

# Claire remembers Yvonne

(Translation)

## First trip

My first glance at India together with a beaming Yvonne, made me feel immediately in love with this burgeoning mass... All at once she saw the possibility - hitherto unexplored by a well structured "mission" – of an "auxiliary" presence (yet very particular by its professional honesty and its universal approach) in that Indian environment so compartmentalized in non-touching colleagues and untouchable patients ! At first sight, she pushed me towards full integration.

Thinking to that candid trip that we started together to explore the deep India, I am still touched by her deep love for the Lord, turned to her close neighbour. She had a simple approach with anyone. I admired her wonder at all that is beautiful and good, and her curiosity to understand, to go inside the new things she saw. (...)

I hear her saying "No trifles", that is to say : let's drop everything that is not essential, which is not in the path of the goal we are called to follow, hindering the freedom of God's children . Yes, I think about all this now, including how Yvonne colored my 25 years of commitment to the caring of 25,000 leprosy patients in Polambakkam.

## Love makes free

There are so many things that can cut our enthusiasm : the difficulties of the work, criticism, discouragement - to yourself mainly... - and I think of those famous trifles ! What is important ? That my fraternal presence would be a sign of Lord's love, given without return. That more and more patients would be cured of their physical and social disease. That the leprosy endemic would decrease as much as the hope of its disappearance for all mankind. That the sick, all the poor would have the same rights as other... So why stop at difficult times? Particularly when it is so obvious that if I am here today it is because the Lord has put my tent here. And I think Yvonne is happy to see me now as an Indian citizen...

This is an opportunity to make a new discovery of India, a reintegration into the continent and even internationally. In fact, a short WHO consultancy last year, led me in 4 states outside the too well-known Polambakkam circle... Being now Indian, I feel as accepted by my siblings and my responsibility has increased. I intend to leave the Centre and to take a one-year sabbatical to learn speaking a new language and thus to start again somewhere else in the spirit of cheerful approach, simplicity and frank freedom of Yvonne.

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