

THE POWER OF TOUCH!

In 1991 I was given a rare opportunity to walk through Long Bay Goal as an official visitor. I definitely now do not want to visit this place in any other capacity!

During the visit I watched how the trained nurse in the infirmary treated each of the prisoners who came to her for treatment. Each prisoner was warmly greeted, and she deliberately touched their hands and arms even if they came in with a migraine headache. This lady whose name I can't recall then casually said to me; *"Experience has taught me that the power of human touch when used with respect is a powerful instrument in healing people."*

When she said those words, I said to myself there is something Christ like about this lady. What her religious background was or if she had one, I had no idea and I wasn't going to ask anyway. The sense of tactile compassion that this nurse revealed to me is so much more effective in life than just dispensing medicine or listening to a physical condition that someone is giving of them self. Essentially it means giving of ourselves the best way we can in responding to a person's suffering.

Jesus of Nazareth was compassion itself especially when he related with the marginalized people of his time such as people who were suffering from leprosy, we hear in Matthew's Gospel (Chapter 8 verse 3); *"he stretched out his hand and touched them."* Fr Martin R Maunsell