

SASAC – NEWS (October– December 2024)



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

“And Mary brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:7)



I am always surprised when I read the above gospel verse which says there was no room for baby Jesus. Jesus who is the God incarnate, the creator of the heaven and the earth; has no proper place to be born. Amazing, isn't it?

The crib we decorate at Christmas is a symbol of a heartless, cruel situation or a society. People could not provide a small corner for the pregnant lady to give birth to her child!

Our hearts are so filled with pride, ego, selfishness, hatred that there is no room for anyone else in our hearts and specially for the poor and marginalised. Even very often our own family members and friends are not allowed in our hearts. We constantly keep telling people, “Sorry, there is no room for you, here. Go away...”

While wishing everyone on this Christmas, pope Francis emphasizes how “the door of God's heart is always open”. Jesus Who does not find “room” has actually come to prepare a ‘room’ for us in heaven; who finds the doors closed has come to open the ‘door’ of heaven for us.

Right from his birth Jesus is rejected and finds himself homeless living a life of a refugee. One day a scribe came up and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” (Mt 8:19-20). Our God is a homeless God. He does not need a home for whole universe is his home. And above all he wants to make his home in a human heart, a heart that is full of love and compassion, a heart that beats for others.

Every Christmas Jesus knocks at our door expecting us to open the closed and locked door of our hearts and let him in. This Christmas let us create some room for Jesus in our hearts. How can we do this? Probably we might have to remove a few unwanted things from our hearts to create a room for Jesus. Can we remove Ego, Pride, Jealousy, hearted, selfishness, or what else?

-Fr. Pramod Dabhi SJ

RETREAT FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS:



26 University Students from St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling made a three-day retreat in early October. Fr. John Banerjee was the resource person for the event. Fr. Sundeep and Fr. Pramod also give some in-puts which was well appreciated. Fr. K.L. George and Mr Chiranjilal Kujur took active interest in organizing this retreat. Some students also showed interest in agriculture and animal husbandry.

MEETING FR. MIKE PARENT IN NEPAL:



Fr. Pramod went to Kathmandu, Nepal for his annual retreat. There were about 40 Jesuits from Darjeeling and Nepal making a group retreat. This was an opportunity to meet many Jesuits whom we have not met for a long time. One such grace-filled moment was meeting Fr. Mike Parent and making a spiritual journey with him for eight days. We met on many occasions and exchanged news, specially about his friends in Kurseong and those associated with SASAC.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF MR. BEN:



SASAC organized a simple but meaningful celebration to mark 100 long years of God's Blessings on Mr. Ben's 100th Birthday. Mr. Ben Has been a great friend of Fr. Abraham and his contribution to the SASAC is enormous.

We had a combined celebration with SASAC, SOJASI, Morning Star, Sudhir and other retired members were present. We all joined in a Thanksgiving Holy Eucharist followed by a festive lunch.

We have also organized a tree plantation program. We decided to plant 100 trees in loving memory of Ben's 100 year's presence on this planet. We were glad to get some maple saplings as it will remind us of our Canadian friends because the Canadian National Flag has a maple leaf on it. SASAC wishes Mr. Ben many more grace filled years in the days to come.

We all wore white T-Shirt with Mr. Ben's picture on it to make the occasion special. This was actually Sudhir's idea and contribution.



VISITORS FROM GUJARAT:



Mr. Manoj Macwan, Kiran, his wife and his Sister-in-law Deepika visited Woodcot and Darjeeling hills for a short period at the end of November. Manoj comes from a very religious background as there are number of priests and nuns from his family. Though it was a short but a memorable tour for them as they were able to visit a number of tourist places around here. They would like to come again to make a retreat at Woodcot.

MIGRATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING



HLDRC, Siliguri organized a Collaboration and Alliance Meeting on Migration and Human Trafficking on 29, November. Including SASAC some 11 organizations were present for the meeting.

The resource persons gave a short presentation high-lighting the social issue present in our locality. Looking at the complications and the magnanimity of the issue, all the organizations agreed to work in collaboration.

RAINBOW HOMES: UDAAN PROGRAM



From December 13 to 18, Woodcot was "House full". Apart from 150 ASHAs we housed another about 150 people to respond to the request of the Rainbow Homes. Rainbow Homes Program - aims to protect, care for, educate and empower the most disadvantaged children. These include children who live on city streets; children without parents, abandoned, and violence-affected children; working children; children of farmer suicide and starvation families; and children of sex workers.

The Rainbow Homes strive to ensure that these children access their rights in loving, open and safe place and grow into happy, responsible and caring citizens.

The purpose of the Udaan Workshop was to equip the Older Children and Young adults to plan for their future life ahead.

In the beginning we were unwilling to allow this program to take place at woodcot for two main reasons. We already have our ASHA training program in full swing. And the participants for Udaan were too many, and the accommodation would be a problem. We were also thinking that the children would create a nuisance by knowing their background.

In spite of certain inconveniences the Udaan Program was well organized and it was a big success. SASAC thanks all who participated in the program and all who worked hard to make it a success including our staff and many volunteers. SASAC wishes happy and prosperous life to all our children.



Wishing you ...

HAPPY & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR