

## From Dr. P. Krishnamurthy

It is difficult to reconcile to the fact that Claire is no more with us.

My association with her spanned about three decades. The first time when I met her at Central Leprosy Teaching and Research Institute, I approached her with a touch of trepidation for I had known from the people at the Institute where I started my leprosy journey that she was a no-nonsense, professional who did not care for personal affiliations in dealing with people working in the programme. How wrong they were was proved by the way she treated me; not like a kid who was trying to take a few tentative steps in leprosy but like a like-minded professional. I could see the twinkle in her eyes when she saw my discomfort. It was affection first sight.

The warm comradeship that started that day kindled an everlasting kinship. I came to know later that she could easily gauge the passion to serve in very people she met and that was one thing that made her believe and trust. Every encounter with her was a lesson in "patients first - programme next - numbers last" attitude. She never hesitated to ask questions; and she was always willing and ready to listen. Her regal bearing and humble disposition brought her instant recognition and positive response.

When two years back she decided to leave India and settle in Belgium she cried. I had never seen her losing her composure. She said: "Sorry, I am leaving. I considered everything. I don't know whether I am doing the right thing". I consoled her and told her: "Claire, hitherto you have lived for others. It is time you live for yourself". She was happy that she confided. She said she would not return.

But a few months later she had to return to receive the Gandhi award from the Vice President of India. That was the last time I saw her. I could see happiness writ large on her face. She was happy not because she got the award, but she was able to see her friends and well wishers.

It is hard to believe that she is no more. Physically she is not here but she lives in my heart and in the heart of millions of others. She continues to live through her ideals and values that she has left as legacy.

Claire was not a deity but she had the divinity of being a great human. She lived for others. Let us live for her values. Regards,

Dr. Krishnamurthy