

DEAR FELLOW ROTARIANS,



On the Web
Speeches and news
from RI President
K.R.Ravindran at
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British writer and Royal Air Force pilot Roald Dahl was also an avid photographer who carried his beloved Zeiss camera on his many adventures. At a time when each photograph had to be laboriously developed by hand, on film or glass plate negatives, he amassed a collection of hundreds of images. In later years, these photographs served as a visual record of his travels, a way to document his experiences and share them with others. Yet he always spoke of his memories as being far more vivid than the photographs could ever reflect. So many events and experiences, he said, were simply impossible to capture; they could not be adequately conveyed in images or words.

Language may fail, and photographs fade; minds are fallible, and details are lost. But some experiences, as Dahl said, never dim; they stand out in our memories, even after decades, as a wall of flame. They rear up forever over the landscape of our past, dividing our lives into what came before and what came after.

That metaphor has stayed with me throughout the past year as I have traveled the world for Rotary. For indeed, this entire year has stood, and will always stand, as a wall of flame in my mind, dividing my life into before and after.

When I think back over these 12 months, I see a bright kaleidoscope of images cascading before my eyes, day after day, week after week. The anxious parents in Chandigarh, India, hovering at the bedside of the child recovering from lifesaving heart surgery. The bright flags of Nepal fluttering over an entire village that had been rebuilt after the devastating earthquake. The feeling of awe in St. Peter's Square at the Jubilee of Rotarians celebrated by Pope Francis. Joyful gatherings around the world, in so many countries, in so many languages – with friends I had never before met, my brothers and sisters in Rotary.

To serve as president of Rotary International is a colossal undertaking, one that cannot be truly conveyed in images or words. It is a wall of flame that will burn forever in my memory, dancing with light, shifting in shadow. A thousand images jostle together in my mind, a thousand recollections, a thousand emotions. Together, they form a great mosaic; together, they show the bright and glorious work of your hands.

As this Rotary year draws to a close, I am prouder than ever to be part of this great organization: one that makes the world not poorer, but richer; replaces despair with hope; raises up those whom fate has brought low; and is a gift to so many, while allowing each of us to Be a Gift to the World.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K.R. Ravindran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

K.R.RAVINDRAN
President, Rotary International

