



# BHARAT KI JEEWAN

SSCC INDIA (BROTHERS)

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## DSDI Foundation Day Celebration 2020



Damien Social Development Institute (DSDI) Foundation Day was celebrated on September 5, 2020. Interestingly, the Foundation Day coincides with the death anniversary and feast day of St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta and with the Teachers' Day celebration – a national holiday in India in commemoration of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan – the second President of independent India – a philosopher and an educationist.

On the Foundation Day celebration, the family of Damien Social Development Institute (DSDI) remembers the legacies of and draws inspiration from St. Damien of Molokai, St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta and of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and re-pledges and re-commits itself to the service of humanity in the margins, especially of the poor and marginalized, and to educating the children of the poor and marginalized of our society in order to build a more “just and humane society”. On this is Day the DSDI staff members organize various activities and programs as a way of celebrating the day. This is also the Day when our Non-formal Education teachers are felicitated for their service and commitment to educating the children in different leprosy colonies and the children in different urban slums and rural villages.

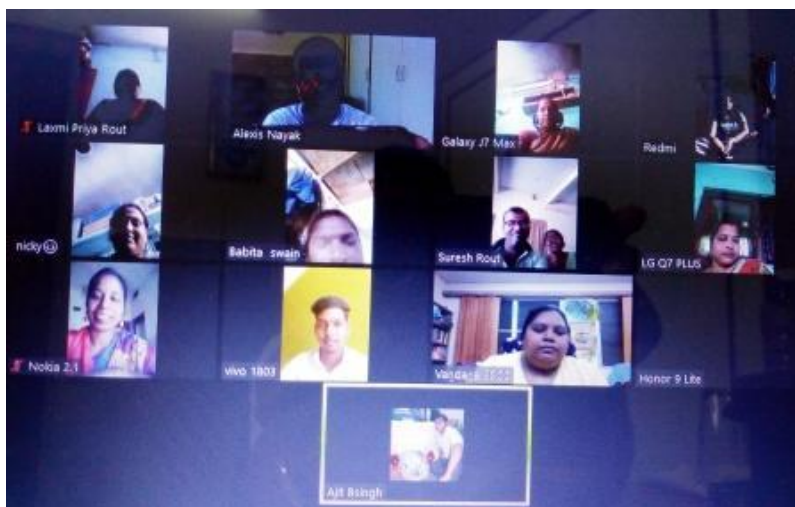
Due to the prevailing increasing number of coronavirus pandemic cases throughout the urban and rural India (Now India is the second largest Covid – 19 affected country in the world), the DSDI Foundation Day Celebration 2020 was very unique and different from any other normal years' celebration. Unlike other years, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2020, the DSDI management and the DSDI staff members were not able to physically gather together for the celebration at DSDI administrative office in Phulnakhara.

Nevertheless, with much interest and enthusiasm shown by the staff members themselves, two programs were held in order to celebrate the Foundation Day on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2020. First, a Thanks-giving Eucharist was celebrated by the SS.CC. family of Brothers and Sisters in the morning. It was a moment of celebration when we offered our prayers of thanks-giving to God for the lives and legacies of St. Damien of Molokai, St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta and of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. We also offered our prayers of thanks-giving to God for our predecessors, for our donors/benefactors, for the service of our staff members, and for the gifts of our stake-holders – the beneficiaries. We prayed for our teachers who have shaped our lives and for all other teachers who shape the lives of students.

Second, a virtual zoom meeting of the DSDI management and the staff members was organized. It was a platform where the management and all the staff members got themselves connected

virtually with much excitement and enthusiasm. The zoom platform was an opportunity where they were able to share their stories and experiences of the past five month coronavirus pandemic crisis in their respective fields of services and ministries.

In the virtual zoom meeting, all expressed their sadness that they were not able to physically gather together for the celebration; however, all felt excited that they were able to connect virtually and listen to each other's stories. In their story telling, some staff members expressed their disappointments that the on-field ministries of DSDI had been affected due to the pandemic situation. They felt powerless because they have not been able to visit the ministry localities and interact with people as the localities have been declared coronavirus containment zones, particularly in localities where our Non-formal Education programs for children are conducted.



Some staff members also shared that the poor and the marginalized in the leprosy colonies and in the urban and rural slums and villages remain grateful to DSDI for its timely distribution of medicines, food rations, masks and sanitizers during the pandemic situations. Throughout the pandemic crisis, distribution of medicines and treatment of ulcer patients in leprosy colonies has been our priority and we continue serve these patients.

There were still some staff members who shared that they had been able to interact with people and children/students on the phone, and were able to visit them in less restricted areas during the pandemic. They informed that the poor people in slums, in leprosy colonies and in urban villages were experiencing joblessness and financial crisis. As a result, they were suffering from want of food as they have no income due to lack of availability of labour works which they depend on for their living.

Although the Foundation Day of DSDI was celebrated without physical presence of each other, the staff members were very grateful that an opportunity was created for all to come on one platform to connect on zoom so that we were able to interact and share our stories. The staff members pledged their commitment to the mission of DSDI, especially to the poor and the marginalized of our society. For, they felt that it is through their participation in the ministries of DSDI that they feel privileged to serve the humanity which gives them an immense contentment and joy to their lives. They feel proud to be members of DSDI family.

Our on-field ministries of DSDI will remain closed so long as the pandemic situation and environment remain unsafe for human interaction. Besides, there are daily reports of increasing number of new cases of coronavirus patients in the localities where we carry out our ministries and we need to take precautions to contain the spread of virus. We hope that our on-field ministries will resume once the situation and the environment become safe enough for human interaction – hopefully by the end of September or early October 2020.

- **Alexis, SS.CC.**

## Blessing of the Renovated St.Damien Prayer House



It was indeed a special morning for all of us – Sacred Hearts fathers, secular branch, Kolkata Archdiocese, Dc sisters and people of Kunjaban. Kunjaban is the Santal Mission station of Serampore parish, which is 40 km away from the mother parish. As the occasion was drawing closer, the great joy filled our hearts with harmonious

gratitude to God. It was the Sunday morning on September 6th, 2020, we, the Sacred Hearts Fathers, Dc sisters, parishioners from Serampore parish had gathered to take part in the celebration of blessing and inauguration of St. Damien prayer house and free tuition centre in kunjaban. Fr. Ajit Kumar Anthony Dasss.cc. the Regional Superior of India solemnly inaugurated the St. Damien prayer house by cutting the ribbon and Fr. ArulThiyagrajss.cc. the parish priest blessed the prayer house and the tuition centre by sprinkling the holy water. Many people were present who witnessed the grand inauguration and the blessing ceremony.

Fr. Umakant Porichha, SS.CC. celebrated the solemn Mass along with Fr. Sudhir Nayak. After the Eucharistic celebration, there was a short cultural programme presented by the parishioners of Kunjaban. At last Sacred Fathers distributed rations to the needy people.

The celebration of this prayer house was not only to mark the special day but also to put the spirit of St. Damien in the hearts of the faithful to journey towards God. The glance and the colour of the prayer house looked very appealing and prayerful. It is a gift from God that was initiated by Fr. Umakant the former parish priest-in-charge who by his selfless dedication and commitment renovated the St. Damien prayer house and free tuition centre for the *Santal* people and it was assisted by sacred hearts Fathers, encouraged by Most Rev. Bishop Thomas D'Souza of Archdiocese of Calcutta and financially supported by Sacred hearts secular branch England and the hard work of each faithful of kunjaban to renovate and put the boundary on.



- **Umakant, SS.CC.**

## The Feast of the Nativity of Mary



The parishioners of St. Damien of Molokai Church are so devoted to our lady of Velankanni that they commemorate the feast every year very solemnly with nine days of novena. And so for this year our pastoral community, premeditated to celebrate the feast of the Nativity of Mary amidst the covid-19 pandemic with the parish community. We inaugurated the novena on 29<sup>th</sup> August and the community decided to have Marian themes for the reflections of every novena day. Each day a video presentation by the brothers in the

community was shared in the parish whatsapp group for their spiritual nourishment. And online novena books were also shared in order to encourage them to have a prayer service in their respective families. Our video presentation and the reflections of every day were much appreciated and welcomed by the parish community. During the novena days and on the feast day people came forward to offer mass with their intentions. Our mother parish, St. Patrick's live streamed the novena masses in you tube channel assisted by the choir members and the readers of the day. And on the feast of the nativity of Mary, two members from every religious community of the local area were invited to join the Holy Eucharist at St. Patrick's. We too joined the mother church to celebrate the feast day solemnly and joined the agape meal thereafter with Fr. Raju and Fr. Upendra.



- *Arockia, SS.CC.*

## Double Celebration

We, the priests and brothers of St. Damien seminary initial formation house, Bangalore, celebrated the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary along with the 74th independence day of India on 15th August. We started the day with morning prayers followed by the Eucharist



celebrated by Fr. Sujoy ss.cc, who hosted the national flag after the mass and made a speech on unity in diversity of India. Br. Augustine, the third year philosophy student delivered the Independence Day speech in which he honored Indian leaders those had worked for the prosperity of the country and promoted democracy.

Having wished each other, brothers were busy throughout the day with their assigned duties such as helping out in the kitchen and preparing the volley ball ground to have a match. They played volley ball with a lot of enthusiasm and competitive spirit. It was a time of great fun.

In the evening we had rosary in which we prayed to our mother Mary for peace within India and its good relationship with other countries. The day ended with the dinner. We thank God for His blessings on each day. Thanks to Fr. Sumit ss.cc, the rector and Fr. Sujoy ss.cc, the assistant for their support. We also extend our thanks to our cooks for their service to our community.

- **Nahshon, SS.CC.**

## Annual Retreat in Morning Star College

And Jesus said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest for a while. Many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat." This indeed applies to us as a scholastic. We sometimes need to be left alone with the lord in silence of our hearts. If we search the meaning of the retreat in dictionary, it says that when any soldier is injured in the war or battle then he is taken to the military hospital where he regains his strength and the wound is healed with new tissue, called granulation tissue. In the same way, retreat also helps us to strengthen our spirituality and renews as with the newness of life when the spirit is at work.

This was the first time that we made our retreat with diocesan brothers at Morning Star College. We were privileged with the Bishop of Asansol diocese, Rt. rev. Salvatore Lobo, who was our retreat preacher for six days. In this pandemic time of corona he agreed to give us talk and helped us to see how the spirit is at work in our discernment process. He sensitized us with the religious' spiritual aspect of life. In the first talk he spoke about "God and I" to seek after God rather than letting it be found by God to allow once presence to flow into the presence of others-meet...merge...and flow together.

In his homily, he talked about seminarian's identity and seminarians' way of life. The gospel passage was correctly fitting to the first day of talk, taken from st. John's gospel ch 1:35-39

“Rabbi where are you staying?” Each of us has been called by God for the mission of God’s kingdom. “look I am standing at your gate knocking. If you hear me calling and opening the door I will come in to you”. As we have responded to his call, we must be open to prompting of the indwelling spirit each moment of our lives. Because this life requires commitment and yes to his will in every face of our life. He also mentioned about the four pillars of diocesan spirituality: “the union with Christ: union with Bishop: union with one’s people: union with one’s fellow priests”. He also did not forget the religious presence and spoke about the religious witnessing Christ and richness in spirituality and the shining stars of the congregation. Surprisingly we were delighted to hear from him about Saint Damien, about his humility and missionary spirit. He shared with the brothers the story of St. Damien, which was the moment of joy for me as an SS.CC.

His talks were so inspiring and enriching to our life and moulding us to be a good missionary. This was a good time for us to be left alone with the lord to pray, meditate and introspect our lives. During our retreat, the dynamics of spiritual practices were evolving our relationship with Jesus Christ and God the father. The Eucharistic celebration, which is the source and summit of our life and holy Eucharistic adoration, made us aware of the active presence of love of Christ.



- Vishal, SS.CC.

## Sacred Hearts Community, Dangadighila Bids Farewell

Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher says, “Nothing is permanent in this world except change.” He maintained that change is the only reality in nature. We all experience some changes in our lives. There was also a change in the community of Dangadighila. Sacred Hearts Community, Dangadighila bid farewell to Fr. Bala Krishna Singh (Premanand Singh) on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2020. In the morning, Fr. Premanand Singh celebrated Holy Eucharist with the community and prayed for each one of us. In his sharing he encouraged brothers in formation to be faithful, loving and to be committed to the responsibilities. He also emphasized in his homily the characteristics of Peter, the Apostle that how he became the rock of the Church founded by Jesus. In the evening we have a holy hour and at the end of the holy hour we all extended our hands towards Fr. Premanand and prayed over him for the success of his new ministry in the formation community, Bangalore and a cultural program in honor of Fr. Premanand Singh. Fr. Premanand Singh was in the community for two years. In the first year along with the community responsibilities he was teaching in St. Claret School to have an experience in view of opening a school in Dangadighila. In the second year he became the pioneer to open the nursery school. He was loved very much by teachers, community members and domestic staffs. His simplicity and loving character attracts

everyone. In the program there were speeches, songs, dances and other creative activities. Bro. Dildhar, Master of the Ceremony, led the program very well with his good speech and Sayari. Bros. Suraj and Vishal helped to organize the event in better way. Everyone was expressing their gratitude to Fr. Premanand for his service to the community. Fr. Ajith Kumar shared his appreciations for Fr. Premanand for his service as the brother of the congregation and as the councilor of the Region. He was also thankful for his openness to the community and wished him best of luck for his new ministry. Another day Kolkata area community members (Fr. Sudhir, Fr. Golak, Fr. Umakant,

Fr. Arul, Bro. Arokia and Bro. Robert) joined in celebration and bid farewell to Fr. Premanand. The celebration was concluded with delicious meal prepared by our staffs. We all thank Fr. Premanand for his love, commitment and



service to this community. May God bless him and be with him always in his new ministry.

- **Radhelal, SS.CC.**