Our labels are a sensible response to the fact that 'Life is difficult'. We live in a society and world, with many problems – but we can learn many techniques for survival. Another reason for our labels is for identification if there was a fire in the school or in an earthquake. Soon we shall have fire practices and then, when you have proved how clever and quick and quiet you are to get out of the building and complete your class register, we shall then study the best techniques for if there is an earthquake. Life is difficult, but for every difficulty, although we cannot do everything, we can do something, to be sensible and make sure that as few people as possible are hurt. Your school and your home have a duty to prepare you for life and, although we all want the lives of children to be lovely and simple and safe, life is not always lovely and simple and safe – and we must do our best to prepare you for those times when life is difficult.

God bless you.

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SCHOOL PRAYER 1. OUR CREATOR

Assembly 32 – Sunday March 2nd

This week, I thought I would talk to you about the words of the prayer that we use every morning in Assembly. When I first came here, I was very pleased to hear the nice prayer you were already saying. I am sure those of all faiths can feel comfortable about saying it. All the major religions say that there is a High Power that created us - the Creator (*Sristikorta*) - and say that this Higher Power is good. It must be awful to worship a god who behaves badly and demands that his worshippers do terrible things. But the major religions of the world agree that the Higher Power above us is good and loving and asks us to be good and loving also.

The prayer begins 'O Almighty God' – and the word 'all – mighty' (*shorboshoktiman*) reminds us how great is a God who was responsible for creating this beautiful world – out of nothing. Can you imagine nothing? That is the hardest thing of all to imagine – nothing. Whatever was the power that made something out of nothing must be the greatest power of all. When you and I make something, we can only make something out of something, can't we? We take various things and make a new thing out of them. It is only the human creativity in art and music and literature that comes nearest to making something out of nothing.

I wonder if some of you watch the nature programmes on television – do you? Do you see pictures of other countries and their peoples, of animals, of life under the sea, life under the microscope and life among the stars? The more we know, the more amazed we are at this beautiful world around us. There was a time, about 100 years ago, when some scientists became very proud. They said that science was about to make such wonderful discoveries that they would then be able to say that Science can explain everything – religion would be unnecessary. There would be no more mystery to life. When the atom was discovered, some scientists said, "Now we have discovered the basic building block of the universe – and we will be able to explain everything!"

And guess what? They discovered that the atom could be divided and, through more and more powerful microscopes, they discovered that the world of the very, very SMALL was more and more complicated than they had ever imagined. As astronomers discovered more and more about the universe, they discovered that the world of the very, very BIG was more and more complicated than they had ever imagined. Science could *look* for the answers but it could not find *all* the answers. Mystery had not been defeated. Science has become humble again in the face of the mystery of life itself.

Bangladesh is a very beautiful country. I hope you and your families get out of Dhaka and explore it as much as possible. There are also other beautiful countries in the world. We are all learning how the things that we buy can affect other parts of the world. Maybe you have seen those advertisements on television that say, "When the buying stops, the killing can stop too!" Some people are still killing tigers for their body parts to be used in medicines. Other animals that are getting fewer in numbers could also be helped if people stopped paying high prices for their body parts or for their babies as pets. All the peoples of the world are slowly learning how to care for our beautiful world better and the creatures in it. In this way, we can give honour to our Almighty God who is its Creator because he loves everything that he has made and wants us to love it too.

God bless you.

SCHOOL PRAYER 2. POURING

Assembly 33 Monday March 3rd 2003

(Take a big jug, a little jug and a glass – and use as visual aids – the more exaggerated, the better!)

We are thinking this week about our school prayer and yesterday we looked at 'O Almighty God' and we thought of our Creator and his wonderful world.

And what do we ask Almighty God to do, do your remember? What is the first thing we ask him to do? POUR DOWN THY BLESSINGS UPON ALL WHO ARE NOW HERE.

The world and you and I are wonderfully and strangely made and many of us do our best – but, day by day, we need God's blessings upon what we do or what we do is not much good. We need to tell him that we will do our little bit to make this day a good day – but we should ask him, "Please will you do your Big Bit?"

Do you remember the verb that is used with the word 'blessing'? What do we ask God to do with his blessings? POUR them down. P – O – U – R. POUR is a lovely word. We stand under the shower and the water *pours* down upon us. The rain pours down on the thirsty land. God is very generous with his blessings – he does not give his blessings to us drip by drip, saying, "Isn't that enough? Do you really want any more?" He *pours* them down.

So we think of God with a great jug of blessings – *pick it up and hold it high* - and we ask him to pour his blessing into us like we pour water from a jug into a glass *(pick up glass and be about to pour water from jug into glass – stop).* NO – wait a moment, that is not right. We are not like glasses – we are like little jugs...*(pick up little jug and pour water from big jug into it, during the following...).* He likes us to say, "Please fill up my little jug of blessings from your big jug of blessings – and then I will go and pour out your blessings on those I meet today – and then you will need to fill me up again tomorrow!"

God does not give us his blessings for us to keep to ourselves. He gives us health and strength and intelligence and opportunities and friends and colleagues and jobs and he does not give us these blessings like a bag of sweets so that we can go into a corner and eat them all ourselves, determined not to share them with anyone else! No, he says, 'I love you but I love my whole world. I want you to let my blessings pour *through* you into the whole world. I give you my blessings so that you can give them away to others – and, when you give them away, you will find that I will always keep your own jug full."

God bless you.