



DELHI – NOIDA – VAISHALI

Teacher's Day, 2026.

My Dear Teachers,

Happy Teacher's Day. I join students of our three schools, and millions of other students all over the country, who on the Teacher's day, gratefully acknowledge their admiration and affection for their teachers. This might even appear as a cliché, but for the last 42 years, in the leadership role of the Schools, I have experienced from close quarters what the life of teachers is all about. It is a non-ending grind, not much different from a working-class mother, who does it all, against unbelievable odds. That is what you are doing, and the world depends on you, even if it appears, it does not!

During these 4 decades, I have also struggled every inch of the way, and in every manner I could, to impress upon the Teachers that they are blessed with one of the world's most rewarding professions, next only to biological parents. I am not sure if I have been successful enough to convey this core reality to the Teachers, but it will continue to be my effort, up to the last day I remain engaged in this space. The romance of being a teacher has many aspects. Two or three generations, ago, almost every single Teacher who has affectionately been addressed as Teacher or Masterji, or Guruji, has left a personal stamp in the foot prints of history, by influencing the life of their wards and there are endless testimonies to that. That is why they were held in awe for the imprint they left in the lives of their students.

What has changed now from them? What aspect of a teacher's life has become more onerous than it was, less replete of experiences of affection that students both good and not so good, continue to express to their teachers. What aspect of a teacher's life has turned less attractive, the tons of smiles that greet teachers every day, like perennial raindrops from heaven, have they become less warm and spontaneous, and what has turned this 'sacred' space called 'teaching', less rewarding. It may so be, that in the public space a teacher does not occupy a pedestal, such as some others may have, but pedestals are pedestals and no more. Some day they fall or they are felled.

Isn't this predicament, a paradoxical opposite of what a teacher was acknowledged to be, not so long ago, perhaps an indicator of something very sad, and perturbing? Is this fall from grace that most Teachers feel they suffer from, real or perceived? How can we allow such an all-important segment of our society, a dominant human group, that has the unique and pivotal role of moulding minds that will set standards that will determine what human society will be in the future, labour under such a stressful cloud that denies them that special place in the society they legitimately hold? How can we allow a vacuum, that in the present model of humanity has no replacement. Or could we venture to think, that this idea, is not a factor external to the teacher herself or himself but rather a socially engineered perception, about the inadequacy of their role in the public mind? It is imperative that we attempt to address this all-important issue.

This is coming from my personal angst. I have seen that every good teacher struggles with the load of teaching. There are no two ways of looking at it, especially in the primary and

middle levels, although their kids do not have to pass through the crucible of the Boards. But the model of the present system that we call K-12 space is identical, all over the developed world. Some teachers in the developed world have even more demanding schedules. But I am not interested in the comparison, but I want to find out what can turn that demanding schedule into a source of joy, for without it, the routine of a teacher can turn itself into a curse.

Have you carefully watched children and mothers poorly and untidily clad, who are found busy at road sides, selling goods to travelers who pass by? Did you ever notice that they have a 'halo' of internal joy that it is difficult to admit, considering they have nothing compared to what we do? It is poetic justice but is also a demonstration that no one can steal our joy, as much as no amount of amassed possessions can grant it to us. There is an anecdote about a millionaire who asked a teacher, that he had money, power to buy, to sell, to give jobs, and to take jobs away, who asked a Teacher what she 'had', to whom the Teacher merely replied 'I make lives', and indeed s/he does.

Every topic well thought out, and every lesson passionately taught, whose outcome is students empowered to think and create their own knowledge, in their own minds and later in the world, is a power and a privilege, you have been invested with. Some years ago, UNESCO published a book, describing the enterprise of education as "the Treasure Within". You are, not what the books taught you, nor the degrees you hold, but what you learnt and which transformed your life, because the treasure you created within you, is like none other, and the passion that you need to share it, none can give you.

Why passion, you might say. Because what you do in the class, cannot be paid for, nor is there an incentive to make you do it, because what you share is the 'Treasure Within' something that wells out from inside you, not from the books or other sources, but as a result of having assimilated it and which propels you each day, to share, to make that spark in you, shine like a thousand suns, with every child you meet.

That briefly stated, is what you are, and I salute you for that 'treasure' within, you, for bringing light and hope in the lives of the kids, little pondering what Wordsworth would have said 'I toiled and toiled but little thought, what wealth to me this everyday class routine of sharing life with my kids had brought; for oft when on my couch or in vacant mood I lie, their smiles and dreams that dazzle the world, flash upon that inward eye, and in my mind, I say to myself, you have done great my friend, and you own a part of that dazzle too.'

Being a teacher, one who has the privilege and the power to share that treasure, I wish you the experience that in your days, will ring your life with that joy, that each day when you go back home for your never ending chores of life, you will draw power and contentment from what you have done that day.

Wishing you a Teacher's Day, like no other, filled with the joy of sharing the "Treasure Within" that makes your life worthier and more precious than of those who do not know what being a Teacher is, or who in the grind of their every day, have failed to recognize the gift that is theirs. With respect and admiration.

*FR. JOSE ALARICO CARVALHO
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