

# Celebrating Girl Children

**O**n September 8th, the Catholic Church celebrates Girl Child day. In India and many other Third World countries, children are not taken seriously. They are exploited, sold, and used for cheap labour. They become beggars, rag-pickers, street children and orphans. They are at juvenile homes, prisons and orphanages. Millions of girl babies are aborted chemically and surgically every year. Those who survive the womb still face the danger of various abuses. The statement “Children are the future of the nation” stops making sense, then! Unlike us, Jesus welcomed the children, took them into His hands and blessed them (ref. Mk: 10: 13-16). “That is the reason our Mother Church dedicates a day especially to the girl child.

Before anything else the girl child is a human being. The rights we enjoy are hers too. She has a right to a home and family, education, playtime, protection from harm and sickness. Most of all, she has the right to be a child. This is a right that she is denied for no fault of hers. They are commonly refused their fundamental rights to education, access to medical care, services and information.

The Good Shepherd Sisters in Central East India /Nepal Province make it their main concern to take care of such children. A total of 1137 children (both girls and boys) are supported for their educational, medical and nutritional needs assisted by CHALICE, an NGO based in Canada, apart from other disadvantaged and abandoned children and girls in our Homes in Garratola, Mangalagiri, Chennai, Karjat, Virar and Nepal.

“One child, one Teacher, one book and one pen can change the World. Education is the only Solution,” says Ms. Malala Yousafzai. Realizing the importance of education to make them useful and contributing citizens of our country, we have been encouraging and assisting children belonging to Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Caste, orphans, semi orphans, HIV/AIDS infected and affected children and children from families with many girl children with education, training and job placement.

A good number of these children have completed their courses and most of them started working in the Banks, Schools, Offices, Hospitals, etc... It has made a great impact on the individuals and their families.

Here are some encouraging stories of girls who made a success of their lives. Indeed they give us immense joy, sense of satisfaction and inspire us to move on. May God be praised!

