

#8 - Mary Centre – Enhancing Life to the Full

What's your family like? Some families are big, with lots of relatives close by while other families are much smaller. Sometimes our families need help – that's why we have charities like ShareLife. They help hundreds of thousands of people in need every year. When we support ShareLife, we say "yes" to Jesus, who invited us to not just help our friends, but even to help those who are often not accepted. Remember the story of the Good Samaritan? Well here's an example of ShareLife helping out a family in trouble.

The Mary Centre is a ShareLife agency helping those with developmental disabilities live life to the full. They work with people like Ted, Gord, and Doug. These three brothers, who are in their 40s and 50s, all have a developmental disability. In the spring of 2003, the brothers lost their mother - their only surviving parent and caregiver. Mum had done everything for Ted, Gord and Doug until the day she died. Now, without assistance, these gentle souls were at risk of being separated. A crisis call went out and the Mary Centre responded. Over the next few months, the brothers received the support they needed to stay together as a family.

For Christmas 2003, several members of the Mary Centre family came together to celebrate with the brothers. There was a tree, music and much laughter. Spontaneously, Gord asked everyone to join hands. In a clear voice, he spoke to his Mum and Dad, assuring them that he and his brothers would be okay, that they were staying together as a family - and, he added, *"thank God for Mary Centre."*

Michael Jordan, the famous basketball player, once said, "I've failed over and over and over again in my life and that is why I succeed." The times when we fall or struggle aren't moments of failure – they are moments to learn just how much we can accomplish when we are challenged. Those with disabilities are valuable members of our community – they have the ABILITY to accomplish so much. We give thanks for ShareLife agencies that serve those with physical and emotional challenges. For God is with all of us, giving us the strength to carry on through the difficult times.

Our Father...(or other appropriate prayer)