

## PASTORAL LETTER ON WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

Dear Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and my dear Faithful,

### **Thy Kingdom Come!**

Pope Francis has declared the First World Children's Day scheduled to be celebrated in the Church on 26 May 2024. This is the first of its nature. Pope in his message for the First World Children's Day quotes Is 42: 4 "You are precious". There are also other references where we read statements similar to it – Is 49:16, Jer 31:3, Jn 3:16 and Rom 5:8. To be precious before God is our great work. Each one is unique exclaims prophet Isaiah (49:15). We are encouraged to celebrate our uniqueness. Every child is precious before God. All are born with some talents and traits. Everyone is called to develop them accordingly to the plan of God. Eachone should use one's creativity and imagination to develop the talent and traits. God always support and encourage our sincere efforts.

Pope invites each child to grow to maturity in mutual respect, collaboration and in sincere love. St. Paul exhorts "Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honour" (Rm. 10:10). Genuine love is required to build up mature human relationship. Paul's description of love in the letter to Corinthians are worth reflecting: "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor 13:4-7). Jesus assures us that the discipleship that we have accepted through the sacrament of baptism has to be manifested by our love: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35).

The Holy Childhood Association founded in our diocese in 2017 is functioning in all parishes. It is meant to initiate our children to missionary zeal and make them true Christian in word and in deed. Every Christian is a missionary. The great command of Jesus is to go to the end of the world and proclaim the good news (Mt 28:19-20). Living out one's Christian identity is also in genuine sense the Christian discipleship. Through the sacrament of holy baptism we have become the members of the mystical body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-30). As every body parts are functioning in mutual collaboration and as per the command from head, the brain, so also every Christian is called to work for the welfare of one another and as per the will of Christ, the head. Service to the needy and promotion of social welfare is to become the identity of each and every Christian (Cf. Mt. 25:35-40).

Pope in his message on World Children's Day 2024 invite every one - parents, elders, teachers and others, to pay close attention to give right formation to the future generation. They are the future of the Church and the future of the nation. Help and create opportunities to draw out their talents and traits, so that they are able to grow in accordance with God's plan. Faith formation, character formation, emotional maturity, intellectual calibre etc. are to be taken care of at each stage of their growth. Parents should keep a close observation of their children so that they may not go astray. Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved. When wealth is lost; nothing is lost, when health is lost; something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost.

I request everyone to celebrate the World Children's Day fittingly in all parishes/missions in the diocese. Kindly arrange some programs for the children in different levels. Allow them to express their views freely and guide them to grow maturely. I have directed the Holy Childhood Association to give necessary guidance in this regard. God bless you.

Yours devotedly in Christ Jesus,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ephrem Nariculam".

† Ephrem Nariculam  
Bishop, Eparchy of Chanda

**NB: Please read to the people the translation of it in local languages or explain its content on any convenient Sunday in May 2024. Kindly celebrate the day befittingly on 26 May itself or an another convenient Sunday.**