



Columban Mission in Pakistan 2011



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St Columbans Mission Society

St. Elizabeth School of Midwifery

Hyderabad, Pakistan

70 young women from marginalized communities in less developed areas are currently training at St.Elizabeth School of Midwifery to advance their socio-economic position by enabling them to become trained professional and qualified midwives for mother, neonatal and infant care in Pakistan.

According to UNESCO statistics, only 28% of Pakistani women have the assistance of a trained attendant during childbirth. Graduates from our School of Midwifery return to all parts of Pakistan and are directly involved through hospitals and village clinics in caring for women.

Twenty-two students passed the final examinations conducted by the Sindh Nurses' Examination Board 2010. All obtained 1st Division and one obtained 1st

position in the province of Sindh.

This is a major achievement and shows that committment, natural ability and good teaching can overcome discrimination.

The School of Midwifery is unable to be self-supporting and continues to require funding assistance to carry out its work. Given the background of those enrolled, fees have to be kept at the barest minimum. Currently each student is requested to provide only Rs.25,000 (= \$277) for the full course.

Each student is provided with subsidized tuition fees, enrolment fees, examination fees, subsidized food and lodging, medical care, uniform and shoes and stationary. The total cost to educate one student is approximately Rs.195,000 (= \$2,166).



Tony Muir & John O'Brien from St Vincent De Paul Society Australia visit the School of Midwifery, December 2010.

The Catholic Centre of Academic Excellence

Hyderabad, Pakistan

The Centre began 5 years ago. The goal of the Centre is to provide a sustained environment where academically talented but deprived and disadvantaged Catholic young men can be assisted to attain high academic grades. This will ensure that they can gain university entrance on merit (i.e. totally free on government scholarship basis).

By its focus on moral, spiritual and personal development, the Centre ensures that the candidates will be able to enter confidently into tertiary education and to successfully complete their studies so that they can ultimately move into opinion-influencing positions and employment. Sixty-five boys are enrolled.

We look forward to them becoming positive Christian leaders in the Church in the diocese of Hyderabad and to their becoming an influential Catholic voice in Pakistan. Family poverty and anti-Christian religious discrimination are the two obstacles which the Centre seeks to overcome to achieve this goal.

The first group of 11 young men completed their four years at the Catholic Centre of Academic Excellence in June. We look to the future and to what these young men can and will do. The Centre gives them promise and hope. We can already see how their lives have been changed. It has happened through the dedication of a committed lay teaching staff of men and women.



The Catholic Youth Development Centre

Hyderabad, Pakistan



What we do at the Catholic Youth Development Centre (CYDC) is take young men who have dropped out of school or who have never been to school and get them from illiteracy to 10th Class (the last year of high school in Pakistan) through an accelerated programme of learning spread over 3 years, from primary to secondary.

They are enrolled for examination purposes in a school in Hyderabad. Then they will be encouraged and guided to move into technical education which will enable them to obtain secure employment and break out of the repressive discrimination they have experienced all their lives.

Education, moral guidance, personal confidence building and religious instruction and sacramental preparation are all seen to in the programme at CYDC. The staff consists of the director and 4 teachers (2 male, 2 female). All students have a full medical check-up on enrolment and receive full vaccination against Hepatitis B.

The students are aged between 16 and 24. Classes are from 9am-1pm, Monday to Friday.

In 2011, 38 young men are enrolled in CYDC. Seven have recently sat for their Class 10 examinations. They are now enrolled in three-year technical courses.

Pakistan Flood Relief

In 2010 floods affected the lives of millions of people in Pakistan. St. Elizabeth Hospital, of which I am Chairman, responded immediately and provided medical assistance to over 26,000 people, all of whom are desperately poor farm labourers. As well as medical care, St. Elizabeth gave drinking water, quilts (for the cold nights of December and January), and nutritional supplements for all.

Our first plan was to provide the supplements only to women and children but all were terribly malnourished so everyone was helped.

Since December 2010 we have been able to help them in reconstructing houses. We arranged for an engineer to come from Karachi to direct the rebuilding. To date we have completed 760 houses and have another 220 under way. Each house is being fitted with solar power. This has put a huge extra workload on the hospital administration and medical and nursing staff but they have all responded with great generosity.

With your help, the Catholic Church in Pakistan has been able to assist many people in great distress. Together we make such a difference.



Palliative Care for the terminally ill

Hyderabad, Pakistan

Palliative care in Australia and New Zealand provides good medical treatment and the support of compassionate health carers to people who are diagnosed with a terminal illness. In Pakistan terminally ill patients are treated as sources of income by the medical profession and the hospital culture. Their illness is not relieved and the financial situation of their families is wrecked as they seek for a cure or for pain relief.

I came to know of home-based Palliative Care in 1997 when my family cared for our mother after she was diagnosed with advanced cancer. We became part of a caring team of nurses, doctors and family. We learnt from one another and

leaned on one another. It was a sad but consoling ten months. I had seen many terminally-ill people in Pakistan without hope, without care, and in great pain. My personal experience of Palliative Care helped me to see that there was a way to respond with care and compassion to their needs.

In 2005 the administrative council of St. Elizabeth Hospital of which I am chairman began discussing the need for and the possibility of commencing a home-based Palliative Care for the terminally ill at Hyderabad, a city of 4,000,000 in the south-east of Pakistan. We understood that it was a powerful way of expressing our Catholic committ-



ment to the dignity of life even in the presence of the reality of death. Its introduction will enable the hospital to continue to offer in a very new way the best possible care at the lowest possible cost to those in need and to manifest compassion and mercy in a practical and outstanding way in Pakistan where society is fragmented by violence and mistrust and where medical care is profit-oriented.

An important benefit of the home-based Palliative Care service is that it will facilitate inter-faith harmony on a very rich human, personal level through the caring ministry of committed Christian nurses, male and female, in the homes of people of different faiths and through the meeting and mutual support of the religious ministers of Muslim, Christian and Hindu patients.

In preparation for beginning the Palliative Care at St. Elizabeth Hospital, one of the male nurses, Patras Inayat, is doing the **year-long Certificate in Palliative Care Nursing** at Calvary-Bethlehem Hospital, Caulfield. Members of St. Vincent de Paul Conferences in Melbourne and office staff at the Columban Mission Centre welcomed Patras and helped him settle into his studies. He will return to Pakistan in November. Meantime another nurse, Eric Siraj, has just completed his **specialized Certificate in Pediatric Nursing** in Hyderabad and will commence further course-work in pediatric

oncological nursing at the Children's Cancer Hospital in Karachi. He will go to Calvary-Bethlehem in March 2012 for the Palliative Care course. The preparation of staff to get the Palliative Care underway is well in hand and we look forward to the ongoing technical help and support of Palliative Care personnel from Australia.

The home-based Palliative Care that is starting at St. Elizabeth Hospital is a **first in Pakistan**. We don't have specific local expertise to fall back on. However, a group of four senior Catholic nurses with academic positions in universities and schools of nursing in Karachi have come together as the Nursing Advisory Service for planning and implementing the Palliative Care at St. Elizabeth. One has had experience in oncological nursing and all bring a focused professional perspective to the new venture. We plan to begin in 2012 with ten terminally-ill patients being visited at home in the morning and evening.

We have already begun sourcing and purchasing the necessary equipment. Some of the equipment such as syringe drivers for continuous pain management is expensive, made more so by the refusal of the Pakistan government to grant any sort of sales tax concession to St. Elizabeth. We also need to purchase a small 4-door car for the Palliative Care nurses to get in and out of the very narrow streets in Hyderabad. It will cost \$10,600 but is a one-of purchase.

Pakistan seems intent on being its own worst enemy. There is much violence, urban rioting, and terrorism even in Karachi and other big cities. People live in increasing fear. A leading Catholic federal minister, Shahbaz Bhatti, was murdered in February this year because he called for religious freedom for Christians. It could be a time for desperation but Christians have living faith and live their hope.



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