

God's language
is LOVE...



... and the first
words are JUSTICE
FREEDOM and PEACE

HAPPY CHRISTMAS and wishing you every BLESSING as we enter 2008,
the International Year of Languages and the 60th Anniversary of the International Declaration of Human Rights

Newman Hall, Post Box No. 4002, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad 380 009, Gujarat, India
Tel: 0091 79 66522333 / 27455913 Fax: 0091 79 27489018
Email: espges@gmail.com / sjprashant@gmail.com

Dear

Today November 14th is the day I write this Christmas letter 2007 to you....more than a month before the actual day ! But today is very significant on several counts, and that is why I have chosen to reflect on the day itself; the days gone by (yesterday) and the days to come (tomorrow).

Yesterday has come and gone; and, one is deeply grateful for all that has happened. There have been an abundance of blessings...high on that list have been your prayers, your solidarity, your sacrifices and your generosity to reach out to the children of Gujarat. Because of all this, life was made much more meaningful for many children here.

Tomorrow continues to hold in store our prayers and good wishes for you, your family and your friends. As you read this Christmas message, may you experience the blessings of Christmas : Joy, Peace, Love and Hope, a sincere wish and prayers from all of us here in Gujarat.

Today is Children's Day in India, when we celebrate every single child. The reality continues to be sad and painful : the vast majority of our children still do not have access to quality education, to safe medicare and even to clean drinking water. Millions of children today labour hard to eke out a living.

Yesterday we witnessed and experienced violence in many parts of Gujarat State, in other parts of India and in the world at large. On October 2nd (the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi), we took a pledge to practice and propagate non-violence, even as the United Nations (for the first time), ushered in a special day dedicated to Non-Violence. Though intentions are sincere, the reality leaves much to be desired.

Tomorrow will be another day.... an important hope we have is that through the Education Sponsorship Programme, we will be able to reach out to many more children. It will also be full ten years (on January 8th 2008), since Uncle Mike (Fr. Urrutia) left us for his heavenly abode. He hoped for a better tomorrow for the children of Gujarat. We continue to look forward to that tomorrow, committing ourselves to do much more in the days to come.

Today we celebrate the birth centenary of Fr. Pedro Arrupe, a former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, who left this world a rich legacy : “*our commitment - rooted in God...to rediscover, redefine and rekindle lives of selfless service*”. He emphasized the faith-justice mandate and the importance of becoming persons for others. Yes, Arrupe symbolized all that we should be doing to make of this world a better place.

Yesterday we lost many a good friend....Fr. Ossie Ferrao, the Principal of our School in Zankhvav, died in a tragic accident; Ms. Machielse Lenting (Nel) was for years, the pillar of all the support we received from Roermond (Netherlands). She died very suddenly about a month ago. We are deeply grateful to friends like them without whom we would not be able to do what we have done so far.

Tomorrow we look forward to increasing our circle of friends in the ESP family. We need much more support. We therefore count on you to let our work be known to several others. What we do here is a drop in the ocean....but several drops all the same, do make up the ocean ! So we look forward to hearing from you....

Today my Jesuit Companions here Aubrey Fernandes and Francis Pudhicherry, have been busy designing the masthead for this Christmas letter. It is never an easy task to do something which is apt, creative and at the same time within specific frameworks. But they have done so ! I am deeply grateful to them, my other colleagues here : John, Veronica and the rest....for so much !

Yesterday we have seen how human rights are being trampled everywhere....of how language and religion divides us instead of uniting us....of how insensitive we have become to “Planet Earth”.

Tomorrow is, however, a New Year....a year in which we recommit ourselves to the propagation and practice of human rights as we observe the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A year dedicated as the International Year of Languages. A year kept aside for Planet Earth. Yes, may 2008 be a new beginning for all of us.

Let's thank the Lord for Yesterday.... Let's ask Him to give us the courage to enjoy our Today, and above all, the commitment to say “Yes” to our Tomorrow.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS ! HAPPY NEW YEAR !

Your Brother,

Cedric Prakash

Christmas 2007

Kindly note : *If you have been sponsoring a child / children through our Education Sponsorship Programme, the Annual Progress Report/s is/are enclosed herewith. Thanks once again for your support. !*

Donations to the EDUCATION SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME may be made by cheque / draft, payable to :

GUJARAT EDUCATION SOCIETY

which is a registered charitable organization : No. Guj.-366/Ahmedabad