

Journalism must serve as a forum for discussion and debate in balanced way: Ram

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Justice J. Sathya Narayana Prasad, Judge, Madras High Court, appealed to the young generation to respect their parents and elders, to never harm or hate anyone, to help the poor especially those in need of help to pursue education and never forget the people who stood by them during difficult times.

Taking part in the 98th College Day celebrations of Loyola College on Saturday, he shared memories from his days as an undergraduate student of history at the college and how he learned punctuality, sincerity, humility and dedication from the institution.

N. Ram, Director of The Hindu Group, received the "Loyola Award" on the occasion. An alumnus of the college, he was lauded for being "an icon in the field of journalism for over six decades".

Mr. Ram said among the values that he had learned at the institution were those that were embedded in the Constitution, but still have to be renewed all the time because if not taken seriously, they fade away.

"Among those values is the value of secularism which is vital to our Constitution, part of its basic structure, democ-



Justice J. Sathya Narayana Prasad of the Madras High Court, second from right, and N. Ram, Director, The Hindu Group, presenting an award to a student at the 98th College Day function of Loyola College. M. VEDHAN

racy, equality, treating everyone with respect and above all humility," he said.

Journalism, he said, must serve as a forum for discussion and debate in a balanced way.

He said it was impossible to ignore the challenges posed by majoritarianism and how what goes in the name of nationalism sometimes was really hyper nationalism and takes a religious colour.

"The major problem as I see it as a journalist is the challenge of majoritarianism not just in India but also in many other countries, including the U.S.," he said.

"You have to come to a college like this to recognise the value of what is part of the Preamble, the core of the Preamble to the Constitution

— justice, equality, liberty and fraternity. It is fashionable today to decry secularism as a tired, formulaic and hack concept. Some liberal journalists, intellectuals and other members of a supposedly liberal intelligentsia seem to have embraced this fashion," he said.

Secularism, as a concept, must be put to work all the time, he said.

Rev. A. Thomas, principal of Loyola College, presented the annual report on the occasion.

Prizes and awards were presented to students. Rev Francis P. Xavier, rector, Loyola Institutions, Rev. B. Jeyaraj, secretary and correspondent, A. John Maria Xavier, vice-principal and J.A. Charles, deputy principal of the college, participated.