

From Sister Maria Armelle

In January 1964, three of us little sisters came from France to Trivandrum to start a fraternity in Pirappancode village. Archbishop Mar Gregorios helped us to get our visas in order to join the leprosy control project of the Malankara diocese. We knew that Claire was working in Tamil Nadu where we could get some training. We were so happy to be welcomed by her in Pollambakam for one week... It was there that I could appreciate her competence as well as her dedication to the people. I sensed her deep respect for the persons, patients and staff. Her awareness of God's presence in everything impressed me. That encounter was for me an encouragement to plunge into the new adventure that awaited us.

Many years later I met Claire on a more friendly basis, thanks to the little brothers and Nalini. Then only I discovered her greatness as well as her fragility. I always felt that we were on the same boat... I really admired her willpower and open mindedness, even in times of discouragement. When she was in the period of deciding to leave Polambakkam and I knew it was a difficult decision to make, I had the chance to spend a week with her. As we walked through the village I could feel the mutual loving relationship between her and the people, young and old, even though they looked up to her respectfully as a doctor. I was touched by this very genuine sense of belonging to each other and realized how hard it could have been for her to make a decision to leave.

I thank God for the person that Claire has been to all of us and I keep in my heart an ever living memory of her.

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