

# Miserable Scenes of Life!

Tra Vinh, a place in the Mekong Delta province, is known for rice production. In the southwestern region, it is a favorable sea area for aquaculture. There are many Khmer people — most of them are very poor. The remote and isolated areas of Tra Vinh are also home to many unfortunate lepers.

In My Cam commune, Cang Long district, there is a rickety hut, which belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Sinh and their family.

Due to feelings of inferiority from leprosy, Mrs. Sinh has not stepped out of the house. She dares not to raise her head to look at anyone, staying away from her village and market. She does not know civilized society. Accepting her illness, day after day, she walks around their tattered hut, living happily with her husband and child. Her life is pitiful, but I admire her!

Her husband, Mr. Sinh, is quite healthy but is blind and still has a good memory. After talking to him once, if he hears a voice again, he can immediately recognize who it is. With blind eyes, he cannot distinguish between day and night, but he still wades into ponds to catch snails and pick vegetables for the whole family every day.

Mrs. Sinh is over 60 years old this year. Her hard, strong hands are gouged by leprosy bacteria, and she has gradually lost all ten fingers. It seems like she accepts fate. Every time we visit, she is still happy. Looking at her hands, we feel compassion for her, unable to stop our tears. Leprosy disease has gnawed at her life for nearly 40 years. Currently, she is the main laborer in the family; every day, she must use her disabled hands to take care of them, including a son with mental illness.

Her family home is a leaf hut with only a small bamboo bed for her son. The floor is her sleeping place, and the hammock behind the house is her husband's year-round resting place. Her family today has enough rice and warm clothes, thanks to Friends of the Lepers Association and your loving kindness and compassion.

You bring joy and hope to them. Through you, they can feel like they are still human beings, loved, supported, and know that their fellow human beings understand their pain. Mrs. Sinh's family is not alone; there are many, many more that live in hardship.

Along three provinces of Vinh Long, Ben Tre, and Tra Vinh, our congregation of Lovers of the Holy Cross of Cai Mon does our missionary and social work. There are more than 500 leprosy patients who have not received care. That is not a small number. In remote areas, in faraway fields, they look forward to receiving love!

As the one responsible for taking care of patients, I cannot help but grieve to see them in pain, misery, poverty, alienation, and loneliness.

We are healthy, have loving hearts, and want to ease their pain. But our capacity is as small as a tiny grain of sand. I earnestly plead for your hearts and love to care for Hansen/leprosy patients. Please continue to help them. I wish to have the honor of being an extended arm of your generous hearts.

Thank our Lord for people still loving each other!

**Nguyen Thi Hong Hoa**

Congregation of Lovers of the Holy Cross of Cai Mon