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# Rejoice in act of giving

We are indeed blessed to be living in this country, where we can show love to one another and celebrate our faiths openly.



**T**HEY are familiar faces to the volunteers of Kenosis Home who spend their Saturdays handing out food to the street people at Brickfields in Kuala Lumpur.

Vagrants, the homeless, drug addicts and the jobless living in the city, they are in need of a decent meal.

They are generally regarded as social outcasts not just by their families but also by society who feel uncomfortable with their presence.

They go to the Kenosis Home's feeding station not just because they can enjoy a plate of rice, curry chicken, half a hard-boiled egg and vegetables there but also have someone to talk to.

Like everyone else, they also want someone to engage with, more so for those who wander the streets aimlessly, broken in spirit.

If you listen to them, some will remark in a dejected manner why they were born in the first place. The feeling of rejection is total.

They just want food and company.

The volunteers do not turn anyone away. And no one has time to preach or try to convert anyone.

Regardless of their race and religion, these underprivileged have one thing in common – their dignity is lost. Don't even talk to them about self-confidence.

They feel despised and unwanted. In fact, most are even told so by their own families. Their will to live is defeated.

Many ask for a second chance. In many cases, after getting that second chance most could not deliver, often leaving their families in despair too.

So they come with empty stomachs, and the volunteers rush to hand out the food before volunteer doctors examine them – if they want medical attention.

At another feeding centre involving about 100 street people near Central Market, the food is gone within 20 minutes.

Among them are HIV carriers and some have full blown AIDS. So it's not a Saturday stroll in the park for the doctors who come every weekend to attend to them. You have to admire these doctors.

There is also an old couple who often

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brings their grandson to the feeding stations. Both are in their 80s but they have to care for their grandson who was abandoned by his parents after they had a dispute with loan sharks. It's a heart-wrenching case.

There are also many blind people, some working as masseurs, in the area who could do with a free meal and a glass of *teh tarik*.

My colleagues and I volunteered our time for a worthy cause yesterday. Since we are not in the league of generous Malaysian

tycoons who are able to spare millions of ringgit for charity, the best we could give was our time.

In support of *The Star's* Volunteer for Change project, we visited the Kenosis street feeding project in Brickfields near the YMCA building.

Kenosis is a Greek word meaning emptiness, but from a Christian theological perspective, it means the self-emptying of one's own will and becoming receptive to God's own divine will.

Kenosis is my favourite cause because I have great respect for the work of Pastor Richard Lee who runs the Kenosis Home street feeding programme. He also runs a rehabilitation programme for drug addicts.

### **Pastor who feeds the hungry**

It's hard not to be impressed with Pastor Lee and his amazing turnaround story. He himself was a drug addict for two decades before he saw the light and through God's grace, turned his life around to be a pastor

now.

Besides his work in the streets and in the drug rehabilitation centres, I enjoy watching Pastor Lee challenging the middle-class congregation in the comfort of their churches,

during his sermons, if they would be comfortable having the drug addicts and HIV carriers sitting among them.

This is a man of God who does the most difficult work. If you are looking for someone to deliver high-brow theological sermons or one with political overtones, he's not the man. He hasn't got time for that because he needs to feed the hungry and those whose lives need saving.

For my colleagues and I, our day out with Kenosis was certainly good for the soul. It couldn't have come at a more appropriate time as this is the holiest season for those who are of the Christian faith.

This is the season of Lent when Christians go through a period of repentance and abstinence. On Thursday, Christians celebrated Maundy Thursday, and many went through the ritual of "washing the feet" to remind themselves to submit to humility. The following day, Good Friday, marks the day when Jesus Christ was crucified.

Today, as you read this, Christians all over the world celebrate Easter Sunday, as they rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus.

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