



OUR SOCIAL MISSION

BY CARITAS SINGAPORE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Giving Hope – every Catholic’s vocation

Hope is an essential ingredient in life especially in times of difficulty and when life looks bleak. All it takes is for someone to extend a helping hand and give benevolently.

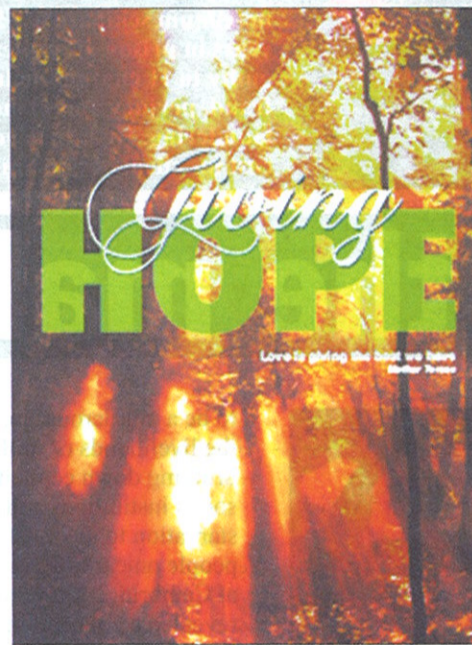
WHAT reasons do people have for hope, if they are not able to meet even the basic needs of life or are battling an emotional loss or the challenges of having taken a wrong fork on the road of life?

A new booklet, *Giving Hope*, shares true stories of individuals who have been able to overcome the burden of their circumstances.

From an ex-inmate to a person with HIV and an estranged couple, the 18 stories recounted in *Giving Hope* also demonstrate the charitable work of our many Catholic charities and groups in making a difference in the lives of those in need.

Giving Hope provides a listing of the various programmes and services provided by Catholic charities and groups. These include support for marriages (for example, troubled marriages, marriage enrichment and pre-marriage counselling), family (elderly, special needs children, delinquent youth and so on) and the marginalised (migrant workers, AIDS patients, prisoners, and others).

More than the Catholic charities, *Giving Hope* shows how many Catholics have answered the call of Jesus to help “the least

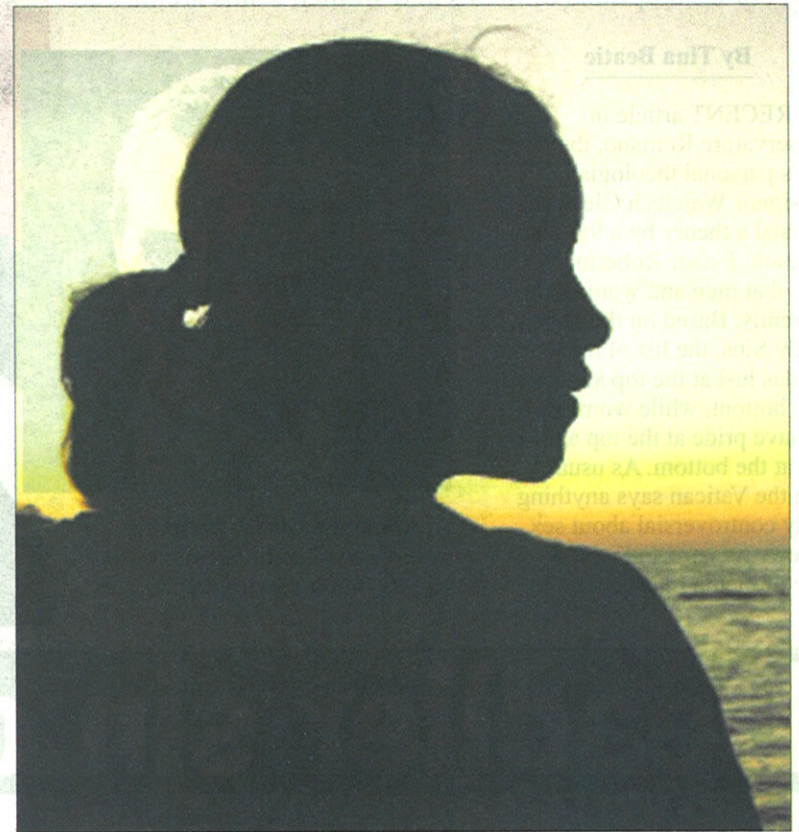


of my brothers”.

Reaching out to help the poor and the needy is a vocation of every Catholic. This is what the Catholic social teaching means by being in solidarity with each other. The commandment of Jesus to love one another as He has loved us should spur Catholics to commit acts of kindness and to give benevolently.

To read the inspiring stories of those who have been helped and those who help, pick up your copy of *Giving Hope* at your parish.

You may also contact Caritas Singapore (telephone: 6337 3711, email: info@caritas-singapore.org) for a copy.



I was a stranger, and you welcomed me...

When Anna married a Singaporean, she dreamt that she would live happily ever after. Little did she know it was the beginning of a nightmare. This is an excerpt from a story in the booklet “Giving Hope”.

IT IS the dream of many migrant workers in Singapore to settle down here. Some lucky ones do find love, get married and make this island city their home.

Like many foreigners before her, Anna (not her real name) came to Singapore 13 years ago, when she was 33, in search of a better life for herself and to provide for her family back in her home country.

While working in Singapore, she met and fell in love with a Singaporean. They married in 1995. It would seem her dream had come true.

Unfortunately for Anna, her dream turned into a nightmare shortly after. Her ordeal started about five months after her marriage, when she was expecting her first child. Her husband started to beat her and abuse her verbally. She remembered an attack in 2000 as the most violent.

Having no one to turn to, Anna was totally helpless but she endured the physical abuse and constant intimidation, all for the sake of her son.

In 2006, she took another major beating which ended with her head all bloodied. She called a public hotline for people in distress. Through a referral from the Novena Church where she went sometimes, she got to know about the Family Life Society. A counsellor took her to the Good Shepherd Centre to seek temporary shelter and she stayed there for three months with her son.

During that time, the Good Shepherd Centre referred her to the Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (ACMI). It sought legal assistance for her from the

Catholic Lawyers Guild which provided the service of a lawyer free of charge.

The Catholic lawyer also gave her emotional support. A Domestic Exclusion Order was obtained for her, and she and her son were able to return to live in the matrimonial flat for six months while her husband stayed elsewhere.

An ACMI staff followed up with personal visits and telephone calls to guide and encourage her during the transition.

At last, Anna had someone whom she could confide in and be guided by.

The separation from her husband gave Anna the space and time she needed to heal and recover from her long ordeal. She was encouraged to learn from her parents in her home country that her husband had visited them in December 2006 to seek their forgiveness. He had also tried many times to see her and their son while they were staying at the Good Shepherd Centre and after they had returned to the flat.

Anna eventually reconciled with her husband, and the family started living together again in July 2007. Her husband’s attitude and behaviour towards her changed for the better.

Anna takes comfort in knowing that she is no longer alone and helpless in Singapore. She has found friends at ACMI who are willing to help in times of need. She is also aware of her rights as a migrant and wife.

Anna can now look towards the future with renewed hope and optimism, thanks to the help of so many strangers who stepped forward to help in her darkest hour.

Please give generously.



IN THE current difficult economic situation, the number of people in need is on the rise. Our Catholic charities are facing greater challenges providing for the new poor and those displaced by companies struggling to survive.

Let us do our part to give hope to those who are in need.

Please pick up a Charities Week appeal envelope from your parish and return it. Alternatively, you may write a cheque to “Caritas Singapore Community Council” and mail it to:
 Caritas Singapore Community Council
 55 Waterloo Street #09-03
 Catholic Welfare Centre
 Singapore 187954

Please provide your NRIC number if you require a tax exempt receipt. There is a 250 per cent tax deduction available for donations made this year. For more information, visit www.caritas-singapore.org.