The Raoul Follereau Foundation and the Order of Saint Lazarus – Monaco join forces in the context of the

62nd WORLD DAY of LEPERS on 23, 24 and 25 January 2015

The World Health Organisation has classified LEPROSY in the group of neglected tropical diseases. There are 250,000 new cases every year, 15,000 of which are already handicapped upon being diagnosed: leprosy continues its devastation!

LEPROSY is a result of poverty, a symbol of exclusion, it persists in disadvantaged regions where ignorance and poverty are prevalent.

The Hansen bacillus (Mycobacterium leprae) is the bacteria which causes leprosy in man. It was discovered in 1893 by the Norwegian doctor Gerhard Armauer Hansen. Leprosy attacks men, women and children indiscriminately. It is not hereditary.

Leprosy is transmitted by means of breathing or skin contact. The incubation period is very long (several years). The first visible symptoms are spots – painless – on the skin, then if not treated in time, in attacks on the nervous system, bringing paralysis and irreversible infirmities.

Since 1981, a very effective polychemotherapy, developed with the help of the Raoul Follereau Foundation, has enabled the treatment of leprosy in 6 to 12 months depending on the type of leprosy. However, the insidious nature of the disease, the lack of medical cover in the affected countries, the resistance of the disease in disadvantaged areas, isolated or unstable, explain the persistence of contagion, the delay in diagnosis and the stagnation of the number of patients suffering from infirmities upon examination. The stability in the number of new cases every year is the proof that the leprosy bacillus is still prevalent.

Raoul Follereau, nicknamed the ‘vagabond of charity’ was a personal friend of Popes, he was also an advocate of the scientific treatment of the disease and the fight against the
traditions and social prejudices that exclude lepers from society. He was above all a man of heart, who spent his whole life fighting social injustice, poverty and the selfishness of the powerful elite.

This committed Catholic favoured all activities that would promote the dignity of the human being, excluded from society by virtue of disease, ignorance or poverty.

He declared:

*I created the World Day of Lepers to advise, mobilise and scandalise public opinion in favour of those unfortunate people who are, in all respects, eligible to be considered for what they are: human beings!*

After creating the World Day of Lepers in 1954, he created the Raoul Follereau Association in 1967 whose mission is to fight against the disease, but also against all forms of exclusions endured by the afflicted, whilst affording them the dignity that they deserve.

The Raoul Follereau Association is present in 28 countries and there are many volunteers who carry on the fight.

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**The fight against leprosy is:** a bit of money, lots of courage and an infinite load of love.

Raoul Follereau

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It is significant that the report which Raoul Follereau sent to the United Nations in 1959 was instrumental in changing most of the laws and regulations that has transformed the conditions of lepers.

**THE MILITARY AND HOSPITALLER ORDER OF SAINT LAZARUS OF JERUSALEM** is probably the oldest order of chivalry in Christendom.

In the beginning, about 1090, the hospitallers of the order looked after the sick, in particular the lepers in Jerusalem. Later, King LOUIS XIV granted to the Order the management of all the hospitals in his kingdom.

Following in the footsteps of this ancient tradition, the Monegasque Association of the Order is committed to cooperate with the Raoul Follereau Association to achieve these aims.

**MAKE A DONATION** * this will help us to further our objectives.

**For example:**
- €12 will purchase a pair of shoes to protect feet that have lost all feeling. Two pairs a year are needed.
- €100 will purchase a Cortisone Kit, a necessary part of the equipment of all medical staff specialising in leprosy.

* in cash,
* by cheque to the order of : OSLJ-Monaco, 45 Ave de Grande-Bretagne, 98000 Monaco
* by bank transfer : LCL Monaco - IBAN MC07 3000 2032 9000 007 0439 Y12 BIC CRLYMCM1

Website :  [www.ordredesaintlazare-monaco.org](http://www.ordredesaintlazare-monaco.org)  [www.raoul-follereau.org/](http://www.raoul-follereau.org/)