



A MINISTRY OF OUR LADY'S NURSES FOR THE POOR

December 2017

Dear friends of the Brown Nurses,

What does the festive season mean for the people in our care? A lucky few can look forward to Christmas gatherings with loving families; one gentleman has a new lady friend (and we've shyly been requested to buy her a gift); others have a circle of mates to keep them company on the day – albeit imbibing a little too freely. For many, though, it can be a lonely time.

One of our male clients may be spending his Christmas in hospital recovering from major surgery. A relatively young man, aged 55, he has been losing his sight over many years due to a degenerative condition and lives with the added stress of a mental illness that renders him suspicious of others or highly anxious. He was recently advised that he required surgery on his spine. As the surgeon bluntly informed him, without it he could become a quadriplegic – and the surgery itself is not without risk.

One of our team accompanied the gentleman to the hospital on the day of his admission. When we called several hours later to check on his progress, we learned that the surgery had been cancelled and he'd been sitting there none-the-wiser (and hungrier by the hour). Despite repeated reminders, hospital staff had not consistently observed protocols regarding visually impaired patients, or made arrangements for his safe transport home. When we collected him ourselves, he was philosophical about the cancellation, owing to other surgeries running late, and has been re-booked for December.

As if that wasn't enough of a burden, the scheduled refurbishment of his public housing unit commenced in the weeks leading up to his original admission date. What started out as a kitchen upgrade expanded to include bathroom tiling, painting, and floor coverings. Each day brought a phone call from him to say that some new and unanticipated project was underway, seeking assistance with packing and cleaning, or asking us to negotiate with tradespeople who had arrived on his doorstep early in the morning wanting to measure up or rearrange his belongings. Understandably, this caused considerable disruption and trip hazards for him as he navigated the ever changing terrain in his home.

His circumstances remind us of our obligation to give succour to those living in "darkness" – be it physical or emotional.



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The three clients we wrote about in the June newsletter have since passed away, however, we were comforted by the knowledge that each of them spent their final days in a dignified and caring environment. We were successful in finding loving homes for one client's pets, bringing considerable peace of mind to their owner.

Our young friends from O'Connor House at Rosebank College marked the school's 150th anniversary by collecting personal items and toiletries for our clients. We noticed some familiar faces when we visited them recently; some of the students we originally met in 2015 are sitting their HSC this year. We wish them well!

In closing, I wish to acknowledge the work of our Registered Nurses and Administration Manager who continue to exemplify the Ministry spirit in support of those most marginalised members of our community. I also call to mind former members of our team, who may be away from Glebe in person but never far from our thoughts. On behalf of the people in our care, we thank you for the ongoing generosity that allows us to provide them with a measure of comfort and Christmas cheer.

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Sincerely,

Wendy Peddell RN
Director of Services