



SHELTER FROM THE STORM

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the world to a standstill. The confusion and panic of the patients and families stranded in Vellore was heartbreaking.

But in these difficult times the goodness of people comes to light.

We had patients from all over the country, and many international patients especially from Bangladesh. The Public Relations Office was buzzing with activity, solving peoples travel crisis and worst of all - the food crisis. So many people were left without food.

The social distancing protocols were forcing local lodges to shut down. When this happened our patient's last hope was CMC. We arranged places for them to stay and spoke to some lodges to accommodate them for a little longer in this crisis.

The rumours and misinformation were especially hard to deal with. Patients came in thousands to CMC asking for a letter which will allow them to travel. But no such letters were permitted or authorized by the Government. We had to explain that these are false rumours. Thankfully, District Administrators were soon able to organise trains designated to take them to their home states.

Our Chatram (shelter) was another place where we could clearly see the hand of God. Here our patients are provided with low cost, shared accommodation and food. More than 60 patients' families, from all over India, stayed here. We were miraculously supported by so many generous volunteers. Individuals and organisations came forward to give food, gas cylinders and supplies for families in the Chatram.

The Manna Meals scheme, coordinated by our Missions team, gives food coupons to patients and their families at the Chatram. During lockdown, this was extended to other patients in need of food. So far, we have distributed over 13,500 food coupons for meals at our canteen.

These experiences were a great learning for us. We learned to cope with new problems. We became aware of the situation. We followed the instructions provided by CMC's Administration. Together, we were able to overcome our fear and confusion and help our patients.



Mr. Rozario