



ASK DAILY DEVOTIONAL

May 2025



Welcome from the editor

Following the structure of the ASK Prayer Diary, three Member countries have provided devotions this month. One week, five persons with a great commitment to the subject of Inner Wellbeing will share their thoughts with us. Lastly, we have a theological reflection on 7 May for our Day of Prayer.

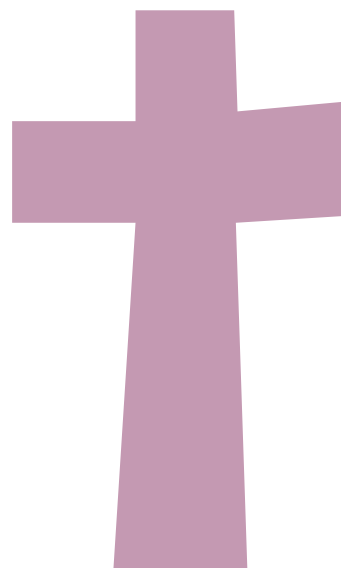
5–9 May
12–16 May
19–23 May
26–30 May

Finland
Inner Wellbeing
Timor-Leste
India: Advocacy and Communications

We pray that the Scriptures and thoughts will be a source of blessing for all of us, and that the reading will encourage and stimulate our prayers for the work of TLM.

I hope we will meet together on the TLM Day of Prayer on Wednesday 7 May. It is a privilege to meet friends from all the Global Fellowship in prayer and worship and there will be many opportunities during that day. [Please sign up for the sessions you would like to join here.](#)

Allan Ekstedt



...the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Kenan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. Luke 3: 36–38

When I read my Bible, I usually read these genealogical tables very quickly without real attention to the names. But, I found an article which explains what these strange names really mean – and I was surprised!

Adam means 'man', Seth 'appointed', Enosh 'mortal', Kenan 'sorrow', Mahalel 'The Blessed God', Jared 'shall come down', Enoch 'teaching', Metuselah 'his death shall bring', Lemech 'disparing' and Noah 'comfort'.

Just ten names –and what an astronomical Gospel Message: Man is appointed mortal sorrow, but the Blessed God shall come down teaching that His death shall bring the disparing people comfort!

Some days ago in the news on TV, a young theologian told that he had realised that God (or a myth about God) was "born" some 2500 years ago, when the Israeli people were mourning the destruction of the holy temple.

It is obvious that this theologian had not read the first chapters of the Bible well – and how blind he was! And how happy we can be and KNOW that our God has been alive and is alive from the beginning to the end. I am happy to agree with Job, who lived almost 4000 years ago:

"I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25–27)

Jukka Harjula is a retired missionary doctor serving now on the Board of The Leprosy Mission Finland.

Prayer

Oh dear living Father! Thanks for Your Word for us. Help me understand more and more, how wonderful Your Word really is for me! You are alive!



Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' And immediately the leprosy left him. Luke 5:13

During my recent visit to Nepal, I had the joy of meeting a friend whom I hadn't seen in 25 years. Our reunion in the churchyard was warm, and though handshaking isn't the most common form of greeting in Nepal, he reached out—an intentional gesture. His hand bore the marks leprosy he had decades ago, yet in that moment, the act of shaking hands carried profound significance.

I remembered patients from the hospital decades ago, individuals once cast to the margins of society because of the visible signs of their illness. For some, the touch of a doctor or nurse was their first human touch in years—an affirmation of their humanity. Touch became more than a physical act; it was a restoration of dignity, an unspoken message of belonging.

Jesus understood this deep longing for acceptance. Before healing the man, he touched him—acknowledging his worth, restoring his dignity, and demonstrating the love that sees beyond affliction. Jesus' touch was not merely the prelude to a miracle; it was, in itself, healing of deep scars of rejection.

Jukka Knuuttila is a Board member of TLM Finland and worked at INF Green Pastures Hospital in Nepal from 1993–2001 as a medical doctor.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for Your boundless love, for seeing us fully and valuing us as Your own. Help us to reflect that love in how we treat others, acknowledging their worth and embracing them with kindness. Jesus, teach us to meet people as You did, to recognise their needs, and to offer the touch of compassion that affirms their dignity. Amen.



TLM's Day of Prayer – A theological reflection: Love is like fire

7 May

US Vice President JD Vance gave probably the highest profile sermon of the year recently in an interview with Fox News. Speaking of our moral duties, he said:

'You love your family, and then you love your neighbour, and then you love your community, and then you love your fellow citizens in your own country. And then after that, you can focus and prioritise the rest of the world'.

I don't want to venture much into a debate that clearly had pointed political undertones to it, except to say: we learn to love first through our families, and we have such influence within them that it is right we do this as well as we can. And from this nurturing source we are called to love our neighbour. It is not always obvious who our neighbour is, and in a world shrunk by travel, trade and communication, that neighbour may live further away from us than we imagine.

The parable of the good Samaritan is Jesus' way of saying we have lots of biases that stop us from loving our neighbour if they are different from us, and we have to overcome these if we are to be true to him. We need spiritual intuition to figure out our daily commitments, not least because one of the deepest ways we show our love is by praying for people, as The Leprosy Mission is doing on this Day of Prayer.

Love like this is to be shared. That's probably where JD Vance mis-sold love. Love does not diminish the further out from us it goes. Love is like fire. We light fire from fire, and when people spread fire, it moves rapidly, like lit candles at a Christingle. So even the last person has as much fire as the first. Withdrawing development funding means withdrawing that Christ-like love and keeping that flame to ourselves.

Our world has many hidden and not so hidden needs and they blow a cooling breeze over human souls. But breezes also fan flames, and the chill wind makes people long for a source of heat. You have that fire, and it cannot be quenched.



The Rt Rev Simon Burton-Jones is the Bishop of Tonbridge in the Church of England. He has written this theological reflection on the theme for The Leprosy Mission's Day of Prayer for 2025. It is available to be read and shared on [TLM's blog](#).

Prayer

Join us for an online
prayer service
today



Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment... Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. Matthew 22:37, 39-40

We all can do either much good, or alternatively, much bad with our words and speech. Let me give a personal example. Today, when preparing this devotion, I exchanged Easter greetings with a friend who is presently getting treatment for relapsed cancer. We had met a couple of months ago, and now she said she had been thinking a lot of something I had said then. My first reaction was anxiety of what it could have been that I said. But actually, I had said something that gave her hope: "And there is also the possibility of a miracle".

Oh, how happy I got, although I had totally forgotten what I had said. Then, later today another friend told me: "I do understand your agony of creation". I never doubted her words, and my feeling of inferiority was much relieved.

This is how God can use us, without us even noticing, to be His aid in spreading good spirits, if only we give Him the chance. The Psalm 73:23 says: "Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand".

I think we can have much control over our words, any time. We may choose words which can encourage those around us or depress them.



Marja Aho, Vice Chair and Safeguarding contact person of the Board of TLM Finland. She has been active with TLM Finland for 10 years.

Prayer

Dear God, help us to pay attention to our words and speech. Help us to promote what is good. Give us a grateful mind. Help us to be responsive towards differences. Be near to those who are ill, and give us all views of hope. Help us to respect our neighbours, both those whom we know and those unfamiliar to us. Thank you for the spring and the awakening nature.



When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. Exodus 3:4-5

The Bible is full of stories of people's encounters with God. They are often very different, but if you look deeper they are still very similar. The places and the circumstances may differ, but a real meeting with God is to enter into holy ground. For Moses the encounter with God was a moment of calling into the real purpose of his life. He had been prepared by God over 80 years for this new step of leadership and he will later be considered as one of the world's most important national leaders. Now the burning sand in the wilderness became holy ground. It all started barefoot on holy ground! Later Joshua and the disciples will have the same experience.

It's interesting that Moses was asked to take off his shoes when he entered holy ground. Why?

- Don't run away! Stay! A human reaction could be to try to escape God's calling. It's not easy to run away without shoes so we have to stop and listen to God and to be equipped by him.
- It's a question of respect for God when we take off our shoes. We are not afraid of God but we respect him. To stay before God barefoot is a sign of humility.
- We are ready to take off our own shoes and stop guiding ourselves and be ready to follow God's guidance and direction. We want to be obedient to God and his will.
- Without shoes, we are without protection for the skin. We are ready to be vulnerable and sensitive, and ready to be touched by God's presence.

We remember the precious moments of God's presence in our lives when we had to take off our own shoes. But those experiences are the starting point of a new step with God and a new journey with him like for Moses. We have to take off our shoes but God will give us new shoes! The prodigal son came to his Father without shoes but he quickly received a brand new pair of shoes for the future.

"..and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace." Eph. 6:15



Allan Ekstedt, Nordic Hub Coordinator, member of TLM Finland Board

Prayer

Father, we enter into your presence with humility. Thank you for the experience of holy ground as a preparation of our service for you. We want to walk with you, guided by you and be empowered by you by your grace.



He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Psalm 23:3

In the rush of our work, even in a mission as noble as serving those affected by leprosy and disability, it's easy to overlook what's going on deep within us. We smile for those we serve. We press on with tasks and deadlines. But how is it with your soul?

God is not only interested in what we do for Him, He is deeply concerned with how we are. Inner wellbeing is the quiet but powerful river within that gives life to all we do. It is a soul restored, a mind at peace, a spirit anchored in God's love.

Psalm 23 paints a picture of our Shepherd leading us beside still waters. These are not just physical places, but spiritual postures, places of calm, healing, and restoration.

Inner wellbeing flows from knowing we are not alone, not forgotten, not unloved. When we are weary, He restores. When we are broken, He heals. When we are confused, He guides.

Many whom we serve are battling more than visible conditions. They are wrestling with stigma, isolation, and emotional scars. As we extend healing hands to others, let us not neglect the healing God offers to us. When we allow Christ to tend to our inner being, we become safer, wiser, and more compassionate vessels for His love.

We are invited daily to be still and to know (Psalm 46:10) —to pause and be present with the One who formed us. It is in those still moments, that our inner wellbeing is cultivated. Let us honour that quiet work of God in our lives and make space to also nurture it in others.

Inner wellbeing is not a luxury; it's a necessity for a life that reflects Christ. In caring for others, let us also care for the sacred space within, where Christ Himself dwells.



Pius Ogbu Sunday is Head of Programmes & Operations at TLM Nigeria, overseeing project implementation and strategy. With over 15 years' service, he rose from volunteer to senior leadership.

Prayer

Lord, restore our weary souls and breathe new life where we feel burdened. Teach us compassion, that we may see and respond to the invisible struggles of others. Unite the Global Fellowship with a shared heart of care, reflecting Your holistic love in how we serve—body, mind, and spirit.



Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction. Mark 5:34

Here we see a woman touching the hem of Jesus's garment and received healing for her 12 long years of bleeding. She was desperate, desolated, discriminated and devoid of resources. She was suffering not just from physical illness, she was suffering mentally, economically, socially and spiritually. She must have heard of Jesus healing people of all kinds of diseases. She had no courage to ask Jesus for healing, but she gathered herself, took courage and touched the hem of His garment, having faith that she would be healed.

Jesus responded to her act by saying "Go in Peace." He lifted her up by healing the inner fear, shame and discrimination she faced, brought her forward amongst the crowd and made it public. She was excluded from society but Jesus made her included in society, giving her the dignity of life by healing her infirmity and making her whole.

In our day to day dealing with people, we need to render our ears to hear, eyes to see the innermost suffering of people who come to us for help. Many of the physical sufferings cause fear, uncertainty, loneliness, lack of hope, despair, desolation, discrimination and so on. Timely help of the person to regain the inner strength and healing helps them to restore physical healing much faster.



Dr Helen Roberts has been working with TLM India for 36 years, currently based at TLM Hospital, Vadathorasalur, India.

Prayer

Dear Lord, We come before your throne of grace, placing the people who seek help from us, that we may hear them and understand their innermost needs and grant us wisdom to share the right kind of words to smoothen their spirits and lift them up. Amen.



I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10

Attending to the inner wellbeing of people affected by leprosy closely relates to The Leprosy Mission's mission of *"following Jesus Christ, we strive to break the chains of leprosy, empowering people to attain healing, dignity and life in all its fullness"*, a reflection of John 10:10. Likewise, by supporting an individual's inner wellbeing, we will make greater progress in realising our vision of *"Leprosy Defeated, Lives Transformed"*. Not only is this addressing inner wellbeing but also it is an essential component in bringing transformation in the lives of people affected by leprosy. Failing to address it could hinder us from defeating leprosy, disabilities and discrimination.

For leprosy to be defeated we need people to have the inner wellbeing needed to complete their treatment, we need those affected to have the self-confidence to be able to advocate for greater investment in leprosy services and to break down the stigma-associated issues with the disease to promote early diagnosis, treatment, and a life with respect and dignity in the community.

TLM is working towards a world where people affected by leprosy can live life in all its fullness. To achieve fullness in life and overall wellbeing, a holistic approach is needed. We aim to focus on the inner wellbeing of persons affected by leprosy. Inner wellbeing refers to an individual's mental, emotional and spiritual state. How they are feeling and coping with their day to day life. The abundant life is not merely physical wellbeing, it also includes spiritual richness, joy and internal fulfilment.



Ruth Shrestha is Senior Counsellor at Anandaban Hospital in Nepal.

Prayer

Dear Lord thank you for the abundant and full of lives that you have given to every one of us. You are our good shepherd who takes us to green pastures and guides us every day. Give us life in its fullness to our whole personality, even if we are affected by any kind of infirmity.



How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. Psalm 36:7

Being diagnosed as having leprosy can make people feel worried, anxious or fearful about their future. When we – with our various roles and responsibilities – not only care for them, but also care about them, they are encouraged and enabled to feel safe, to find hope and to live well, despite their diagnosis and the difficulties it can cause.

In Psalm 36.7, the Psalmist likens God's caring about us all to that of a bird sheltering us under the safety of its wings.

Near to my home, a swan each year builds her nest and raises her brood. She stretches out her wings to protect their downy feathers from the rain, and defends her young from attack by dog or fox. Feeling safe, these young cygnets, as they grow, begin to explore and to fend for themselves. As they do so, the parent birds remain close by; attentive, caring and ready to protect from danger.

We can be like these birds; we can be there while needed, enabling and encouraging those feeling vulnerable, uncertain or afraid. We can remain alongside, too, as their confidence grows and their anxieties lessen.

Assured, as the Psalmist was, that we are all cared about by our loving God, we can be like those swans. We can be there as long as we are needed, enabling all those we care for, and care about, to live with hope, and to live well.

Lorna Murray worked as a Mental Health Chaplain, served on the Board of TLM Scotland, and is currently a member of TLM's Inner Wellbeing group

Prayer

Caring God, you shelter us under the shadow of your wings. Help us to care about others as compassionately as you care about us. Help us to provide the safe places in which fears and anxieties may be shared and new hope found.



I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. Psalm 34:4-5

Greetings in the Name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! We all know the burden of pain and stigma that people affected by leprosy carry within themselves, which often lasts a lifetime. The burden is too heavy for them because they are often alone in this journey. Navigating social stigma and discrimination requires spiritual fortitude and faith in our Holy Father, who can heal our inner wounds as mentioned in Luke 4:18: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ... He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and ... to set at liberty those who are oppressed."

Let us release our heavy burden to Jesus, for His yoke is easy and His burden light. Let us lend each other's hands to people who are quietly bearing the burden of ignominy and seek the Lord's divine wisdom in bringing inner peace and wellbeing into their lives. We look up to Him to alleviate the mental agony of persons affected by leprosy and their family members. Let us seek His blessings and guidance, which will help us create an enabling environment where people affected by leprosy do not live in fear and anxiety and are able to be one with their community, fully included and understood.



Subhojit Goswami, Senior Program Manager – Advocacy & Communications, The Leprosy Mission Trust India

Prayer

Dear Lord, you are the healer of the broken-hearted. We know you are always protecting your children and guarding their hearts and minds. Lord, we look up to you to save those who are crushed in spirit and work through them to bring inner healing.



I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

As I look at my life – everything I've walked through, the highs and the lows, I realise just how true this verse is:

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

There have been times when I wasn't sure how I'd make it. Times when I felt worn down, uncertain, or even broken. Life didn't always go the way I planned. Some doors closed, some people left, and some seasons were heavier than others. But somehow, I'm still here. I've grown. I've overcome. And I know now, it wasn't by my strength alone.

Christ has been my steady hand when I was shaking. My peace in the middle of chaos. My strength when I had none left to give. Even when I felt too weak to stand, His grace carried me.

This verse reminds me that I don't need to have it all together. I don't need to be perfect or fearless. What I need is to trust Him, to believe that no matter what lies ahead, He will strengthen me for it. Every challenge, every step, every dream, I can face it, not because I'm enough on my own, but because He is enough in me. So, as I move forward in life, I hold onto this truth:

I am capable, I am called, and I am strengthened "not by who I am, but by who Christ is within me".

Carolina Soares, Training Coordinator and GEDSI in PHACE Project, ML-TL

Prayer

Dear God

Thank You for the opportunity to be part of this organisation. Bless the leadership, Strengthen our team with unity, compassion, and purpose. Help us to work not just for success, but for significance, impacting lives and honouring You in all we do. Let this organisation be a light, bringing hope, healing, and excellence wherever we are called to serve. May we walk in humility, speak with grace, and act with love. When we grow weary, remind us that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Thank You for placing us here. We trust you to lead, provide, and sustain. In Jesus' name, Amen.



“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:37-39

Everyone is sure to fall in love with someone.

When we ‘fall in love’, our thoughts are with the one we love. We may think of them while we eat, or struggle to sleep because we are thinking of them. There is a song like this called ‘[Thinking of you](#)’. It has these words: mau makan ingat kamu, mau tidur ingat kamu (Want to remember you while I’m eating, want to remember you while I’m sleeping)

When you receive a message from him, your heart pounds, and you quickly pick up the phone and send a flurry of messages to his direct message. When you miss a call, you’re quick to call him and if you run out of phone credit, you’ll run to get some more. Heavy rain or hot weather won’t stop you from looking for a connection and calling her.

Gunung akan kudaki, lautan api akan kuseberangi – “Mountain I’ll go over, even the sea of fire I will cross too” This illustrates how far we will go to demonstrate our love for someone.

I want to share with you that God is more than a loved one. GOD HAS SHOWN AND PROVEN His love for me and us through his sacrifice on the cross when we were in the dark and the depths of sin (Romans 5:8). And his law says that we must love God.

Would you be willing to GIVE EVERYTHING to someone you love, especially to God, who died to save us?

We are so ready to waste time, money, effort, and so on to a loved one. How can we love God with all our heart, soul, and strength? Each of us should reflect on this and asks ourselves: HOW CAN I SHOW LOVE FOR JESUS TODAY?

Frederico Pereira Mendes, HR Assistant at Misaun Lepra Timor-Leste

Prayer

Lord, my God, I want to love you so much more and more every day. Help me to love You above all things, now until death, and forever in heaven. I put all my trust in your love, full of forgiveness, and let my heart rejoice in your help of salvation. Amen.



Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

Life often feels overwhelming, whether it's the demands of work, the pressure of studying, the physical changes during pregnancy and childbirth. In those moments, I found myself feeling weary and worn out, struggling to keep up with everything. There were times when it seemed like I couldn't juggle it all, and I started to wonder how I would manage. But through all these challenges, I soon realised that true rest wasn't just about taking a break or escaping responsibilities it was about resting in God's promises and trusting that He was with me every step of the way.

Each day, I prayed for strength not only for my body but for my heart as well. I learned to slow down, to listen to my body, and to trust that God was guiding me through it all. As I navigated the pressures of work, the demands of studying, the physical strain of pregnancy and childbirth, I found peace. It wasn't an escape from the difficulties, but rather a deep sense of rest knowing that God's presence was with me. His peace washed over me, and I felt strengthened to continue moving forward, no matter how overwhelming the challenges felt.

I began to understand that Jesus offers me rest not by removing the challenges I face, but by empowering me to face them with His strength. Whether I was balancing work, studying, carrying the life of my child, or enduring the pain of childbirth, I experienced the truth of Matthew 11:28 in a personal way. Jesus didn't take away my burdens, but He gave me the rest and peace to carry them, transforming my struggles into moments of reliance on Him.

Pascuela Apriani da Silva, Senior Medical Coordinator at Misaun Lepra Timor-Leste. I love business and laughing.

Prayer

**Lord Jesus,
I feel tired and overwhelmed with all that life demands. Please
grant me rest and strength for both my body and soul.
Help me to trust in Your presence and guidance through every
challenge I face. May Your peace fill my heart, and may Your
strength carry me through each day. Thank You for always being
with me, giving me the rest I need.
In Your name, Amen.**



Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7

Life can feel overwhelming at times, especially when we face challenges at work, personal struggles, or situations beyond our control. These worries can steal our peace, leaving us anxious and weighed down. But the good news is that God invites us to bring our worries to Him. It's not just a suggestion—it's something He commands us to do.

In 1 Peter 5:7, we're reminded to cast all our anxieties on the Lord because He cares for us. Whenever I feel anxious or overwhelmed, this verse is a constant reminder that I don't have to carry my worries alone. It's not just advice—it's a call to trust God fully with every part of our lives. Why? Because He cares deeply about us, and He is far more capable of handling our burdens than we are.

We tend to hold on to our fears and anxieties, thinking that worrying will help us find solutions. But in reality, worrying only adds to the burden on our hearts. The truth is, worrying about my circumstances never changes anything. However, when I choose to give my worries to God, I experience a peace and freedom that goes beyond what I can understand.

Application:

1. **Pray and Let Go:** Begin by taking a moment to pray and be honest with God about your worries. Lay them out before Him, and then trust that He has heard you. Tell God that you are choosing to release your concerns into His hands.
2. **Focus on God's Care:** Remember that God loves you unconditionally. His heart is for your wellbeing, and He is always looking out for you. When you feel worried, focus on His goodness and faithfulness in your life. Let this bring you peace.
3. **Practice Trust Daily:** Worries will come, but the act of surrendering them to God is something we can practice every day. Instead of carrying the burden yourself, let each worry be an opportunity to choose trust over fear.

Joaozina Da Coceicao, Finance Manager at Misaun Lepra Timor-Leste (MLTL)

Prayer

Father, I come before You with my heart heavy from worry. I recognise the areas in my life where anxiety has taken hold, and I choose to surrender them to You today. I trust that You care deeply for me and that You are faithful to meet my needs. Help me to let go of control and fully trust in Your plans. Fill me with Your peace, Lord, and guard my heart and mind. I know that with You by my side, I have nothing to fear. In Jesus' name, Amen.



The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed. Luke 4:18

I still remember the first time I truly grasped what it meant to be called to serve in The Leprosy Mission. It wasn't in a grand moment of revelation—it was in the quiet, almost unspoken connection with someone affected by leprosy. I had read stories and statistics, studied the Mission's impact, but nothing prepared me for the moment when I sat with a person whose life had been shaped by the disease.

She looked at me—not with bitterness, but with a quiet strength. As she shared about the rejection she had faced, about losing work, community, and dignity, something stirred in me. It wasn't pity—it was a deep conviction. This was why I was here. It wasn't just about treatment or programmes; it was about restoring dignity, reminding each person that their worth is untouched by the stigma society places on them.

In that moment, I saw God's heart in the work we do. It is not just about healing bodies—it is about restoring hope, rebuilding lives. My calling is not simply a job; it is a response to the deep injustice that still exists in the world. And every time I see someone regain confidence, find acceptance, or embrace their future without fear, I know that this calling is worth every challenge.

Afliana Lisnahan Reis (Nona), Executive Director, Misaun Lepra Timor-Leste.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for calling me to this work. It is not always easy, but You have shown me that love is stronger than stigma, and dignity can be restored through compassion. Give me the strength to serve with humility and patience. Let me be Your hands and feet, bringing comfort and hope. Help me to listen, to care deeply, and to remember that in each person I meet, I am encountering You. Amen.



Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8–9

Brothers and sisters of The Leprosy Mission Trust India, we stand today on sacred ground, a ground marked by compassion and a relentless pursuit of justice. Our work, deeply rooted in the heart of Christ, compels us to advocate for those often relegated to the margins, those affected by leprosy.

Proverbs 31:8–9 rings with divine urgency: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves... defend the rights of the poor and needy." This isn't a suggestion; it's a command. In a world where stigma and misinformation perpetuate suffering, our advocacy is a lifeline.

Our communication is not merely about disseminating information; it's about dismantling walls of prejudice. It's about weaving narratives of hope, restoring dignity, and reflecting the image of God in every person. Think of Moses, who, though hesitant, spoke truth to power. Think of Esther, whose courageous communication saved her people. Think of Jesus, who consistently lifted the voices of the marginalised.

As we engage with policymakers, communities, and individuals, let our words be seasoned with grace and truth. Let our communication be a beacon of light, illuminating the path towards inclusion and healing. Let us be bold in challenging injustice, relentless in seeking equity, and unwavering in our commitment to restoring wholeness.

Pray that our work continues to be a testament to the transformative power of Christ's love. Let us be His voice, His hands, His heart, bringing hope and healing to those who need it most.



Nikita Sarah is the Head of Advocacy and Communication at The Leprosy Mission Trust India.

Prayer

Loving God, strengthen and guide us as we strive to make TLM a safe place for everyone. Give us wisdom and courage to listen with open hearts, see with open eyes, and speak out to ensure that children, vulnerable people and our colleagues, are safe, loved, respected, and cared for. Amen.



Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. Philippians 2:3-4

The message of Philippians 2:3-4 resonates deeply with the advocacy and communication work of The Leprosy Mission Trust India. These verses challenge us to move beyond self-interest and embrace a life of humble service, a principle that directly informs TLMTI's efforts to dismantle stigma and empower those affected by leprosy.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit" translates into the commitment to tell authentic stories. The communication domain focuses on navigating various platforms especially in a world of evolving technology and strategising on amplifying the voices of people affected by leprosy to raise awareness and inspire action.

"In humility value others above yourselves" is evident in TLMTI's advocacy. Always putting people first, ensuring their voices are heard in policymaking and public discourse. Rather than taking the spotlight, the capacity of champions is built to help them speak for themselves, valuing their lived experience and inherent dignity.

"Not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others" guides TLMTI's strategies. Prioritising accurate information dissemination, challenging misconceptions and promoting understanding. The strategies focus on the needs of those affected, advocating for their rights to healthcare, education, and social inclusion.

The staff embody the humble service exemplified by Jesus. They "wash the feet" of the marginalised by fighting for their rights, challenging discriminatory practices, and fostering a society where they are treated with respect and dignity. By amplifying their voices and advocating for their needs, they are actively living out the call to prioritise the interests of others, extending God's love and grace through their impactful work.



Nikita Sarah is the Head of Advocacy and Communication at The Leprosy Mission Trust India.

Prayer

Almighty God, Grant wisdom and courage to those who work tirelessly to advocate for people affected by leprosy, to challenge and change systems and practices, and to bring hope to the hopeless. Guide the communication, that it may penetrate the hearts of policymakers and communities alike. May the efforts translate into tangible change, restoring dignity and hope. Amen



Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Philippians 2:2

The Leprosy Mission's advocacy and communication team, in their vital work, mirrors the collaborative spirit found throughout scripture. Just as the early church functioned as a body where each part was essential (1 Corinthians 12), so too must our efforts be united. Consider Nehemiah, rebuilding Jerusalem's walls. He didn't work alone. He rallied the people, each tribe and family contributing their strength (Nehemiah 3). Similarly, our advocacy and communication requires a coalition of voices.

The government, as stewards of justice, holds significant power to enact change. When we partner with them, we amplify the voices of the marginalised, ensuring policies reflect compassion and equity. Just as Moses sought Pharaoh's ear, we must engage with authorities, presenting the truth with grace and persistence.

Partnerships with other NGOs, faith-based organisations, civil-society organisations and community leaders create a powerful chorus. Each brings unique expertise and reach, strengthening our collective impact. When we share resources and strategies, we break down silos and build a unified front against stigma and discrimination.

The Leprosy Mission consistently strives to highlight these partnerships, showcasing the strength of unity. By demonstrating how collaboration translates into tangible change—improved healthcare, social inclusion, and restored dignity—we inspire others to join the cause.

Just as Jesus sent his disciples out in pairs (Mark 6:7), recognising the power of shared witness, we continue to embrace partnership as a cornerstone of our work. For in unity, we find strength, and in collaboration, we witness the transformative power of God's love.



Nikita Sarah is the Head of Advocacy and Communication at The Leprosy Mission Trust India.

Prayer

Dear Lord, unite us in purpose, as your body is one. Strengthen our partnerships with governments and all who seek justice. Empower us to amplify the voices of the marginalised, that together, we may bring healing and wholeness to those affected by leprosy. Amen.



Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8–9

We are all made in God's image, aren't we? Then why is it that some of us often find ourselves unequal with the rest and are looked down upon for acquiring a disease? A sense of being left behind and a feeling of being discriminated against pervades through the minds of people affected by leprosy. The Lord tells us to "do good, seek justice, and correct oppression", and we must follow His words to the hilt.

As followers of the Son of God, it will be unbecoming for us to deny fundamental rights to our fellow citizens just because they have leprosy, a disease that already takes away a lot from them. Our duty beckons us to be empathetic and to understand the pain our fellow friends are suffering and alleviate that with all our means at our disposal. People affected by/ cured of leprosy are often deprived of their right to timely and proper treatment, right to build skills and access a livelihood, and several other basic rights. We need to correct that. We need to look up to our Lord and draw inspiration from His life so that we can act against any injustice meted out to people affected by leprosy. They are as entitled to basic human rights as us.



Subhojit Goswami, Senior Program Manager – Advocacy & Communications, The Leprosy Mission Trust India

Prayer

Pray for the Lord's wisdom as The Leprosy Mission pushes the limits of its understanding of human rights issues affecting people affected by leprosy and tries to mobilise ideas, resources and commitment from different stakeholders to create an inclusive policy and legal environment for them.



Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love. 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

We are able to take care of our health only when we have the necessary awareness and know-how on signs and symptoms and diagnosis. This is true for leprosy as well. For millennia, people had harboured exaggerated fears about leprosy; they were repulsed at the sight of a person affected and almost drove them away. The reason behind such actions is ignorance and lack of understanding.

This is why The Leprosy Mission has been earnestly pursuing awareness campaigns to dispel fear and myths that create a whole lot of ripple effect in terms of delayed diagnosis and disability. In Isaiah 41:10, the Lord assures us, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." We count on the Lord's guidance to strengthen communities with awareness, accurate information, and persistent nudges at seeking early diagnosis and treatment.

We are confident that the Holy Father will guide us in designing more effective leprosy awareness campaigns that can bring a heightened level of leprosy awareness among at-risk populations, impacting people across all genders, age groups and levels of vulnerability.



Subhojit Goswami, Senior Program Manager – Advocacy & Communications, The Leprosy Mission Trust India

Prayer

May the Lord's wisdom be upon us as we think of new ideas and ways to develop awareness campaigns that can put an end to all misconceptions and motivate at-risk populations to go for early diagnosis.

