



*It was a beautiful sight this morning seeing your beaming faces, so full of joy heading off to Kolkata for what will be a life changing experience. To give of yourself the way you all are is something you all should be proud of. All our love,  
Sharon, Chris & Courtney Bellemore*



## THE PILGRIMAGE OF HOPE INDIA 2009

They have arrived!  
Posted: 6 Jan 2009

Dear Parents and Friends,

Last night I went to the airport to meet the Pilgrims. We arrived back at the hotel at 10pm (local time) and everyone was in bed by 11pm. The Pilgrims had enjoyed a very good flight, with no problems at all. Although they were tired, there was a wonderful atmosphere of excitement and anticipation among the group.

This morning we have held an orientation session, and already I can sense a real feeling of 'community' developing. This will grow as the days go by, but it is so encouraging to see it at this early stage. We met with Father Gregory Monteiro, who is the Kolkata Diocesan Youth Director, and he gave us a very

interesting introduction to some of the aspects of life in Kolkata. This afternoon we are going to Mother House to visit Mother Teresa's tomb, and also to meet Sister Nirmala, who was appointed by Mother Teresa to be her successor. Please continue to check the website daily. As long as the internet connection remains reliable, we hope to write a daily blog, and add photos.

Kindest regards  
Brother James



*As former pilgrims we will follow with great interest and with a very strong sense of involvement, your Pilgrimage. Having been to Kolkata in 05 and also in 07 we can, in a split second, transport ourselves to the projects where you will be involved, the sights and smells of the streets and most importantly the great love which grew within us and which is still there for the beautiful people of Kolkata. Our prayer for all of you is that you will allow yourselves to be open to the love that your brothers and sisters in India will freely offer to you.  
Rob and Margaret Hadfield.*



*Dear India Pilgrims 09  
On the eve of your departure I wish you all the very best on what I trust will be an exceptional experience for you all. POH India 09 is a significant step forward for the POH Programme as we welcome a more significant adult participation than on any previous trip. I know that every participant, no matter what your age or purpose, will be moved by what you experience. I know that together you will grow as individuals and as a group. I also know that God's Blessing is upon you.  
Best wishes for all that is ahead.  
Garth Wynne  
Headmaster  
Christ Church Grammar School.*

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*What you are doing now is without doubt, one of the most courageous, generous journeys that is possible. You are inspiring. May those under your care receive comfort and strength from your touch and your smile.*

Posted: 8 Jan 2009 - 8:55am

Today began with a long bus ride to a place called Titigarh which was full of "postcard moments." One such moment was when a man squatted by the side of the road brushing his teeth in the dirty water running down the ditch on the side of the road. Above him was a billboard advertising digital recordable TV which highlighted the sharp contrast of wealth distribution in India.

We greeted each person with the traditional greeting and although some were very disfigured, we held hands. One particular man, who was missing many fingers and turning blind, asked where we were from and when he learned we were Australian he commented about Ricky Ponting's batting. We were entertained by the small children of the patients who sang songs for us. Despite their hardship, the people were peaceful and dignified and it was a very positive experience.



Titigarh was established by Mother Teresa for the care of lepers who were shunned by everyone and called the "Untouchables." Now they have a place where Christian Brothers care for those who suffer with Leprosy. Amazingly it is situated literally on both sides of a railway line. It was a very emotional experience. We walked silently through the rooms where the lepers worked at 50 looms, weaving the cotton they had dyed into material for the Sisters' uniforms. We also were privileged to be taken through the long wards where the lepers are nursed.

We then went through the orientation process to begin work in the Missionaries of Charity. Tomorrow is a 4.30am start when we walk through the streets of Calcutta to Mass with the Sisters.

*We can only have some sense of what you confront. We do know that the 'ripple effect' of what you do will last forever. Love & kindness lasts longer than man's inhumanity to man. It is so wonderful that you 'fill the bank' of love & kindness, for mankind, thru your pilgrimage. Your generosity of spirit & service can make all the difference, not just immediately but, in the future of those you serve. At this time we are reminded of 'hope' and what this means. One way of making sense of 'hope' is to see it as 'Helping Other Possibilities Emerge'. It is through your actions that hope is brought to the life of others. It was great to hear the letters you received helped your journey in some way. Proud parents wrote them! Challenge yourself thru the experience, learn, support, encourage & serve. Love from The Hodgett's Family & all other proud parents.*

*Hi Pilgrims especially the Peter Moses crew. I hope you all having an amazing time over there. I've been reading the blogs and looking at the pictures (I even recognised two of the children). Take in every moment as it comes, keep smiling and make lots of memories! Thinking of you all lots. Emily x (India 08)*

