



Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man.
~Rabindranath Tagore

“The child is recognized, universally, as a human being who must be able to develop physically, mentally, socially, morally, and spiritually, with freedom and dignity.” Every child is born with inalienable human rights founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, gender, language, religion, origins, wealth, birth, status or ability.

As we look around the world today, we’re confronted with an uncomfortable but undeniable truth: Millions of children’s lives are blighted, for no other reason than the country, the community, the gender or the circumstances into which they are born. Before they draw their first breath, the life chances of poor and excluded children are often being shaped by inequity. Disadvantage and discrimination against their communities and families will help determine whether they live or die, whether they have a chance to learn and later earn a decent living. Conflicts, crisis and climate-related disasters deepen their deprivation and diminish their potential.

As we know, no one is more vulnerable to poverty than children. Poverty perpetuates the cycle of disadvantage and inequity, which robs millions of children of their potential and causes irreparable damage that reverberates



throughout a lifetime. Around the world, children make up nearly half of the almost 900 million people living on less than US\$1.90 a day. Their families struggle to afford the basic health care and nutrition needed to provide them a strong start. These deprivations leave a lasting imprint; more than 160 million children are stunted.

Despite great progress in school enrolment in many parts of the world, the number of children aged 6 to 11 who are out of school has increased since 2011. About 124 million children and adolescents do not attend school,

and 2 out of 5 leave Primary School without learning how to read, write or do basic arithmetic, according to the 2013 data.

Children are our most valuable resource. They are the life of the world. Only a section of the children in the world enjoy childhood.



Scripture reading- (Matt. 19:14)

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Let us be silent for a moment and allow these words of Jesus to echo in our hearts.

- What does this mean to me, to us, based on what we heard about children in the present day world?

-What does this mean to me, to us, based on the reality of the children of my own country?

Jesus is asking from us to let the children come to Him, and do not hinder them to live as children of God. As Good Shepherd people what is our responsibility towards children to live with dignity as children of God?

The world has made tremendous progress in reducing child death, getting children into school and lifting millions out of poverty. But yet millions of children suffer. In 2015, an estimated 5.9 million children died before reaching age 5, mostly as a result of diseases that can be readily and affordably prevented and treated. Millions more children are still denied access to education simply because their parents are poor or from a stigmatized group, because they were born female, or because they are growing up in countries affected by conflict or chronic crisis. And even though poverty is falling globally, nearly half of the world's extreme poor are children, and many more experience multiple dimensions of poverty in their lives.

How can we contribute to build a just society for our future, for our children? What can we do to give the God-given worth and dignity, to children? What can we do to give a fair chance to every child?

These are matters of political commitment, they are matters of resources, and they are matters of collective will to tackle inequity and inequality. May we join hands with others to move the constraint which hinders children to live with God-given dignity and worth.

Unless the world tackles inequity today, in 2030:

167 million children will live in **extreme poverty**

69 million children under age 5 **will die** between 2016 and 2030

60 million children of primary school age will be **out of school**



unicef  

We are the children of the world –

(Refer: <http://youtu.be/hdtTgUSZE9o>)

Chorus: We are the children of the world.
Every face is different, yet we are all the same;
We have the same hopes and fears, and dreams for the future,
Yes, we are the children; we are the children of the world.

Yesterday was yours, we have tomorrow,
But in between us all must share today.
Be careful what you're telling us,
We're learning what you're showing us,
Depending on your guidance to help us
on our way, on our way.

Look in our eyes, see all the promise,
We know the future's in our hands.
Give us the courage to face every
challenge, Prepare us to risk, so we'll
learn how to fly. Watch us fly



Prayer-

Spirit in our midst, awaken us to new vitality, arouse us with new energy, and enthuse us with new conviction. Link us in a spirit of togetherness. Guide us a spirit of wisdom. Support us in a spirit of encouragement. Inspire us we pray as co-workers searching for Truth and Justice, to be shared in the human family –of women and children, and our hearts to pursue God’s heavenly kingdom in the world. Amen

Please read the report on [“The State of the World’s Children 2016”](#)

Prayer contributed by Sr. Niluka Perera, Province of Sri Lanka/Pakistan