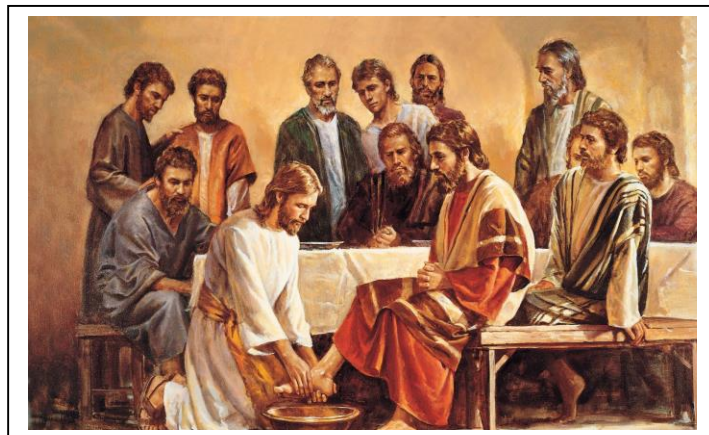


SASAC – NEWS (January– March 2024)



SASAC, Sepoydhura, Tung P.O., Kurseong – 734224, Darjeeling District, West Bengal, India. Email: sasac.sojasi@gmail.com

“**Jesus** knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and **began to wash his disciples’ feet**, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.” (John: 13: 3-5)



Jesus as a Rabi or Teacher does not miss any opportunity to educate his disciples the important lessons of life. Even on his last supper with his disciples, he teaches them one of the most important lessons of love, service and humility. Very often words alone do not suffice and so actions are required to accompany to carry the message across. Jesus could have given a long discourse (homily) on humility just by words of mouth. However, he chooses to bend down and wash the disciples’ feet. No teacher in the entire history of mankind had done this. It was shocking for the disciples how could a teacher wash his disciples’ feet. And that is why Simon Peter on behalf of all the disciples said, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” ... “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” After washing the feet of all his disciples, including Judas Iscariot, Jesus concludes his lesson on humility by saying, *“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.”*

On his wheelchair the 87 year old, Pope Francis washed and kissed the feet of 12 women inmates at a prison in Rome on the Holy Thursday. “Jesus humiliates himself,” Francis said. “With this gesture, he makes us understand what he had said: ‘I am not here to be served, but to serve ... He teaches us the path of service.’”

Let this not be only a Holy Thursday ritual, but as Christians we must do the same in our communities and families. Being Christian is loving and serving our fellow human beings without prejudice, without boundaries and without limit. Service with love and humility is the core message of Jesus, and so of Christianity.

-Fr. Pramod Dabhi SJ

REPUBLIC-DAY CELEBRATION:



SASAC celebrated the Republic Day on 26 January 2024. All our staff members with the ASHA trainees took part in the joyous celebration. Fr. Sundeep hoisted the national flag on the occasion. Fr. Pramod Dabhi gave an inspiring speech to the assembly. He said that as true citizens of the country we need to free ourselves from any forces that enslave us and very often these forces are not somewhere outside but within us, such as greed, selfishness, ignorance, indiscipline ... It was a very memorable day for all of us to come together under the Tiranga, the national flag of India as brothers and sisters irrespective of our cultural differences.

MEETING WITH MS. MAMATA BANERJEE, THE CHIEF MINISTER OF WEST BENGAL:



On 29, January, Ms. Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister of West Bengal called a meeting of various Christian leaders of all denomination. Fr. Pramod represented SASAC for the same. Ms. Banerjee

appreciated the service rendered by the Christian community in various fields, particularly in education and health. She ensured her whole-hearted support to the Christian community and institutions. She told that the Christian minority need not to fear, but voice their concerns openly. She also shared some memorable moments she had with Mother Teresa of Kolkata.

RETREAT CUM TOUR - MUMBAI



Under the leadership of Ms. Reena Sequeira a group of 11 visited Woodcot for a Spiritual Retreat in the first week of February. The group also visited many sights of tourist interests in Darjeeling. They had a wonderful time here, except some of them found the weather too cold. The group also visited the North East under the guidance of Fr. Arul SJ and experienced the hospitality of Kohima Jesuits. Fr. Arul meticulously organized a short trip of North East which they enjoyed very much.

FREE MEDICAL CAMP- MAHARANI



SASAC organized a couple of free medical camps for the remote villages of Kurseong. It was an initiative of Dr. Ramesh Anand, our old associate of Jesu Ashram. Dr. Anand and the medical staff of Jesu Ashram worked hard

to complete two medical camps in a day in two different villages, Maharani and Belltar. Hats off to them! There were 93 needy patients who benefited from these camps. SASAC thanks to all who supported the camp, specially Dr. Anand and Fr. Julius Kujur, the director of Jesu Ashram. The village leaders and volunteers were very helpful in managing the logistics and delicious lunch.

FREE MEDICAL CAMP- BELLTAR



Belltar is a small and backward village. Missionaries of Charity Sisters visit this village regularly and distribute medicines to the sick. Free Medical Camps in this village are very rare. SASAC will have follow up programs to improve health and hygiene of this village.

WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION:



SASAC celebrated International Women's Day on March 8, 2024. More than 110 women were present on the occasion. Mr. Subhashish Nath, Master Trainer from the State ASHA Cell was the Chief Guest for the occasion. He said that we do not celebrate International "Men's Day", but only "Women's Day". This indicates that women are still considered, lower or less privileged in comparison to men. His desire is to see men and women all over the world considered equal and we may celebrate "HUMAN'S DAY" instead of "Women's Day". Fr. Sundeep

entertained the audience with his wit and Poems. Fr. Pramod spoken on the empowerment of women. He emphasized on health and education of the girl child. He stressed on the need of economic and political power in the hands of women for social transformation. It was an educating and enjoyable day for all present.

VISIT OF HLDRC WOMEN STAFF, MATIGARA



Four women staff members of HLDRC, Matigara visited Woodcot for outing and relaxation. All of them are very active in Social Action field. They explored the campus and saw varieties of animals and birds. I was surprised as they asked me, "Are you allowed to keep deer in the campus?" I said, "Sorry dear, we don't have a deer." They took me and showed me a spotted deer grazing in the campus, very peacefully! Wow, what a scene it was!

TURKEY FARMING:



SASAC is encouraging Turkey Farming as an additional income for the farmers. SASAC has initially brought some 30 turkeys for the promotional and educational purpose. This has become an attraction for those who visit SASAC, as turkey is not very common in the hills.

So far 18 people have showed interest in keeping turkey at their homes along with country chickens. Many are buying the turkey eggs for eating and hatching purpose. However, people are little reluctant to introduce turkey meat in their diet.

PEACE BE WITH YOU



Adobe Stock | #557291202