

HOM (Hands of Mercy) Prayers and News – February 2024

Welcome to this special new edition of 'HOM Prayers and News'. We are indebted to Fran Gunn who has faithfully written the prayer calendar for over 20 years. Towards the end of last year she felt that it was time to hand over the reins and we want to thank Fran for all the time, energy and effort that she poured into the prayer update.

We are now experimenting with a different format and we hope that this will continue to encourage and inspire your prayers. We will have specific prayer topics for each month as we focus on key areas of the Hands of Mercy ministry. We will also seek to share news, updates or stories. After this introductory edition, we will move to a quarterly update as follows: March – May (Spring/Easter), June – August (Summer), September – November (Autumn) and December – February (Winter/Christmas). For those of you who also receive the prayer calendar by email, you will continue to get a monthly update which will focus on the prayer topic(s) for that month.

February Prayer Focus

This month, please pray for...

- Sally Escoto, Director of HOM and her husband Joey – they have faced a number of challenges recently (including the unexpected death of their nephew last year and an unexplained illness in their new baby grandson this year). Pray for strength, health and restoration as they juggle all their leadership responsibilities, including leading HOM and the Mercy Community Church.

Interview with Sally – Her Journey with Faith, God and Hands of Mercy

Tell us a bit about yourself



My name is Sally Escoto. I am the Director of HOM Philippines, and of course, I believe that everything is the Lord's plan. I was not really religious when I started with Hands of Mercy – I had so many vices in life. But of course the Lord changed me and I am very grateful that I was able to meet the Lord and change my life and change everything in me and my family.

When did you first become part of Hands of Mercy?

Well, actually, God really used my children. Uncle Bob and Auntie Fran [David Gunn's parents] came to the community with David Gunn [founder, Hands of Mercy] and started to reach out to the children, two of whom were mine. David brought my children to his church but I was hesitant to let them go. I was just thinking that he would convert them to his religion and I didn't want that! At first, when David brought the children back to the house, I was very unfriendly to him. Later, David asked if I could help him because he couldn't speak Tagalog [the Filipino language]. He was going to reach out to start a feeding programme. Again, I said that I was too busy. I kept on running like Jonah but I believe that when God calls you, you cannot go anywhere! At that time, I had a successful restaurant near the community where

David planned to start the feeding programme and every lunchtime he brought children to the restaurant and fed them there. Suddenly the business wasn't earning any more (I thought maybe it was because of David?!) until I couldn't pay the rent so I had to close the business. David persisted in asking me to join him. I felt like God was calling me to help families in need in the community. I talked to Joey, my husband, about it. I think he was thinking that if I joined, that I would change, that I wouldn't drink or gamble anymore. Eventually I said yes!

"There's a lot of challenges, a lot of work, a lot of stress..."



I am helping people in the [squatter] community who have the same needs as mine. So I have to sacrifice to help them. It wasn't until the Lord really put the passion in my heart to reach out to people in the community. At first, it wasn't easy. But I was just thinking of the unconditional love that God has given to us. Even now, there are times when I am pressured, I am stressed, but I know that with God on my

side, I can do it. Who would have thought that we would be celebrating 27 years of HOM!

What are some of the needs in the community?

- **Toilets:** A study that we conducted in the community found that some people don't have a toilet. Some [go to the toilet] anywhere, even onto a piece of paper, wrap it up and put it in the trash. (HOM can help through the Home Improvement Programme).
- **Education:** We are really able to help a child when we encourage them to dream and to get out of the cycle of poverty. If they finish their education everything will change. (HOM can help through the Child Sponsorship Programme).
- **Food:** Children go hungry and some who are able to go to school go there hungry – as a result they can't understand what's being taught to them (HOM can help through the Family Support Programme and/or Supplementary Feeding Programme)
- **Medication:** It is very expensive to get sick in the Philippines – you can die if you don't have money. (HOM can help through the Prescription Medicine Programme and/or Surgical Treatment Programme).

Have you got a favourite Scripture?

Actually, the Lord put this on my heart since I started to reach out to people in the community. **Galatians 6:9 – do not grow weary in doing good, because at the proper time you will reap the harvest if you don't give up.** It's a partnership. We couldn't do this here if the supporters in the UK didn't open their hearts and give their help. I just want to thank everyone for their love and support.

If you would like to support Hands of Mercy or specifically sponsor a child or a family, please contact the Hands of Mercy office. Thank you and God bless you.

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Restoring hope to the needy through love and compassion