**Theme: International Day of the Girl Child - 11 October**

**Background**

"On this International Day of the Girl Child, I call on all governments to take action to end all forms of violence against girls in all parts of the world. Together, we must create a world where violence against women and girls is never tolerated and girls are always empowered to reach their full potential. “Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

The International Day of the Girl Child promotes girls’ rights and highlights gender inequalities that remain between girls and boys. It is a UN observance that is annually held on October 11.

The International Day of the Girl Child gives people and organizations the opportunity to raise public awareness of the different types of discrimination and abuse that many girls around the world suffer from. On this day, many community and political leaders talk to the public about the importance of girls’ right to equal education and their fundamental freedoms. Various events are held to showcase the work that people are doing to empower girls through active support and engagement with parents, families, and the wider community.

**Parish Bulletin**

• Over 60 million girls worldwide are forced into marriage before the age of 18

• 125 million girls and women worldwide have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)

• 1.2 million children are being trafficked each year – many of these children are girls forced into sex trafficking

• Pregnancy is the leading cause of death worldwide for women aged 15 to 19

• Literacy rates for girls in many countries remain low – just 12% of Afghan women aged 15 and over are literate

Since 2012, the United Nations marks 11 October as the ‘International Day of the Girl Child’.

The day promotes girls' human rights, highlights gender inequalities that remain between girls and boys and addresses the various forms of discrimination and abuse suffered by girls around the world.

See more at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/girl-child#sthash.4J5NdQZc.dpuf>

UN Women is working to empower women and girls in more than 70 countries across the world.

UN Women focuses on ensuring that women and girls are able to access their rights, live free from violence, with economic security and contribute as full citizens.

**Prayer of the Faithful**

As we acknowledge International Day of the Girl Child this week, we pray for girls around the world who are subjected to discrimination and abuse. We pray that their equal dignity and worth are reacognised valued as much as that of their brothers.

We give thanks for those who have worked to improve the living conditions and educational opportunities for girls throughout the world. May community and political leaders realise the importance of girls’ right to equal education and their fundamental freedoms. We pray to the Lord.

**Resources**

<http://www.un.org/en/events/girlchild/>