selfish person judges everything by whether he or she likes it or not – whether he or she will profit from it or not. A selfish person does not think about other people, or what other people might like or profit from. It is very difficult to have a good family life if there are one or two people in it who only think of themselves. It is also very difficult to have a good school life or a good national life, if everyone thinks only of themselves and what is best for them.

In this sentence, we are asking God to keep us away from bad things and mix us up with good things so we are kept fresh and nice. But we have to share in this work. We do our little bit and God does his BIG bit. It is no good mixing with bad people in bad situations and then praying to God to keep us free from badness! It is as silly as going to stand in a really dirty, filthy river or pond and then praying to God 'Please, God, keep me clean!' God will not be able to hear your prayer because his angels will be laughing so loudly at you! If, as a girl, we start mixing with other girls who are gossips and speak and act badly towards others, then we cannot expect not to pick up those bad habits and become like them. If, as a boy, we mix in bad company, with those who use bad language or take drugs or carry knives and guns in order to steal and threaten, then we are being very stupid if we think we are not going to pick up those bad habits and become like them.

We pray to God to help us to keep away from sinful words and deeds and thoughts because we are doing our best to keep ourselves away from them. But the more we mix with people who are like sugar and salt, the more we shall become like good jam or good chutney. If we want to develop into people whose characters will be tasty and not horrible then we will pray, "Preserve us from sin and selfishness."

God bless you.

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SCHOOL PRAYER 6. GENEROUS

Assembly 37 Sunday March 9th 2003

I want us to begin your training in how to behave in a serious emergency. First we shall pretend that there is a fire – and have a fire drill but not for the whole school at the same time – to begin with! I am asking the class teachers to choose a lesson-time. Maybe the Coordinators could plan 2 or 3 forms together on the same floor. Please choose a responsible person to lead the class line down the stairs – someone who will walk at the right speed – quickly but not rushing. You are to shut all the windows, go downstairs and out of the school and into the yard where the registers will be taken to check that all are present and that no one is lost in the fire! I would like your teachers to time this – how soon you can be out in the yard and checked but, I repeat, without running or pushing or being silly. As soon as you can do this really well, each group of classes separately, then we shall have a fire drill for the whole school.

We are thinking of the meaning of our school prayer and come to the request – Make us generous. What does 'generous' mean? We can be generous in 3 different ways – generous with our time, generous with our talents and gifts – and generous with our treasure or money. I repeat, we can be generous with our time, our talent and treasure.

We can be generous with time. Those of us who are grown-ups remember with great love and thankfulness, the people who had time for us, when we were growing up. Maybe you too can think of people who give you their time - members of your family, neighbours and friends, who spend time with you – especially when you are ill or upset. It is lovely, when we are ill, if people visit us. Or when we are especially sad, maybe when someone

near us has died, it is nice to receive cards and letters and flowers and visitors and phone-calls. It is good when people find time to play with us or help us with our reading or hobbies or activities. Maybe it is our grandparents who have more time for us than our parents, as sometimes our parents are very busy. Sometimes busy people do not realize that other people need them and they have to be asked. "Please can you give me some time? There are things I want to talk to you about." When I was a very busy minister in England and when my husband was alive, I remember one day, talking to someone over the phone, making an appointment to see them – and my husband called to me from the other side of the room, "Please may I make an appointment to see you?" I felt very ashamed to realize that I was becoming too busy. It is possible for married people not to give each another enough time. I hope you and your parents make time to talk to each other. Everything is changing so fast. You are changing. The world is changing. It is so important that we keep communicating with each another in our families. The most valuable thing we can give someone is our time. Be generous with your time.

We should also be generous with our talents. In school, if you find a subject difficult and your friend is good at it, it is very nice when he or she takes time to explain that subject to you. If you have a gift for singing or sports, dancing, music or art, it is lovely if you can be generous with your talents and gifts to others. We can all benefit so much if we share our talents.

Finally, we can be generous with our money. All good religions encourage us to remember the poor. There are good organisations through which we can give money to the poor. One of the most obvious way of being generous is to pay those who work for us enough for them to live decently and look after their families properly. Some wages in Bangladesh are very low and this can tempt people to be dishonest.

So let us try to live generously especially when God has been very generous to us. God bless you.

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SCHOOL PRAYER 7. BRAVE

Assembly 39 – Tuesday March 11th 2003

I told you in the last Assembly that we were going to start fire practices. What I did not tell you then was that, when you are really good at fire practices, we shall start to have earthquake practices. If you feel afraid of the idea that we could have a fire here and that Dhaka could have an earthquake then that is perfectly normal. We are all afraid of danger – that is why we need COURAGE – we need to ask God to make us brave.

The sentence we are looking at is 'Make us generous and brave'. On Sunday, we thought about being generous with our time, our talent and our treasure. Now we have to face the fact that life is often frightening. That is one of the many ways that life is difficult. If we pretend that life is easy, then we are fools. If we think we do not need courage *(oot-hosh)* then I do not know what world you are living in. Every day, it takes courage to get out of bed. We do not know what the day may bring. Every day we walk through streets where there are accidents and thieves. Every day, we risk a lot, just by living our lives.

The moment you say you will do anything, you have to face the fact that you may fail. Every time you try to accept responsibility or do a job, you risk doing it badly. When I was offered the job of being Principal of this school, I was afraid. What a big responsibility! What if I do and say the wrong things? What if people do not like me? Every day, you and I have the choice to be a mouse or a tiger – to run away or face up to what every day brings to us.

There are times in life that need special bravery, special courage. Maybe you have someone in your family who is facing serious illness – that takes a lot of courage. And there are lots of