

News from the UN & Around the World

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A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 5th Edition of UNANIMA International's News from the UN and Around the World. I am writing this reflection on Nelson Mandela International Day, recalling the momentous occasion one year ago when world leaders unanimously adopted the Nelson Mandela Political Declaration. The Declaration reaffirmed the Principles of the UN Charter. Nelson Mandela was an "extraordinary global advocate for dignity and equality". As one of the most iconic and inspirational leaders of our time, he exemplified courage, resilience, compassion and commitment to freedom, peace and social justice.

We are also on this day winding up the 2019 High Level Political Forum at the UN in New York, where there is still lots of energy flowing. We have been here for the past ten days exchanging what it means to be bold in our fight for equality and realize human rights for all of humanity. During these days UNANIMA International has focused on Inequality and helping to identify the invisible and marginalized groups, especially women, children and girls.

As we work collectively for peace, stability, sustainable development, and human rights for all, we would be well served to remember the example set by Nelson Mandela when he said "our best tribute is found in actions". Mandela left a light in the world that continues to shine today. His light was one of justice, equality and hope.

Jean



HIGHLIGHTS


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FAMILY HOMELESSNESS: A PASTORAL REFLECTION

I have represented my congregation at the United Nations for two years now. My daily walk is characterized by re-familiarizing myself with the contours of the short walk to the UN from Grand Central. Sometimes, I venture on 43rd street, where, I am always greeted by a cheerful "good morning" by man when I pass St. Agnes Church. Mostly, on my way back to Grand Central, I walk toward 42nd street, and often see some homeless resting on the benches by the corner of 1st Avenue and 42nd street. I normally smile and greet them very quickly if they are awake. Now, I am getting familiar with them. I cannot ignore them. I feel pained that I could not do much, especially during the days when it is so hot, or when it is freezing. I found myself again with the 'homelessness' I see around me. The memories of my work in Taiwan are being re-lived. It haunts me I think.

"All the lonely people, where do they all come from?" a quote Fran Ferder and John Heagle borrowed from The Beatles began their chapter on Longing for Intimacy. "Is there enough love?" the authors quote a young woman as asking, who cannot reconcile her experience of intimacy and love in her family and what she witnesses around her. And how can we not have this kind of awareness and further ask questions, like: "Is there enough love in my life to keep me going from day to day? Is there enough connection so that I don't feel isolated and alone? Is there enough understanding, enough compassion to find meaning? How can I heal from the betrayals of love and the collapse of trust?" [Ferder and Heagle p. 45]. And how can we not feel "not being at home" with what is going on around our lives.

In working with women and men who have found refuge in the streets, the primary issue of homelessness is not only one of a lack of physical home, but the aloneness and isolation from their "home", whether this home is the self, family and friends, or society. The term "disaffiliation" may be useful in understanding this particular dehumanizing experience of homelessness. This is the psychological homelessness. Over a prolonged period of being in this situation this feeling of being alive and belongingness dies. The dignity and hunger for living slowly vanishes into the dirt and invisibility that one feels. This spark in the human capacity for living and authentic intimacy needs to be nurtured once more and "be brought home again". The helping tasks required of us staff and volunteers at Good Samaritan Women's Center requires the intimate compassion as that of the Good Samaritan in the story. Homelessness puts on a new quest and is thirsting for understanding in the light of intimacy or the lack of it in a human person...

Being present and facilitating trust and safe environment is our immediate response just as food, showers and clothing restore the physical well-being of some of our friends. And as for me, this is a test of whether I can love the stranger, even when my being stretched. Our service requires 'side by side intimacy' and 'back to back intimacy' [p. 151-153]. It is important to become a friend and the assurance of being with them until one finds themselves ready to be in relationship. It is the assurance of being with them in the unfolding task of reclaiming one's ability to be in relationship. It is a journey of celebrating togetherness in being both blessed and broken. In their book, Ferder and Heagle talk about shaping a theology of compassion. They suggest that the process of encouraging, healing and ministering to the community in the practice of Gospel vision is called pastoral theology. "Pastoral Ministry begins by accepting people where they are and listening respectfully to their stories, just as Jesus and the woman at the well...It is a presence to be offered. The first task is to offer a safe setting." [Ferder & Heagle, p. 213]

I suggest that the Spirituality of Intimacy reclaimed from the Gospel/Jesus example, is the basis for the caring of others who have or are suffering from disconnection, such as those who have found themselves homeless. The awareness of such, evokes us 'to see' and 'to act' and humbly return to ourselves, experiencing God's love.

By Marvie L. Misolas, MM

Referenced:

Tender Fires: The Spiritual Promise of Sexuality by Fran Ferder and John Heagle. Crossroad Publishing Co., New York, 2002



WHATS HAPPENING AT THE UN



NGO Committees Update



NGO Major Group (NGO MG)



As the key facilitation mechanism for participation and enhancing the engagement of non-governmental organizations in processes directly and indirectly related to the High Level Political Forum, the NGO MG has been very busy throughout the HLPF the months leading up to it. Throughout the forum the Major Group prepared a position paper, delivered statements, coordinated inputs to the Voluntary National Reviews and facilitated a side event titled "From Grounded Policy, Through Embodied Practice, To Broad Participation: The SDGs in action". As an active member of the Major Group UNANIMA International was among the organisers of this event. You can watch the Side event here: <https://www.facebook.com/NGOMajorGroup/videos/2551647721521470/>

If you would like to access a summary of the position paper click here: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=3170&nr=2144&page=view&type=30022>

NGO Committee on Social Development (NGO CSocD)

During the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) the NGO CSocD Grassroots Subcommittee hosted a side event titled "Lived Experiences of Inequalities (SDG 10); Grassroots respond". At this event we heard the initial results of the Inequalities survey distributed earlier this year and lived experiences of inequalities. Click here to watch some of this side event: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LK FCCtQfVx8Jsg31FF9QK720QBY6yVHq/view?fbclid=IwAR3UG0vx0n6KsoV61LvHy4cBBFocwy1u4P8pa584_oluAJZwqceZ29oomw For more information on this committee you can visit their website: <https://ngosocdev.org> or search them on Facebook.



Calling for 1000 Voices

In preparation for the 58th Commission for Social Development, themed "Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness" as well as ongoing advocacy efforts, UNANIMA International is collecting 1000 voices. We are looking for the voices of all, around how we as individuals experience, see or view the issue of Family Homelessness/ Displacement and Trauma.

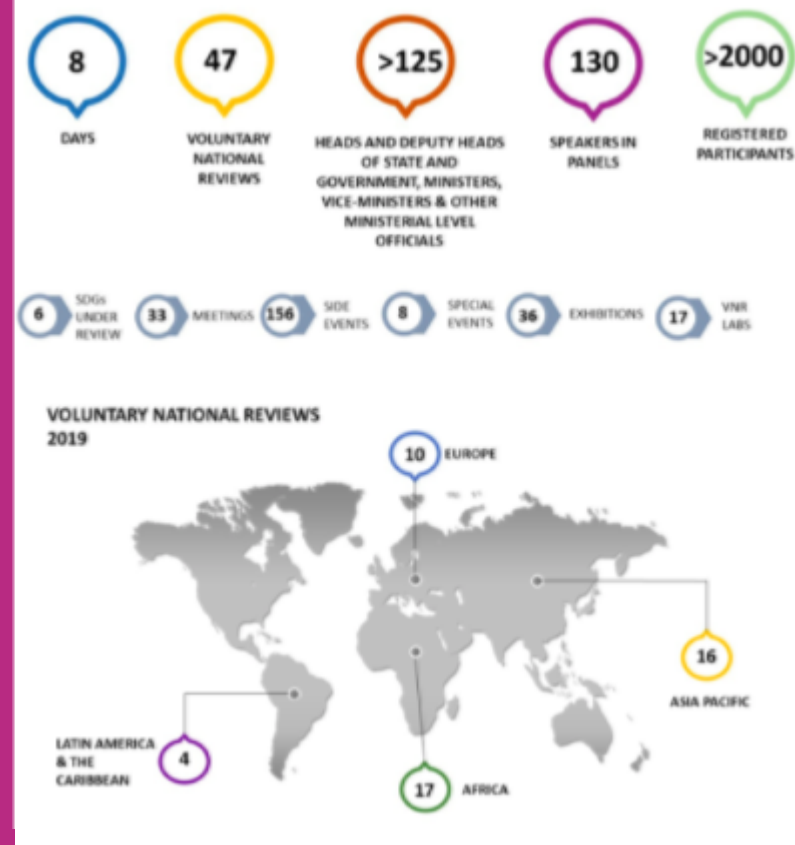
We would like to put a call out to everyone in our community and beyond to send us videos, voice recordings, art or other multimedia you wish to contribute. We are especially interested in hearing the voices of Women and Children/ Girls who have a lived experience of Homelessness/ Displacement and Trauma. If you have any questions or would like to contribute something please contact info@unanima-international.org.



#MakingaHome4Everyone

High Level Political Forum (HLPF) Review

From July 9-18th, 2019, the meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, at the United Nations in New York City. In its 4th year, this session's theme was "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality." Like its four preceding years, the 2019 HLPF focused on reviewing a set of the 17 goals in depth. In 2019, Goal 4: Quality Education; Goal 8: Decent Work for All; Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities; Goal 13: Combat Climate Change; Goal 16: Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies; and Goal 17: Partnership for Sustainable Development, were the focus goals. As you can see from the infographic below the Forum's programme was filled with meaningful interactions between Member States, the UN and Non-state stakeholders including NGOs. You can watch the official sessions of the HLPF on Sustainable Development on UN Web TV, by searching "2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2019)" or visit the programme here: <https://sustainabledeve>



Throughout the course of the forum UNANIMA International co-sponsored a total of 3 events: "SDG4: At the heart of achieving the 2030 Agenda," through our involvement in the NGO Committee on Migration; "From Grounded Policy, Through Embodied Practice, To Broad Participation: The SDGs in Action" through our involvement in the NGO Major Group; and "Lived Experiences of Inequalities (SDG 10); Grassroots respond" through our involvement in the NGO Committee on Social Development (Grassroots Subcommittee). Each of the events was well attended and contributed greatly to the dialogue that the HLPF facilitated. In addition to the side event JCoR held an orientation for member delegates attending the HLPF for the first time. This event was attended by UNANIMA International member Sister Mary Sreeja Chittilappilly, SND who upon reflection of her experience said "I appreciated the orientation given by JCoR before the HLPF. I would recommend HLPF or a similar experience for all those in leadership and others who commit to global transformation."

As well as co-sponsoring side events UNANIMA International undertook a significant advocacy campaign surrounding the topic of Family Homelessness/ Displacement (Specifically Women and Children/ Girls) and Trauma. Alongside networking and attending relevant events, the UNANIMA International Staff, along with some of our wonderful friends in New York, delivered advocacy packs and spoke to various Member States, gauging their interest in the topic. A number of connections were made with Member States that will surely lead to substantial collaborations and further advocacy in the future. If you would like an electronic copy of the advocacy kit please email info@unanima-international.org



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 2030 Agenda So Far

Since its adoption in 2015, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have provided, and have been used as a blueprint for the world to achieve Sustainable Development through the United Nations 5 P's: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. As 2030 edges closer we must question ourselves, our communities, our national government and the global community, if our actions today are establishing a foundation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Each year United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres releases a report titled "The Sustainable Development Goals Report", which gives evidence-based insights and identifies the progress, shortfalls and gaps in implementation so far. As well as giving an overview of the goals and implementation to date it highlights where more action needs to be taken to ensure "no one is left behind". Four years since their adoption, the 2019 Report identifies progress in many areas, including extreme poverty reduction, decrease in child mortality rates, widespread immunization, and increase in people's access to electricity. Unfortunately it also tells us that the global response thus far has not been ambitious enough and continues to leave the most vulnerable people and countries suffering the most.

The following are a number of key findings detailed in the 2019 report:

- Increasing inequality among and within countries requires urgent attention. Three quarters of stunted children live in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa; extreme poverty is three times higher in rural areas than urban areas; young people are more likely to be unemployed than adults; only a quarter of people with severe disabilities collect a disability pension; and women and girls still face barriers to achieving equality.
- The year 2018 was the fourth warmest year on record. Levels of carbon dioxide concentrations continued to increase in 2018. Ocean acidity is 26% higher than in pre-industrial times and is projected to increase by 100% to 150% by 2100 at the current rate of CO2 emissions.
- The number of people living in extreme poverty declined from 36% in 1990 to 8.6% in 2018, but the pace of poverty reduction is starting to decelerate as the world struggles to respond to entrenched deprivation, violent conflicts and vulnerabilities to natural disasters.
- Global hunger has been on the rise after a prolonged decline.

You can find the entire Sustainable Development Goals Report here <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/>

The SDG Summit

On 24 and 25 September 2019, Heads of State and Governments will come together at the United Nations Headquarters in New York for the Sustainable Development Goals Summit (SDG Summit). To convene under the auspices of the General Assembly (GA) this summit will follow up and to contribute to comprehensive review of progress and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) so far. As this is the end of the first four year cycle, this monumental event will be the first UN summit of its kind since the adoption of the Agenda in September 2015. As well as the inter-governmentally agreed political declaration, voluntary actions to accelerate SDG implementation will be announced before and during the Summit. You can find out more information about the Summit and factsheets on all 17 goals here: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsammit/home>



In preparation for the summit, the UN has launched the "SDG Acceleration Actions" register. This is a platform where initiatives voluntarily undertaken by countries and other stakeholders that contribute to a speeded up implementation of the 2030 Agenda can be shared. SDG Acceleration Actions can be registered by national Governments, local and regional governments, the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, international and regional financial institutions, major groups and other stakeholders including the private sector, civil society organizations, academic and research institutions, the scientific community, and other actors - individually or in partnership. If you would like to register your organization's Acceleration Actions visit this website: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/register/?source=90>



Top: Back Row -Stacy Hanrahan, Barbara Jean Head, Nonata Bezerra, Cathy Sheehan, Ellen Sinclair, Anne McCabe, Fran Gorsuch, Janice Belanger, Margaret Fyfe, Margaret Scott, Maureen Foltz, Pereka Nyirenda, Josee Therrien, Ces Martin, Eileen Davey Front Row- Barbara Spears, Jean Quinn, Lucille Goulet, Mary Akinwale and Janet Petersworth
 Bottom left: Jean Quinn DW, Executive Director & Molly Gerke, Executive Assistant. Bottom middle: Eliza Gelfand, Administrative Assistant, Bottom Rights: Kirin Taylor, Research Fellow

MEET OUR NEW RESEARCH FELLOW

In August UNANIMA International welcomes our new Research Fellow, Kirin Taylor, to our team.

Kirin Taylor is a politically engaged pacifist, and M.A. candidate in Government and Politics from St. John's University. Originally from Maryland, USA, Taylor has worked previously in non-profit administration and peace education with Little Friends for Peace, where she learned "peace must begin with each one of us." Taylor spent a year in Austria in high school, which spurred her love for learning languages, and informed her understanding of peace as encompassing world perspectives. Her experiences in cultural exchange and community driven service-work and research have incited a desire in her to engage in political advocacy for social justice. Most recently, Taylor interned with the Congregation of the Mission at the United Nations, part of the Vincentian family, in order to contribute to solving multilateral issues such as environmental concerns and homelessness. Taylor has previously worked with homeless youth, adults, and refugees.

Important Upcoming Dates

August 9th	International Day of the Worlds Indigenous Peoples
August 12th	International Youth Day
September 21st	International Day of Peace Climate Action Summit
September 23rd	Sustainable Development
September 24-25th	Goals Summit
October 1st	International Day of Older Persons
October 10th	World Mental Health Day
October 17th	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

INTERN UPDATE & INTRODUCTIONS

NYU Summer Intern - Ellie Ballard

Ellie Ballard is a graduate student at NYU in the International Relations department. She completed her undergraduate degree in politics, rights and development at NYU in 2018. Originally from Dayton, Ohio, Ellie's interest in politics began when she worked as a volunteer with at Dayton's Democratic Party headquarters in the summer of 2014. During her year studying abroad in Berlin, Ellie interned with Kiron Open Higher Education, an NGO that helps refugees in Germany start and/or finish university degrees and adjust to life in Europe. Following this experience, Ellie returned to New York with a strong desire to continue working for NGOs that provide aid and services for vulnerable populations around the world.

Catherine Ferguson Scholar - Sr Rashmi Mattappally

I am Sr. Mary Rashmi Mattappally from Kerala, India, who came to Tanzania, Africa in 2002 after working in different parts of India: Delhi slums, rural areas of Bihar, and as a diocesan animator of Basic Christian Communities among the fisher folks and landless people of the Trivandrum Diocese. In Arusha Tanzania, I began a Center for women of low income groups and had several programs for them; organizing the women into Self Help Groups (SHG) and Village Community Banks (VICOBA), skill development and training for leadership and self-reliance, giving special attention to AIDS victims. Several pre-schools were begun under the trees for the children, assisting children living in difficult environment and orphans, vulnerable teenage girls and school drop-outs, senior citizens and so on. I started reaching out to the Maasai Community from 2008, staying in the Maasai 'boma', journeying with them and learning from them. Everything is being transformed slowly. Jesus our Good Shepherd lives among the Maasai Community and I am very happy to be in the company!

Immersion Experience - Michele Brodrick

I have worked in Catholic education in Australia for approximately thirty years, and am currently Deputy Principal at St Joseph's College, Geelong. Prior to this I was a teacher and senior leader at Clonard College, an all-girls Kildare Ministries secondary school, for seventeen years. During this time, I had the opportunity to develop curriculum and initiatives in Indigenous education. This resulted in the opportunity to lead a research project on Intercultural Understanding, attend the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE) in Peru in 2011, and present alongside Indigenous leaders from Australia at WIPCE in 2014. I have enjoyed working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families, and for many years I was involved in establishing partnerships and immersion experiences with remote Aboriginal communities in Australia.

I am extremely grateful to be given an internship at UNANIMA International. This opportunity will allow me to further my understanding of ways to foster global consciousness and understand how nations can coexist based on principles of solidarity. It will also broaden my understanding of the United Nations, UNANIMA International and the work of NGOs to bring about systemic change. As a leader in education, I want to utilise any learnings to promote advocacy within my current school and to share these learnings with the greater Catholic network in Australia.



Cyclone Idai Displaces Hundreds of People in Southern Malawi

Cyclone Idai has brought destruction to parts of Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe in what could become one of the worst weather-related disasters to hit the Southern Hemisphere this decade. Hundreds have died and as many as 600,000 people have been displaced, according to the World Food Programme. In Konzalendo Parish, Malawi, where the Religious Sisters of Charity live and work, a number of houses collapsed completely while others collapsed partially, due to the strong winds, and left people displaced and homeless. Most of the houses in Konzalendo are built with bricks, mud, and grass thatching for a roof. This is what the people can manage due to the extreme poverty they experience. The people of Konzalendo had started improving their houses with money they were generating from selling bananas, which most of them were growing in abundance around their homes. However, a few years ago a disease wiped out all the bananas in the area, leaving the people deprived of their main source of income.

Three Sisters of Charity from Zambia along with the two sisters living in Konzalendo visited some of the people that had been affected by Cyclone Idai in Chipho. Chipho is a village bordering Mozambique. The sense of hopelessness was evident in a number of people whose homes we visited. However some of the people have started to rebuild their houses using the bricks from the houses that had collapsed. However, all they have to put the bricks together is mud— a recipe for further disaster. Thanks to our partnership with the Jesuits we will be able to help some of the families with cement and roofing sheets so that they can construct more solid houses. What was really moving among some of the families we visited was their desire to move on and not give into their desperation. I was reminded forcefully of a verse in the Irish Poet, Brendan Kennelly's poem, 'Begin'

*Though we live in a world that dreams of ending
that always seems about to give in
something that will not acknowledge conclusion
insists that we forever begin.*

I could not help but admire the resilience of this community. They had lost most of their material possessions, and their crops had been destroyed by excessive rain, but they were ready to begin again and move on with their lives.

Malawi is one of Africa's most densely populated countries and is the third poorest nation in the world according to the 2018 ranking by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). More than half of the population lives below the poverty line, and over 85 percent depend on subsistence agriculture.

The situation in Konzalendo reminds one of the reality of extreme poverty in our world and how the world's resources are so unequally distributed. There is an urgent need for the Governments of the World to start seriously addressing Sustainable Goal 1 in Agenda 2030 in which they committed to ending Extreme Poverty:

- 1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day
- 1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

As Dan Ariely says, "Disasters are usually a good time to re-examine what we've done so far, what mistakes we've made, and what improvements should come next."

Addressing poverty that relegates some of the populations of our world into situations that expose them to dire consequences in times of disaster should take centre stage in all Government plans. Malawi will be holding Presidential and Parliamentary elections in the next few weeks and the Church has done a commendable job in trying to sensitize people on the need to vote for leaders who will put the interests of the people first and address the huge problem of poverty in the country. It remains to be seen if the people have heeded the message.

The Sisters of Charity, in partnership with the Jesuit project 'Beyond Cyclone Idai', will try to respond to the people's needs in the best way possible and work with the community to build capacities so that their vulnerability to climate related disasters is reduced. One immediate learning is that those who had planted trees around their houses suffered less from the effects of the strong winds. One of the initiatives, therefore, will be to encourage tree planting around people's homes.

We thank God for the generosity of so many people who are going to make this possible
- Religious Sisters of Charity (Ireland and Australia)



REFORESTATION PROJECT- MATANIWAI HERITAGE SITE

Some time ago the Unit of Fiji missioned Sister Lora Adikakai SM to work on a Reforestation Project with the local people of Nacula Island, part of the Yasawa group in Fiji. The aim of the project is to restore damage done to soil and habitat through erosion and to educate the younger generation in sustainable planting and planning for the future. It is a way of uniting the people of the Tokatoka clan in a common project, moving away from dependence on tourism, by re-focusing and taking responsibility for their own land.

Before the 1950s, the village elders described Mataniwai as a woodland area, but over the years the land has been gradually degraded. It is now predominantly grassland and shrubs with a few isolated trees. The aim is to plant as great a variety as possible of indigenous species of trees, fruit trees, sweet smelling flowering trees, and a number of species for commercial purposes. The natural water supply on the island—two springs—is utilised for dripping and watering of the seedlings. The Forestry Department was willing to provide trees and other seedlings because this Project is in line with the Government's initiative towards combating climate change. Also survival checks are conducted regularly with the help of the Forestry Department. It is a long term process. It may take twenty to thirty years to reach its full maturity!

Early in June 2019 Lora was accompanied by the Fiji Leadership Team to the Yasawa Islands to begin work. Whilst working at the project site she lives very simply! She returns at regular intervals to her community in Nadi.

- Marist Sisters, Yasawa Islands, Fiji



RESOURCE SECTION



Slipping through the Cracks Exposing inequalities in the EU

To see this report visit:
<https://www.sdgwatcheurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/FALLING-THROUGH-THE-CRACKS-JUNE-2019.pdf>

Sustainable Development Website

Visit this website <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsummit> is full of Sustainable Development information



Spotlight Report

To see this report visit:
<https://www.2030spotlight.org/en>



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Reflection- A Poem on Encounters of Homeless People)

Old man by the willow tree,
You rested your back on the cold bench,
Your face, lined with dark creases.
You told the night quietly your struggles.
Its soft breeze touched your forehead and kissed
you with swift comfort.
Thus momentarily, the tired body finds rest.
It was heaven for you.
You avoided my smile, you fear I will know who you
really are.
I wanted to ask you, but I'd rather not.
I wanted to ask you, how is life?
Does it really matter?
I was deep into these questions,
Suddenly you interrupted my thoughts,
You chuckled and gave me a welcoming smile!
-Lim Sim Ek