

March 5, 2002.

Dear Friends,

We are at the end of another academic year, a year of both joy and sorrow. We have been able to reach out to a few more children and families and have also been blessed by some more benefactors. September 11th has left its indelible scars with terrorism, violence and corruption continuing to rock our world. Our country too has its share of tension and turmoil with the recent killings and burnings at Gujarat. *But in a world of gloom and despair there still lies hope and light for God can never abandon his people.*

When the world seems a defeat for God and you are sick with the disorder, the violence, terror, war on the streets; when everything seems to be in chaos, remember that Jesus died and rose again to save us all and to heal our broken world. His salvation is already with us. This is the Easter message. This is the message of hope.

Yes, every act of charity and kindness is an act of faith in the Resurrection. Every time you feed the hungry, clothe the naked, defend the weak, forgive your enemy, welcome the poor, you believe in the Resurrection.

When you wake at peace in the morning, when you sing to the rising sun;

When you go to work with joy, you believe in the Resurrection.

The undeniable sign of the Resurrection is joy, bringing a sense of hope to others that is tangible, irresistible and enduring.

Let us then place our hope in God alone and continue to expect miracles of transformation and healing in our self our society and our world.

School re-opened on 24th November'01 after a 3-week break for Diwali.

Our young German sponsors, Mr. Thomas Feix and Mr. Wolfgang Spitchan, arrived on 22nd November on a 2-week visit to Prem Dan to do a Video shooting of our 3 Prem Dan schools and the Boarding at Kharghar. They hope to have a documentary ready on Prem Dan for more publicity and more sponsors. May God bless all their efforts.

The wives of the Naval Officers decided to celebrate Navy Week with our children. So every afternoon from the 3rd of December to the 7th of December the seamen came personally to deliver the delicious meals prepared by the naval cooks while the wives of the Naval Officers, themselves, served our children. The children were fascinated to see the seamen in their spotless white uniforms. It was indeed a very noble gesture and they enjoyed the experience of sharing their time and money with the needy. They also visit us at other times bringing clothes, snacks and other useful things for the children.

On the 14th of December, the staff and students of Shakuntal Kantilal Jain Girls High School visited our Reay Road school and gave our children a Christmas party and gifts. They also donated sacks of dal and rice to Prem Dan for our feeding programme.

On the 15th of December, we lost a very dear sponsor, Mr. Mario Traversini, who died of cancer in Rome. He had donated a Computer system to Prem Dan while he was in charge of Telecom Italia. We had a short prayer service for him. May his soul rest in peace.

On 19th and 20th of December, we had our usual Christmas parties for our 3 schools.

Most of the children from our Boarding and the other Boardings spend their vacations at home. But those who have nowhere to go to are occasionally fortunate to have a kind benefactor arrange a holiday for them. This time on the 23rd of December, Mr. Philip Baudin, in-charge of Prem Dan France, took 12 girls and 6 boys for a few days to Gorai, an island in Mumbai. Ms. Aruna, Ms. Annice, Annie, Shankar and Savita accompanied the children. They celebrated a meaningful Christmas together and had a great time at the beach and in the swimming pool.

Mr. Mauro Mingrone, of Prem Dan Italy, along with his wife, Deborah, paid us a short visit on 30th December.

Mr. Arjun and Mrs. Anjali Mathrani came down from USA in December and made a few trips to Prem Dan. They also visited our Boarding on the 5th of January and were happy to see the Vocational Training Centre, named after his mother, in progress.

The Vocational Training Course, which commenced in July 2002, has helped our girls in many ways. In Computers, the girls have learned Fundamentals, DOS, MS Office, a little of Internet, Oracle 8, C and are now doing C+ +. The Tailoring Course has made the girls proficient in stitching men's, women's and children's garments. They have also learned Crotchet, Embroidery, and to make soft toys and candles. Most of the girls are not fluent in English and have not studied much; hence the teachers have to teach them basic concepts and Arithmetic before moving to the Course essentials. The Baking, Confectionery and Cooking Course will begin in the first week of April. They will soon be able to put these skills into practice and begin earning their living.

The children of Garden school and Geeta Nagar school received their MMR (Mumps-Measles-Rubella) vaccination on the 11th and 17th of January from Dr. Stella Shrivastava and her team.

On 21st January, Sajit Kumar, our ex-student and currently a part-time worker in Prem Dan, married Sherly Sasi, in his home town in Kerala. Unfortunately, none of us were able to attend the wedding on account of the distance.

The Lions Club of Cuffe Parade visited our Boarding on the 14th of February with goodies and other essential items for the girls. What a good way to celebrate Valentine's Day!

Javier Moro, nephew of the famous writer, Dominique La Pierre (author of City of Joy) and his wife Teresa Mendez, came from Spain on a 2-week visit to Mumbai. They visited us on 24th and 25th February to take photos and collect material in order to publish something on Prem Dan.

The SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examination began on the 2nd of March. This time we have 23 children appearing for the exam, which is the highest number in the 24 years of Prem Dan's existence. We hope they all pass with flying colours.

School will be closing on the 5th of April for the summer vacation. We wish you all A Very Happy Easter. May the Risen Lord bless you and your families with His peace, love and joy.

Yours gratefully in Jesus and Mary,

Sr. Morris
Sr. Felicity Morris
(SR. FELICITY MORRIS)

Sr. Patricia Santos
(SR. PATRICIA SANTOS)