



Glenn Gazette

Weekly News Report from the GLENN FAMILY FOUNDATION

Monday 18th February, 2008

Volume 1, Issue 4

Special points of interest:

- Father Ruiz SPECIAL—Leprosy.
- Alana's Blogs are now online!!
- www.glennfamilyfoundation.org

Father Ruiz & Leprosy...

In an earlier article printed in Issue 2 (04/02/08) we introduced you to Mother Mary Goisis from Macau. In this weeks feature story I'd like to focus on an equally influential figure in Macau who GFF has had a long standing friendship with - Fr. Luis Ruiz Suarez S.J. and his work with leprosy.

Father Luis Ruiz Suárez is a Spanish Jesuit who after leaving Spain in 1930 and studying in Belgium and Cuba he arrived in China in 1941. He was ordained Priest in Shanghai and started his apostolate teaching English and visiting the Christianities but in 1951 fell sick with typhus and had to leave China, landing in Macau to recover his health. Father Ruiz was the nucleus and force behind immense charitable work in Macau during the 50's, 60's and 70's but today I draw focus to his work with the lepers.

This particular work gained momentum after a providential encounter in mainland China with an old Chinese Priest in 1985 who took Father Ruiz to visit a group of lepers, forsaken in a small island of the province of Guangdong,

Tai Kam. Isolated by the sea, without telephone, nobody wanted to go there. Father Ruiz immediately offered assistance through the Sisters of St. Anne who within 5 years of patience and sacrifice together with their love and affection to the lepers, transformed the center into one of the best leprosarium.

Leprosy is a chronic disease caused by a slow multiplying bacterium. It dates back to 600 BC and throughout history, the afflicted have often been ostracized by their communities and families. Transmission of the disease occurs via droplets, from the nose and mouth, during close and frequent contact with untreated cases. Symptoms can take between 5 to 20 years to appear with skin lesions being the primary external symptom. However left untreated, leprosy can be progressive, causing debilitating permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs, and eyes. The age-old social stigma associated with the advanced form of leprosy lingers in many areas, and remains a major obstacle to self-reporting and early treatment.

Story continued on page 2.



Father Ruiz blesses a leprosy sufferer at Lufeng leprosy centre in Yunnan Province (2007).

LEPROSY FEATURE

We're on the web!
www.glennfamilyfoundation.org

Weekly News Report from the GLENN
FAMILY FOUNDATION

Glenn Family Foundation Ltd
Kingston Chambers, P.O. Box 173,
Road Town, Tortola,
British Virgin Islands.

Registration Number: 1398339

*We'd love to hear from you—please send all
enquires, compliments and complaints to:*

E-mail: lauraede@glennfamilyfoundation.org



Cutaneous leprosy lesions on a
patient's thigh



Father Ruiz & Leprosy Con't

Surprisingly it was only in 1940 that effective treatment for leprosy appeared with the introduction of the drug called dapsone and its derivatives. However, gradually the bacteria in leprosy became resistant to this drug and caused it to be ineffective! It wasn't until the early 1980's when Doctors introduced what's called "Multi-Drug Therapy" (MDT) which means today Leprosy is a curable disease and treatment provided in the early stages averts disability. With minimal training, leprosy can be easily diagnosed on clinical signs alone.

In 9 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America leprosy is still considered a public health problem with these countries accounting for about 75% of the global disease burden. Approximately 410 000 new cases of leprosy were detected during 2004 compared to a peak of 804 000 in 1998. At the beginning of 2005, 290 000 cases were undergoing treatment. Father Ruiz now oversees the running of 74 Leper Centres with 20 of these having Sisters care for over 1200 leprosy patients. On the back page we have included photos from the Lufeng leprosy centre in Yunnan Province.

Father Ruiz, a man of 90 plus years of age, still continually visits more than 100 Chinese leprosa-ria which are seldom visited by Health Department officials. He is determined to travel the many miles over challenging terrain to express his affection to these people. As he often repeats "what the lepers are mostly lacking is affection and love". At the same time, in each of the leprosa-ria he visits, a meeting with the authorities takes place to decide what kind of improvement is most urgent to transform these miserable centres into human being living quarters. **GFF donated US\$500,000.00 last year to Father Ruiz to continue his unconditional work.**

Next week we'll touch base on the link between GFF, Father Ruiz and Mother Mary.