



Children Festival of Hope

Rev. Rabindranath Ray : The Diocese of Durgapur played host to the Children's Festival of Hope from 4th – 5th December, 2018. This year the theme was "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Many children from different churches of our diocese attended the festival. Jean and Johnnie Corbett's team from USA also attended the festival which was held in our St. Michael's Golden

Jubilee Multipurpose Hall and spread over to the Parish Hall during mealtime. The first day of our festival began at 5:00 p.m. diocese. We were all given a cap with Children's Festival of Hope written on it. The programme began with a prayer followed by lighting of the candles during which we danced to the song "Light of the world". After this we sang some songs and then we performed a drama where we depicted the various

ways in which Satan tempts us and tries to claim us in order to block our access to God. The message of our drama was that if you have faith and a strong will, every temptation can be overcome and we can always return to our ever loving Heavenly Father. The students from all the other churches performed dances to Christian songs. This was followed by prayer and dinner. The next morning, after Sunday service we sang many songs

and took part in several activities. We learnt many new things; Jean Ma'am taught us about using our fingers for praying - like our thumb which refers to our family, the pointing finger refers to the leaders, the middle finger to God to say sorry; we also learnt about the armour of God and several other interesting things. We had a Bible quiz in which a student from Group B won the first position. After the quiz, we had games

and then lunch. After lunch we had some time to our selves during which many of us, including the USA Team, played flying disk. After game time was over we went back to the Multipurpose Hall where everyone showed their talents through several dances, skits and songs. At the end of the programme all of us got together to dance; then we had our dinner and the students from other churches left for their homes. ■



Editorial

The Joy of Giving

- Ankita Bhattacharya

Come Christmas and all of us are busy running around, trying to find that perfect gift for all our near and dear ones. The gifts under the Christmas tree make all of us so happy; opening them is another level of joy altogether. In all of our excitement, we all forget the person whose birthday we are commemorating. Jesus always reached out to the poor. But, during Christmas, most of us forget Jesus' ministry and buy into the commercialisation of the Christmas spirit.

While the concept of Christmas spirit brings to mind merry making and joyous celebration, we often tend to overlook or ignore those less-fortunate for us; for whom joy and merry making would involve even one hot meal. When I was younger, I remember, the new Mother Superior of our convent stopped giving us Christmas gifts during her first year. Naturally, as little children we were all very sad. But on the day last day before our boarding closed for the winter vacation, she told us something that stayed with me for life. Sr. Superior, as we called her, said, "I know all of you are sad that this year we did not get you any gift. What we did was, we gifted the children in the slums with your gift money. Now, you will all go home and have warm clothes on your back and food in your belly; but as you

go to church this Christmas, I want you all to remember this, that because of you another less-fortunate child will have a sweater this winter..." She went on to remind us how Jesus was among the less-fortunate ones, taking birth in a stable on a cold winter night and laying there among the cattle without the comfort of a home or a crib.

Jesus' ministry involved the poor and the oppressed. He always reached out to those who were shunned by the society and he always helped those who were less-fortunate, be it the blind man, or the deaf man, or an adulteress; he welcomed them all with open arms and gave them the gift of love and care.

This Christmas, as we run around decorating our homes and buying gifts for our beloved ones, I urge all of you to pause for a second and to think about the ones who most require a gift. It could be the gift of love, of understanding, or of something as simple as hug. It most definitely does not have to be a material gift, but, if we pause for a while and spare a moment for those who are not as fortunate as us, we will, as our Sr. Superior used to say, "...be reaching out to Jesus himself..." Let's make this Christmas about Jesus instead of about Hallmark! ■

DCSDC Children's Christmas Programme

Chandni Das : As the month of December comes near, in our hearts a new excitement arises; we eagerly look forward to our Christmas programme. This year also we were very excited. Our Christmas programme was held on 5th December. We were very happy that our guests from the USA Jean and Johnny and their team were present along with the Diocesan staff and all our parents. This year our Christmas programme was held in the new St. Michael's Multipurpose

Hall. The hall was decorated very beautifully with balloons, stars and a Christmas tree. The programme was conducted by Rev. Pankaj Pandey. Before the programme began we all got into our new Christmas clothes. Rev. Rabindranath Ray started the programme with a prayer. Then our Chief Guests were welcomed with a gift. It was followed by a dance performed by eight of the older girls. The children from our centre then performed two action songs, and a drama. The little ones of kindergarten pre-

nted the nativity play. The programme was followed by a dance and Christmas carols by the different pastorates. Before the event could conclude, our DCSDC children performed "Jingle Bells". While the song was playing, we had a surprise visit from Santa himself. Everyone took pictures with Santa and had a good time. Santa's visit was followed by distribution of sarees among our parents by the Diocesan Women's Fellowship for Christian Service. Then Rev. Pandey ended the programme with a prayer. ■



Inauguration of St. Luke's Church

Binod Hansda : A piece of land was purchased at Ranib-andh half a century ago in order to build a church almost in the centre of Santhal Mission Pastorate from where it would be easier to minister the whole pastorate. But, since its purchase, the land had been lying fallow and the congregation had suggested selling it off. Our beloved Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Probal Kanto Dutta, advised us not to sell

the land but build a church there. Under his guidance and support the two-storeyed church building was erected for the people of Santhal Mission Pastorate. The newly-built church was christened St. Luke's Church, and was inaugurated on 30th November, 2018 by our Bishop. There were more than two hundred and fifty attendees at the inauguration service which included mem-

bers of neighbouring Barikul Church, Sarenga Church, Osmond Memorial Church, Kolkata, local government officials, well-wishers as well as our friends from abroad and the Diocesan clergy. The Youth Fellowship of Santhal Mission Pastorate welcomed the guests in a traditional santhali style – washing the feet accompanied by traditional singing, dancing and drums. Mr. Johnnie Corbett

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from USA read from Psalm 24 as we entered into the church by cutting the ribbon. Rev. Subhendu Saren offered prayer. Pastor Al Zadig delivered a heart touching message from the Bible and offered prayer before the consecration of the Altar. This was followed by blessing of the building with 'Holy Water'. Mr. Mansing Hembrom, Secretary of our church, expressed thanks and gratitude to Almighty God, who enabled us to build the church; he also

thanked our Bishop for his support without which this church could not be built here, he also extended his gratitude to all the people who extended their financial support and prayer to build the church.

Mr. Johnnie Corbett and his wife, Mrs. Jean Corbett of USA unveiled the stone tablet of the church, Sunday school, and guest room and purified the buildings with Holy Water for the glory of God and offered the closing prayer. ■



Women Empowerment through Anti-Liquor Movement

Prodyut Mallo : Drinking spurious alcohol and addiction is a major concern in the villages of west Bengal. The women of Asansol Sel-Help Group were inspired by their counterpart in Sarenga to start an anti-liquor campaign in their villages. The crushing debts coupled with domestic

violence and addiction has led these women to band together in an effort to stop their husbands from ruining their own lives and their families'.

The women from Asansol contacted the "Promila Bahini" members in Sarenga who gave them directions on how to organise themselves



into a formidable force. More than a hundred women from Baro Goura got together to organise a march and create awareness about alcoholism. The officers at Sarenga Police Station assured these women their cooperation after hearing their plight and their plans to tackle their problems. About 70 wom-

en gather together every evening and go round their villages to shut down illegal alcohol stores and to bring their husband and sons home. They use sticks and torches to inspire fear in their alcoholic family members who will otherwise beat the women up. These women are committed to end the cycle of alcoholism which

will in turn ensure the health and economic stability of their husbands and family members. This will also ensure that the men treat the women with respect. Other villages have also been inspired by this bold move of the women of Asansol village and are now planning to form similar organisations in their own villages. ■

Festival of Hope 2018

Rev. Sumanto Naru : The Healing Ministry of the Diocese of Durgapur has grown over the past couple of years. Programmes such as the OSL (International Order of St. Luke the Physician) India Healing Ministry, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Festival of Joy and Festival of Hope, have kindled the fact that "Jesus heals even today", in the hearts and minds of thousands of people of varied faiths in the seven districts of West Bengal under the Diocese of Durgapur and beyond.

Recently from the 28th November to 3rd December, 2018, "Festival of Hope" (FOH) was organised at four different locations of the Diocese. On Wednesday the 28th of November it was organised at Sarenga and on the 1st of December at

Koonor, then on 2nd December at Patharkata and finally on Monday, 3rd December, at St. Michael's Safe Home Campus at Baldahura for the people of Malda.

The Festival of Hope is a programme in partnership with St. Michael's Church, Charleston, USA. Prayer warriors from this partner church visits different locations in the Diocese of Durgapur, sharing the Word of God and individually praying for healing in the name of Jesus for multitudes who suffer from some kind of mental, physical or spiritual ailments. This year a team of ten members came from St. Michael's Church,

Charleston. These men and women of God, shared very inspiring messages from the Bible, real life stories of healing and personal experiences with thousands of people at the four locations. Many miracles were witnessed during their individual healing prayer sessions with people with specific prayer needs. The OSL India team members and clergy of the Diocese were present with them at all the locations to administer healing. We thank God for programmes such as the "Festival of Hope", which has really helped to bring Jesus' love to the people. ■



The best way to spread Christmas cheer
is wishing everyone around and singing out
loud for all so that they may hear!....
Merry Christmas!