Harvest Thanksgiving in Delhi embraces Social Responsibility

On Sunday, October 18, 2026, a beautiful garden in New Delhi became a place of gratitude, fellowship and reflection. Families and friends gathered at the home of Oliver and Verena Mirza for a Harvest Thanksgiving service, organised jointly by the German-speaking Emmaus Catholic Community and the German Protestant Church in North India (DPKN).

The garden was filled with warmth and life. Surrounded by greenery, with an altar decorated with harvest offerings, we came together to thank God for the gifts of Creation, the food on our tables and the people who enrich our lives. Pastor Christoph Wildfang led the liturgy, and the service was enriched by Bryan's musical accompaniment.

Yet, as we gathered in such beautiful surroundings, one thought stayed with me: How can we truly give thanks for our blessings without remembering those who struggle to meet even their most basic needs?

From a Beautiful Garden to the Reality of the Slums

This question becomes particularly urgent in a city like Delhi, where great wealth and opportunity exist beside severe poverty. Behind the busy streets, modern buildings and expanding economy are communities where families struggle with insecure livelihoods, inadequate housing, and limited access to education and healthcare.

For children growing up in the slums, the circumstances of their birth can profoundly shape their opportunities. Many face obstacles that other children rarely have to consider. Access to quality education, safe places to learn and play, creative activities and reliable support can make an enormous difference to their future.

Bringing Hope to Children in the Slums

One of the most meaningful moments of the Thanksgiving service was Emily's presentation about the slum project, and the efforts to support children living in difficult social and economic circumstances. The project seeks to support these children through education and creative activities, helping them discover their abilities and develop confidence. Such initiatives offer more than practical assistance. They communicate a powerful message: You matter. Your future matters. Your circumstances today do not have to determine your whole life.

Education can open doors; Art and other creative activities allow children to express themselves, develop their talents, and experience the joy of achievement. Equally important is the presence of adults who listen, encourage and take their hopes seriously. The work associated with Altreach India and the Arul Foundation India reflects this commitment to stand with children who need opportunities and support.

The question was no longer simply whether we were grateful for what we had, but whether our gratitude could become something meaningful in the lives of children who have so much less. After the service, the garden became a place of conversation, friendship and shared joy. The celebration brought together people from different backgrounds, and reminded us that community is built not only through worship, but also through the willingness to accompany one another through life's changes.



__Fr Dr Arul Lourdu__ serves the German-speaking Catholic community in India; he is involved in initiatives supporting disadvantaged children and communities.