

# Anta Akhi Newsletter

## You, My Brother

*Serving a life of dignity of the person with disability*



December 2012



*Luminous is the Word of God.  
Pacifying, it gives strength to handle all situations, the difficulties...  
Because it tells us with what Love we are loved!  
of what tenderness we are « curled up » !  
Just for us to feed of this word, will allow us to grow,  
To free ourselves from everything that stifles life, happiness in us.  
Steeped in the Word, we become embodied expression,  
witnesses of Him who keeps telling us His Love every day.  
And the Word was made flesh in Mary by the Holy Spirit.  
She lives with us, in us, to tell us and lead us to the Father.  
What our God could have done more  
What He continues to do for us, in us, through us?  
So that our joy may be full that nothing and no one can snatch us,  
May we not cease to recognize the wonders of the Lord,  
In singing, praising, and glorifying Him...*

Yvonne Chami

## Live the gift of joy!

Dear friends,

It is not necessary to be rich or healthy to be able to exist and live happy. Joy is a gift given to each one of us, disable or healthy, by our Creator, so that we can live with and for other the joy of gift. For the joy does not last if I keep it to myself, it flourishes and grows by living with and for others. At Anta Akhi, we are together! Together to pray! Together to work, to talk, and to love! Together to overcome our difficulties, to offer pleasant moments, and especially to prepare for Christmas! October, November, December, three months as a hive to ensure the Christmas

atmosphere of joy!



The ability to live Christmas is conditioned by the love we have for God and especially for our fellow men.

Dear friends, we are all called to live this gift of joy, this gift that we have received

for free and that we have to give freely to those who are sad, tired, exhausted, desperate and marginalized.

This is why Christmas is the opportunity given to us to discover God's love in the child Jesus, the love that is embodied in us, by our presence to each other, respect and prayer!

Together to flood the joy!

The joy of Christmas!

*Roula Najem*

*Founder of continuity of  
Anta Akhi/HVE*

*Deputy Director General*

## Our Lebanese friends, in Saudi Arabia and in United Arab Emirates!

Our Lebanese friends came together, since a year, to help our young people with disabilities. In Saudi Arabia, the amount they have collected through the group of Ms. Daou has allowed us to implement a tent for a recreational and festive space for our youth. Also Mr. And Mrs. Saad mobilized a group of friends for the purchase of audiovisual equipment. As for the group living in UAE, it has contributed to the purchase of a computer, *along with the contribution of Mr. Medawar*. Thank you dear friends for your big heart!

**Anta Akhi France: A big Thank You!** Thank you for all the friends of France Anta Akhi who celebrated for the eighth consecutive year, their gala dinner. This year, the diner took place on December 1, 2012 at Westin Hotel, Paris. Dear friends, thank you for the love you have for our young people with disabilities and thank you for all the support you give to our work.

**Welcome to Elisabeth Chaumont** who joined our family in Lebanon since October 2012 for two years, as part of the CDC – Catholic Delegation for Cooperation. Elisabeth who is part of the Franciscan Fraternity of Bitche – France, will assist Yvonne in organizing and making available the existential training materials.



## At Anta Akhi, It is Christmas «month »! Come and see!

Christmas ! A time of grace for all of us. Our savior comes to visit us bringing peace with him. Our youth at the Tenderness Home along with their parents and friends have understood: it is with great joy that they welcome the Child Jesus and about his birth, it is a month of celebrations that is lived in peace, joy and love. All! Friends attending on their own or through their schools, movements, companies get together and come to participate with our youth moments that will remain etched in everyone's heart.



The « month » of Christmas at Anta Akhi runs until January 6. To live it in beauty and guarantee a great atmosphere, all the team is mobilized, well before December.

The month begins by drawing the name of the hidden friend: the youth and the team participate at this game which allows being more present particularly for the needs of the other and these are small gestures of affection that embellish our daily lives.

On December 3rd: To celebrate Saint Barbara, our young people spend a wonderful evening animated by the seminarians of Saint John, Harissa who make sure to book this date for us.

December 19 is a special day for the team of Anta Akhi and the youth: « Christmas together » is a much awaited moment! We have fun during the day full of songs and a lot of games and where we unveil the hidden friend. So we get all the festive atmosphere et we are ready to celebrate the next day the great Christmas Mass which combines the family of SeSoBEL and Anta Akhi. We participate with a lot of emotions, enjoying the live nativity made up of children of SeSoBEL and their animators.

The days pass and it is the moment to celebrate a great tradition at Anta Akhi: «Traveling Christmas»! Jesus comes to us! The day of December 24 consists of the heart of action at Anta Akhi regarding Christmas and the youth: faithful to the advent of the Savior, we accompany Jesus in *the Holy Sacrament* in his visit to the youth with disabilities who stayed at home. From house to house, 50 persons including priests, seminarians, volunteers and members of the team are divided into four groups and visit 30 families. Greeted with great joy, we pray together, and youth and their families receive the Body of Christ. After thanking the Lord, we sing Christmas hymns accompanied by a guitar or a darbuka while welcoming Santa Claus with his candy and his gifts ...

At the same time, at the Tenderness Home, everything is ready to celebrate the Child Jesus: our youth put their best clothes for the

festive diner. They are grouped around a special menu offered by the ladies committee of Anta Akhi! After we feasted, we are ready to sing Christmas, worship the Lord, and participate in the midnight Mass.

« Gloria in Exelcis Deo » The lord is born! Halleluiah!

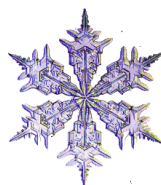
... And then... as tradition demands... we open our Christmas gifts! And then, it is really nice to see the child look in each one of us, a look that translated impatience to discover what lies behind the packaging. We thank all those who contributed to the Christmas gifts for our youth.

Christmas Eve is over, we welcome for the next two days the visitors and friends who want to share with us the joy of the feast; and the night of the 26th, it is us who go to Our Lady of Lebanon – Harissa, to congratulate Mary the Mother for the birth of Her Son and celebrate the Mass.



To end the year in style, we celebrate New Year' Eve with our friends. After the festive diner, we take time for Eucharistic adoration and we participate in the midnight Mass in thanking the Lord for the past year and entrusting him with the upcoming one. We entrust him also with our big family, thanking him for all the friends who contributed to ensure that we have a daily full of dignity, as well as our country that is experiencing a difficult situation! And then... We continue the celebration through dance.

We end the festivities of Christmas on January 6, the feast of the Epiphany by giving the possibility to our youth to thank the team of Anta Akhi who gives generously to make our Tenderness Home a home of love everyday!



### Traveling Christmas – Jesus comes to us! Parents, youth and animators express their feelings

The parents of our youth are very touched and express their feelings by offering us pastry and asking us to stay more ... Some are moved to tears: « thank you for thinking of us! ». As for the youth, everyone expresses in his own way: Fady O. welcomes us with his « habibi » usual darling, Elie Z. tells us his joy with plenty of sounds, Fady R. and his sister Rira pray, from Paul A. comes a great peace... As for Lara, it is with a lot of laughs and satisfied nods she communicates her joy ... « What affects me the most is the fact of living the true meaning of Christmas. Yes, you can be present for others so they can be happy » says Elie K. who is part of the tour.

As for Carlos, he wrote a small testimony: « Thank you for the opportunity given to me to participate in this day. It was a day blessed by the Lord yesterday. We were very united and we sent the precious Heart of Jesus to every family. Joy and love were present in every one of us who participated and in every person to whom we visited. Thank you my God »



## Fadi: « When God gives us family life, he also gives us the grace of faith. »

Fadi, 38 years, is a young man who lives permanently in the Home of Tenderness since 2006; he has the syndrome of Marinesco-Sjögren which results in a progressive loss of the neuromuscular faculties. Fadi moves with a wheelchair and nowadays he can hardly see, very difficult for him to hear but it is with joy that he spends his days. His authentic testimony results from a life full of prayer that he was able to maintain and develop.

### What is Christmas to you?

Christmas is the incarnation of our God on earth. Before God came to earth, we were in sin. But God's love for us is greater than our sin: God has become a human like us and participated in our life, except for sin.

When God came, he made us enter his family. We were scattered away from his path. I feel the joy thinking that God has left everything to come to me and bring me up to him. Thus, I join his family, me and all of us! God did not come only 2000 years ago, but even today he lives in us. Knowingly, I can live intensely all the events of the day.

When God came, he gave meaning to suffering, disability and any disease, and ... he gave us joy. He does not give us the disability nor the disease but he comes to he helps us, to bring us up to him, and lighten the weight we carry in saying: « I, I came to carry with you your grief. » This thought pleases me so much ! God carries with me my disability and I am not alone. Since it is true that neither suffering nor grief will disappear, but with our God, they become lighter. Yes, suffering is worth living in God's presence; this presence comforts me...

Before knowing God and Anta Akhi, I felt that Christmas was like any other day of the year. After meeting God, I knew that He wanted me to live my mission as a witness of His resurrection and His joy, and I started to feel practically the joy in my life. When I help my brother according to my ability, I feel the joy: if one of the disabled youth wants to move his hand, I help him do so; it is perhaps a simple thing to do but in God's eyes it is very important because I am helping God in person. It gives a lot of joy to think that what little

remains of my abilities, I do not keep it for myself but I put them in the service of my brother and God continues the rest.

### Christmas... Faith... Family

I love a lot Christmas because people get together. When we set the nativity and the tree, I try to imagine how God came to earth. And when we meet at Anta Akhi, I am pleased to see faces that I have not seen for a while.



As for the family, it is very important: we live complementarity, we share our experiences, and we express our needs, our joys, and our love for each other. If a person lives by itself and does not share its experience, it may live in the despair. The joy of God is incarnated in the family. When Mary and Joseph made the project of founding a family, God did not change their project but gave it a different meaning. It was not longer a « private » family but a family for the salvation of each person.



When we met, we pray also our family from heaven: Jesus said if two or three are gathered in His name, he will be among them; what will happen to a community or a family? What Joy would that bring? When we pray together, God is present and our family is in relation with his. We are all together and God hears our prayers. It warms my heart to think about it. When he gives us family life, he also gives us the grace of faith! Yes, this faith is embodied through the family!

### A last word?

I would like to conclude with a prayer:

*Thank you Lord for Thou has put gladness of Thy incarnation in our hearts and Your joy in our families. Help us Lord to be the joy of Christmas to live in practice every day and to share with our brothers. Let us know that You are present today and not only 2000 years ago, that You know each one by his name et that You want us to live as a family under your sight with You as the son of the same Father. We proclaim faith in you, we share everything, and we carry the concerns of our brothers as we carry ours.*

*At the end, I would like to tell You, You who came to us to bring us up to Thee: I thank you for this great grace. Give us always to be in union with You as our life has no meaning without You. With You Lord we can live the joy despite the difficulties and the disability. With You, everything is worth to be lived. Glory to Thee forever. Amen.*



# Georgette: « Anta Akhi at the heart of my love for Lebanon. »



It is thanks (!) to the war that I knew Lebanon and its people. At the time, we were paired with a school and the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes – Beirut. In the context of this friendship, I visited this country for the first time around Christmas 1989. Two years later, I returned to Lebanon with a delegation from the diocese.



And then, through Marie-Paule who is part of the Franciscan Fraternity of Bitche, we met Yvonne Chami. It is her visit that rekindled my desire to work for a Lebanese cause because I always hold in my heart the kindness of this people. This is how « I work » for Anta Akhi since 2006 thinking constantly of that smile that reflects the joy of living of the Lebanese people even under the bombshells and that I found in the lips of our protected with disabilities.

Since the beginning of the year I work to produce several and varied items to be sold at Christmas markets.

I am constantly looking for ideas to make quality items which the cost of materials would allow a reasonable sale price that is not too high. By mid-November, Marie-Claire helps me with Christmas markets and solicits potential buyers at home. Gradually, we manage to gather some money for the benefit of Anta Akhi.

We hope that this year too, the « clients » will be au rendezvous and we will be able to provide a little help, to our modest extent, to the protected of Anta Akhi. We will always be with you with all our heart. To all, we wish you a very Merry Christmas.

Georgette Klein

## News from Lebanon

The month of October was a very tiring month for the Lebanese who experienced with difficulty the attack in the popular district of Ashrafieh – Beirut. Lebanon still lives a very unstable period at a regional and national level; however it holds up! By the prayer of all his children, Christians and Muslims, and with the protection of Virgin Mary, we have avoided the worse.

Thank you to all who have prayed for Lebanon, and which have called distant countries to ask for our news.

We are confident that Lebanon is more than a country, it is a message – *Blessed Pope John Paul II* - and that it is possible that all its children can live in peace ; Isn't so that Pope Benedict XVI came to bring a lot of hope to our torn Middle East ? « I will leave you my peace » has been the slogan of his visit.

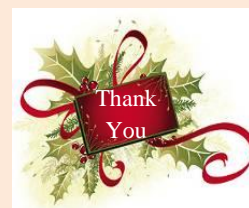
May we let the Spirit transform us so we can live everyday in peace, joy, love, and as brothers! And continue to believe that Mary, Queen of the Impossible can remain Queen of Lebanon, Queen of peace.

## Reminder

*Dear friends, our home is a house of prayer. Without a look fixed on Jesus, His Father, His Mother, His Spirit, we would not be able to continue and develop.*

*Our call today is to join us in prayer for the big family of Anta Akhi, all the families, and also Lebanon.*

*By the force of the prayer, confident in Jesus alive, we can cope with all the storms!*



## How to help Anta Akhi:

1. Sponsoring a young person starting \$10 (or €10) per month, \$120 (or € 120) per year.
2. Make a single donation possibly specifying the need that you want to support.

To make a donation with tax receipt in France, please contact [elisabeth.gorius@neuf.fr](mailto:elisabeth.gorius@neuf.fr)

Thank you for taking part in what we build together in our journey in life.

*If you wish to receive our newsletter via the internet rather than by paper mail, please notify us by email*

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