You and I live in a very interesting world with lots of creatures in it. We are learning more and more about them and, as we do so, we learn more about ourselves. We are distant relatives of the animals and we can learn FROM them as we learn ABOUT them. God bless you.

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DOGS WITH JOBS

Assembly 56 – Thursday April 3rd 2003

Some of us are looking at the school rules and wondering if they need to be updated. There are some school rules in your diaries, some in your classrooms and at least one form has made up their own rules about the behaviour they want in *their* classroom, We would very much like a copy of that, please 4B, and to know the comments and suggestions of all of you about improvements to our rules.

Some of you are forgetting the rule about 'Sitting down to eat' OR maybe you think that packets of crisps aren't food so don't count. Yesterday, I stopped two boys walking up and down the stairs with open packets of crisps. If someone had bumped into them and made them drop the packets, the crisps would have gone all over the stairs in thousands of tiny pieces. Either eat in your classrooms or in the canteen – do not walk around eating and drinking. It's not good for your digestion, either.

My last talk this week on animals will be about working animals, that is, animals who do a useful job. Elephants, horses, oxen, donkeys – all can work for us but, in some cultures, including mine, for many years, people have used the fact that dogs love being useful and love being praised – and so can be trained to do all sorts of jobs. Where there are lots of sheep, special sheepdogs are used for gathering them and moving them

to places where the farmer needs them. In some hilly parts of the UK, sheep feed off the grass over miles and miles of hills. They would be impossible to gather without dogs. Because of television, we can watch how these dogs work, because they run for miles and different cameras follow them. The only way the shepherd can communicate with them is by whistles – and every different kind of whistle means a different order – turn left, turn right, stop and drop, move on slowly and so forth. A hundred men could not do what two good sheepdogs can do.

Then there are Guidedogs for the Blind – have you seen how they work? They are trained and then the blind person is trained with them for a time because they have to work as a team and understand each other. The Guidedog wears a special harness with a handle that the blind person holds. The dog will go along the side of the road and stop at the crossings and wait for the traffic – until it is safe to cross. The dog quickly gets to know the shops and homes that their master or mistress likes to visit. Many blind people who have dogs cannot imagine life without one. Many shops have a notice, 'NO DOGS ALLOWED – except guide dogs' because they are very well-behaved. A very important member of the British Government, David Blunkett, our Home Secretary, is blind and his dog goes into Parliament with him and lies down in the House of Commons at his feet. There are also working dogs for deaf people. When the telephone rings or the doorbell rings, the deaf person cannot hear, so the dog goes to them and communicates what is happening.

But the most frequent jobs that dogs do is to be guard dogs. A real guard dog is specially trained and the man or woman who is going to work with him is trained also. They are a team. The handler has to know how to give the orders and the dog must know what to do. A guard and his guard dog are a team who are very expensive to hire because they do a good job. Many thieves and other criminals who are not afraid of people, are afraid of a dog. I cannot understand why, here in Bangladesh, someone has

not started a business, training guard dogs and their handlers and hiring them out to protect people and their property. I am sure that some of you who have a pet dog know that most of them will growl and bark if strangers come so, if you say, "Good boy!" when your dog barks at strangers and, "No, that person is OK," when they bark at one of the family or a friend, you should be able to train him. If we love and care for our animals, they will love and care for us.

God bless you.

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THE MILLENIUM RESOLUTION – LET THERE BE - 1

Assembly 57 – Sunday April 6th 2003

(Take the framed poster with the Millenium Resolution on it.)

Do any of you make New Year's Resolutions? When the new year comes, do you say, "Next year, I will take up a new hobby or I will not be horrible to my brother or sister." That is your New Year Resolution – what you are resolved to do. Before the year 2000 came, some people said, "We must have a very special resolution for the Millenium," and they asked the churches of the UK to write one – and they did. Their Millenium Resolution was not just for Christians or people from one particular culture, but something that everyone could agree to – and this is what they wrote – it has been made into a nice poster by a good artist who is also a nun.

In the middle it says "Let there be…" and there are 6 things round it. The first wish is 'Let there be RESPECT FOR THE EARTH.' This is something that we are beginning to be much more aware of than most of our fathers and grandfathers were. Do you speak of Mother Earth in Bangla? Well, it is very easy to take

Mothers for granted, isn't it?. "Good old mother – she will always be there, being nice to me, agreeing with whatever I want…." Yes? Now we are beginning to see that Mother Earth cannot do everything that every greedy person or nation wants. There are limits.

Think of the sea. We are learning that when there are more and more fishing boats with nets with smaller and smaller holes, then fish are caught in larger quantities and if the smaller and younger fish are caught then they do not grow up to have babies and the number of fish goes down and down. Some of the fishermen of Britain are very angry at the moment because the European Parliament regulates the number of fish they can catch and it gets lower and lower and some of them face poverty – but what else is there to do? If they go on fishing as they are fishing now, the fish will die out altogether and then no fishermen will earn any money.

And what about the trees? It is very interesting to me to see the way Bangladesh uses wood in its furniture. You use it as though the forests of India will never grow smaller. In Haluaghat, the lorry-loads of wood from India (some of it smuggled) rolled through the town and I was horrified. When I visited the Chittagong Hill Tracts, I went to a part where all the big trees have gone – taken by those who felt that Mother Earth existed only for them. In Europe, so many of our woods and forests have gone, that some people are getting much more aware.. Many big town trees have preservation orders on them. No one is allowed to cut them down. We collect our waste paper very carefully – 'Save Paper. Save Trees' is the slogan. Many organizations that print cards and writing paper have written on the back 'made from re-cycled paper' or 'Made from wood from sustainable resources.' In other words, every time they cut a tree down, they plant another one. As for the minerals and other products we get out of the ground, the coal and oil, the gas and the iron, the gems and the chemicals – they do not