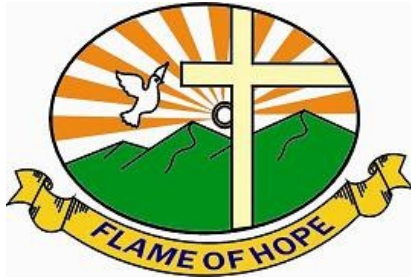




## ***FLAME OF HOPE***



***Home for the physically and mentally challenged children.***

***Mobile: 9932896137***

***e-mail: [flameofhope2007@yahoo.co.in](mailto:flameofhope2007@yahoo.co.in)***

***srannfrancesca@hotmail.com***

Dear Friends,

In our last letter I cautioned you that the next edition will be stuffed with boasting and pride and now we got even more reasons to 'balloon' it.

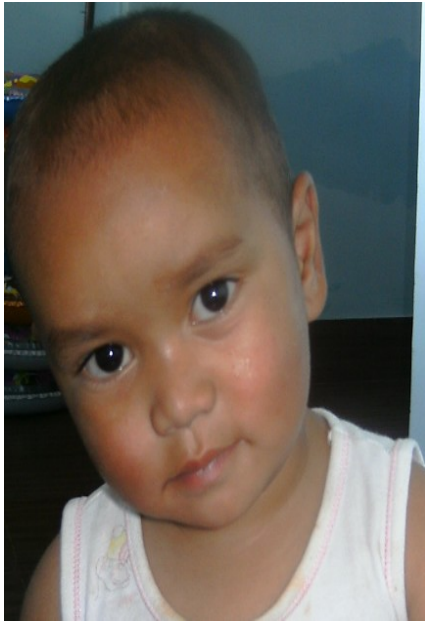
There was a little event in my life that brought Big Gifts and that is my 50-th Birthday. I kept it secret, especially because many think I am less than 50 (probably they judge by the amount of wisdom I acquired so far). Whatever reasons, I don't feel old.

So what happened on this particular day? It had to be special and it



happened to be special.

Usha gave me unusual gift- she brought Abishek as new



member of our family. Some of you already saw him from the visits we made to Chimney. He is a son of a young girl who recently was murdered by her husband and that in front of their two years old boy- Abishek. When around three years ago I went to visit Chimney with Simonetta we met the girl who was expecting a baby. Her look made you feels to empty your pocket and fill her tiny hand. Each time I went there she would just look, never ask but her desperate situation would speak and ask of its own. I wished we could do more for her than just occasional 'relief' and take her away from there but it was not possible. Her husband, a drunkard wouldn't allow. He was torturing her and in this particular corner of the world where people are their own judges silence was the only solution, which was not solution at all. Last January we went there with Franco, Gianluca, Aldo and Rebecca. As we arrived in the village the girl (mother of Abishek) emerged from the mist, as usually speechless. On seeing her Gianluca pull out his jacket and covered her tiny body. Most probably this was the only instant she ever was respected by men. In such a piercing cold she wore a transparent shirt that certainly did not beat the chill. As usually she never spoke a word and as usually my companions understood the need to share what they had at that moment. Two months later her husband in drunkard rage stabbed her and leaving her bleeding to death run away. Abishek was left on the mercy of the local people who thank God turn to us for help and so we have taken the child under our care. He will be the most spoiled one as all the 'didis' (big sisters) are making competition in caring for him and carrying him. And he loves to be the 'prince'. I am forced to take preventive action because he is in danger of never learning to walk.



**Summer camp.** Yes, it was a real summer

camp. May month is unbearable as for the heat. Almost all the children got boils and Fr. Abraham exhausted to the last drop of his sweat. Then Usha as usually cool but attentive to the needs of others invited us for summer holidays to her 'air-conditioned' country site. We did not wait for her second phone call but armed with sleeping bags we flew to the hills ignoring the road signs "Ply, don't fly". After being roasted in the heat you don't need any other amusement, but only the fresh breeze and soothing cool on the boils. We encamped in the playing room, all on the floor in sleeping bags like real scouts.

The other 'four in one' Gift is four candidates. I will remind you here that one of the reasons we desired to have house in Siliguri was precisely that- to gain vocations. We were in desperate need of that. I was getting little bit discouraged as there was no sign of any vocation. But everything happens in God's time. We have to be patient and trustful (not always easy). But I had God's given conviction that He will eventually increase our number. We kept on praying, putting in front line our children so that Jesus will act on seeing them so innocent (at Cana His Mother had to push Him to action). Now, on 29.04.2012, Vocation Sunday and my 50-th Birthday two girls officially asked us to join. My joy was uncontrollable. There were another two of their friends who came to work. We could perceive that they too had big attraction for children and for our way of life. As the two first candidates shifted to the new building the other two approached me with the same desire.

After four months of 'Come and See' programme, they received the dress that would remind them and speak to others that they belong to Flame of Hope Family.



They got many qualities that are

needed and expected from the candidates, especially initial zeal and freshness that I hope will never shrink (like their dress that we stitched and after washing became so small that the tailor had to remake it ...with gun put to his head. otherwise he wouldn't complete the work for the occasion of reception). On the end everything went well, (tailor is alive) with Fr. Paul as celebrant. What really is heartening is the joy of the children. Somehow they perceive that these girls intend to share their life with them, not for money sake but out of love. This echo

**\* our vision- Our VISION is to live like brothers and sisters, sharing our life with the physically and mentally challenged people, children of the One Father of us all, who care for each other, who bring hope to the one deprived of it.**

(Many physically and mentally challenged people have little or no hope for the future. We hope that by our dedication to this group of humanity we open their hearts with the wonderment: *'What is the man that you care for him?'* I pray and hope that many of our brothers and sisters who are challenged by physical or mental disabilities will wake up with joy to meet new day, with hope in their hearts: *I must be someone important for God, because he cares for me, I am loved by Him, He has not forgotten me, He wants me to love Him, He calls others to Himself to love and serve me.*

This would be the Good News for each of them. Yes, we all prayed for that and the event was the Good News to our children.

**\* our mission- Our Mission (Apostolate) consists first and foremost in forming small communities of 10-12 members and creating a loving family, modeled on the Holy Family, where we share a common life, most of it spent together with the physically and mentally challenged helping each other in day to day living.**

**Our main apostolate is to be community- "Family". 'Let them know we are Christians by our love' because love is the witness par excellence which leads to hope.**

So far all four fulfill the 'requirements'.



**Nikita** has put us on alert once again. Hardly we

came back from the 'summer camp' when Nikita got very bad seizure followed by the same several times. We took her to the hospital where usually she is treated and she had to be hospitalized. After a day the condition worsened and she was put in ICU. We could meet her for 10 minutes daily but had to be in disposition all the time because every now and then we would get the list of the medicines to buy. After a week doctor told that we could take her if we wish. We brought her back home, but little we knew about her health condition, mainly of the pneumonia that she developed while in ICU, and bed-sores. The room she stayed was so cold, that it was Icy Care Unit rather than Intensive Care Unit.

By following night her condition became very bad with 41 C and I thought first of taking her back to hospital. But somehow I felt she did not want to go to hospital. Even while she was in hospital seemingly unconscious and I would see her for 10 min. and would say few words to her ear, tears would fall from her eyes. Besides the bed sores if not taken care in time, will go worse and worse. So taking life in hands, literally, and relaying on God's mercy, we began our own treatment. Day and night one of us (thank God for our four candidates who proved to be very reliable) we kept vigil near her bed, putting cold cloth on her body to reduce fever, giving regularly antibiotic that God's Providence 'supplied' (Paul brought along with him) and giving nourishing liquids by feeding tube. Evenings we had family rosary in her room. With these temporal and heavenly aids Nikita's condition became better day by day and after a week she looked around very consciously and smiled. That rewarded us enough for all our efforts.

Already I mentioned about the presence of my brother- Fr. Paul. But he needs full page; he deserved it genuinely because he did full time job in the kitchen and as water guard in our swimming pool.







he was getting to car to go to airport the post man delivered the letters of thanks (between some love letters too). Here I get chance to mention my love words to all who contributed to the common 'purse' that he handed over to me. There are names that are surely already written in the Book near the entrance to Heaven and I thank all of you but just a special word to Grace. She herself being challenged had a thought to support our children from her earnings. What a beautiful and selfless gesture in this time when most are struggling and her surely. I thank also Louis and his family, John who send the medical things of which the antibiotic we used immediately and effectively.

So the object I thought of boasting about came to the last place (I supposed to boast about the building) but that is because, as usually, God exceeds our dreaming.



When we decided to extend the building to



have bigger chapel and few rooms, it was almost like a secret. I did not have courage to tell anyone that we need more space. After all the present building is not that small. But the little 'voice' inside me was urging to get extra space and that immediately. It is because God knows our needs and so the Holy Spirit 'whispers' to our ears of His Plan. I felt almost uneasy to explain to anyone for what we are building again. But I knew for what, for whom, namely for candidates. After not even a year, with funds that you so generously have sent we were able to complete the building and have Easter celebrations held in new chapel. In a way it was absolutely stupid on my part to build 'in secret' because without your support how could we build anything at all? That proves that in my 'mind' I am not at all like 50 yrs. adult. Fr. Abraham has given himself almost up to death to hold all the Holy Week services, beginning with Palm Sunday and ending with Easter Sunday. Looking at the pictures you may have just a glimpse of our chapel but why not to have full view? Hm?



I leave you here with this tempting perspective and Meena will open gate for you.