



SOCIETY OF JESUS AGRICULTURAL AND SOCIAL INSTITUTE (SOJASI)
P.O. Kurseong - 734 203 Distt. Darjeeling. INDIA

January-February 2011

PEACE !!



JOY !!



LOVE !!



Dear Friends:

Peace! Joy! Love! And Greetings from SOJASI!

When I look back, I think I got my vocation to work with under privileged people when I worked in SAS Poultry Work Scholarship Program.

When I was in the 10th standard, my father George got very sick. He used to have terrible stomach-aches. (Later on we found on his death bed he had cancer of the pancreas.) He must have realized that he would die soon. We were five children to feed, educate & look after. Four girls and one boy. I was the eldest. So my father George requested Fr Abraham to put me and my brother Valerian (he was in the 9th standard) in the SAS work scholarship program.



SOJASI Christmas celebration: 11 of our children took part in the play with parish children.



MorningStar children: Christmas preparation 2011 (SajanSimon, Pratima B, Pooja E, Chogel)

My first assignment in SAS Poultry Work Scholarship Program was to guide and work with twenty-five 5th standard children. They were called the Egg-Cleaning Crew. I had to teach them how to handle and clean the eggs of our 7000 chickens carefully & put them on egg trays for marketing. I had to check their uniforms daily. We had to do this every morning and evening before and after school.

When Christmas time came, those children used to blow eggs out of their shells without breaking the shells. We used to cook the yolks and whites of the eggs for the children. And we used to dip the empty shells in enamels of different colours, red, green, blue, gold & silver to use for Christmas decorations. Those coloured egg shells really looked like celestial bodies. We had lots of fun doing this.



Fr Abe blessed Prabina M, Pratima B, Dikila and Aden R who were selected to go to Kolkata for Gospel Melody program



Christmas 2010: SOJASI team (staff & children)

After finishing my schooling at St Joseph's High school, I joined SASAC. At SASAC I learned many things and different ways to help poor people. I worked in the office. Typed Fr A's thousands of letters to friends. Besides, poultry work & marketing, I learned Square Meter Gardening, organic compost and how to produce oyster mushroom. I had never seen a cow closely but I had to learn about cows also.

We surveyed the SASAC II (now SOJASI) area and its surrounding 9 villages. We trained fathers or mothers of the 16 poorest families and 50 workers at SASAC II & 50 workers at SASAC I in organic farming (SMVG) & compost production. We trained them in oyster mushroom production. When we carried out our survey, these farmers were sowing only two crops, local radish and potatoes. We spent about six years supervising these nine villages, planting thousands of trees every year especially fodder trees and organizing the marketing of their produce etc.

We went to Canada twice with Fr Abe in 1984 & 1989 to thank his friends who have supported his work for the poor to give the Best Education possible to the poorest. There we met many wonderful people. Most of the time we stayed at Fr Abe's friends' homes. Mrs. Jane Davidson-McGee & her daughter Elizabeth, Mrs. Kathy Martin & her daughter Kathleen Martin helped us organize our trips across Canada. On our way we met Mr. Randy Helten who gave us moral support when we were very homesick. After visiting Canada, I realized we have lots of friends who love us and are interested in our lives & in our works for the poor.

So much was happening at SASAC and in my life. It had truly become my way of life. I love it and have no regrets at all. When SASAC closed down, it was like a hurricane coming into our lives & destroying everything.

We survived through this hurricane also with God's blessings and also with the help and support of our friends, especially Mrs Beth Emiry, Ben Hochausen., Scott Herrington, Chris Bake, Debra Cummings & her friends and families, Hubert Soltan, Dr Nancy Maguire, Dr Laura Louie & her friends, Kathy & Jim Martin and Shepherds with food, shelter & education for our children.



Study time: Mrs Kathy Martin with children:
October 2011 visit



Tea break: children eating corn snacks

Now we have our own home "MorningStar" thanks to Deb Cummings & her friends and families. At present there are 17 school-going children and 3 adults living in this home. And now the MorningStar family is under the SOJASI umbrella. I hope more and more poor children will get food, shelter and education through SOJASI. It is a small effort from our side. It will be a great gift if God blesses our effort and you bless our children and touch their lives.

Hoping and wishing to get encouragement and support from you all.

Yours Sincerely,

Cecilia George