Bengaluru: Dream India Network (DIN), a not-for-profit organization working for the benefit of children at risk, in collaboration with St. Francis Xavier Girls’ High School organized Deepavali celebrations here on Sunday.

In his inaugural address, Chief Guest Sri Sri Sri Nirmalanandatha Maha Swamiji of Adichunchanagiri Mutt, called for peace in the society.

Swamiji who began his talk with slokas uttered in Sanskrit said occasions and celebrations of this sort has reconciled all religions and has helped bring all communities together under an umbrella. Pointing to the 400 strong children of foster homes at the event, Swamiji said, “You are a great asset of our country, God has given the divinity and looks after us,” he added. The main aim of coming together is to establish peace in the society, said Swamiji and added that this was shattered due to lack of discipline.

“Peace and discipline are co-related. We have great spiritual masters to emulate in our pursuit for peace. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam used to utter mantras,” he said. Quoting Kalam, he said peace comes to the society through religious beauty which is found in the character. The order in the family reflects and leads to society. Swamiji suggested to realise that beauty and divinity go hand in hand. Swamiji who was a scientist prior to his joining the monastery appreciated the effort DIN puts in the massive task they are engaged in.
Fr Edward Thomas, Adviser and Mentor, DIN, welcoming all invitees said Swamiji was a scientist and a professionally qualified person who renounced the worldly attractions and became the Swamiji. Fr Edward invited Swamiji to collaborate with DIN by way of donating land and building infrastructure for foster children and the hundreds of the dying elderly people on streets of the city. Fr Edward made it amply clear to swamiji that the work done by him and his team members were not for conversion. If anybody does conversion, it is sin and against the teachings and tenets of Jesus. Some of the nuns took children of foster home to temples as per their belief and faith. What is making the rounds is misconception. Christianity stands for service to the needy. Quoting the Bible, Fr Edward said Jesus asked people of his time ‘where were they when he was hungry, thirsty, naked and in prison.’

Fr Edward said DIN is a dreamers’ platform. The motto of DIN is: ‘If you have a dream we have a plan and if you have a plan we have a platform.’ Dream India as a policy has decided to celebrate all the major festivals of all the religions so as to inculcate proper values in the children. He said DIN celebrates Christmas, Bakrid and Deepavali every year as part of National Integration and brotherhood. This year about 400 Dream India Foster Home children from 50 Foster Homes have come together to celebrate Deepavali. Deepavali is a celebration of the victory over darkness that symbolizes evil. It expresses the conviction and hope that evil in our world can be eliminated or conquered by light and good will prevails.

Dr Anush Solomon, Swayam Sevak, speaking on the occasion quoting Mother Teresa said, “I convert Hindus to be a better Hindu and a Muslim, a better Muslim. A lot of simple and humble people work behind the scenes and they turn tears into cheers. A lot of chaos exist in the world and to change it we need to ‘go slow’ to bring order. Among others who spoke included Fr Prem, Ivan Nigli, Ex-MLA, Sr Malar Joseph SJT, Principal, St. Francis Xavier’s High School (on behalf of Sr. Benedicta Mary Joseph, Provincial SJT), Biplov Datta, Director, Insoul Foundation, Sr. Regina, Secretary, CRI, Dr Dawood Iqbal, a social worker and Sr Lissy Rose,
Dream India Network Celebrates Deepavali for Children of Foster Homes

Director, Foster Homes who also proposed a vote of thanks.

Certificates and medals were presented to the best in sports and games.

Among others present on the occasion included William, Member, Minority Commission, Pericho Prabhu, Kiritappa, Ms Benjamin from CASA, Vijay Kumar, Secretary RSS, Koshy, Metilda, Minority Commission, Sandeep Vikram and Praveen.

Children enthralled the guests, invitees and all others with their dances. Sr. Jayasree coordinated the entire programme. Ms Sameera compered the celebration and inaugural function prior to the sports and games conducted in the afternoon.

Earlier, Loynel H Johnes, Sports Consultant who was the chief guest, inaugurated and declared the Sports Events Open. Loynel who was also a teacher said sports day used to bring excitement. Competition is sharing joy, even if one faced disappointment and loss but it lasted for a while only.

Sr Leena SJT speaking on the occasion said the Olympic flame symbolized the light of the Spirit, knowledge and life. The flame used in the Olympic games is lit at Olypia the ancient Greecr where the sacred fire was kept burning on the altar of Hestia. The ancient Greeks believed that the fire was given to mankind by Prometheus and have sacred qualities. Linking the ancient culture and games with the modern ones, the flame is carried with the relay, which formally ends with the lighting of the Olympic cauldron, during the opening ceremony of the Olypic games.

It was first introduced to the winter Olympics in 1936. Diem created the first relay Olympia to Berlin. The torch is the common emblem of enlightenment and hope. And a torch held up symbolizes life, truth and regenerative power of the flame. Sr Leena also made a fervent prayer and expressed hope that the events would help to keep up the hope it gave in every one’s hearts and to bring cheer and enlightenment within and around the participants and all
Dream India Network Celebrates Deepavali for Children of Foster Homes

others as well.

Children were divided according to their age and various games and sports were conducted in groups. Children performed Aerobics on the occasion. Among those sponsored the celebration included Seed India. Youth for change also extended a helping hand in the smooth conducting of the sports programme.

Advertisements