the needs of Santhwanam are met miraculously and Santhwanam is a house of miracles!

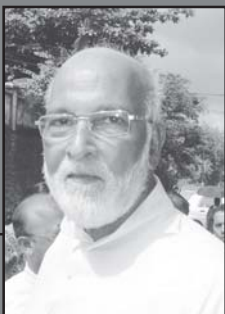
Now there is a Board of Trustees consisting of 7 persons and a Welfare Committee of 7 members. The number of inmates reached 102. The children of Santhwanam are content with the limited space available. Today 46 children attend different schools at different levels. Sr.Celine Kallarackal is there, from the very beginning doing counseling. Shri. Sebastian Kunnel and Mrs. Jyothy regularly come to give tuitions. Mr. Joseph Mathew C.A., our Auditor does the auditing

freely from the beginning and also helps in our financial crises.

Now there are 86 inmates from 8 states belonging to Hinduism, Christianity and Muslim community living together in harmony. 46 children are going school from LKG to degree classes. Three girls are married off. During the last Eight years Santhwanam could house more than 1,700 people; patched up 126 couples through counselling; could find placements for more than 400 ladies. They work in hostels as wardens; assist in Medical Shops, Super Markets and Textile Shops. A few children in Santhwanam could be helped for heart surgery, kidney surgery, micro-vascular surgery, etc. with the help of many charitable and social service societies. Thus, as you have seen, everything about Santhwanam runs smoothly through the miraculous, unseen, powerful hands!

**"Amazing things
which we cannot
understand happen
at God's Command"**

(Job: 37:5)



Rev. Fr. George Koodathil

Why Santhwanam?

The word Santhwanam means, 'comforting'; 'consoling', etc. as given in the dictionaries. Those who have lost peace and security in life need santhwanam. The promise of God that 'even if the mother who begot you forgets you, I will not forget you; do not be troubled in mind, trust in God and in me', will sure, console us. Carrying a heavy load of tribulations, walking through the hard path ways, the confidence that God is with us, such people, the frustrations and despair will not affect. The peace, love and help of God is made available through people than direct, as He wishes.

The Santhwanam at Arpookara is a great testimony of God's love and care. An ordinary lady like Smt. Annie Babu, was given great insight by God and her sacrificial attitude put together made Santhwanam a realization. Under the cooling shade of Santhwanam, more than hundred little children, teenagers and youth live happily. When they did not have a place in their own homes, God provided them with a better home!

Most of these children are deeply wounded in their minds.

Those who had experienced hellish assaults at so tender an age, are brought by God to Santhwanam. Smt. Annie Babu and those who serve here, bring them up with love and care. They bring them up with faith in God; teach them to pray; to love each other and help them to identify what is good and what is bad. In this short period of time three girls from Santhwanam were married off and with the help of many, arrangements are made to meet their financial needs and welfare.

Why did they have to come to Santhwanam? The painful defeats of shaken family basement brought them here. In most of the cases, alcohol is the villain. We can say that alcohol is as old as human history. In olden days people had the feeling that alcoholism is wrong and that they feared that others would come to know of it for shame.

Today times have changed and drinking is graded as a status symbol. It is drunk to lessen sorrows; increase the joy; for company's sake ; to break off relationships; to promote hunger; to get sleep; celebrate birth, to abate the sorrow of death, in

short, alcohol is an inevitable factor and has come to be acknowledged that life without alcohol is not life at all! Alcohol is the supplier of the strength needed to fight each other and to kill. Without the inspiration of the alcohol, generally people are reluctant to do assault or raping or bad deeds in the normal condition. All misdeeds are quite easy with the back support of alcohol. Under the influence of alcohol, what comes out of one is erratic thoughts, feelings and wrong deeds. And that's why sensible people try to avoid alcoholics.

Where there is a drunkard, it is the Satan who rules. They happen to miss all the blessings of God – happiness, peace, prosperity, development – everything is lost. The residue left behind a drunkard is, the physically, mentally, spiritually persecuted wife and children rendered orphans.

The pathways of deterioration:

1. Estrangement from God.

They do not bother about religion. They lose conscience about social values resulting in great spiritual deterioration.

2. Keeping away from people:

They let relationships sever. They pinpoint others as culprits and justify themselves. He is not bothered at all about the tears and hardships of the wife. Even if the children are starving or suffering from sickness, the alcoholic is the least bothered. It is probable that an alcoholic addict may abuse his own children.

3. Drifting away from one's own personality:

Drugs and alcohol and other things of intoxication subject people to different illness. It causes physical sickness like cancer, liver cirrhosis and mental illness like dementia, mental retardation. An addict will not be able to follow the instructions of a doctor or not ready to anything to

get cured. Paranoia is a result of addiction leading one to doubting the fidelity of the partner; creating suicidal tendency (a byproduct of deep despair). In short the life of a drunkard is put out due to physical affliction and spiritual deterioration.

The status that the society has granted to alcoholism; the promoting of alcoholism by different governments; the abundant availability of alcohol, etc. multiplies the number of the drunkards. Starting to drink from childhood, upon reaching youth, the life burns out in intense yearning. If only one learned lessons from the failures of others! It is only through total prohibition of alcohol and creating awareness that we can lift up man from the deep pit of alcohol.

Afflictions and damnation will come into the life of the alcoholic. While he is presenting others with trials and tribulations, he is posing threat to his eternal life. All the religious books defy alcoholism and makes clear of the total doom of the alcoholic.

Here are a few quotes from the Holy Bible:

*".....drunkards will not possess God's kingdom"
(1 Cor 1:9).*

"Let us conduct ourselves properly....no orgies or drunkenness, no immorality or indecency, no fighting or jealousy" (Rom 13:13).

"...they are envious, get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these. I warn you ... will not possess the Kingdom of God" (Gal5:21).

A Tribute to my Annie Auntie

Sarika S



It is my Annie auntie and Santhwanam who enabled me to write about my life which has been lost way back somewhere in the path of life..... My name is Sharika. I and my two children are the inhabitants of Santhwanam today. My children are studying in one of the best schools in Kottayam in the U.K.G. and 3rd Std respectively. I have come to know that my husband abandoned me and our two children and got his marriage registered with another woman. When I questioned him about it, he assaulted me brutally. I decided we didn't need such a life and we were on the way to commit suicide. But the good people around brought us to Santhwanam. Today I am working as an Accountant and live for my children, simultaneously doing a course to fulfill my aims of life. Today I have an aim in life. It is Santhwanam that helped me to reach it. There are many women like me in Santhwanam whose lives had slipped out. There is my auntie to console them. Yes, Santhwanam, that is the home for me and my children.



OBITUARY

The unexpected demise of Mrs. Mariam Varghese, affectionately called *Kunjukochamma* is not only an irreparable loss for her own family but also to Santhwanam. A perfect personality like hers is rarely found. Kunjukochamma loved Santhwanam a lot. She was with us in our strengths and weaknesses (growth and stagnation).

Even though she was quite a busy person in the socio-economic field, it was not a hindrance for her to be a part of Santhwanam. She did not hold anyone in low esteem. She had made the members of her family and friends to co-operate with Santhwanam. So, even as we recognize the stark reality of death, the pain inflicted by her departure, is still smarting within us.

My Father Who had Gone in Search of a tortoise egg



Athira

When our parents were alive, we had been staying in different places. It was Chithirechi (elder sister Chithira) who said that she wanted a tortoise egg. When we open up a tortoise which is about to lay eggs, we would get a big egg. It is tasty to eat it boiled. So my father went to the temple pool to catch the tortoise. He returned empty-handed. Then, after taking food, he went out again to cast line in the pool of 'Thruprayar' hospital. Three days had passed and he didn't return. It was his usual practice to take loans from others when we had no food and vanish for days and would return with the money to pay back the debts. Therefore we did not make much enquiry about his disappearance. Then we asked his friends and they had not seen him. When we reached 'Thruprayar' an elderly person asked us whether we would be able to identify our father. He took the four of us and our mother with him. There, in the deep pool our father was floating on the surface upside down along with the line and the vessel and the slippers were there on the land waiting..... Seeing this, our mother tried to jump into the pool taking us along with her. But the natives prevented us. My father's younger brother and our grand father together picked him up. His eyes were eaten by fish and my father had become stout. A pit was dug nearby a premise and my father

was laid to rest though even the pit was full of water. Our poor father!

After some time a man came to our mother promising to take care of us. He used to drink and forced our mother to drink and this became a regular habit.

Our mother used to go for palm-reading and we used to go to different places asking for money. He used to beat our mother after drinking, asking for money. All four of us would go out collecting cans and bottles and sell them on Sundays and hand over the money to our mother. One day when we went to sell the junk, Rajeshwari told us that she was not coming with us but remained in the house washing vessels. One of our mother's relatives by name Thulasi took her promising to show her the beach but she did not return. Then we shifted to Aluwa. There we stayed for some time. From there we went to Edathua. While we were staying under a bridge, mother had a fight with a woman. The people around asked us to leave the place. The step father took Chithirechi and Sethu with him and sent them away in a train and he returned alone and there was no news about them. Mother used to fight with him on account of this and one day he

burnt our mother and went away. Her burnt up body was undergoing decomposition. A woman who was working as a worker lifting bricks, collected money for us and we took her to a hospital but they refused to admit her. They told us to go to our uncles and sent us by train. They got her admitted in a hospital. I took care of her, washing her clothes, etc. The elder ladies used to feel sorry for me saying, 'you are a young child.' Our uncles caught tortoises and sold them in the toddy shop. There the owner bought medicines for her. They were very costly medicines and we could not afford to buy them. Even then our mother died. The policemen asked me whether I had any food at all. When I said 'no', they bought food for me. The policemen called in the ambulance and the local people bought a coffin. Amma was luckier



that she could be in a coffin while our father was packed up in a mattress and buried in a pit filled with water. Mother was buried in a government plot. Then the uncles started to fight over me and at last the eldest uncle Murugan took me with him. At first things were okay and he had loved me. Then he sent me for begging and the first day I got 600 rupees. Then onwards they sent me every day. I had no slippers but there was no use telling because the aunt would'nt let me sit at home, she would say, 'just for today' and it became a routine

At Last They Were Reunited: The Four Flowers in a Bunch

Four little children who were separated in childhood chanced to meet after six years. It was the feature published in 'Penma' that made it possible.

Kottayam: When the little ones whose lives were shattered in the street got united in the courtyard of Santhwanam where one could see the flowers of joy blooming!

The four siblings whom 'destiny' separated were reunited after six years. The events that led to the reunion: the story of the siblings who were separated due to the death of the parents and the resultant life situation published in 'Penma'; the attempt made by one of them to trace out the others; the reunion of three of them published on June 10, 2011; seeing this feature, Rajeshwari, the 4th one could be traced out in an orphanage at Thiruvananthapuram. This 4th one was seeing the others for the first time after the separation. The siblings : Chithira (16), Rajeshwari (14), Athira (13) and Sethu (10) met at Santhwanam, the organisation for Women and Children.

They are the children of Selvan and Mallika who belonged to a nomadic group from Andhra Pradesh. They were living in a make-shift shelter at Aluwa on the way



1. The group of four – when the siblings Rajeshwari, Athira, Chithira and Sethu at Santhwanam.

side. Selvan who had gone to catch tortoise, was drowned and as a result they became orphans. Their mother Mallika started staying with another man. He was a drunkard and he assaulted them all brutally and sent them for begging. When it became too unbearable, the children drifted away into different directions. Rajeshwari was the first to go out. She was found begging and the police sent her to an

orphanage in Thiruvananthapuram. After some time Mallika had a mysterious death of burning. After her death Chithira and Sethu were abandoned in a train by the step father. The police who found them in doubtful situation, sent both to different orphanages. Athira was taken by Mallika's relatives but they sent for begging and on such a day she was found by the police at Kottayam and brought her to Santhwanam. The probe made by Annie Babu, the Director of Santhwanam who came to know of her story made it possible to trace two of her siblings. This news published in Malayala Manorama helped to trace Rajeshwari from an orphanage in Thiruvananthapuram. The other three had lived together in Santhwanam but it was the first time Rajeshwari came to live together with them in Santhwanam ever since they were separated. In spite of the happiness of the reunion, they carry about a sorrow that they would have to go away to their different abodes leaving Athira alone in Santhwanam.

programme. If I got less money, my uncle would beat me. On certain days I would sit and watch TV in other houses and those days I would get cruel beatings.

On certain days uncle wouldn't give any rice porridge to me. One day he threw a stone at me. I ran to the market, sat down and cried. All the people there had loved me. Whenever I sat there hungry, they would understand it and would give me five rupees to buy steam hocker and would advise me to eat fast that they wouldn't see me.

One day I got into a bus to Kottayam for begging. I had great desire to go to Kottayam as if somebody had been pulling me. I sat there enjoying the scenery. The

conductor did not ask me for a ticket. I had only five rupees with me. The conductor announced that the bus had reached Kottayam. The whole day I wandered through Kottayam as if it was a great place. I had no money to go back either. I was feeling very hungry. I asked a policeman who had stood there for the bus to Vaikom as I didn't know to read or write. He asked me many questions like, where did I come from; whether I had relatives and who are they; if he would send me in a bus, whether I would go alone, etc. I told him that I would go. He told me that I shouldn't go alone and he took me to the senior officer. At first I was scared, but at the same time I felt an inner joy that I had escaped from the uncles. He asked

me whether I wished to study. I replied that I would like to study. He told me that he would send me to a safe place.

Thus at last I reached 'my home'. I told everything to Annie Amma and felt relieved. Some times I would sit with Amma and cry as I very much wanted to see my elder sisters. She had comforted me by saying that, 'we would find out'. Once I started living in Santhwanam I felt that I have everyone here – a house, Annie Amma, family, food, etc.

After six years, with the help of Amma I could trace up my siblings. Now all my sorrows have vanished. I do not cry any more. I wish to become a teacher in future.

An Onam that I cannot Forget



Mini K.M.



Unable to bear the cruelties and hunger I faced everyday I decided not to live any more. At that time one of my friends called Raji took me to Annie auntie. My husband used to come home only after four or five days. It was rarely that he brought something... We had to go days without food. His drinking habit made him a paranoid and he did not allow the children to go to school – or rather, he made the children to watch over me. I was not permitted to go out or talk with the neighbours.

When there was no food, one day I went to work in a paddy field taking the children along with me. They sat on the land while I worked. At 3 o' clock, the work was over and I got the wage with which I bought rice and kerosene for the

stove and reached home fast. When we reached he was already there. What he did first was to pour the kerosene into the rice. I cannot remember whatever happened after that.

It was 9 years before that I approached Annie Babu, the Director of Santhwanam. My husband was not ready to stop drinking, or take treatment for addiction. Our children aged 8, 5 and 3, were first sent to School by Annie auntie. Since it was hellish to live with a drunkard husband I had to leave the home with my children.

Onam, is an occasion when all, especially the children are happy. We also had a memorable Onam with my drunkard husband. He came to celebrate Onam after one week. There was no firewood even to cook. The rice we had borrowed also had got exhausted. My hungry children were sleeping tired and weak. They heard the sound of my father at mid night. He had on his head a big sack full of

something and he was staggering. He woke the children up saying that he had brought vitamin food, he opened the sack and gave each big trunks of yam. Then I understood that the sack was full of that. We had a fight on that. The next day was Onam. While the neighbours were celebrating Onam with new dresses and sumptuous 'Onasadya', we were watching the funeral of Mother Teresa on the TV of a neighbouring house in order to forget the hunger.

Another unforgettable Onam I had, was with my Annie auntie. Santhwanam was not yet started then. Annie auntie took me and my children to her own house. That Onam was celebrated ten fold. We had a sumptuous 'Onasadya' and plays. Even today the memories of that Onam lingers in my mind and the mind of my children. Within one year, with the help of

Annie auntie we could build a house at *Puthuppally*. Now I go for domestic work and run my home. My children study for BCom and +2 respectively. I am sure that my children will not fall into the treacherous pit of alcohol because they had lost their father due to alcohol. The alcohol that had presented them with pains and sorrow, they hate and curse.

*“Those who oppress the poor
insult their maker”*

(Prov: 14:31)

Free Birds In the Open Nest.

This poem was born out of the words of a poetess who got a chance to visit Santhwanam, this is an institution that gives awareness to the girls who are encircled by a lot of don'ts from the moment of birth, that they have also the right to savor the honey drops of freedom. It was my dream that has come true in Santhwanam where I could see a founder who gives freedom to the inmates as given no where else and the children whose happy faces do not proclaim that they are the victims of cruelties and are confident. They are also aware of the fact that they are also owners of this world and that they are children of nature. This enlightened my mind and the imagination took wings.



I saw free birds in the open nest
I saw nests that were not woven to close
I saw thick and tight knots of chains
I saw them joining hands right and left.

My mind was filled with the happiness I saw
My eyes both got wet without knowing
My wish was to see them again and again

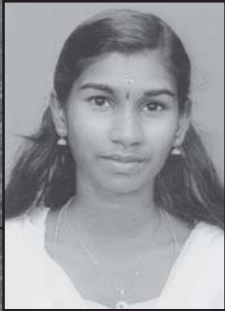
Harkening for the jingling of their anklets
How did you know my mind?
The one who made my dream come true.

I unfurled a flower for you
I fold my hands before you for,
The chained birds you have set free

Let them stand straight in the world
In rows and rows of daring souls
May the womanhood be blessed for ever!

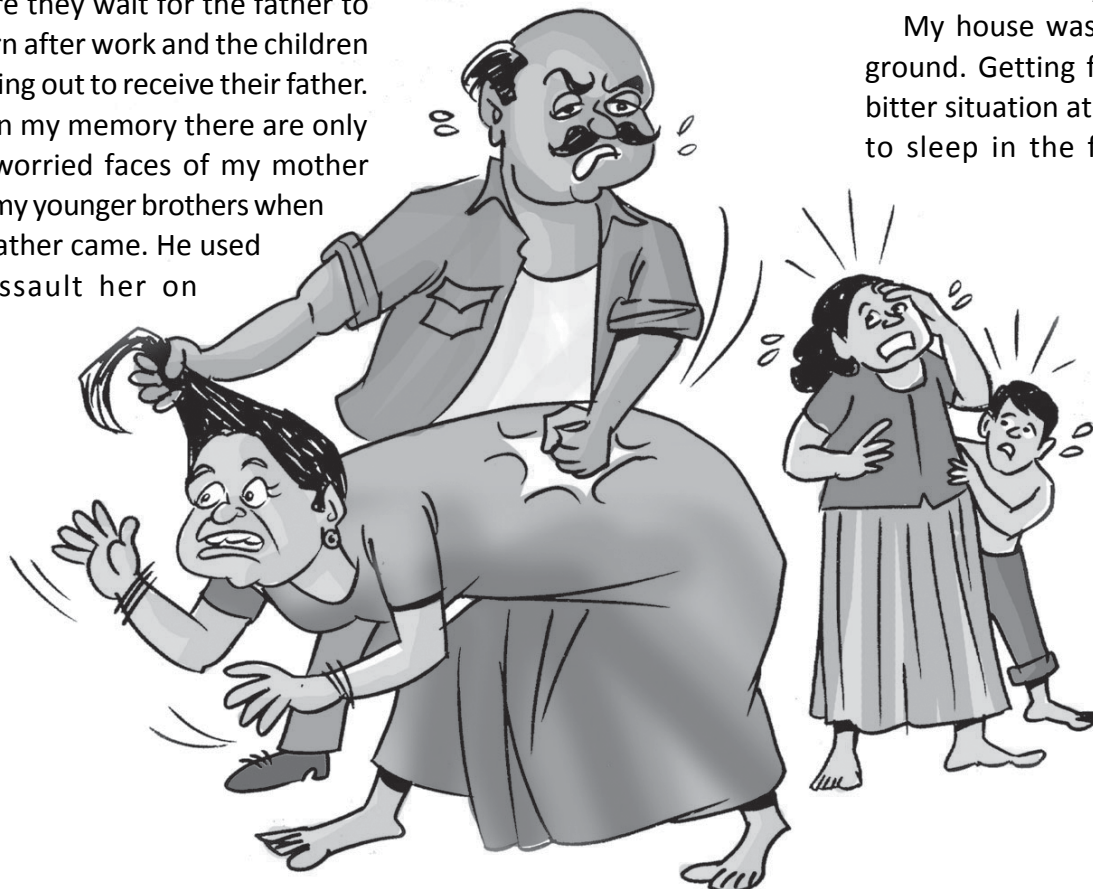
**Leelamma Varghese
Doctors Garden
Gandhinagar
Kottayam**

The Memories that Do not Die



Monisha
B.Com
2nd Year Student

Chachan (father) was a nightmare for me. Alcohol – it had given me a lot of sorrows and sufferings, estrangement and poverty. There may be homes where they wait for the father to return after work and the children running out to receive their father. But in my memory there are only the worried faces of my mother and my younger brothers when my father came. He used to assault her on



silly matters. I could feel that the persecution and the verbal abuse of my father were slowly affecting my mother leading her into psychic problems. On the days my father came home drunk. I, my

Once we had nothing to eat and so we ate up the fibre of the tapioca that we had in the previous day. Many times I used to go to the library with empty tiffin box and sat there.

mother and the younger brothers used to be awake. Most of our life, we had sleepless nights. Then the minds of the four of us used to wander in different directions; we could not talk with each other. Every day I would wait for the new painful experiences that would come the next day.

My house was near a funeral ground. Getting fed up with the bitter situation at home, we used to sleep in the funeral ground which was dark. Our father didn't know of this hiding place of ours. On such a day I went to the neighbouring house and called the police. They also had enough of him. He had no fear for any one. Chachan asked the S.I. why he

was interfering in his family matters and the S.I. slapped him. When they went away mother got the double of what she was getting every day. It was his so called friends who were behind all this.

When the neighbours celebrated Onam and the school re-opening with new dresses, bags and umbrellas, I used to feel wanting them. I used to have good marks and wished so much to study. When I came with good marks, there was not a word of encouragement. Slowly my interest in studies diminished.

Fully awake in the night and having received beatings; going to school the next day without food and fearing whether my father would assault my mother, I would totally be vexed. Many times I had to just look on helplessly. When my mother gave birth to the younger brother, Chachan had disappeared. There was no money for medicine or food. Even while she was pregnant and weary, she used to go for lifting soil on her head so that we wouldn't starve. When we get ready for prayer Chachan would come in and make trouble and would even throw away the statues of God. Those days we were hesitant to come back from school. My teachers and friends supported me a lot and inspired me.

One day when we had nothing to eat, we ate up the fibre of the tapioca that we had in the previous day. Many times I used to go to the library with an empty tiffin box and sit there.

Frankly, I cannot write about his other changes, his behaviour was not what children would ever expect from a father. We had to watch bad CDs that he would bring. Then he stopped being a father.....I developed hatred and estrangement towards him. My mother stood with me always. Then he became a paranoiac. Mother worked hard to make both ends meet and my father also would shamelessly eat from the food she earned.

One day he came home drunk and gave a hit upon mother's backbone with a heavy hammer used for breaking rocks. When I looked up I saw my mother crawling and when I ran towards her in panic she told me to run away. Whatever happened in our home, no neighbour would look in as our father was a paranoiac and sure would make stories linking them. I took a liquor bottle, broke it and threatened him saying if he ever touched my mother, I would hit him with it. Somehow he put down the hammer. The next day all four of us went to the family court and it is advocate Sindhu who took us to Santhwanam.

On reaching there, we ate food and slept in peace! During the S.S.L.C. examination, Chachan got violent and resorted to verbal abuse and I studied lighting a candle on the step outside. When I was studying for X Chachan burnt all my books. Sometimes I used to go to my mother's house when there was trouble. But my aunt didn't like it.

After reaching Santhwanam I study well. Till then I had not joined for any extra activities in the school and to the surprise of my teachers last year I got prize in Arts and Sports at the Revenue and District levels. Annie auntie sent my younger brothers to another orphanage. They are also happy there. My mother found employment as a domestic help.

Now I am doing a degree course. I have a clear cut aim, a dear dream. This dream was instilled into me by my Annie auntie. Now I no more look back to the bygone dreary past but looking forward to the bright light of hope!

***"OUR PURPOSE
IN LIFE
IS NOT TO BE
SUCCESSFUL,
BUT TO BE
FAITHFUL"***

Billy Graham

LEANING ON THE SHADOWED PRISON WALL



Chithira

Once I and my friends were wandering through the streets, the police picked us up for stealing the gold chain of a lady and took us to the police station. When we reached the station scared and shivering, we went and sat in a corner. The police asked each of us whether we had taken the chain. We all said that we didn't. But they didn't believe us. Besides, the senior officer was also not there as he had gone somewhere far. Saying that the senior officer was not there and that they wouldn't let us out till he came, they took us to the central jail.

There we saw wonderful things. Some people were working and some were roaring from within! They locked us all inside saying that unless and until we told the truth, they wouldn't let us out. At

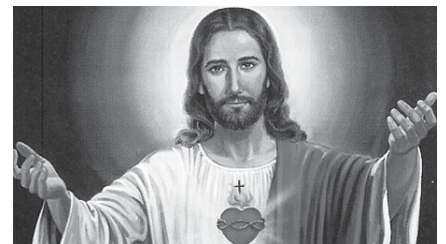
We all cried in a chorus, "Sir, we have not taken the chain" We told him this also that even if we have to go begging in the streets, we will not steal anything from anyone and he believed us to our great relief.

first we felt very sad. After two-three days, slowly our sorrows began to recede. The inmates of the jail liked us very much. At noon the bell would ring for lunch and all of us would have to go and sit in rows with our plates and food will be served to all. The food we get there does not have either chili or salt.

After 10 days the senior officer came. He also asked us the same question. We said the same answer. We all cried in a chorus, "Sir, we have not taken the chain" We told him this also that even if

we have to go begging in the streets, we will not steal anything from anyone and he believed us to our great relief.

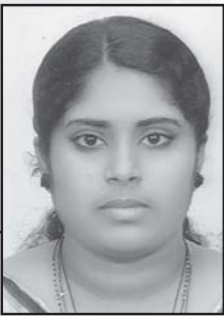
He also scolded the other policemen for detaining us in the jail for ten days for a crime we had not done. Besides he bought us new dresses and gave money to each of us. And thus we went back to our own places. This is a great incident that I will never forget in my life!



***God is truth.
And the truth will
set you free***



These are the dear ones of God



Pooja Pushpan

Reporter
Sahi T.V.

Amma saw me. As soon as she saw me, she came to me. She took me inside as if she was awaiting me. She asked about me and at that moment I could feel that a good percent of whatever weight I had been carrying in the head, on the shoulders, and in my heart, were lessened.

Let me start by giving thanks to God for making me a part of this temple. There is ample reason for me to term Santhwanam a temple. The shadow of destitution that has fallen upon, from the little birds that were not yet mature enough to fly, to the retarded lives that had to stop their forward journey of life at different stages, are safe in the hands of Santhwanam. Most of the inhabitants enter the threshold of Santhwanam with eyes wherein hopes and dreams have dried out, shedding blood in the place of tears and act like zombies controlled by someone somewhere, with the question 'now what?' reflected on the faces. They have been receiving only neglect, mocking and hatred from this wide world that rendered them helpless and had nobody to rely upon, are proved to be the dear ones of God as they are brought in to rest upon the bosom of the mother, Santhwanam so loving and caring! When the mother wipes off their tears and take up the pains of the children, there they are born again into a new life, in a new world. And they will experience a renewed energy and strength flowing into their veins that would induce them to run up the steps ahead that stretches far and wide when they are received with both hands stretched out and embrace them unto the chest.

My very first day in Santhwanam was special. When darkness was slowly creeping into my life and life itself was becoming a big question mark. I was beidered to see the sharp claws upon the hands extended to console me! But many times I could experience the care and love of someone. But who? I didn't know that. At last I myself wished to rewrite the book of my life and tried to do so. But the angels chained me in their hands, wiped off the tears, caressed my hair with their fingers and slept in peace.

When I woke up, it was to this house I was brought in. Although my feet were moving, I didn't know where they were carrying me. When I reached the courtyard of Santhwanam, a little angel caught my hand and led me in. She didn't know me and I didn't know her. Still she kept her hands round me and took me inside. May be it was the unknown saviour who had assigned the girl to stand at the entrance for me. Amma (mother) saw me. As soon as she saw me, she came to me. She took me inside as if she had been awaiting me. She asked about me and at that moment I could feel that a good percent of whatever weight I had been carrying in the head, on the shoulders, and in my heart, were lessened. On the first day itself when Amma told me to keep the first step up from the ground, I was wondering; my saviour had, even without my asking, has arranged everything for me – my house, felt was happy like anything. Beyond that something else made me happier... that is something Amma says very often that whatever Santhwanam needs, God arranges and that we do not have to run after anything. Thus God has chosen me also. My joy knew no bounds when I realized that God had included my name also in the list of the inmates of Santhwanam. Now I understand the meaning of what Amma told then. When I see miracles happening in front of my eyes, I stand in dismay and speechless.

I can say that there is no one in Santhwanam who had not directly experienced the love and care of God. We can see a number of noticeable and unnoticeable

testimonies. From many such experiences, let me cite one. Once, Aiswarya from Santhwanam got fever and she was very tired. She was studying in the 10th grade and thinking not to miss her classes, she was sent to the hospital with one of the mothers in the morning itself. Doctors diagnosed it as measles and Annie Amma was worried because measles would spread; there were even small children and there were no rooms to isolate her. The rooms we had were already overloaded. At last Amma told that there's preventive medicine for measles in Homoeopathy and if all are given it, the disease will not spread. And she told that the medicine was to be given that day itself. But who will go to buy? It was only a few days since I had come to Santhwanam and therefore Kottayam was still a strange place to me. Since I was new, she could not entrust the Office to me and go by herself. Another staff, Maria was not there. Since we had no other option, we postponed it for the next day. Around 3 pm. a car drove in to Santhwanam and two ladies came out. Amma and I were there in the office. They introduced themselves and that introduction shocked me.

One of the ladies was the District Homoeo Medical Officer Dr. Annie John and another homoeo doctor with her. They had come to visit Santhwanam. Amma and I looked at each other. I was totally surprised. They asked Amma about Santhwanam and in between Amma indicated about Aiswarya's measles. And what Dr. Annie John said next, again gave me another shock. She said that there is no

need to worry about the spreading of disease and that there's strong preventive medicine in Homoeopathy and she would send the medicine that day itself - that was what we needed. By 4 o'clock in the evening, Dr. Annie John sent 80 bottles of the medicine in her car along with the driver. And the measles did not spread at all! How many such miracles are happening here daily and I know God better as I see Him leading on each inhabitant, wiping the tears off and He is here and I also have started experiencing his love and care.

Then when I started walking through paths covered in darkness, I never expected a light coming into my life and I was not sure where the paths were leading me on. But I had to go and I started walking but now I know that Amma has been waiting for me somewhere with the light. I walked and reached near Amma. There was no darkness there and now I can see everything clearly. All the paths I had been walking were covered in darkness and therefore I couldn't see myself. Now I can see myself, my Amma, the world and all the steps I wish to climb upon. Every time I get the warmth, it gets into my veins supplying the strength needed to run up the higher steps of life.



The Ladder of Success



Akkamma David
Trustee

Can This Single Lady Help All?

I came to know Annie when she was the Secretary to Thanal. Then I was the Students Hostel Secretary of Y.W.C.A.

Many women from different places used to come with their children and tell their sorrows to Annie. Whenever she had to go about related to such women's problems, she used to take me along with her. It was when the management of Thanal took a decision not to accommodate more people in Thanal, she had to resign her post with great sorrow. But everything has turned out to be good.

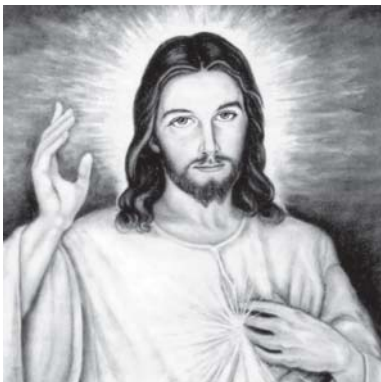
At the time when Santhwanam was started I thought 'isn't it too much – Annie alone, how she would manage?' But later even though she

had to go through difficult situations, the God's hand was with her. I could discern in Annie, a great person who was not fattening her own purse, but spending everything for the poor and taking up sufferings for their sake. I could but be dismayed about the strong support that her husband Babu and her two sons gave her. I remember Annie selling their rubber estate when it was clear that Santhwanam would no longer be able to go ahead without its own building. Now Santhwanam owns the house with a premise full of fruit trees and nuts that reminds us of the garden of Eden!

I remember with dread a journey to a mountainous area of the 'Malayarayan' tribal settlements in

order to settle a social issue regarding excommunication. It was for a poor family 'estranged' by their society. Unexpectedly about hundred people including men and women came with stones and sticks roaring against us. But we spent about 4 hours there and returned only after settling the matter. I still remember the impassive face of Annie even when the crowd was jeering at us. Why should she fear if the person who is taking care of things, was along with her?

I am happy that I am also a part of this. My life on earth is becoming fruitful through Santhwanam. This relationship has given me a chance to see and know the hardships of people.



Do not be afraid I am with you!

*Defend the rights of the poor and the orphans;
be fair to the needy and the helpless.
Rescue them from the power of evilment.*

(Psalms 22:3, 4)

THE RAIN!



Chinchumol Rani
Degree Student

**That day I cried a lot
and rain also joined
with me. I had not
known that my mother
had become a cancer
patient. Mother
departed
from this world to a far
away place from
where she would
never come back.**

Rain! Always it was a friend of mine. It reminds me of an irreparable loss. In 2000, I, my mother and my siblings reached an orphanage. After a few hours, she left us there and went back alone. That day I cried a lot and rain also cried with me. But I didn't know that my mother had become a cancer patient. She went away. She departed from this world to a far away place from where she would never come back. Only the rain was left there to cry with me. From then onwards, rain was with me as a friend – in my happiness and sorrows and the tears of the heart and with the personal sorrows which could not be shared with anyone, rain was with me.

When my mother was gone, another friend came into my life apart from the rain to shade me. Consolation in words, love and sincerity in deeds, care of a mother, Santhwanam, better than my own mother who begot me. It taught me how to win over the steps ahead in life and to face life through goodness. It was there with me ever since as a shade and support. This is rather a house than an

orphanage! It touched my heart. And the rain is a silent witness in all these and who else is there to share with, but the rain.

Rain was my friend not only in sorrow. Sometimes it gives me a strange experience of soothing pain because of the school life and the pain of staying away from my siblings who are away.

The smell of soil that comes along with a new rain, the memories of entering into the new world of knowledge-all dance within my mind. Whenever the rain comes I feel that my friend is coming near me.

***“I can’t recite the rhyme
“Rain rain go away;
come again
another day”
but rain rain come down
don’t don’t go away***

Will I ever have another 'Perunnal' ?



Rinayamol Roy

Will I ever have another 'Perunnal' (a holy celebration to commemorate a saint)

My family comprised of Papa, Mummy and three children. I have two younger brothers. Papa was working in a bus. We used to wait for his return after work. Because he will have with him short-eats for us. We used to run a race to be with him first. One day we all went to St.Mary's church, Vallarpadam for Perunnal. While returning Papa had bought us ice cream. We were very happy that day.

Papa was not very talkative. Papa taught me to ride a bicycle. Slowly he took to drinking and started coming home late. He lost his job in the bus and he started butchering. When he comes home drunk, whatever we say he would explode and abuse us. He used to assault me and mother but he

wouldn't harm my brothers. When I reached the age of six, we went to Thanal. And Annie Amma had called Papa.

He was not ready to take treatment for alcoholism. Promising that he would not trouble us any more, took us with him. But after six months he became the old self and became a total alcoholic addict. Many days we had to sit outside the house and spend nights. If he doesn't drink he is good. We were scared of Papa when he comes drunk. Many diseases crept into him. The Papa who used to come home with unsteady steps...we had to bow our heads in shame before the society. Slowly his liver and brain got damaged and he sent us out of the house. Our grandmother told us to go somewhere and escape and thus we reached Santhwanam.

Papa didn't need us anymore. Even though he was called to Santhwanam he was not ready to come and he never came to Santhwanam. Today we are in orphanages and our mother is working. In the last January, on the 3rd our Papa left us for ever. Still I love my Papa a lot and it makes me cry whenever I think of him. If this alcohol was not there, I wouldn't have lost my dear Papa!

Alcoholism is devil incarnated. Keep away that it will make you a slave of it





The House of Miracles



Jolly Adimathra
Senior Sub Editor Mathrubhumi

Annie Babu doesn't know George Muller because it is 115 years since he has passed away. But even today he is alive, through the hundreds of children for whom he had made a life, and the scribbling on his prayerful experiences... if anyone wants to cut short the distance to God, just follow the experience of George Muller. The instances where God intervened to make possible what was impossible to man. We will be able to go through wonderful moments to make our faith in God deep, strong and stable. There are many things in common with the miraculous experiences of George Muller and that of the Santhwanam of Annie Babu. Let me cite an experience in the life of George Muller:

Once there was nothing for lunch for the children in his orphanage. So he decided to have lunch with them.

It was nearing noon and he asked his children to set the plates on the dining table. Then all of them knelt down. There were about 500 children along with him. They are the children of the miracle house and miracles were not new to them. As the prayer was progressing, there was a loud noise outside. It was the busy road leading to the city. It was the sound of a vehicle holding the brake. Some accident might have happened. People gathered and they were talking loudly. But he was not ready to wind up the prayer or inquire about the incident because there were so many hungry bellies knelt down and they should be given food. For that, the father in heaven should show mercy. Therefore, they went on knocking at the door of the heavenly father. Suddenly they heard someone knocking at their door.

As he was deep in prayer he did not bother about it but the knock which had started slowly became fast and strong. Then he stood up and opened the door. Right in front of their door he spotted a vehicle that had a brake down. 'I'm the owner of this van. On my way to the city, the axle of the van got broke. By the time I call a mechanic and get it repaired, it will take a long time. This is the lunch for the city and it would become bad by the time and therefore will you kindly take this food for the children of the house?'

His eyes would have got wet and the words that he wished to utter would have died down within and might have seen the children knelt down in prayer. This was the answer to the prayer they were doing within a closed door without being shared with anyone else in the

world. The power that broke the axle of the vehicle that was going to the city broke down right in front of the orphanage! When Muller and his children completed their prayer, their dining table was fully set. They didn't have to bother and spend time even on cooking! Within minutes they had belly-full!

You also can experience this. I have experienced the same many times in my life...when all the doors were closed and as per human calculations, there was no chance to open a door and still went on knocking. I am indebted to God for the miracle of opening the door exclusively for me.

Santhwanam taught me that God will do wonders through our prayers. How many miracles are happening here in this house of miracles! And I remember them.

The girl who had become grotesque to look at due to severe burning and came to Santhwanam, had her name booked for micro-vascular surgery without any money. Two lakhs of rupees was needed for the surgery. Annie and the girl with her distorted face went on praying and just the day before the

surgery was fixed, God sent a person with exactly two lakhs of rupees. When the poor girl returned after the surgery, God touched the person who had given the money. He had no issues for 12 years after marriage and they had undergone many types of treatment without any positive result and he was feeling desperate. When he helped the poor girl with money, God gave him the gift of a child!

When Santhwanam started with the abandoned child from the train and while they were being suffocated in the small rented house, I was also with them. When the threat of being closed down, I was along with Annie. The dream for a handful of soil, God blessed and made it expand as he did bless the five loaves of bread and collected 12 basketsful of the remains..... How much is the glow of the house which God had sojourned for Santhwanam with a big beautiful house by the bank of a river and a big pond and with an orchard full of fruit trees! When the big magician of the High opened up

his closed hands there was everything wanted for Santhwanam. Isn't it the same glow of George's miracle home that we see in Santhwanam?

The children who are born on Earth are his beloveds, his stars. When they are thrown out there are only a few who are ready to lift them up. But there are a few rare ones to whom God blesses and gives the gift of lifting them and embracing them in the bosom. It's God's fingers that touched them and he has kept a number of miracles for them and they see and experience them. They feel the presence of God quite close to them and they are led by Him.

Those who go along with them, those who hear them and see them, they are miracles. My faith in God is becoming firm by the nearness to Santhwanam.

MY SANTHWANAM

In the empty path of my life
My eyes filling and voice cracking
I and my beloved child came
In to this place, Santhwanam.
Smiling with love
With all the mind
Came and comforted me
The Santhwanam, my mother.

My mind full of darkness,
Was lighted with the beauty of light
By this golden lamp, Santhwanam.
My life without any meaning,
Is provided with several meanings
By the Holy fountain, Santhwanam.
It's the toddler's jabbering for me,
It's a place that welcomes one

While wandering without a roof
Saying welcome and welcome
Is the great comforter for me today
Is my great comfort, Santhwanam!



In Search of the Tune of a Lullaby

Shanthini

When we hear the famous lullaby in Malayalam 'Omana thinkal kidavo.....' what comes to one's mind is the love of mothers towards their children. Each line of the lyric comes as the innocent words of love. We can imagine the love of a mother, caressing their children in their lap. I think this is the greatest luck that they can have on this earth. This luck God has not given me. Perhaps God may not give all the blessings to one person. Still there is a pain that though my mother was there all the while at a stone's throw, I couldn't enjoy that love. No woman would become a mother just by giving birth to a child in the real sense. For that, the mother should love the children and then only the 'mother' becomes meaningful. Even in starvation, if the mother embraces the child to her bosom, that would be sufficient to suffice the child's hunger. All those who read this may have parents and grew up enjoying their love. Just think of me and thousands like me who never had the luck to experience this. If the mother had gone in the wrong way due to

negative circumstances, children will not accuse them. But if a mother goes in the wrong way in spite of all comforts, who will not, but accuse them? I and my Chechi (elder sister) had gone through a lot of bad experiences because of our mother. For all the wrong doings of our mother, the people around blamed us also. They looked at us with the same eyes with which they looked at our mother. Nobody knew the truth, and if at all they knew the truth, they pretended that they didn't know and hurt us. During nights I was very scared when I started knowing what's right and what is not. My mother was a bad dream for me. I was scared of her and hated her. In most of the stories, the father is the villain but circumstances got me stamped as the daughter who beat her mother. If the mother was not alive, that would be that. It was the time when I and my Chechi didn't know what is meant by love. While going out, allegations and unholy looks rendered us tired. When we saw mothers loving and caring their children, we used to feel jealous



about them. I didn't wish for much but for the mother's love as it was very dear to me. The only one thing that we cannot buy with money, is love. If I go on thinking of my mother I would go mad. Now I'm learning to forget all and forgive. The mother for whom I had wished was an angel of my dream. Now that angel is with me to direct me in the right path and to lead me on to goodness. That's my mother in Santhwanam. I need the blessing of all to help me go up and up the ladder for this mother and for my younger sisters.





Fr. Jose Chazhikattu

THE EMBLEM OF SERVICE

We become great when we utilize our position, authority and capabilities for the good of man with a mind of service. My aim should not be to use my position and capabilities for the growth and prominence of myself, but for the overall good of the society and The Church. The teaching of St. Paul that 'each one should consider others better than oneself' (Phil 2:3) gains importance. Having the mind to render service is the important thing. Lacking in this attitude is the cause of splits, division and discrimination seen today both in the Church and Administration levels. It is one of the great lessons that Jesus gave to the world: 'the one who wishes to be the leader, should become the servant of all'.

The minds of the apostles were full of worldly ambitions. Mistaking the kingdom of Jesus to be materialistic, they engaged themselves in securing prominent positions. Thus, Salomi, the mother of Jacob and John comes to Jesus with her recommendation. Because Jacob and John tried to win better positions, the other apostles felt irritated with them. Understanding this clash between the apostles,

Jesus called the apostles and told them, 'the one who wishes to be great, should be your servant and the one who wishes to be the leader, should serve all. This is what we should understand and accept that the world needs service. When The Church received royal authority, the accessories of royal gaiety and authoritative attitude crept into it and to an extent it has led to the shadowing of the attitude of service that Jesus had assigned to the apostolic church. Among a number of institutions working throughout the Church in the service of mankind, most of them lack the attitude of service. Importance should be given for developing proper attitudes towards services rather than to the individual growth of institutions. What should come out of those who serve should be sincerity and spiritual values. The love of Lord filled with mercy should be the resource of our service. We have to lend our ears to the voice of the son of God. We have to develop on the concept that service leads to and ends in the son of God. 'Whatever you did to the least of these brothers, you did unto me' (Mt.18:20) The great among you,

should be like the least and the one with authority should be like a servant.' (Lk 22: 26-27). Let the service mindedness of Jesus be filled in us.

Great institutions like Santhwanam stands out as new and permanent testimonials of Jesus's service mind, the testimonials of love, broadmindedness and mercy. Lifting up the discarded ones in life and bringing them to the main stream of life, Santhwanam stands out a symbol of selfless and merciful love of God, showing to the world 'who is great'?



Goodness is the wealth that will never be destroyed

The Memma of my Memories



Maria Sunny
Social Worker

Our beloved Memma, Rev.Sr. Michael Thakadiyel, is an irreparable loss in the book of memoir of Santhwanam. On 11th April 2013, we have completed one year of Memma's departure. But she still lives in the heart of the children of Santhwanam. I have only three years' attachment to Memma. Memma remained a wonder to all with her enthusiasm and spirit that had nothing to do with her age. I could learn a lot from her within the three years. As a beginner, it helped me a lot. Memma who is an irreparable loss to Santhwanam and Annie auntie, lives here in spirit with us.

Auntie used to tell that Memma used to care a lot for the poor and the suffering and had tried to spend most of her time with them. When auntie was still a child and whenever she visited them Memma used to tell them stories of the lot. She used to instruct them that they should love such people if they wished to love God. We can say without doubt that such thoughts that Memma had carved into her mind in childhood, led to the realization of

them through Santhwanam, the resort of the destitute and the discarded ones today. About 1,500 lives that had posed a big question mark have reached safe grounds through the hands of Santhwanam. Even though departed, she still lives in thousands of minds. The reason is her service. She used to be very careful in spending money. She was interested in spending only what was needed. The very mention of Memma, another thing that comes to all the minds in Santhwanam is her fame for walking. Whenever she used to come to Santhwanam, Memma used to come by bus, get down near Dental College and walk it down to Santhwanam. She was never hesitant to walk even at the age of 88 years. Suggesting that she could go by auto and by the time we would call for an auto, she must have left Santhwanam.

Every child of Santhwanam was dear to her. She used to be with us at least three days in a week. When Memma is there, children are very happy because she would be with them in prayer, singing and playing. She used to tell each of them how to pray and would group them to carry on

the prayer in the proper way and taught some of them to lead prayers. They are still following the pattern Memma had taught them.

We had celebrated her 88th birthday in Santhwanam. We thought about giving a birthday present to Memma and decided to buy two sets of habits for her and then and there auntie replied that definitely she would give that over to someone else. So we decided not to. Yes, Memma is like that. She may have only two or three sets and if they are torn, she would stitch again and again and use them.

Memma was with auntie always there as a strong hand to support and shade her, especially when Santhwanam faced difficulties and crises. She would run in for any need of Santhwanam. She went out with auntie in the search of finding finance for building Santhwanam. Even though she is no more with us, Santhwanam still remembers her words, thoughts and deeds with gratitude. Even at the age of 88 Memma used to do her own things and for others with great spirit and enthusiasm. Today Memma is a power in our minds, a model and an ever shining light!



Ashwathy A.B.

MY MOTHER, OF WHOM I HAVE HEARD AND KNOWN

Father and mother and we three children were living happily in our home. Our mother died when I was eight months old. I know of her death only through whatever I have heard. The death my mother had decided – my poor mother. How much she might have suffered to go away leaving us three children! It is because of our father that our mother died. Every night he used to come drunk. Father used to assault her without any reason. My grand mother told me that my father used to assault her in what ever ways he could.

I know the great sorrow to live without father and mother. When I became old enough to understand things and whenever I see happy families how I wished for a family and wept about it. It is the alcohol that made our mother say good bye to us and to the world. Even now I wish if my parents were alive. I saw my father last year when my grandfather was in a hospital, my father was admitted in another ward with a broken limb. Someone might have done it to him. I don't know where he lives now or who ever are with him.

Then it was our grandfather and grandmother who brought us up. But they are ageing and how long the poor ones can take care of us? We got an answer to all these through our Annie amma. I am very happy now in Santhwanam. This is my home. Henceforth I wish to be the daughter of Annie Amma and the younger sister of all the elder sisters here. My great wish is to become a teacher and for that I will study very well.



*“Your children are not your children. They come through you, but not from you.
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you”*

Khalil Gibran



Scribbles of Memories

Mini Varghese

April 4, 2008 Santhwanam had completed one year of existence. Then there was not this building or so many members. Santhwanam worked in a rented house near *Choottuvely*. We were only 35 people there. We were experiencing too much of financial difficulties. But letting His presence felt, God was there always with Santhwanam. Witnessing certain unexpected and miraculous involvement made our eyes wet.

Starting days of Santhwanam we got free timber from a saw mill at Kudamaloor owned by Mr. Martin. Only thing is that we should arrange a lorry and bring it. Often Anni Auntie also came with us. Because of her busy schedule, she could not leave the office that particular day. Usually we used to prepare the lunch before I and Moni left for bringing the firewood. Thinking that we would be able to return before it became very hot, we went in the morning. Accordingly auntie arranged the lorry by 8.45. I and Moni went with Gail and Deepthi in order to bring the timber. We thought that we would return by 11 and would get time to cook rice. We arranged the timber in the lorry and started off. But in between the lorry broke down. The driver told us that if we waited for getting it repaired, it would take a long time and so it would be better to call another vehicle. The

thought that we would be able to cook rice only after reaching Santhwanam made us sad. The road to Santhwanam was a deserted road and there was no way of communication. So the only option was to call another vehicle. We unloaded the timber on the side of the road and loaded into the other vehicle the driver had called. We were all very sad on the way to Santhwanam. There is no lunch in Santhwanam. All, even little children would be hungry and to make food for so many, would take more time. Since it was Saturday, all children would be at home. What excuse we would tell auntie? We reached about 1.30 pm with thousand questions in our minds.

As soon as the vehicle stopped Moni ran towards auntie and asked what they would do since they had not cooked lunch. It was then only that auntie came to know that there was no food. Because when the kitchen staff got late to turn up, it was she who had served a sumptuous lunch for the children and that too, on plantain leaves with various curries and plantain fruits. When we came to know that they all, including auntie had their food, we stood perplexed!

This is what had happened. Because she was very busy in the office,

she didn't know that the food was not cooked. That day around 12.45, a Sajiv Kumar from Choottuveli brought rice and curries on the occasion of commemorating the 40th day of demise of the 3-year-old son of Sajiv Kumar and Manju. It was not pre-informed. That was the first day rice and curry was brought to Santhwanam. Who ever brought the food, along with auntie gave food to all. All the while auntie was not aware of the fact that food was not cooked in Santhwanam. What auntie told then still remains in mind, 'it is not I or Moni who feed the children of Santhwanam. Even if I don't care or Moni neglects, God will send on the correct time whatever the children of Santhwanam needs.

That is Santhwanam. When we reached with full of worries about the children, what we saw was a kitchen full of rice and curries. My mind filled out that moment. He came to know of everything and He had intervened. There our minds became stronger. Even today Santhwanam doesn't lose heart on the face of crises because we know that He is there to help and support us.



Nisha

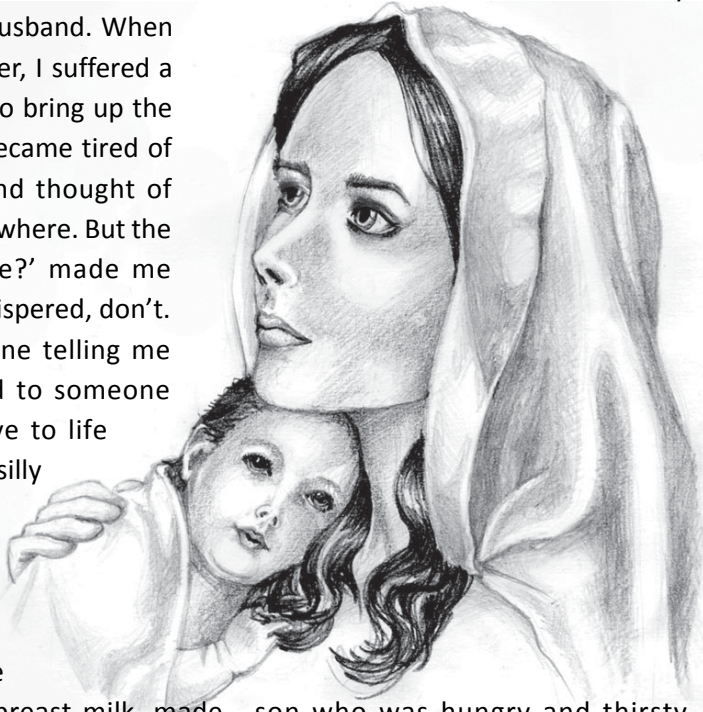
My family is one that had sunk deep into unending sorrows. Among them I own a deeply wounded heart. In my childhood my father and mother hurt me. They got separated. In my wedded life, alcohol and friends were more precious to my husband. When I became a mother, I suffered a lot of hardships to bring up the little one and I became tired of the sufferings and thought of going away somewhere. But the question, 'where?' made me sad. My mind whispered, don't. I felt like someone telling me to give the child to someone and say good bye to life for ever. Was it a silly feeling or the truth? I don't know, I don't know any thing. The face of the child crying for breast milk, made me weak. Then I thought of putting an end to both the lives. So we went about visiting friends and relatives. While enjoying with them, nobody might have noticed my eyes getting wet. I and my child are a burden to all. So I wished to go away, but where? Pain is always along with me as my sibling. To enliven the

IN THE CASE OF A RE-BIRTH, I WISH TO BE THE DAUGHTER OF THIS MOTHER

dead mind and weak body, I struggled hard. Before the false faces of love I and my son were left alone..all had deserted us. My friends comforted me in one place and on the opposite of it there were allegations.

I went with my child to a hotel carrying poison with me. The tired face of my

life, in Santhwanam, a real mother, reliable and consoling the orphans and the destitute women. The word of God says, do not be afraid I am with you "Yes, here the mother is there with you for everything. When I see my mother my sorrowful heart becomes happy and I forget everything. Mother taught me to forgive and forget. Curing the wounds; doing good; giving peace and more of love, a guide in life, showing forth the light of truth and justice, she is there. I have learnt from this Santhwanam that with love and hope we can overcome any negative situations or crises.



son who was hungry and thirsty made me sad. My mind accused me, 'if you are a burden, you die, but why the child'? Who is the cause of my wrong action, my parents or the husband who auctioned for my life? I lost my mind and became totally mad. I went on walking without any aim. I saw the owner of a great heart that welcomed us from the bleak

*You are dear to me,
the apple of my eye.*

*Even if your mother
forgives you I will
not forsake you*

Shade and Support



Mini Bejoy

The little ones whose lives, Destiny has let be thrown into waysides, verandas of hospitals, shrubs and railway stations....

The unmarried women who had believed the false promises and became mothers....

Helpless women who had run away from husbands addicted to alcohol and drugs and from paranoid relations with their children....

Those who had become schizophrenic due to life situations...

Those who stood transfixed before the question of existence 'now what?' having had a narrow escape from suicidal points.....

The girls who were rape victims.....

They are all safe under the wings of Santhwanam. Annie Babu(Annie Amma) is the 'santhwanam' of their lives. She is not only their mother but their elder sister and even God. It will be a wonder if the thousands who had experienced the comforting love, refer to her thus. What they should call their Annie Amma who had held up her hand and led them to the greenery of life when they had all their hopes dried up and a big question mark looming before their lives!

A lot of people come to Annie Amma when they have to face difficulties. They all know that Annie auntie will be there asking and fighting with God on behalf of them and that the door of Santhwanam will always be open!

Annie Amma is the foster mother to 86 children who have come from the furnaces of negatives. Those whose parents have left them; those who had to suffer from their own people and orphans, on reaching Santhwanam are safe, forgetting the backlog of pains they had had to suffer.

If there are any relatives, listen.....

The little angels are doing well here.....

Though they are orphans, without bearing the pain of destitution they live in the shades of Santhwanam, the mother's nest.....



THE COMFORTING TOUCH OF EXPERIENCES



Sr. Celine Kallarackal M.M.S
Counsellor - Santhwanam

*I do wonder
how the daily
expenses are met.
But everything
goes ahead
smoothly under the
care of God Almighty!
Though we
cannot predict what
would be there for
tomorrow,
someone comes
like the messenger of
God with a
helping
hand.*

I am serving in Santhwanam, the resort of the helpless and the hapless for four years. I, a nun of the Medical Mission Sisters (MMS), derive the most valuable moments of my life from Santhwanam.

Santhwanam was previously working in a small house at S.H. Mount. What makes Santhwanam so prosperous and lively is the selfless work of Annie Babu, who is so dear to the people of Kottayam due to her ardent and excellent service and her team.

When Santhwanam grew into a big tree, the small building at S.H. Mount became insufficient. In Whatever little space they had, all the women and children lived like the members of the same family in unity and happiness. The elder children very much enjoy dressing and sending the children to schools.

The government had instructed Santhwanam to buy a new building due to the lack of space in the small house. By the grace of God we

could buy a big house with all facilities and sufficient land. This is situated near Medical College, Kottayam.

I am working here as a counsellor. It is a joyful experience to share in the hot problems and provide them with the cooling of consolation. What a counsellor does is to help each one to stand on one's own feet; help to change what can be changed and provide knowledge and the sense to accept whatever cannot be changed.

The husbands of most women who live here are alcoholics or drug addicts. At the same time they are paranoids. They not only assault their wives and children brutally but also send them out of the house. The majority of them feel depressed and commit suicide.

The police catch and bring in many with suicidal tendencies to Santhwanam. Some others escape with their children and reach Santhwanam. To give counselling to them is a contenting experience. Through counselling, they are provided with mental strength and confidence and help them to go ahead relying upon God. Besides,

their husbands are called in and they are also given counselling.

Many of them who are given counselling, agree to undergo treatment for de-addiction and are prepared for starting a life afresh. Those who are freed from alcoholism, are ready to take away their wives and live a safe and comfortable life. Santhwanam offers them all possible moral support to go ahead in their lives.

The uncompromising cases are trained for hand works and set to work and the children are sent to schools.

The number of people who come to Santhwanam are too many. Standing firm within the limits, Santhwanam offers selfless service and try to hold the maximum number within the limited space.

I have to say a little about the financial conditions of Santhwanam. There is no principal properties to Santhwanam. There are debts to be paid back due to the purchase of the new building. I do wonder how the daily expenses are met. But everything goes ahead smoothly under the care of God

Almighty! Though we cannot predict what would be there for tomorrow, someone comes like the messenger of God with a helping hand.

Supplicating everything to the God of Mercy, Santhwanam is going ahead. This total supplication to God, is the working force of the Santhwanam team.

Smt. Annie Babu, the founder and Director of Santhwanam is the core and spirit of this institution. All the people in Santhwanam look upon her as their loving mother.

The service mindedness, sacrificing mentality, the spirit of work and her patience sets me thinking. Apart from loving and promoting them she finds out the inherent and hidden talents in them and tries her level best to develop them. The children of Santhwanam grow up with talent and character. And Santhwanam tries sincerely for giving them a value-oriented education for formulating their character.

I consider it my great luck to work in this institution along with such

idealists. I am proud of being able to throw a little light into the lives of the children in Santhwanam. I also pray that let they will be made instruments to instill mental strength and reliance upon God.

One year has passed since Rev.Sr. Michael, who was a guiding light and moral support to Santhwanam departed to her heavenly abode. Sr. Michael M.M.S. was a senior member of Santhwanam and whatever she had done for it, should be engraved in golden letters in the history of Santhwanam. Let's pray and beg for her intercession.

May the blessings of Sr. Michael be showered upon Santhwanam as a rain of consolation. I pray to God Almighty that Santhwanam, as its name indicates, be an abode of moral strength and shade to all the orphans and destitutes who come to its lap of consolation.



PRIYANKA

When I feel sad, even without me knowing, it is my good mother who alleviates my sorrows. It is only Annie Amma who reads the sorrows and happiness of my mind. When Annie Amma scolds me, my eyes get wet without me knowing it, but I know that is for my good. What ever sorrow haunts me, she is the one who embraces to her heart. What will I give her in return-Love? happiness? - What should I give her?

My Little Hopes



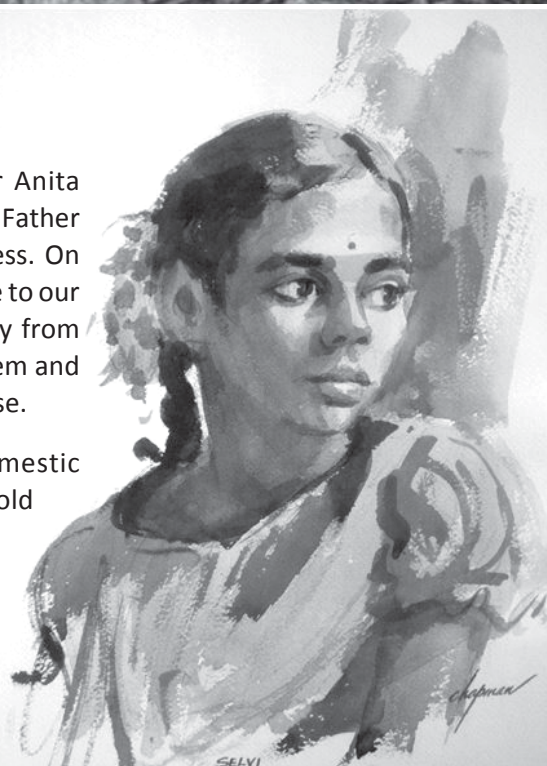
Julie

It was my elder sister Anita who was taking care of me. Father used to drink and was careless. On one Sunday certain men came to our house. My father took money from them and I had to go with them and they in turn put me in a house.

I didn't know any domestic work. I did whatever they told me. Then slowly the kitchen work, washing and cleaning, everything. I had asked them to send me for schooling. They told me that they had brought me to do work. They did not give me any money.

After three years my father came and took money again and went away even without seeing me...that made me very sad. I cried a lot. I said that I wanted to go home and they told me that if the father doesn't need you, why should you go?

I stubbornly told them that I wanted to go away from there. They didn't like to send me away and they did beat me for retaliating. Once when they wanted to go somewhere, they put me in one of



their relative's house and they came back in the evening. They did beat me again accusing me of theft as the chain of the Chechy in the house, was missing. Both the uncle and auntie did beat me. As I went on denying, they locked me up in the bathroom and didn't give me any food for three days until a person came to pray and then they set me free. After one month when the Chechy's old house was demolished to make a new house, they got the

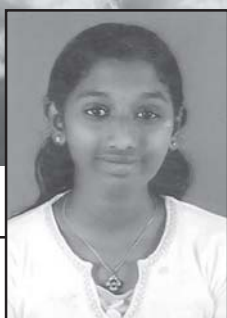
chain back. This news the Chechy told auntie but they didn't say a word of 'sorry' to me. I didn't like it there because they used to beat me. When they reached their native place, Kerala, I came away from the house at night. The policemen who saw me brought me to Santhwanam.

Now I am studying in Class V and am very happy here. Here I got my mother father and a number of elder sisters. I do not have too much of ambitions....still I would like to be a teacher.

*"Your pain will be
turned into joy"*

(Jn 16, 20)

Waiting for a Time of Laughter.....



Santhi

These revelations of womanhood is a necessity. Such an example still exists in my little mind. Born as the daughter of Appachan and Lissy of Ampara Nirappel, God had planned a great project behind this birth. It was to lift up the womanhood, of which she also was a member. With the comforting hands of Santhwanam, our mother has lifted up a group of women who had sunk in the depth of tears. She welcomed them to a free world and a new life where the bad smell of alcohol or drugs would not haunt them and there were no vice men hunting out the women. What she uplifted before the society was not the physical body of a woman but her mind, her thoughts and personality. It is a norm that being

a woman she is confined to so many limitations but she fought singly for the women the society had neglected and to rejuvenate the broken hearts of the little ones discarded by the society. Her family was with her to support her. She could find a temporary abode for the women who were neglected, cheated and downtrodden and helped to settle their problems and strengthened them to be brought to the main stream of society. The orphaned children who had no access to the care of their parents, were given love, care, freedom and lovable restrictions so as to bring their talents out and help them to spread wings and soar up to the heights of society.

This is the holy and devotion before God, the Father, help the widowed and the orphans in their need.' (Ja 1:27)

These verse are put into practice through these acts of our Amma. The life of women and children are not anyone's gift but their right. Henceforth we can say that our Amma would fight for the freedom of women and children all her life. The number of women presenting the womanhood through good acts, is very less in the history. If she could substitute for this vacuum, we can also fight with small acts of good work. Let us believe that we can uplift womanhood through such acts and let it show forth its light all over the world.

"This is the holy and undefiled devotion before God the Father, to help the widowed and the orphans in their need." (Ja 1:27)

The Woman, Family And The Law



Adv. Sindhu Gopalakrishnan

The energy for the development of the society is based on the mental strength of women. A woman who has amassed mental strength learns to live wisely. Our women should become able to make use of the legal system to experience their rights. If the ignorance regarding their rights and the ways and means of solutions be removed and what the law guarantees to women (knowledge about the laws for protection of women and systems of protection) should be made aware, women can achieve progress in social and economical situations.

Women can be freed from the assaults against them if only the laws are implemented in such a way ensuring the respectful status and

safety to women in the society and make sure that it reaches them.

If only men and women strengthen each other the society would become better. The children grow up with the misconceptions of discriminations that are being spread through homes, schools, newspapers, TVs and other media gather the wrong idea that anything can be done to women and that they are destined to suffer. Both men and women are to be identified as separate individuals and train the children to respect their personality. Thus in families, schools and society whether boy or girl, a personality development oriented education must be received first from families. It

should open up an inner eye in them. A sense of values and ability to confront negatives should be inculcated in them.

The family members should help the girls to identify and recognize the glory of their birth and the value of their womanhood. Whether boy or girl, the mothers should make them understand the difference between a 'good touch' and a 'bad touch' even from childhood.

In the case of a situation where a woman returns to her own house as a result of finding it difficult to adjust with her husband, or a man finding it difficult to adjust with his wife and is behaving as if he needs a separation or divorce and wishes to stay away from her, they or their

parents, before approaching an advocate or police, their families, especially the parents should think well. If the way of approach of their son or daughter towards the problems had been changed, would it have made a difference? Could it be because of the ignorance about married life and sex or misconceptions about them? If the answer would be 'yes' or 'no', send your son or daughter for counseling. The parents should know authentically what is counseling and then they can make their children understand the need of it.

You should think about approaching a court only after making a sincere effort to settle the problem amicably.

The cases that come under the consideration of a Family Court:

Family Courts are established in every district. Regarding the relationship between husband and wife and whatever other contentions are defined in the laws of family courts come under the Family Court.

Eg: divorce; nullifying a marriage; restore wedlock; dispute between husband and wife about properties; either husband or wife approaching the court for prohibition; dispute on the fatherhood of a child; petition for getting alimony; dispute about keeping custody; if a husband knows for sure that the child is not

his own, he can approach a Family Court to get a negative declaration. On the other hand, a mother can approach the Family Court to get the fatherhood of a child established on the real father. Wherever there are Family Courts, the other courts do not have the power to intervene in matters that come under the jurisdiction of the Family Court.

Mostly the judges try their level best to unite the husband and wife. It is to make the procedures easy for settling family matters that Family Courts are established exclusively for handling family matters. There is no need to pay any fee in the court except a petition fee stamp of least value. When all the efforts of compromises fail, then only there would be trials and judgment.

In the cases of marriages that come under the Hindu Marriage Act, they can file their petition in a Family Court where the marriage took place, or in the place where the couples had lived together for the last time. If it is the wife who is filing the petition, she can file in the family court where she lives.

General drawbacks of couples found in most cases that are registered in the family courts:

1. Couples do not grant individual freedom.
2. They do not know how to love or rather do not know how to express their love in their hearts.

3. They do not try to know the possibility of the partner's job, the success they can win and the means to gain it.

4. They do not give any importance to the parents of the partner.

5. Lack of training in using good language for speaking, inability to control the voice and the body language.

6. On the part of girls, they expect the characteristics of her father and the boys expecting the qualities of their mother in the partners.

7. They get fed up with the partner's affinity for extravagance but they keep it in mind without expressing for a long time and after some time it turns to expressions of anger in different ways.

8. The ignorance of the girl in cooking and aversion to kitchen routines.

9. First get a place in the minds of the family members and thereby do not understand the principle of 'getting a place into'.

10. If one doesn't know how to overcome difficulties

11. No maturity of feeling

12. Ignorance of sexual matters and irate imaginations

13. Not understanding the importance of small matters

14. Too much of love and anxiety of mothers about daughters. Eg. Calling the daughter many times over the phone and ask about the matters in her husband's family and give directions

15. Taking no treatment for paranoia and the inability to identify the state of illness

16. Trying to scare the wife and bring her under his whims and fancies.

17. Storing information but lack of wit to use them.

Creating awareness about the protection of law for women is not a means to fight against men, but should be aimed at bringing about the welfare of the whole family and to establish a family justice. Those who are strong should not submit the weak ones to injustice and assaults. It is not pulling the higher ones down but we have to raise the weak ones up to the level of the higher ones. Let the women not fall into pitfalls but go ahead with self confidence, intellect and

capabilities rising up to the situations and be able to work with confidence, patience and a strong will power.



Santhwanam of Heaven



Nusaifa



Santhwanam is heaven to me
Santhwanam is the true mother
Taking care of angelic children
Santhwanam is my comforting friend
When my eyes are filled with tears of sorrow.

Santhwanam is a baby cot for my child
Beloved, to sleep listening to a lullaby
Santhwanam is a golden lamp for me
That shines on with the grace of God.

Santhwanam is a golden house for me
In which I can sleep with calm and peace.
Santhwanam is an ever shining lamp for me
Wherein the memories of Memma are alive.

Santhwanam is the honey dew
That kisses the rose blossoms
O' World, I do not know how to sing
The glories of Santhwanam, our heaven.



My Annie Amma

Aksa M. Jose



My father who used to call me a long 'Ponnu', is no more. I didn't know about his death. I am not sure whether Amma knew about it either. I have memories of my father in my mind. What comes to mind is the father who drinks and unconsciously beat my mother and use bad language. Once he used to come home after work bringing 'halva' and other sweets. But it all had changed. My poor mother had suffered a lot. Many

things happened and we happened to be in orphanages. Mother sometimes comes to see me.

Today I have peace and happiness in my present home, Santhwanam.



Razia

The loving consolation

As the sea becomes calm
Under the blue sky
My mind is calm in my house Santhwanam.
The Santhwanam that threw light
Into the darkened life of mine
The Santhwanam that wiped off
The tears that flowed out of my eyes.
The santhwanam that set straight
My feet that had gone weary.
The Santhwanam that embraced and kissed
My child, my only consolation.
The Santhwanam that put colours
Into my mind frustrated with sorrow
The Santhwanam that unfurled smiling days
Upon my face laden with sorrow.
In the house called Santhwanam
A mother had awaited me
With a smiling face of love
My life ahead and that of my little one
Is this mother's mercy and love.

I Love my father betterbut.....



Ms. Mohija M. Mohan

After my father's death I came to know what hunger is. Since we had no house of our own we were staying with relatives for the last 12 years. Even now I am going through mental strain and difficulties but I live making them agreeable and go ahead.

I wish if I will have another birth I would definitely like to be born of my own parents and be sister to my brother. Even when I recall my father's face, my eyes are filled with tears. It was a love that we thought would never be separated from us.

Ever since I started, remembering, loved my father the best. I loved my father more than my mother. I had no other world except my father. Born into a good family with a better position as far as finance and comforts of life were concerned, we had a peaceful life. Our father used to fulfill all our needs. He was a good person and a contractor whom the society had held in respect. He had about 45

workers under him. Those days he used to sit at home and drink and never went out for drinking at the cost of his name.

As days passed, the tension of the work and problems of the workers and financial difficulties cropped up. In order to face the financial difficulties he sold 8 cents of land and all our ornaments. Still he was in debt. Then it came to be that for him everything was drinking and his friends.

By and by he started bringing liquor in to the house and started full-time drinking at home. He would not go to the work site and so the works got pending. We lost peace of mind. There was nothing

to pawn. All his workers went their way and my father became mentally very weak. One who had lived a royal life turned out to be in the state of a servant within no time.

My mother had given all her support to my father so that he prospers. But in the course of time my father who had high self esteem deteriorated into a state one doesn't care for anything. He did not cut short his drinking. Then he started fighting every day. He would send us out and sit locked inside. Thus our life became unbearable even at the small age. People started laughing at us. The neighbours and family members gave him a pet name 'kudiyar' (drunkard). Our heart would break hearing that.

Then I used to ask in my mind often, "why were we given such a father?" Due to his alcoholism and chewing betel leaves, he was admitted in Medical College Hospital, Kottayam for physical ailments. What we heard from the doctors was that his disease was not curable and that no medicine would help and that he wouldn't live long. Still I remember the heart-broken cry then.

As he was waiting for his death he wasn't bothered about anything and started drinking again assuming that his wife and children would live somehow. He didn't have to drink much. One day our mother put me

and my younger brother in a friend's house and went to my father's side as his illness had become worse. Even late at night we couldn't see our parents; I fed my younger brother, sang lullabies and put him to sleep. After some time his sister's husband came and asked for the key of the cupboard wherein the white dhotis were kept. Suddenly a vibration of death went through me. I ran to our house and what I saw was that our father was covered with a white cloth. Even today that sight arouses a shiver in me.

The thought that we lost our father for ever made me weak. Now we do not have anyone. Deciding not to live any more I took the kerosene can and while trying to pour it over us, the people ran and caught the kerosene can and scolded me. Whatever they had all told that day as the word of God still reverberates in my heart, 'now it is your duty to look after the mother and the brother there's nobody for them. Don't make them sad. Teach the younger brother and make him big.' Even today I have not refrained from doing so.

After my father's death I came to know what hunger is. Since we had no house of our own we were staying with relatives for the last 12 years. Even now I am going through mental strain and difficulties but I

live making them agreeable and go ahead.

I have completed my post graduation and my brother is doing +2. The meaning of Santhwanam is made meaningful in the loving Amma who has been wiping off the tears of many, seeing this my heart whispered to me this is the abode of God and He let me also in to be under the shade of Santhwanam. I am enjoying the love and care of this mother every minute. Those whom God loves, He will send to this Earth and they are the ones who wipe off the tears of the heart-broken. My Annie Amma is such a person who is filled with broad-mindedness and divinity.

It is alcohol that took our father away from us. For the grace of making me a part of Santhwanam, I thank God with gratitude. The precious life that He has given us, let us utilize for wiping off the tears of thousands....

*"The Lord
upholds all who fall,
and raises up
all who are
bowed down"*

(Psalm 145:14)



The Consoling Touch of God



Sebastian D. Kunnel

God is only One. All human beings are His children and therefore we are brothers and sisters to one another. Not only that, the whole creation should show forth the divine light and maintain the equilibrium of Nature. It is so easy to say! But in reality we see many different faces bearing the brunt of negatives around us.

If we say that whatever is happening today in the world is bestiality, it wouldn't be true. We cannot say that animals are consciously doing wrong but they behave according to the intuition of their organic body composition. Whereas, in the case of man, the wrong doings are connected to the influence of Satan.

Humanity is basically lenient to evil. How strong the poisonous

seeds sown by the evil forces in human minds grow! Yet, the words of goodness is sown wherever there is the presence of God. Amidst swiping and assaults; in the valley of poverty and tears, it turns to be the comforting touch of God!

*Those who work along
with the hands that do
good, they work with
God himself.*

It is such a comforting touch that one receives in Santhwanam. I don't have any doubt that the source of every goodness is God. So long as the hands that get involved and continue in the service of destitute women and children, they work as the hands of God. Those who try to increase the quantity of goodness and work to lessen the quantity of evil in the world are actually the presence in the God's areas of work.

May God consistently bless Annie Babu who is running an institution for the destitute women and children purely depending on God and with the support of good souls. Her husband Babu and members of her family deserve to be congratulated.

Those who work along with the hands that do good, they work with God himself. All the people who do different services and help Santhwanam, can be proud of the fact that they are working as a part of goodness. The mothers over there and the children who radiate the peace of God through their smiles and the happy disposition they carry about, prove that God's consoling touch can reach beyond all sufferings.

May God render Santhwanam more strength to help many more people to receive God's caress and get the feather touch!.

Strings of intoxication

Monisha K.M.

Have the eyes of man become blurred?
Has darkness spread in the mind of man?
Wherever I look at I see just one thing
Assault, terrorism and racialism

I see the woman sinking into blood
I see the walls of love being disheveled
I see fights on religion, race and colour
I've got fed up with such sights
I wonder when will it all end!

O' Intoxication of drinks, you remember
Admitting your inability to differentiate
Between who's the mother or sister?
You are the messenger of death.

Was it the result of your sin
That I have to suffer so much?
Why do you do such cruelty?
I'm fed up with the cruelty of intoxication

You transform a man into an animal
When will I see your end, I wait for?

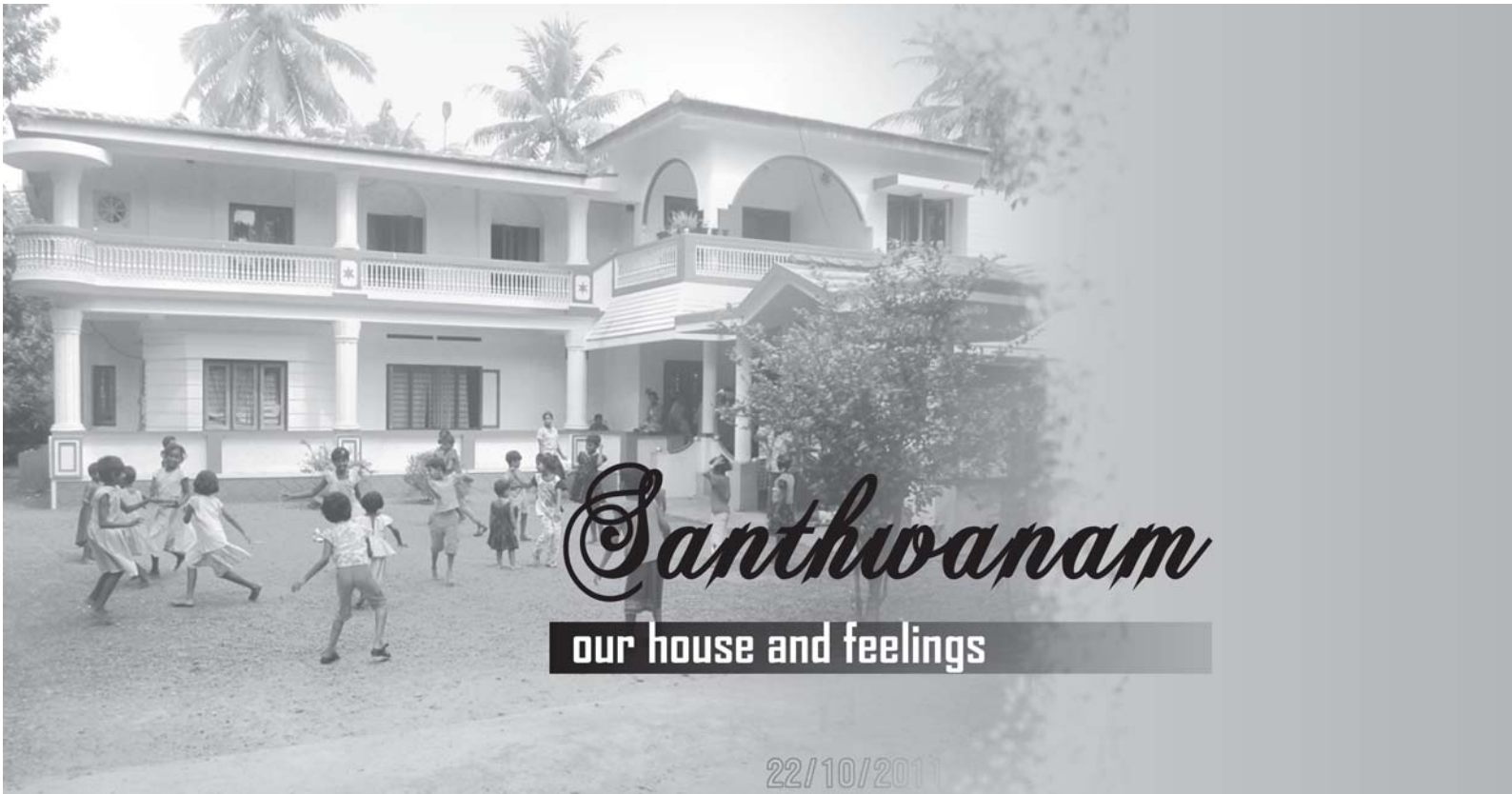


AMMA

The mother who sings
The mother who befriends.
Singing and making friends !
Life itself is Amma
My life is Amma
What a good mother !
Beautiful mother
My own mother
My good mother !



Anaswara



Bibin Ottakkunnel OSH

The holy and innocent devotion before God the Father is, coming to help the poor and the widows in their sufferings.

Santhwanam is the house which looms my Christ experience and dreams of service in the path of my life as a priest. The priest in me who had stepped into Santhwanam the first time with a feeling of strangeness, sees it as my own family today. It is God's gift for supplicating my life and dreams to priesthood, for the mother whom I had left behind, I have a number of mothers here. In the place of brothers and sisters I have left behind, here I receive the love and care from a number of sisters and children.

In my steps ahead aiming to find God, the family Santhwanam

held my hand and led me to the realities of God's love and care through real life situations. The lives of all those who live in Santhwanam, those who have come and gone and Annie Amma are proofs of the existence of God. It induced me to think on life and muse over it.

In my first meeting with the children of Santhwanam they shared their views on priesthood that set me think deeply.

Priest:

1. Is the representative of God
2. Who has taken service as the motto of life
3. A person of prayer
4. One who loves the poor and the orphans more

In between learning the Scripture and reading the Scripture I read the verse of apostle James: If one thinks of himself as a devotee of God, and lives cheating the heart and without controlling

the tongue, his devotion is worthless. The holy and innocent devotion before God the Father is, coming to help the poor and the widows in their sufferings. Keep one self chaste without getting blemished (Ja 1:27) We can see that both Moses and the prophets give stress to the same idea. The special consideration of Jesus towards the neglected and the perfectness of the love of Jesus were the reminders that inspired us.

My knowledge is that priesthood is the sharing of the motherhood and fatherhood of God the Father. I received this awareness through the playful laughter of the children of Santhwanam. Firm belief in the reliance to God and realities of the real life are the guiding light that we receive from Santhwanam. Submitting everyone in the care of God and supplicating all to the resulting transformation of God's blessings.

When I was Alone



Sruthy

As far as I remember, I have only my mother. I saw my father when I was 10 years old. I don't know the reason for their separation. Afterwards I saw him twice – when I was in Class 10 and at the time of marriage.

My marriage took place when I was 16. I didn't like it at all but I had to agree before the threats of my mother. It was before my +2 exams. I cried to make it after the exams but nobody agreed. They had told that they would teach me. But they did not. What my alcoholic husband did was making and selling Toddy. The third day itself he illtreated me accusing that the bathroom I cleaned was not clean enough. After I had the first child, he assaulted me demanding money

again. That day he burnt me with zinc rod and soldering core. When he gets drunk, he becomes very cruel and troubles me a lot.

When I turned 21 I had already become the mother of his two children. I got fed up with his troubles and went back home. There, the attitude of my mother was different; she even tried to sell me. Thinking of putting an end to this life I was on the way to commit suicide. But the railway police took me to Santhwanam. Now I am completing 1 year in Santhwanam.

Here I have peace and happiness. I was sent to a school for work. My daughter is suffering from epilepsy and there's something wrong with the valve of her heart. So I had to leave the job. I want to teach my daughter and I also have to study. Now it is Annie Amma who is looking after all our affairs. My wish is to become a graduate nurse.



**When an obstacle comes your way
stop crying and start trying**



Our Picnic in Photos



The inmates of Santhwanam at Ramakkalmedu



Howling for echo over the hills



Dancing with the wind



SANTHWANASPARSAM



**Philomina James
Podipara**

In the God's own land, Kerala,
Spreading the lap of consolation;
In the fountain of God's consolation
The children of God flow in large numbers.

The shade at the courtyard of Santhwanam
Garlanded with blooming flowers of consolation
Given to be worn as a gift of Santhwanam.

To rest the weary feet that had walked
A long way in the hard path of life
To se down and open the bundles of sorrow
They had been carrying so far as back pack.

Towards a mind that would hold to bosom
And hand that'd embrace and words kind.
Here the faces painted black, slowly
Brighten up with the rays of hope.

Acquiring the strength to go forward,
To trample over the dried up flowers of dream
Tender buds spring up into flower buds,
Blossoming Spring into hopeless minds.

Having taken out the black pictures
From the bundle and burnt them
Gaining strength to start afresh
Into a new life like the phoenix!

The bright faces of children running about
In the warm love of the mother of Santhwanam
Colourful as butterflies attired in happiness
Though discarded like flowers in the field
They are clothed in the likeness of God.

Though like sparrows that do not have a barn
They are sumptuously fed by the hand of God.
May the tree of Santhwanam grow big and strong
Spreading branches to make nests for sparrows!



A Guiding Light



Meenu

When I am writing this at my own home Santhwanam, my mind is at peace. I have peace and joy in the house where I have a mother 'chechies'(elder sisters) and anujathies(younger sisters).

Our mother and we, five children, left our house five years back. We cannot call it a house rather a hell if there is such a one on earth. As far as I remember, from childhood our 'Appa' (father) was a terror to us and our mother. When our father used to come home drunk, we would run and hide behind our mother. Not a single day in his life he would come without getting drunk. Once he is back, he would start bullying us. We used to pray that there shouldn't be nights and cursed the nights! Because of Appa's assaults, we used to spend the night in the next plot. Many days he would throw away our dinner along with the vessels. Those were the days we were fed up with pain and hunger... the mother would embrace the children and cry. Such dreadful experiences would never leave my mind and remain a big wound hard to heal.

Once he had tried to kill our mother pressing the pillow upon her face. Our grandmother told our mother

to escape to some place. Scared of the father Amma set out to secure a job somewhere and our grandmother was the only one for us to rely on. One day, after our Amma had gone away, Appa made us stand in a line and poured kerosene over us. Our Amma got scared and came from her place of work and he assaulted her severely and when he pulled out a boulder to hit on her head, the people around saved her and they called the police and the police came. They told the police that they should either shoot him or put him in jail. When he is drunk he behaves like a mad dog. Sometimes he used to make our mother drink liquor by force. A house in which our grand mother and , we five children were staying together, whatever Appa tells and does to Amma cannot be remembered or shared with anybody.

The youngest sister Nandinikutty had trouble with her kidney and needed medicine every day. One day he came after drinking and threw Nandinikutty away saying that a lot of money had to be spent on her treatment.

The youngest sister Nandinikutty had trouble with her kidney and needed medicine every day. One day he came after drinking and threw Nandinikutty away saying that a lot of money had to be spent on her treatment. We cried aloud. Blood came out of her mouth and nose. Seeing this ourgrand mother got paralysed and she stayed thus for three months and then she passed away leaving us for ever. She was a guardian angel for us.

It was on the day he tried to kill our mother, we had to leave the house. We reached an orphanage in Palai. The mother had helped us. From her we came to know of Santhwanam. I feel very happy and sad to remember the way how we reached Santhwanam. Once we reached here, the feeling that 'we have nobody' has faded away. Our mother cried and told Annie auntie what ever sorrows she had been keeping in her mind so far.

My younger brother is sent to another institution and my mother is working somewhere. My younger sisters are also studying in different institutions. I study very happily. Now I feel that we have some one. Annie Amma is there to look after us and share our sorrows. I tell my mother that Annie Amma loves more than she does. One day some N.S.S. volunteers from Mahatma

Gandhi University came to clean the pool. We also went with them. It was full of mud and after cleaning we had asked permission from Annie Amma to wash in the Meenachil river close by. Usually she never allows us to go to the river, but that day seeing us so much clad in mud, she allowed us to go and take bath standing on the steps. Monisha and Chinchu who knew swimming started swimming in the river. Tempted, I also got in for swimming towards the middle of the river though I didn't know swimming. But my hands and feet got weak and slowly sunk into the depths. Those were the moments I saw death in front of my eyes and the very moment I thought everything is going to end, someone had pulled upon my hair and led me towards the shore. All were standing transfixed on the shore in fear. Then I came to know that it was my Annie Amma who pulled me into life. Whenever I think of that fearful incident I thank God and Annie Amma.

I want to study, get a job and make a house and we would stay with our mother in that house, from where nobody would turn us out. This is the greatest desire in my life. With the good hope that Annie Amma would be with us as a guiding light in our promising life, we would live ahead.



The greatest man in history was named

Jesus

He had no servants, yet they called Him master.

He had no degree, yet they called Him Teacher

He had no medicine, yet they called him healer

He had no army, yet kings feared him.

He won no, military battles, yet He conquered the world.

He committed no crime, yet they crucified Him.

He was buried in a tomb, yet He lives today!

*We are one drop
Together we are
an ocean*



MY MEMORIES



Since my daughter is in Santhwanam I come every year to celebrate my Onam here. When I think of an Onam day of years back, I shudder even now. My husband was an alcohol and drug addict. If he was not given money for drinking, he threw away the food along with the cooking vessels. Either I or our son should go to the neighbouring houses to ask for loans. He wouldn't go because they wouldn't give him. It was my duty to run the house. If the neighbours gave some old clothes, he would throw into the fire. I had hoped to wear a new dress. Our neighbours used to give food to our hungry children in secret. My husband was simply sitting at home. If at all he had gone for some work, it would be a nightmare for us thinking what would happen in the night as he would surely drink off the money and would come home in a fiendish state. I lived on stitching

clothes and the neighbours used to give me their stitching. Once when he had no money to drink, he sold the sewing machine. What was left, was only the vessels. One day he sold that also. One day he threw out the rice in the aluminum pot and sold that also. At last there was just a vessel for keeping drinking water and that also he sold. When there was nothing to sell, he asked me to sell 'ganja' but I refused. So he started beating me and troubling me like burning me with cigarette butts, beating me with cable wire, hitting on my head with his fist, and this became a regular programme. Then we totally stopped buying anything as there was no vessel to cook. He starved me and our children for 3 days. Our debts to the neighbours increased. He told me to bring money for him even if I had to sell myself. That day I decided to leave the house. It was the neighbours who took us to Annie

auntie. My husband was not ready to under go treatment for addiction. Now it is his parents who have to putup his pranks. Even they are filing cases against him. Now I have started a tailoring shop. I wish to make a house, bring my children back from the two orphanages and live together. But my daughter prefers to stay with Annie auntie. Wherever I am, I come to Santhwanam to celebrate my Onam happily.

Bindu

***“Do good to those
who need it, never
tell your neighbour
to wait till tomorrow
if you can
help him now.”***

(Sir 4:1-3)

Will I ever Get back my Achachi?



Saranya Chandran

We were staying in a small wooden house at Kavanattinkara in a plot given by our mother's people. Our family consists of Achachi, Amma, my younger brother and I. Achachi would go for any work and he did it well. When he returns in the evening, though he would have a little alcohol, he would have either biscuits or rusks for me and my brother. We would anxiously wait for his return to get what he brings. But the quantity of his drinking increased and the atmosphere of the house changed so suddenly. In the evenings, instead of the food packets we had expected, he started bringing liquor bottles. The staggering steps and the short temperament was a new experience for us. Then it became a routine sight. There was no money to buy even rice. By the time he had forgotten about the household

expenses and responsibilities as he had become an addict to alcohol.

Because our mother didn't want us to starve, she started going for work. But there also Achachi became a villain as he started drinking by selling the rice mother had bought. For no reason he started assaulting, first our mother and then, us and our house which was a heaven became a hell.

I am sure that no other institution would ever have suffered so much for a family like this.

Once when his assaults reached the peak point, the neighbours intervened and he turned against them. He wanted money for drinking and he was ready to get it at any cost. So he started stealing things from the neighbourhood and drink earning a pet name 'the thief'. We reached a point when we could not continue to live there. It was when we were at our wits end that our mother approached Annie auntie. Annie

auntie sent our Achachi to a de-addiction centre for treatment and afterwards to attend a retreat for alcoholics. Though it gave us new hopes, we couldn't go back to our house. Annie auntie arranged a house of one of her relatives and she herself got admission for us in the school at Cherpunkal. Besides she arranged a work for our Achachi also. We felt happy and confident but it was short lived. Within one month he became the old self, drinking, abusing and beating and the peace was totally shattered.

One day he stole one sack of dried pepper from the very house we were staying and with that we were out again. We had to change 5 houses within that one year. We couldn't stay even for one month in a house and the troubles with Achachi became unbearable.

Annie auntie put my brother in an institution for boys and kept me in Santhwanam and sent my mother for work in a house. Even then the troubles we had with him, was not lessened. He used to come to Santhwanam and abuse and the police would come and take him away. I was afraid even to go to school because my father would

linger somewhere on the way side, beat me and take me by force in an auto. Then Annie auntie would bring me back with the help of the police. Many times I had escaped thus. He would come to the school and abuse the teacher. Then Annie auntie had to send someone with me.

When we were living together, Achachi used to make my younger brother also drink even as he was 7 years old. From 10 years he would drink from the father's liquor bottles and fill it up with water. So we could not guide him to the straight line. Till now he has been sent to many institutions all over Kerala including two juvenile homes. Wherever he is, he would create trouble and go out of it. Achachi's assaults and the bad character of my brother made my mother mentally weak but Annie auntie was always there with strong support. When Achachi became a big trouble at Santhwanam and the place where my mother worked, many times the police had to be called in. Then he came to Santhwanam and was a big headache. He did not even bother about the court order that he shouldn't enter Santhwanam. I am sure that no other institution would ever have suffered so much for a family like this. Once while returning from school, I saw a bad scene, the local people were leading Achachi to the police station with a load of rubber sheets he had stolen. Nobody came to know that I was his daughter. I hid my face with

the school bag. I cannot forget that scene, in fact no daughter can.

Auntie did her level best to see that I never failed in life. After completing my +2, I was sent to a Food Craft institution for a course on Front Office Management. Today I am working in a good institution. Santhwanam gave me the confidence. If there is light in my life now, I am indebted for the same to my Annie auntie and Santhwanam. Every single happiness in my life, is a loving gift from my Annie auntie.

*If you can't fly
then run
if you can't run
then walk
If you can't walk
then crawl
Whatever you do
you have to keep moving
forward*

(Martin Luther King)



We study here

1. Pallikkoodam, Kalathipady, Kottayam
Thanks to Mrs. Mary Roy.
2. Sophia International Public School, Manganam
Thanks to-
Shri. Varkey Abraham
3. Govt. Model school, Kottayam
4. B.C.M. College, Kottayam
5. Press Club, Kottayam
6. K.E. College, Mannanam
7. St. Maecellina's, Nattassery, Kottayam
8. St. Mary's Kudamaloar
9. St. Mary's, Athirampuzha
10. Medical College Higher Secondary Arpookara
11. Govt. L.P.S. Mudiyoorkara
12. St. Gregorios U.P.S., Mannarkunnu.
13. Udupi Dhanwantari College of Nursing



The Bridal Chamber without the Bridegroom!



That day was my wedding day! I set out clad in the sari and blouse and 6 sovereigns of gold ornaments that the nuns had bought for me, along with two sisters and two elder ladies who were working with me. It was past the time of wedding but my bridegroom had not turned up! Some guests had come. They went and brought him to the church. His hands were shivering at the time of the wedding. After the wedding and the feast, I reached my husband's house and got in putting the right

foot first as was the custom. After reaching the house, he had gone to the place where the feast was held and he did not return that day. I didn't know where he was. Waiting and waiting for the groom, I fell asleep. When I woke up in the morning I saw my groom sleeping on the veranda.

His sister said that he never comes home. He gets drunk and sleeps somewhere, Preethi has to change all these habits.

On the second day, though drunk, he was at home. But there was a fight between the father who had taken drug and the son who was drunk. I called the nun and asked her to take me back as I was so much scared. The sister told me that it was because I had never lived in a home...everywhere fathers are like that and everything will change... I thought that it would be so.

On the third day also there was a fight between the two about spending the dowry of one lakh

rupees and gold of six sovereigns given on the day of betrothal. Then my husband took the 50,000 rupees I had in the bank saved till that day. In the commotion he pushed me into the fire while I was cooking porridge. The mark of burning on the hand and in the mind has not disappeared as yet. The neighbours intervened and one of them said that they cannot let it go thus and if continued so, he would file a case against him.

After that, when ever there were fights between them I would escape to the nearby rubber plantation. One day the father, intoxicated with 'ganja' came after me and I had to run to the neighbouring house from where I called the nun. She told that it was a marriage done before a group of people and that it would cause shame to them also. I was not brought up in a house and thought it best not to call the sister ever after.

When the fights aggravated the neighbours called the police and the police told us to change the house that day itself. The parents also agreed and we did so. He had to go to the police station every day and sign. For some time he did not trouble me for fear of the police.

After one week he started again. In the meanwhile I got pregnant also. He wouldn't buy anything and I was starving. Twice he poured kerosene over my head and both the times I had escaped. But when he did it on the third time, I did not run. I wonder why, but he did not burn me. I got tired of starving and then I set out in search of my original mother. I found her but she was not ready to accept me.

My house was in Thrissur district. As long as I remember, a woman called Remani had brought me up. My mother never liked girls. I have heard that when a girl child was born to her brother, they were also abandoned.

Remani, I had called 'Memma'. She took care of me well. But when she was to be married I was sent into a convent. After that she never came to see me. I was lazy and not good at studies and so I stayed there doing the household work there. After many years I was brought to the convent in Kottayam.

May be because I got fed up with the life in the convent so long that I could not stand the scolding of the sister any more. When there

were more workers, the overall charge was upon me. I had to get the scold even for the mistakes of others also. Once when I was scolded, I told them to send me to another convent. But they took me to Santhwanam. After the counselling, I was sent to a convent in Palai as per my wish. My marriage took place there. The marriage was arranged quickly within one week without informing Annie auntie or the convent where I had been staying before.

While we were in the rented house, the owner of the house told my husband that he shouldn't assault me in his house. Then we found another house. It was also a secluded house. There also he continued the same.

That day, labor pain started about 2 in the after noon. I phoned up my husband. He was sitting with his friends and drinking. He told me to 'bear it up'. I waited till 9 pm. I couldn't stand any more and somehow I reached the nearby house. They took me to the district hospital. I myself went into the hospital. The doctor told that the child was sunk in motion and needed an immediate operation. Nobody was there but when the doctor called my husband came and signed up the papers.

The child was kept in the I.C.U. For three days from the day of delivery but nobody turned up. After that his sister came. Only after

15 days it was found that there was some problem with the heart of the child and an operation was needed. With this, my husband left us. Then he started saying that the child was not his at all.

When his cruelties increased and I could stand it no longer, I came to Santhwanam. Even though Annie auntie called my husband many times, he never turned up. What was the use of calling the mother-in-law who was mentally sick and the drug addict father?

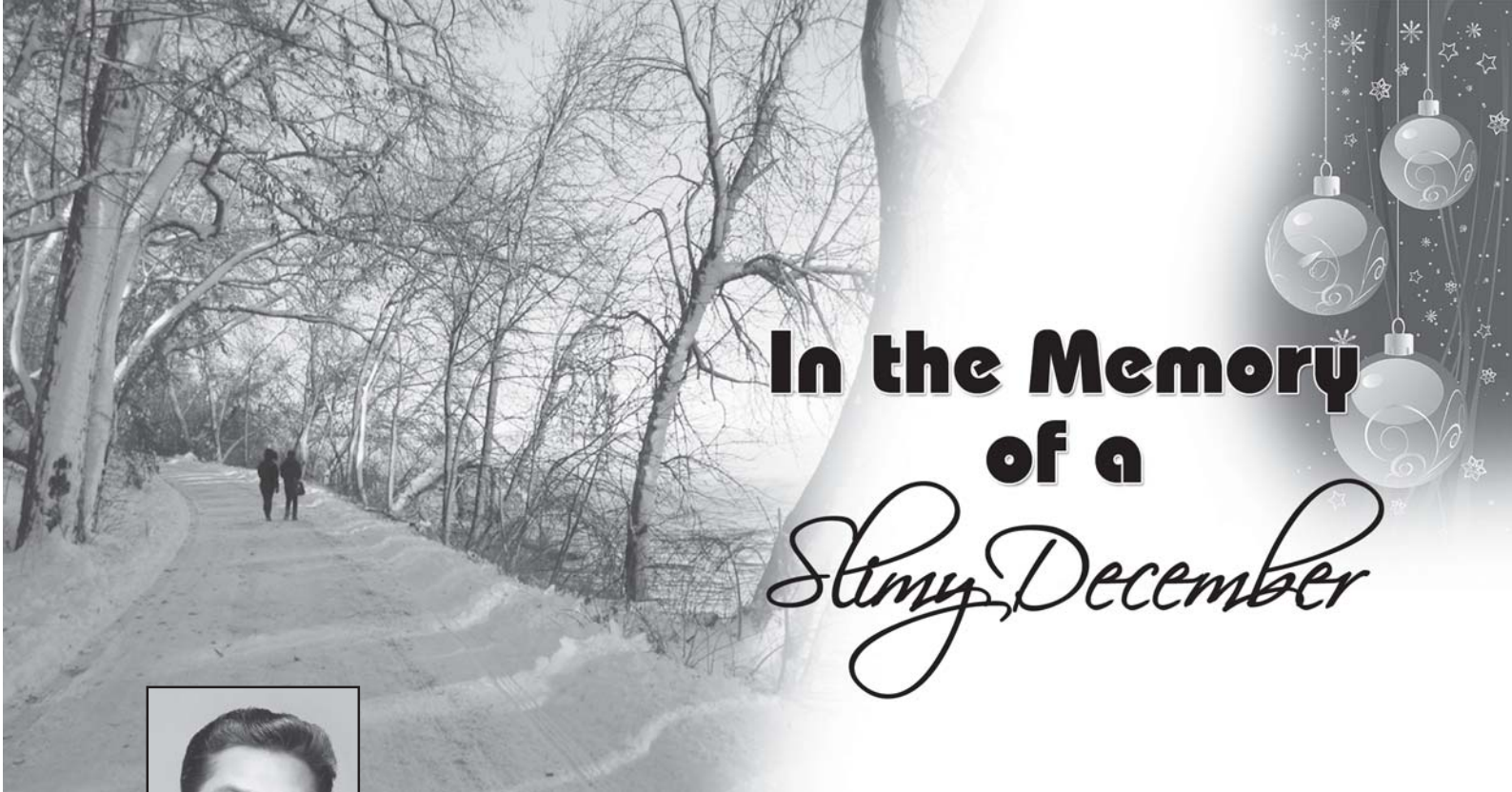
After a long time I slept peacefully. Today I live in my home Santhwanam for my child.

I am happy with everything here. Now my child is 6 months and I have named her Aleena. The doctor told us that when she completes one year the operation should be done. Now I don't worry about any of this because, am I not in Santhwanam?

Preethi



*"My frame was not
hidden from you, when
I was made in secret,
and skillfully wrought
in the
lowest parts of the
earth"
(Psalm 139:15)*



In the Memory of a *Stimpy December*



Rajesh Kannankara
Cinema Director

It was on a cold December night that I reached this shore of love. Later on many times I had felt that it was a destiny. It was my friend and singer Najim Arshad who was the reason behind it. He told me that he had a music programme at Kottayam, in the native place of Rajeshettan and he asked me whether I would like to go with him and thus I joined him. But it was not for attending the programme that I went, but it was because of the selfish motive, taking into consideration that I will not have to drive all the way home alone. When we reached Kottayam only he told me that his programme was in an orphanage near Medical College and that if I too went with him, they would be happier and he would inform them accordingly. I agreed only reluctantly because I was in a bad mental condition.

I was disturbed in mind because in the discussion on a film, I had refused to change the story as per the whims of the star in the film and that I had to break off from it and the truth that I may have to abandon the project itself scared me. Based on this I had been thinking that I was the most unlucky man on earth but comparing to the troubles and hardships of the orphaned children here made me consider myself as

the luckiest person on earth! I learned to postpone my busy schedule in order to be always with them as an elder brother and a friend. What I understood is that, here, they have everyone. Annie auntie is a person who loves the children of Santhwanam though she had not given birth to them and there is the solid support of Babu Chettan also.

When I told that my visit to this shore of Santhwanam was a coincidence, is proved a reality when I realize that the story of my new film 'Thakkali' is based on the outdoor sceneries of Santhwanam. I have to write a lot more about them but when they have to write more, my attempt would become futile.

I wished to scribble a few words in this Souvenir when in the course of time I got the realization that these people are someone of my own. You can also see the bitter experiences of these children in the pages of this book. I also read their words becoming unsteady between the lines in the story of their lives.

One thing is there. It may not be possible for just one person to help all but all can help many. Wishing the very best of all to all my dear sisters, children of Santhwanam and their loving Annie Amma.

Your own Rajesh

Kannankara.



Jwala is the fire that Santhwanam kindled against alcoholism and drug addiction.

The tears of a group of women and children who were subjected to the atrocities of the head of the family, set the flame of 'Jwala' ablaze. In most of the cases of the hapless and the helpless women and children resorting to Santhwanam, the villain is Liquor and other things causing intoxication. It is only 8 years since Santhwanam started. Out of the 1700 cases that came to Santhwanam, 85% of the 1600 cases that came to Santhwanam were either wives and children or mothers of addict.

The great challenge we face today is that the future generation which is to lead our society forward, live a life of intoxication, having lost the sense of social awareness and social responsibilities. While the spirit and life of the best part of our society, comprising the youth and the teens are being frozen by the intake of alcohol, the policy of the government, aiming at just the income by letting the people get drunk, is abominable and cruel.

Many do not come to know what cruelties and persecutions are being enacted within the four walls of the house against women and children and their suffering goes unnoticed.

What we normally do in Santhwanam is to call the husbands in such cases, give them counselling, send them for de-addiction programmes, retreats, police intervention, etc. and try to reunite the family. Excepting in a few cases, most of the husbands become the same old person or even worse within six months. I am working in this field for the last 14 years. Within this period I have seen the suicides of two men who had two children each. There are many women who go into depression due to the alcoholism and persecution of the husbands. The above two families had come before me and I was the person who reunited them. In two other cases I had reunited and sent them back after counselling and treatment. Though they had started to live a better life, before long it became worse and the women and children again came to Santhwanam. One of them even attempted to sell his wife. In that situation I made the women live separately. After that they refused to go back to the husbands. But after some years their husbands committed suicide. These incidents disturbed my mind a lot.

Once a person is addicted to alcohol, it is very difficult for him to escape from it because the brain cells that are damaged due to alcoholism are not rebuilt. Shattered physically, spiritually, socially and

financially, some of them wander about like wanton spirits. Some had left their homes and resorted to hospital verandas and in shop fronts, ready to go to any extent to get money for drinking. They abuse the people around, getting beaten in turn and live like butts of ridicule.

It was at this juncture that we thought of conducting an awareness programmes to save at least the new generation from the clutches of alcohol.

In the Jwala of 2011 students from 10 colleges took part. The C.M.S. College and the Baselios College presented plots against alcohol in the rally.

In Jwala 2013, we collected the response of students at the school-college levels as letters to the Chief Minister in the form of post cards. As regards this, a few Principals told us about the use of alcohol within the campus. If it was done secretly and hidden before, now children have the audacity to do it openly in the class room. They told us how the Principal walked into a classroom where students were drinking, they had the audacity to pull out a chair, fill a gas and offer it to the Principal on seeing him coming into the class. Another principal told about the students who had come prepared to go for a tour with unsteady steps and about those who bring liquor in water bottles and drink.

We distributed about 10 lakhs of cards through 35 volunteers in schools and colleges throughout Kerala. Some of them were sent to the C.M. direct from the institutions by courier last year itself. Many letters written by children shocked us.

In spite of the post cards being open letters, children wrote openly about the cruelties and suffering they undergo at homes because the head of the family was alcoholic. Our minds felt frozen when some of them wrote about incidents where the father couldn't identify the daughter born in his own blood. Many letters were full of anger and hatred they had against the Government that covets the income through alcohol. **We had held an exhibition of these letters before submitting to the C.M.**

We set out to the Secretariat at Trivandrum in two buses. We handed over 4 lakhs of letters direct to the C.M. He accepted the letters as the first complaint after the inauguration of the new building made exclusively for the C.M. to receive complaints directly from the public. The children of Santhwanam did the lighting ceremony of the function along with the Chief Minister.

Through the resolution given by Santhwanam, we demanded two things:

1. An alcohol-free Kerala
2. To include lessons against alcoholism and drug addiction in schools from 4 to 10.

The C.M remarked that introducing lessons of awareness in schools against alcoholism was a new idea and he promised us that he would discuss about it and take steps for implementation of the same. He added that the government do not see alcohol as a source of income because while the government collects 3,000 crores of rupees through alcohol, it has to spend 6,000 crores on treatment and accident claim. He praised the works of Santhwanam

Jwala is a reminder.....

It reminds that while the authorities close their eyes against injustice, the feelings of people would flare up.....

The little flickers that we kindle here are to shoot into flames.....

Annie Babu.

**IT IS NOT ONLY WHAT WE DO BUT ALSO
WHAT WE
DONOT DO, FOR WHICH WE
ARE ACCOUNTABLE-**

Moliere



JWALA - 2013

Pooja

LIFE is a precious pearl given to us from heaven
We shouldn't be fools to waste it in liquor bottles.
Should we rear up drunkards to fill in the coffers?
Should we support the beverages to safeguard the name of Kerala?
Don't you hear the laments of those lives torn by liquor bottles?

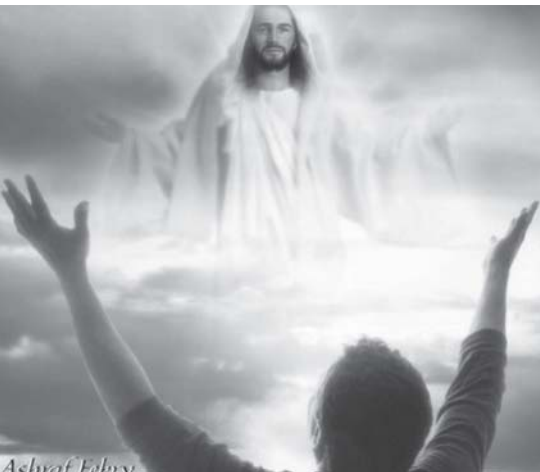
O' the Government of Kerala, why do you bring up a generation
Feeding them with liquor that does not recognize mothers or sisters?
Haven't you seen the bulging bellies beneath petticoats?

The life that was torn in a running vehicle in the centre of the city
Termed as 'destiny' or the "Age of *Kali*" and those who keep hands on head
You can find the villain, the liquor, if you dig out the root primary.

Whether it's life or death, Liquor is what we rely upon
Watching the pranks of drunkards one feels animals are better
What they do is from the animal nature unlike the human beings!

Haven't you seen the mother who fled in fear of the son whom she begot?
Haven't you got fed up with the liquor-induced hair dance of the drunkards?
Haven't you got fed up with collecting tax out of life, self-esteem and tears?
Can't you stop yet the liquor to safeguard the name of the native land, 'Kerala'?





Alphonsa

I was born in a remote village in the district of Kannur, Kerala, in the year 1988. My father was an alcohol and drug addict. From childhood he had disclaimed me alleging that they got me from a river and that I was not their child. This pain persisted in me and grew up along with me turning to hatred. When I reached 10th standard, one day I felt pain on my right thigh and it spread throughout the limb and up to the hip and I started limping. They gave me ayurvedic treatment with medicine and massage. But the pain kept on increasing and I had to stop my studies midway. After 9 years of ayurvedic treatment I was taken to Pariyaram Medical College at Kannur. There the doctors informed that the bones are deteriorating and that an immediate surgery was needed. But my people did not have the means to treat me. So I stayed back at home doing household works with difficulty, fighting against the severe pain.

We were 8 siblings. All were married except I and my elder brother. All my people started calling me 'ashreekaram' (an omen of bad

luck). They told me that it was because of me that my brother remained a bachelor even at a late age. So they took me to an institution at Alappuzha. There also I had a difficult life with a heavy work load and free service, I felt like cursing God himself for having created me for such a life – an unwanted burden to all!

From there I was sent to another institution at Kottayam where the work load was heavier and treatment harsher. There I stayed about one year. The pain increased and it became worse and unbearable. I was taking homeo medicine for pain relief. Since it was a retreat centre I could no longer continue there as I could not put a foot down on the floor. The greatest pain was that nobody from my house had turned up all these six years I was discarded.

They took me to Santhwanam. I related my story of life from childhood to Annie Auntie, the Director of Santhwanam. In her I found God himself who is love itself. Here at last I found my home, my own mother and my siblings. I get all the love, care and attention that were kept away from my life so far. I have never seen such a sacrificing love even in holy people who are supposed to represent God.

Annie Auntie consulted the doctors about my limb and they

advised me an immediate operation for replacing the hip bones. I was advised to use a stick for walking that the pain would be less and would stop the bones from cracking. A good amount of money was needed for the operations. Even though I approached the institutions I had served, they did not give any help at all. Annie Amma did all arrangements for my treatment. She took me to the Medical College, Kottayam. The doctors told that the bones have degenerated and an immediate surgery was needed to rectify the damage. The amount required for the surgery was about 1,36,000. Amma managed to arrange the money, where and how, she and only God knows. I was admitted for the surgery on June 9 and the surgery was done on 18 with the help of God and the prayers of many. I got discharged on 28.

Though a desolate, discarded and desperate person I was, now I enjoy the warmth of love and care of my Amma, for whom I have never come across a substitute in my life. After my surgery I live a life without the pain that has been haunting my life so long! I fold my hands in prayer before God that He may grant a healthy and long life to Annie Amma that she would help a number of helpless and hapless beings like me!

Transformation

MAY 18 WAS THE DAY MY LIFE WAS SHATTERED. In those days I used to go to a nearby Retreat Centre as a volunteer. It was 4 O' clock and I had gone for a cup of tea. The cook, Mr. James was already there in the kitchen. A big frying pan full of oil was being heated up by the side of the gas cylinder. All of a sudden there was a fire and flames shot up. Apparently the cylinder was leaking as we could guess from the smell of gas. Mr. James sensed it but instead of turning the cylinder off, he turned it open and was out of the kitchen. I didn't know what to do in such a situation as we did not have cooking gas at home. I managed to reach the door but could not run out. I suffered 25% burns.

I was admitted in a private hospital nearby. From there I was sent to a well known hospital in

Thiruvalla, all swatted in bandages. There I was in the I.C.U. for 40 days! The doctor who was treating me went on leave for 10 days after entrusting me to the care of another doctor. The doctor who had treated me first used to dress up my wounds every day. But the new doctor dressed the wounds only three times in the ten days he was



Susan when she reached Santhwanam

in charge. I told the doctor that the doctor who had treated me first used to do so every day. But the doctor's reply was that it needed at least four persons to clean up the wounds and put on fresh dressings. After 10 days the first doctor returned and he opened up the bandages and was shocked to see the wounds inflamed very badly. In fact, it looked like an overripe jackfruit!

He told me that my fingers had to be amputated. I did not agree to that. But I was taken to the

Operation Theatre where four of my fingers and my nose were cut off. I was discharged after two months. From there I was taken to the Mundakayam Medical Trust Hospital where I was admitted till the wounds were completely cured.

I returned home. On reaching home, I was shocked when looked into the mirror and saw my face so distorted and disfigured. I stayed at home for about two and half years without any contact with the world outside. I felt very sad and started hating my life because whenever I got out of the house, people stared



Susan after Microvascular Surgery

at me and turned their faces away in fear. I got fed up with my life and asked God many times why I was given such a dreadful life. I wished to die. But my good God did not allow me to end my life.



Susan, before the burning over

God lifted me up from the dark abyss I had fallen into and gave me an independent life just as I wished. From Santhwanam I gained a second birth and I stepped out into the world once again, without flinching or feeling ashamed. Now I have a small job to keep my life going and I feel good and confident.

I was in such a state that I could not do any work with the fingers cut off. It was in such a state with all my dreams shattered and totally depressed, I reached Santhwanam. There I could restart my life. Annie Auntie told me to pray for all those who had net with accidents in the world. After three-four months it was Annie Auntie who took me to Amrutha Hospital, Ernakulam. There they told us that the shape of my face can be repaired through micro-vascular surgery. For that they would insert a balloon into the gut and fill it up with saline on alternate days. That

balloon itself cost Rs.20,000 at that time. Also we had to remit two lakhs of rupees for the operation. For life-saving operations they would give concession in the fee but since this came under cosmetic surgery, we couldn't avail of that. Without thinking about the cost or anything Auntie booked an appointment for the next month. Auntie comforted me by saying that God is there and He will take care of it.

We tried to raise some money for this cause but it came only up to 30,000. Miraculously God did send a person with the required amount of money for the operation. He himself remitted the whole amount for the operation. He told us only one thing that he had no children and that we should pray to God for granting him a child. Every day the children of Santhwanam prayed for him. The operation was done in six sections. After one operation, the next one would be after one or two months' gap. The very next day after the 6th surgery, a child was born to my benefactor. Every year they

come to Santhwanam with the child and give gifts to Santhwanam and the children therein.

Today I am 34 years old. The accident occurred when I was 23. God lifted me up from the dark abyss of life and gave me an independent life as I had wished. From Santhwanam I gained a second birth and I started off into the world without flinching or feeling ashamed. Now as I have a small job to keep my life going I feel good and confident.

While I was in Santhwanam, Memma, (Sr. Michael Thakadiyel MMS) had given me a lot of support and even though she is no more, I feel that she is still with me and her comforting words still ringing in my years. I can remember Memma, Santhwanam and Annie Auntie only with tears of gratitude welling up in the eyes!



Booker Prize winner Arundhathi Roy and her mother Mrs. Mary Roy visits Santhwanam



Holy communion

JWALA 2013



Children of Santhwanam lighting the lamp along with the Chief Minister



Handing over the memorandum



The inaugural address



The CM examining the four lakhs of letters of children against alcoholism

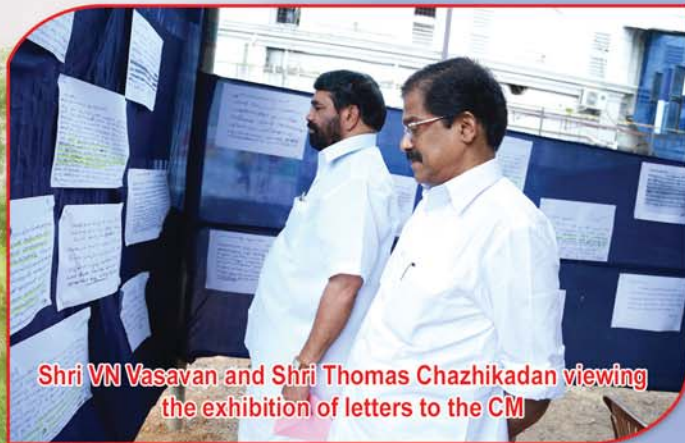


The Jwala meet



Dancing dollies







Listening for lullabies from far off



The Santhwanam crop !



Mothers who completed Job Oriented Training



Seminarians Painting Santhwanam



Honouring Rev. Sr. Michael



Shri. V.M. Sudheeran, KPCC President
handing over the 2011-FLAME to Sr. Michael



Sr. Michael's Birthday Celebration



Jwala Marching on



Rosanna with the inmates
on her marriage day



Rosanna with her husband Siju



Keerthana with the children of
Santhwanam on her marriage



Keerthana and her Husband Shiju



Anitha with the children of Santhwanam
on her marriage



Anitha with her husband Mathews



Children of Santhwanam cleaning the Roadside



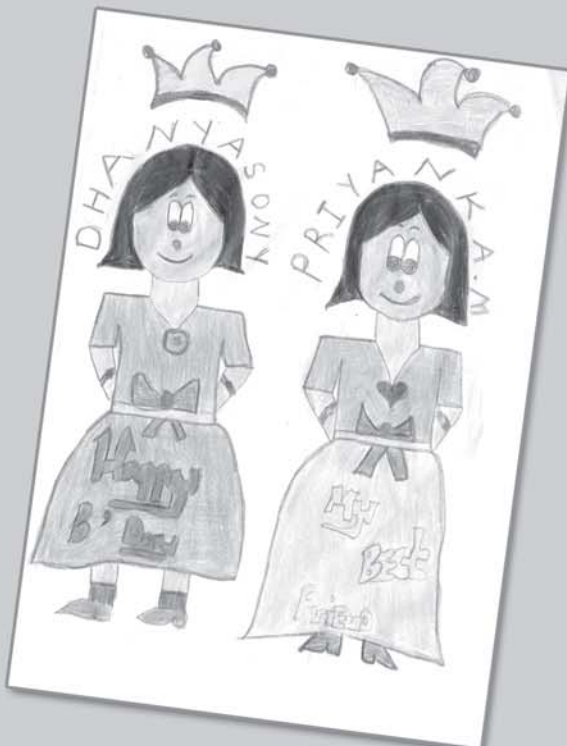
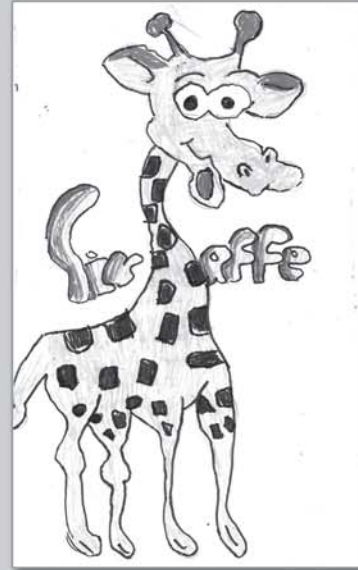
Baptism of Anitha's Baby



Little Drawings



A hand-drawn sketch of Jesus with long hair and a beard, holding a staff and gesturing with his other hand.



In the Hands of God



Acku on his arrival



The 9-month old Acku

*A*cku, the premature baby boy was 1 kg when brought to Santhwanam by the Childline from Medical College, Kottayam. He was put in a bucket full of water. But the unseen hand held him up from drowning. He was just alive and breathing; what one could see was only two bulging eyes! With the help of two feeding mothers and under the full time care of another mother, he started his little life in Santhwanam. But the feeding was not sufficient for the puny little one. The heavenly father, who saw it from above, miraculously sent three bottles of nutrient food through a Keralite family from Australia who did not know anything about the little Acku. They had brought it for their child but when they went back they brought it to Santhwanam. There was the inscription on the bottles, 'For Premature Babies'. The God of Providence who had fed Prophet Elias by sending bread through a crow, did His service here also! Now he is 9 months old and is the pet of all the inmates.


Greatness of Charity!



Gowrikuttyamma



Gowrikuttyamma, was brought to Santhwanam by the C.I of Women Cell and Adv. Sindhu Gopalakrishnan. She is a widow without any children. She received 11 cents of land as share from the family. After her husband's death there was nobody to take care of her. She donated the land to Santhwanam. Santhwanam has divided the property between three inmates of Santhwanam considering the fact that their male children (above 10 years) left in other orphanages as they cannot be accommodated in Santhwanam, an institution for orphaned girl children and women. They would have to be brought back during the holidays and there is no home to accommodate them and so they have to stay with relatives, friends or in temple premises where they will not be proper safety. What is next in front of us is building houses for them.

One share is given to Manju, a widow with three children.

Another part is given to Radhamani, another woman with three children.

The other is given to Afnitha, with five children, abandoned by her alcoholic husband.

Respected Oommen Chandy Sir,

Please read this:

I am a +2 student. In my house there are my father, mother and my younger sister. We are all happy here. When my father comes home after getting drunk, my mother will not be at home as she was a nurse and had to do night duties. My father, drunk and unconscious, he assaults me sexually. I cannot tell this to anybody and I cannot tell it to my mother either because the peace of our home will be at stake. But when he wakes up in the morning he is not conscious of what ever happened the night before. I am pretty sure that he is not aware of what he does. Because in the day time both I and mother will be at home but he never behaves in the wrong way. Then I feel about him as a good father. Sometimes we all go out together. He is very loving and caring on such occasions. He will buy everything I want. Many times I tell him not to drink also.

Sir,

Filling the coppers with the money of liquor and making controversies about it and sitting behind the green flag, playing the fake political drama, hoodwinking the people and wasting their work and time and severing their relationship. Then again wasting crores of rupees for propagandas and conducting awareness programmes against alcoholism. Again, instead of making them a part of the long chain of "swindle", why can't you put a full stop to this policy of alcoholism. "Jai hind."

Respected Sir,

I write this Letter to bring to your notice to the most problematic issue in the society today . This big giant called 'alcohol' is devouring our society today. I hope to get a promise of a remedy to this illness. We, the youth of kerala wish to be free of alcoholism. May be, this vile, vicious cobra may be a panacea for you though it is gulping down the growing youth. May be you are getting good profit but may I ask you, is it right to get the Profit from taking others' lives? Think and act!

Respected Sir,

You own a good personality. If we should also be respectable persons like you, this alcohol should be abolished totally from this earth even!

Respected Chief Minister,

Sir,

I am the wife of a drunkard and the mother of two children. I came to know of him misusing my girls. He burnt the ID card and birth certificates. I shudder of dying when I think of my children. I pray that let others do not have such a life experience as ours.

Abolish Alcohol , save the Land!

There is no need for telling you about the ill effects of alcoholism. All its accounts are under your safe custody. It is from selling alcohol that the government gets the major share of tax. But this money looks like quotation money. The quotation group gets money from direct killing but the Government gets money by killing man inch by inch. The after effects are to be borne by innocent children like me! – Ayisha

Through selling alcohol, drugs and other intoxicating products, the Government coffers may get filled up, but through these some dreams get withered, some relationships are burnt out, there is drought of love and some lives are lost. Believing and hoping that you will be take adequate steps to abolish this vice. Faith, isn't that all! ! !

A few letters to the Chief Minister Against Alcoholism

Respected Sir,

You, who is striving to make Kerala 'free of alcohol', your name will be recorded in the pages of history in golden letters – a different Chief Minister.....

History will remember you as a different Chief Minister!

We are the products of a school under the Government which thinks that selling alcohol is a big source of income. I am thirteen years and my brothers drink alcohol and as far as the government is concerned they are loyal citizens who remit the tax regularly. You should have the ability to abolish the sale of liquor which is destroying the health and future of my brothers.

Respectfully,

Aarathy Ashok

Respected Sir,

All of us know that alcohol is poison. The development that is gained through such poison is not stable. It should not be brought about by exploiting the manpower of the nation. It is alcohol that is turning Kerala, which is termed as 'God's own land' to the land of the devil. Do we need this alcohol? Is it the alcohol that is disintegrating families and the nation that brings in development? If India and Kerala, specially made free of alcohol, development is possible here.....

Save us and the world from
this big devil, alcohol!

Sir, - For the stability and development of the state, you are doing many things. As a person believing in the Democracy, I have admiration and faith in your works. I agree that you and your government have done a lot to make this small piece of land, Kerala as good as to be compared with other developed states in the world. When we consider all these we become more aware of the threat of alcohol that is a hindrance to development. I have strong faith in your sense of justice and that you will do the needful at your end to get rid off this block!

Hoping to get justice,
Tony.

Sir,

Either stop alcohol totally or let not fine those who drive drunk. Akhilesh.

My father, grand father and my uncle – all are drunkards. One day my father came home drunk. Mother gave him food at 12 pm. But he threw the food away and beat my mother. I wanted to kill my father that night. But my mother is a poor soul. He threw away the sewing machine with which my mother stitches clothes. Then he went out of the house and we didn't have anything left to eat that night. My father beat my mother and we didn't have food for three days at a stretch. After three months again he came back and poor mother let him in. But I cannot consider him as my own father.

Respected Umman Chandy Sir,

I also studied in the same school where you had studied (Govt. Boys H.S.S. Puthuppally). Because of my drunkard father, we have no peace of mind. On the day of Onam and other celebrations, he would be some where in the streets fallen drunk. I will have to go and bring him home. He destroyed everything due to drinking. We do not have even a house to live! I become very small in front of my friends and difficult to hold my head high though I passed with 83 % marks for the S.S.L.C. examination.

The people of Kerala seems to have lost awareness of a social life amidst the busy 'Emerging Kerala' and 'Smart City' projects. The increase in number of beverages becomes a big question mark before us. The number of drunkards is increasing. The government responsible to bring up a generation with care and support is promoting alcohol. Why don't the government which is abolishing all unnecessary things, close down the beverages? Due to the carelessness of the government, each family and the society is being disintegrated. Considering our faith in the Chief Minister, we would request you to take necessary steps to abolish liquor.

A few letters to the Chief Minister Against Alcoholism

Respected Chief Minister,
I am the 17-year old son of a drunkard father. Because of the alcoholism of my 'Bappa' (father), I, my 'Umma' (mother) and my siblings suffered a lot. Today we do not have a house to live in. My Umma is now staying in different orphanages. Is our tears necessary to bring about development in the land?

Sir,
Let my mother smile at least once in her life,
let me sleep in her lap!

Ashly

Resp. Oommen Chandy,
Water there is, in the bottle
Which contains 'colour' and 'kick';
Will be unconscious on drinking;
That lures in pests, on drinking;
Disintegrate family and the land;
Arraying the drink and the drinkers,
Kerala has become a haunted house.

Do you want to sell it again?
Letting the eyes, the liver and the ears to perish;
Killing, anger in its peak and row of persecutions;
Wasting the house, the land and destroying,
Why don't we stop selling this 'bottle of poison?'
O' the Leader, be our Saviour
Turn the land into a heaven!
Respectfully,

Jerin M. James

Sir,
There is no need for telling you about the ill effects of alcoholism. All its accounts are under your safe custody. It is from selling alcohol that the government gets the major share of tax. But this money looks like quotation money. The quotation group gets money from direct killing but the Government gets money by killing man inch by inch. The after effects are to be borne by innocent children like me! – Ayisha

Sir,
Through selling alcohol, drugs and other intoxicating products, the Government coffers may get filled up, but through these some dreams get withered, some relationships are burnt out, there is drought of love and some lives are lost. Believing and hoping that you will take adequate steps to abolish this vice. Faith, isn't that all!!

CM Receives 4 Lakh Post Cards

The cards were brought to the city by Santhwanam, a centre for distressed women and children at Kottayam, as part of 'Jwala 2013', an initiative against alcoholism

Express News Service

T'Puram: Post cards bearing heart-rending experiences, all on the ruinous effect of alcoholism in families. They were mostly written by children, and many found it the best way to give vent to their deep frustrations.

In small bundles, the post cards made way to the newly-built visitors' station next to the north gate of Secretariat. Four lakh such cards addressed to him were received by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy himself on Wednesday during the inaugural of the visitors' station.

The cards were brought here by Santhwanam, a centre for distressed women and children at Kottayam, as part of 'Jwala 2013', an initiative against alcoholism.

"No one knows about the sufferings of women and children in families with alcoholic men. The next generation should be free from it," said Annie Babu, managing trustee of Santhwanam.



Chief Minister Oommen Chandy with the representatives of Santhwanam at Secretariat on Wednesday | EXPRESS

wanam.

After submitting the cards, they requested the Chief Minister to include in the school curriculum lessons on the ill-effects of alcoholism from standard 4 to 10.

For the past six years, Santhwanam has been conducting programmes against the use of narcotics, alcohol and abusive substances.

"We visited more than 700 educational institutions from Thiruvananthapuram to Kasargod to distribute the post cards. The children were given enough time to return it and for that we visited the places again," said Pooja Pushpan, a representative of Santhwanam.

Both girls and boys alike wrote about their lives on the cards. From domestic violence to incest, the cards contained shocking incidents happening in families.

Carrying the cards, 77 inmates of Santhwanam travelled all the way to the city from Kottayam to submit them to the Chief Minister.

They comprised women and children from eight states in India; Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Nagaland and Assam.

On receiving the memorandum from the representatives of Santhwanam, Chandy said that it was befitting that the cards were submitted on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanthi, as Mahatma Gandhi himself was a foremost campaigner against alcoholism. "In order to make the state alcohol-free, awareness programmes need to be strengthened," said Chandy.

He handed over the memorandum submitted by the visitors to Chief Secretary E K Bharat Bhushan, who was also present on the occasion. The Chief Secretary said that after holding discussions with the departments concerned, he would prepare a report.

The girls, who accompanied the team, later presented a dance performance to create awareness against alcoholism at Museum.

The First Complaint was against alcoholism. The Chief Minister's Centre for Interaction with people Inaugurated

Thiruvananthapuram: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy comes out of the office at North Block in order to receive the complaints of the public. Henceforth the Chief Minister will see people in the new building near the gate of protest.

The 'Janasambarka kendram' was inaugurated by receiving the bundles of four lakhs of letters against alcoholism. The letters of complaint were written on post cards by students of schools and colleges. It is Santhwanam situated at Gandhinagar that took the initiative and leadership of the programme. The Managing Trustee of Santhwanam Smt. Annie Babu said that even though ten lakhs of cards were distributed through schools and colleges throughout Kerala, only four lakhs were returned. The bundles of letters were carried in special vehicles. The children of Santhwanam also accompanied the letters.

The chief minister said that whenever he is available, he will receive complaints of the public. He handed over the complaints received to the Chief Secretary. He said that he will have a meeting with the secretaries of different divisions and take a decision. He also added that in order to achieve the aim of an alcohol-free Kerala, the government alone cannot do anything but the people and organizations also should co-operate with the government. The government has implemented all the suggestions made by anti-alcoholic organizations. It is because of this that the authority was transferred to the local governing body and cut short the



The Chief Minister receiving the inaugural complaints against alcoholism in the new building from the children of Santhwanam.

availability of alcohol. He said that henceforth Bar License will be given only to the 5-Star hotels.

The Chief Secretary Mr. Bharat Bhushan and Governing Secretary K.R. Jyothilal also spoke on the occasion.

Due to the sensational allegation of the culprits of 'solar energy' going in and out of the CM's office, now there is strict checking at the entry blocking the way of the public to lodge complaints at the CM's office, the CM has opted for the new building specifically for the general public to bring complaints to him directly. It was in July that the building started. It can seat 75 people.



The inauguration of 'Jwala' under the leadership of Santhwanam at Gandhinagar by Shri. V.M. Sudheeran. The President of the township Mr.Sunny Kaloar, V.N. Vasavan, minister Shri. Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan, Dr. Philipose Mar Chrisostam Marthoma, the major Archbishop, Dr. Praveen and others at the function.



Onam Celebration of 'Grahalakshmi' Group at Santhwanam

Kottayam: This year also the 'Grahalakshmi' team of Mathrubhumi celebrated Onam at Santhwanam, the house of mercy for the destitute women and orphaned children.

They had prepared everything: made 'Atha Pookkalam', Ona Sadya, sang Onam Songs and organized different cultural programmes. It was inaugurated by Mini Antony, District Collector of Kottayam.

Since the celebration took place on the shore of mercy and goodness, it has beauty and importance. She said that she was very happy to spend the day with the little children of Santhwanam. The President of Grahalakshmi Vedi Smt. P.K. Annamma,, P.H. Rejina, Co-ordinator Smt. Jolly Adimathra and Smt. Annie Babu, the Director of Santhwanam delivered speeches of the occasion and the Grahalakshmi Vedi members and the residents of Santhwanam performed various cultural programmes.

A unique (special) birthday celebration!

Kottayam: Shri Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan celebrated his 62nd birthday with the children of Santhwanam. The minister who came yesterday to celebrate his birthday was greeted by the children of Santhwanam. They were enthusiastic to shake hands with the minister who happily received each greeting. He cut the birthday cake and gave the first piece to the youngest child in Santhwanam. Every child wanted to get the piece from the minister himself and he was ready to do so. As a birthday gift, the Director and the inmates presented him with a pen and he wrote: 'Santhwanam, real santhwanam, my prayers'.

Without the colouration of a feast, the minister visited the C.S.I. Ascension Sevana Nilayam around 6.30am. It was he who had arranged breakfast for the destitute and the cancer patients yesterday. He was received by the chaplain Eby Sathyanathan, Secretary Amos Abraham and the Secretary of the Ascension Church received the minister at the Centre. Some of the inmates served the breakfast to the minister. The trustees of the Sevana Nilayam had prepared sweets to give the minister.

Caption: The children of Santhwanam greet the minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan who came to santhwanam to celebrate his birthday offering flowers. Smt. Annie Babu is standing close by.



Shri. Monse Joseph, Minister, Shri. Thomas Chazhikadan, Smt. Annie Babu, Shri. P.U. Thomas, Mr. Joseph Mathew and Mr. Jose Maveli at the inaugural function.

Santhwanam is the Need of the Day: Monse

Kottayam: Monse Joseph, minister said on the inauguration of Santhwanam at S.H. Mount, an institution for the destitute women and orphaned children that an institution like Santhwanam is the need of the day. The adopted child of Santhwanam, Janani also lighted the lamp along with the minister. Shri. Thomas Chazhikadan M.L.A. presided over the function. Mr. Vasavan handed over the first gift money over to the Managing Trustee, Annie Babu. Mr. Mathew Kanamala, the Managing Trustee of Nava Jeevan, Mr. P.U. Thomas, Director of 'Aswasa Bhavan' Mr. Joseph Mathew, the President of 'Jana Seva Sisu Bhavan' Mr. Jose Maveli and Ms. Mariam Varghese spoke on the occasion.



When Durga who was found on Sunday evening at Nagampadam, Kottayam, was brought to Santhwanam by the Gandhinagar police..

Durga – the sorrowing sight in the drizzling rain.....

Kottayam: she came with a few coins held tightly in her hands, a dark thin girl with a helpless little face...in the cold of the town around 5 pm on a Sunday, was a sorrowing sight.

A girl of about 5 years was seen walking all alone aimlessly along Nagampadam. As she was spotted in a doubtful situation, she was asked about her whereabouts and she managed to utter

her name 'Durga' in Tamil-Malayalam. On further questioning, it became clear that she was left out from a nomadic group and between she told 'Thengassi'. Seeing a few people who have been passing by in a car, stopped and asked about it. They informed the Gandhinagar Police and they brought her to Santhwanam. The children of Santhwanam welcomed her and her tears got dry and she started laughing with them. In between eating and enjoying with others, her eyes were seeking her mother.....



The Opposition Leader Shri. Oommen Chandy inaugurates the new building of Santhwanam at Gandhinagar. Fr. Mathew K. John, V.N. Vasavan M.L.A., Thomas Chazhikadan M.L.A., Santhosh George Jacob, Annie Babu, Fr. Mathew Manakkattu are on the stage.

THE 'SANTHWANAM' HOUSE SUBMITTED

Kottayam: While inaugurating the new building of Santhwanam at Gandhinagar, the Opposition Leader Shri Oommen Chandy Pointed out the development of Santhwanam, the institution for the deserted women and orphaned children, within such a short period of time, said that 'if you do good the society will approve of you'. He added that institutions like Santhwanam do what the Government body cannot do. Giving love and care to the needy, it becomes a model to the society at large. He told that such institutions are beneficial not only to the inmates, but also throw light in the life of others as well. The 'Children's section' was inaugurated by Shri. Thomas Chazhikadan M.L.A. and the 'Mother and Child' section was inaugurated by Shri. V.N. Vasavan M.L.A. The inauguration of the website was done by Shri. Santhosh George Jacob, Manorama Online Content Co-ordinator. Santhwanam Trustee Smt. Annie Babu presided over the function. The blessing of the new building was done by Rev.Fr. Joseph Kalarickal, Vicar of Holy Family Church, Mudiyoorkara. The Orphanage Control Board member Fr. Mathew K. John, the President of Vadavathoor Seminary, Fr. Mathew Manakkattu, the Vicar of St. Joseph's church, Puthuvely Fr. Jose Chazhikattu, the Municipal Councilor Smt. Alice Joseph, Mariam Varghese Panampunna, spoke on the occasion.



Like a Dream Come True for Revathy in Thenkasi

Kottayam: When the mother and the daughter embraced each other and shared thousands of memories, it proved that time or language can set no barrier

on the way of blood relationship. Revathy who had left Tamilnadu at the age of 10, found out her mother and family at the age of 22 in Thengassi of Tamilnadu. Annie Babu, Director of Santhwanam at Choottuvelli, Kottayam, was also with her in her efforts to trace them out.

Revathy, the eldest daughter of Uthaman and Rajeshwari had her life shuffled at the age of 10. She used to see the trains passing to and fro and was interested in train journey. One day, without telling anyone she got into a train but she was not aware of the fact that the train had already started moving! When the train took speed she started running frantically for a way to get out. But there was no way. Tired, she sat down in a corner and fell asleep. The train brought her to Kerala. From then on, she spent her days in orphanages at Aluva, Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram. Finally she reached Santhwanam. Sitting alone in the room, she used to cry and cry. When this became a regular routine, the Santhwanam authorities decided to try to trace out her parents and family. With the confidence that she would be able to identify her locality and home, Revathy was taken to Thengasi. But unfortunately she could not identify the spot. They went to all the places that Revathy had told them, but it was useless. Then a complaint was registered with the Thengasi police and after that they went to Thoothukudy, her father's native place. But there was also no hope. At last a complaint was given to the Superintendent of Police there also and thought of returning. But then the Thengasi police managed to trace her mother Rajeshwari with the help of whatever information Revathy had given. When she came to know that her lost girl was coming home, she had come with her youngest daughter and the whole village was waiting anxiously at the police station. At the first sight they could recognize each other. They embraced each other and cried for a long time. But Revathy could not follow Tamil and Rajeshwari could not understand Malayalam and they could not make out what the other was trying to say. Finally she was taken home.



Nandu and Nandini with the Director of Santhwanam, Smt. Annie Babu.

Consolation and Love for Nandu and Nandini Deepika – April 19, 2008.

Kottayam: Nandu, aged 7, said that their mother gave him a green-coloured liquid to drink saying that it is the medicine for developing intellect. But after drinking that he had vomited and became unconscious and he cannot remember anything further. Nandu is the eldest son of Valsala of Vazhupadi, Mavelikkara, who had decided to kill her three children by poisoning and to commit suicide. Valsala is still in a serious condition at Medical College, Kottayam. The children, Nandu (7), Nandana (4) and Navya (3), were also given poison but they were admitted in the Children's hospital at Kottayam and were saved. Even though they were discharged on Thursday, nobody came to claim them. The Superintendent of the hospital contacted Ms. Annie Babu, the Director of Santhwanam at S.H. Mount and accordingly they came and took charge of the children and on the way they went to the Medical College to inform Valsala about her children, Valsala insisted on having the youngest, Navya to be left with her in the hospital. So they left without Navya to Santhwanam with Nandu and Nandana. Santhwanam was set up in June 2007 aiming to rehabilitate the orphans and the orphaned. Now there are 32 inmates there. Establishments like Santhwanam are becoming an abode of mercy and love for the deserted children.

A THREAT TO THE DIRECTOR OF SANTHWANAM

It is alleged that the leader of a terrorist gang is caught.

Kottayam: It is alleged that the gang leader who had threatened the Director of Santhwanam, a house for the destitute women and orphaned children, is caught by the police. As per the instructions given by the Superintendent of Police, Kottayam, it was the C.I. of Chalakudy who managed to catch the gang leader called 'Theevetti Babu'. It is said that he was caught near a famous retreat centre at Chalakkudy on Thursday evening.

As they could not suffer the cruelties of 'theevetti' Babu any more, his wife and children had come days ago to Santhwanam at Choottuvelli. When he came to know that they had reached Santhwanam he phoned up to Santhwanam and on the Director's mobile phone challenging and threatening. When it was repeated many times, the Director of Santhwanam filed a petition to the S.P. Ashok Kumar and he had arranged police protection for Santhwanam.

A complaint was also given to the Cyber Cell for threatening over the phone. While the police were keeping trail of Babu with the help of the Cyber Cell, he was caught at Chalakudy on Thursday. The Santhwanam authorities had already sent the wife and children to another place. Babu might have reached Chalakudy on Thursday thinking that they would be in the retreat centre at Chalakudy. The Chalakudy police informed that there were a number of police cases against Babu over there. The case will proceed as per the instructions of the S.P. of police, Kottayam.

Mathrubhumi 02/04/2010.



Annie Babu, Director of Santhwanam along with the inmates.

Santhwanam to the birds whose wings were severed Mathrubhumi 24 July, 2008.

Kottayam: Poor little children whose lives were orphaned and left abandoned throughout waysides, hospital verandas and in shrubs.

The women who had believed in false promises were destined to become unmarried mothers.\

They are helpless and destitute women who have escaped from husbands addicted to alcohol and drugs and paranoid in-laws with their children.

Those who are rendered mentally sick....; those who have had a narrow escape from suicide...; standing transfixed in front of the question, 'now what?' and the girls who were rape victims.....

They are safe under the wings of Santhwanam. Santhwanam was instituted in June 2007 envisaging the rehabilitation of the destitute women and children, as per the Indian Charitable Trust Act. On October 28, 2007, Santhwanam started its official social working from a rented house named 'Manjackal' by the side of the Choottuvelli-Chungam road under the trusteeship of Smt. Annie Babu. There are 35 inmates in Santhwanam at present. From the very beginning to this day Sr. Celine Kallarackal is giving counseling for the inmates of Santhwanam. It was Meera Jomy who helped in giving tuition to the children. Before, it was the neighbor Sunil Augustine who did this work.

When she says that Shri. Thomas Chazhikadan M.L.A used to visit Santhwanam every month and gave Rs. 3000 each month, we can see the light of gratitude flashing in her eyes. Once there was no food for the inmates of Santhwanam, an autorickshaw driver Sajiv Kumar from Choottuvelli had come with rice and curries as if sent by God.

Municipal Counsilar Adv. Francis Jacob, wife Shalini Francis, Social worker M.J. Sebastian and many from the socio-economic and cultural field are the members of Santhwanam Trust and the Welfare Board.



**Nov 18
2013**

Rosanna's wedding at Santhwanam.

Kottayam: Rosanna had her wedding at Santhwanam. Sprouting wings of hope for a new life, Rosanna has become the life partner of Siju. The autodriver Siju (Mathew Abraham) of Padanilathu, Payyappadi, married Rosanna at St. Thomas parish church, Vellukkada. Vicar Fr. Thomas Varghese blessed the marriage.

Rosanna had reached Santhwanam five years back. Rosanna, who had come to Kerala from Tamilnadu through an agent, had worked from the age of 10 about 18 years in a house. When she was 28, Rosanna was sent out by the owners by paying just Rs. 25,000. Then she worked in a convent for two years and at last reached under the shade of Santhwanam. By the intervention of Santhwanam, Rosanna could get the right amount due to her from the house where she had worked for such a long period...

Though there was no body for Rosanna, Rosanna's wedding was celebrated grandly at Santhwanam. Mathew, who has been looking after his sick mother, was late for marriage. Siju earned his livelihood by driving the auto. About fifty people from Santhwanam, went for her wedding by car and mini bus. It is the 3rd marriage arranged by Santhwanam for its inmates.



Santhwanam, opening the mesmeric world of music.

Kottayam: On Saturday Santhwanam was in the world of music and magic. ; the inmates of Santhwanam forgot themselves immersed in the mesmeric world when they had expected only music, they had presented two items. The team who had come along with the film director Rajesh Kannankara presented the cultural feast. When the children got the chance to meet Bharath Sajikumar who had taken part in a music programme in a private TVchannel whom they had seen only on the screen, were delighted beyond words. When Biju Kalathil presented a magical show apart from the music programme, they were excited and overjoyed.

Mini-screen stars Rajiv Roshan, Kottayam Pratheep, Previous M.G University Chairman Shrishanth were also there along with Rajesh.



Certificate of Appreciation

*The Archeparchy of Changanacherry
proudly honours her beloved daughter
Smt. Annie Babu (Swanthwanam)
for her contributions in the field of Rehabilitation of the
widows and abandoned women and their empowerment*

→ *Sgt. A. A. A.*

Changanacherry
19.05.2012

Mr. Joseph Perumthottam
Metropolitan Archbishop of Changanacherry



"I raise up my eyes to the mountains; where will I get help from? I
will get help from the Lord who had created the Heaven and Earth." (Psalm 121:1)



Constructing new building ground floor sponsored by: Maliyekal Family Trust