

**REPLY TO THE FELICITATIONS BY DR P C THOMAS, PRINCIPAL, GOOD
SHEPHERD INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

Thank you very much Mr. Sunder for those very kind words of felicitations.

You, being a very strong well wisher of our school, and the family, there are no sentiments between us.

Nevertheless, I accept your felicitations as coming from a representative of the Board of Governors and parents of the school.

Every Founder's Day takes us back to the initial days which were very tough, nothing but a toil. In fact, I must confess, that "No success comes to me without a long and tough fight". For me, it is a life of 24 X 7, 365 days. We do not believe in a "Lap Top" management, but only on "Hands on" management leading from the front and working along with the team.

In 1977, I had no Hamletian complex - 'to be or not to be' when we decided to found the school. Just think for a moment, from 54 students on the first day it once touched 1286. We are now planning to bring down the strength to 700 in 3 - 4 years time.

This achievement was only due to the confidence of the parents of the school in our professional approach, personal attention, strict discipline and academic monitoring. As you all are aware, we follow a holistic approach - giving equal importance to Academics, Co-curricular activities, sports and games. Nothing is done at the cost of the other.

We consider ourselves as Trustees of your children, your daughters, your sons and your grand children. We will not let you down.

We re-affirm that we will maintain very high ethical standards in everything that we do. We are committed to follow strictly the 'Four Way Test' of Rotary International that Mr. Sunder mentioned now. As members of the Good Shepherd family, dear parents, we require your support and prayers too. We value your relation to the school and hope it lives on even after your child finishes his or her studies here.

Back home, some nice evenings spent (very rare), since we work late in the evenings, whenever I point out the mistakes of someone whom we dealt with during the day, my wife always tells me, "all are not P.C. Thomas and just leave the matter".

Whatever we do, our main focus is and will continue to be the school - which we have built up “brick by brick” and “breath by breath”

Managing a fully residential school in this day and age is like captaining a ship sailing through turbulent and troubled waters.

Mr. Sunder, you made a reference to my faith in the Divine Power. Let me tell everyone this evening, that my life is full of stories of many miracles that have happened.

It is also by the grace of God, who I believe has a plan for my life and guides me everyday My strong faith is that I am just an instrument in the hands of the Almighty.

Our faith is that “every child comes into this world, with the message that God is, not yet, discouraged of man”.

In the Holy Bible, Lord Jesus explains the parable of a man who sows his seeds in his field. Some seeds fell on rocks and some fell on very fertile soil. Fortunately, I fell on the fertile soil of education. I thank the omnipresent Divine Power for this.

I am reminded of the very famous words of Shakespeare in ‘As you like it’

“All the world is a stage,
And all the men and women merely players,
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts”

Yes, very true - I have gone through all the six of the seven ages that Shakespeare narrates in this famous monologue.

On this happy and important occasion, let me assure and reaffirm that we will continue to treat your children as our own children - It is a “life time commitment” and without any hesitation, I can say that it is our life’s only mission.

I have often told the staff and students in the School Assembly that every cell in my body knows every brick in the buildings. Yes, with all confidence, I can repeat that I will not let you down.

I choose this occasion to make an important announcement today - Yes, as an assurance from the family that someone responsible will continue with the same commitment and

dedication. We have decided to appoint our daughter Julie Pradeesh as one of the Vice Principals. Currently, she is the Vice President on the Board of Governors and she will continue to perform both these responsibilities.

Julie's husband, our son-in-law Mr. Pradeesh Lawrence is the Senior Vice President on the Board of Governors looking after the Financial Matters. He ensures that everything is in good shape.

As per our present plans, we still have a long way to go. We will never become complacent of our achievements but continue to strive hard to make GSIS one of the best schools in the world. Well, that has to be done, I am fully aware, before health withers me out and age wears me out.

I often remember the famous lines of Robert Frost, a poem I learned in the College 40 years ago :-

“The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep”

Thank you.