

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.



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 you 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

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.



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