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SCHOOL PRAYER 3. PROSPERITY
Assembly 34 – Tuesday March 4th 2003

This week we are going through the school prayer and yesterday, I had a jug of water here. What was I doing with that? (Recap)

Now what is the next sentence – "Prosper our labours." Do you know what 'prosper' means – a prosperous person is someone whose work is going very well. Prosperity is what a nation enjoys when its economy is booming and people are becoming richer. Every person and every nation wants to be prosperous. 'Prosper our LABOURS.' What is our labour? Our WORK. So we are saying to God, "We are going to work hard today – please see that our work goes well. Please make our work successful."

Lots of people want God to give them prosperity – riches and success – and even ask other people to pray for it – but they do not do very much about it themselves. It is not very surprising when such people do not do become prosperous. In your language and mine, there are similar sayings – In English it goes 'God helps those who help themselves.' It is rather silly to say, "Please God, help me to pass my exams!" if you are doing no work, if you watch television every evening and look out of the window most of the school-time! Similarly, if someone is a shopkeeper and he is praying for his business to do well but, if his shop does not have the things in it that people want to buy and if the shop assistants are rude to the customers and if he is drinking tea all day with his friends, then his shop will not do well, however hard he prays.

We can only pray for God to give our work success, when we are doing our very best. If you are working very hard in your office, or your shop, or your bank or your classroom then you can pray this prayer – "Dear God – prosper my labours." God is very pleased with the prayer of such a person – and there is a chance that he will give you success.

I am sure that you know this in your relationship with your father and mother. If you want them to do a special favour, then you know that you have much more chance of getting it, if you are doing your best to be a good child, working hard, behaving well at home, and being kind and friendly and helpful. If you are rude and difficult and lazy and then go and ask your parents to get you some nice new clothes, or something, then there is not much chance of them agreeing!

If we do the LITTLE that we can do, then maybe God will do the LOT that he can do – but then, that is his business and we cannot ORDER him to do it – we can only ask – and so every day we ask him to prosper our labours.

God bless you.

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SCHOOL PRAYER 4. PROTECTION
Assembly 35 - Wednesday March 5th 2003

This is the last day that Mrs Rita Bennett is going to have with us. She flies back to the UK tomorrow morning early. We have already had a little presentation by the staff and a very nice dinner from the Management and Coordinators but this is the last chance for the rest of you to say goodbye and thank her very much for being with us for 2 weeks when she has worked very hard on giving the teachers good advice to make our school even better…..

This week we are going through the school prayer and looking at the meaning. It is very easy, in every religion, to repeat prayers without thinking about their meaning and these prayers never get above the ceiling. God is deaf to such prayers.

On Monday, we looked at POUR out your blessings. Yesterday, we looked at 'PROSPER our labours" and today we do the next sentence which is ……'PROTECT us from all things hurtful both to soul and body.' I must say that I know God answers this prayer because I am AMAZED that there are not more serious accidents in this school. There must be armies of God's angels on duty every single school day, caring for you all! We have very little play space down here and you rush around and very few fall over. And, when I see big and small pupils rushing up and down stairs, carrying bags, I am AMAZED that no one has fallen down the stairs and killed themselves or someone else.

I wonder if you can imagine what a responsibility it is for this school to care for over 300 precious children! If anything happens to any one of you, your parents could be very angry with us! It is horrible for any teacher to have to tell parents that their child is injured. It is every schoolteacher's worst nightmare.

Accidents can happen very easily in school for the simple reason that growing children have little control over their bodies. Especially when you are a teenager, your movements are not coordinated and you do not know your own strength – which is why you sometimes hurt each other when you do not mean to. YOU think you are giving someone a little tap and, suddenly, they are on the floor, writhing in pain! This is why it is so important for you to play games and sports and also to dance, to help you to learn how to control your bodies and get used to the fact that, each year, you are growing bigger…...

So, while we pray to God to keep his angel armies on duty here, please try to move around the school more carefully. Already, the little children are going upstairs to play in our big Upper Assembly Room and sometimes there are very small pupils going one way and big pupils going the other way. Some of you who are very tall, please look downwards every now and again to make sure you are not running over a small child, like a large truck running over a small bicycle.

It is not only your bodies that need protection, your souls can be hurt – and your feelings - in school. Some of you can be very rude and nasty to each other. Sometimes it can be worse to have your feelings hurt than your body. So, please look after each other in every way. You are very precious and important people and we do not want any of you to be hurt in any way. That is why we pray, "Protect us from all things hurtful both to soul and body."

God bless you.

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SCHOOL PRAYER 5. PRESERVATION

Assembly 36 – Saturday March 8th 2003

In our school prayer, there are a lot of Ps – Pour down thy blessings. Prosper our labours. Protect us from all things hurtful and now we think of the 4th P – PRESERVE US FROM SIN AND SELFISHNESS.

Now I wonder if you understand the word PRESERVE. Preservatives are very useful things that help to keep food nice and tasty that would otherwise go bad. If you boil fruit with lots of sugar you get a preserve called JAM or JELLY which is very nice on bread or in rice pudding. If you do not eat mangoes, they will go bad, but if your use a clever recipe, with salt and vinegar and other things, you can make mango chutney. But fruit and vegetables and other things have to be mixed with preservatives and cooked in certain ways, in order to keep them, (preserve them) fresh and nice so they do not go bad and smelly and horrible.

Sin and selfishness are bad and smelly things. Sin is a word that covers all the bad things – all the ways we have of saying NO to what we know is good and right - and selfishness is the sort of badness that comes when people think only of themselves. The