

But sometimes the word 'new' can be frightening. If you are visiting a place that you have never visited before, you may ask yourself, "Will we find it all right – and will we like it?" If you are meeting new people., you wonder, "Will I like them?" Taking a new job, new kinds of food, going to a new school, taking a new sport or hobby can make us feel nervous, anxious, even fearful.

Last Thursday, we did something new. We had a Foundation Day Ceremony. Before we went onto the field, I went round the classrooms and found, in one classroom, a boy pupil and, in another classroom, a girl pupil who did not want to join the rest of us and I had to help them to have the courage to leave their classrooms and come with me. This was quite understandable. There were a lot of people there and they were young Junior School pupils.

But life will give you many new things to do. Sometimes it will be exciting, sometimes it will be frightening. Every day is a new day to live and we never know what it will bring. Every day is a new adventure. Let us help one another to have courage and not be afraid.

God bless you.



## **TO BE TRULY MODERN - CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF!**

*Assembly 16 - January 27<sup>th</sup> 2003*

In the time of my grandfather and grandmother, when my father was a little boy, they usually had a little maidservant living with them. Such girls usually came from poor homes, knew very little, had had almost no education and the housewife had to teach her everything. She was paid a low salary and given her clothes. If the family she lived with were good and kind, her life was good. If

they were bad and cruel people, her life could be hell. This was in England 100 years ago. It was rather like Bangladesh today.

In England, all that has changed. In the last century, we had 2 World Wars and full employment and most of the domestic servants left. Now, only the very richest families have servants who live in the house because the salaries for such servants are very high. Also, houses with extra rooms for servants are very expensive. So most people cannot afford to have servants who live with them. Some middle and upper class people have women who come in and clean their homes. These cleaning ladies usually come in when all the family is out at work and school. They have the key to your house and clean the house when it is empty. You trust them totally and leave them a note as to what to do. My cleaning lady is a good friend and I pay her 700 taka for every hour of work which is a fair price, because the cost of living is very high. If you are rude to your cleaning lady or treat her badly, she leaves and you have great difficulty finding another one.

If any of you go to university overseas, there may be a cleaning lady for your part of your hostel and room but she will only come once a day. If you make a mess, you have to live with it for the whole day until she comes again on the next day. In most student accommodation, there is a kitchen that is shared by a group of men and women students who do their own cooking because going to the student canteen is too expensive. So both men and women students have to learn to shop for food, cook it and clean up afterwards themselves.

In this school, we are trying to prepare you for life. Many of you have servants at home who clean up after you. We have support staff here but it is not their job to clean up after you when you have made a mess unnecessarily. Do you understand that? They are not your personal servants. Please try not to drop paper and food on the floor. When you eat your tiffin, take it to a chair, and sit down until you have finished eating it. Do not walk around the school eating. When you have finished eating, don't just put

down your empty plate and bottle of drink on a chair, or on the floor, or on the stairs for someone else to pick up. If any of you see someone doing that, say, 'Pick it up and take it to the kitchen yourself!' Some of you make a mess in the bathroom and leave it for the next person to find. This behaviour is not acceptable. This is not training for life. Whether you go to other countries or stay always in Bangladesh, it is not fair that you think someone else is responsible for clearing up your mess! **THINK!** Be thoughtful and not selfish. There are other people in the world. Learn to share your world with other people. This will make you much better members of your family, your school and, one day, maybe, your student hostel. If you go to other countries, you surely do not want to be called "The dirty Bangladeshi"! If you stay in the home of a foreign friend, it may be the mother of the family, who has a busy job herself, who also does the house-cleaning. Do not make more work for her. Instead, offer to help her. Boys, if you are not clean in your personal habits, you may find it hard to find a wife! Girls, do you want to marry a man who is dirty? Of course not! So, please, learn good habits of personal cleanliness at home and school and practice good habits wherever you go. This will give you more self-respect and help other people, in Bangladesh and in other countries that you may visit one day, to respect you also.

God bless you.



## **LEARNING TO RELATE NON-VIOLENTLY**

*Assembly 17a - January 28<sup>th</sup> 2003*

Do any of you read the newspapers? Then surely you know that there are many people in Bangladesh who are very violent. They disagree with someone and they do not know what to do except fight. Often it is dirty fighting. Maybe a young man wants a

young woman and she says, "No!" – so he throws acid on her. Maybe there is a disagreement about land, so a child is kidnapped and killed. Recently, a little girl was thrown onto a fire by someone because her grandfather was a candidate for a different political party. These people are very poor – not in money – and sometimes not in education - but in life skills. They do not know how to talk about their differences. They know only one language – the language of physical violence. As you grow up, it is necessary for a good life that you learn to learn how to understand other people and how to talk to them. When you learn the language of good WORDS, you do not have to use the language of bad FISTS.

So, if you are going to grow up into the sort of people who can help violent Bangladeshis with this problem, you must learn to be skilful in communication yourself. And some of you have a lot to learn. There is a Junior School class next to my office. If they are left alone for 5 minutes, they are fighting with one another! I listen. First they begin to shout. Then they begin to fight. Then there are tears. "He did this!" "She did that!" Yes, girls can fight too! Yesterday, there was some fighting in a Senior Class.

I am sorry that so many adults in the world are giving you a very bad example. Every day on your television screens, you see examples of violent behaviour. Many computer games are violent. The nations of the world behave very badly towards one another. Sometimes, they try to talk to one another but, too often, they are not skilful at talking, so they pick up guns and bombs. We are all praying that the problem of Iraq and the problem of terrorism can be solved by peaceful means.

But, if we want peace in the world, we have to begin with ourselves – peace in our families and our school and our neighbourhood. It isn't easy. Each one of us is different – we all have different ideas and opinions, behaviour and loyalties. But we have to learn to relate well to one another. A famous African American called Rev Doctor Martin Luther King, said, "Either we