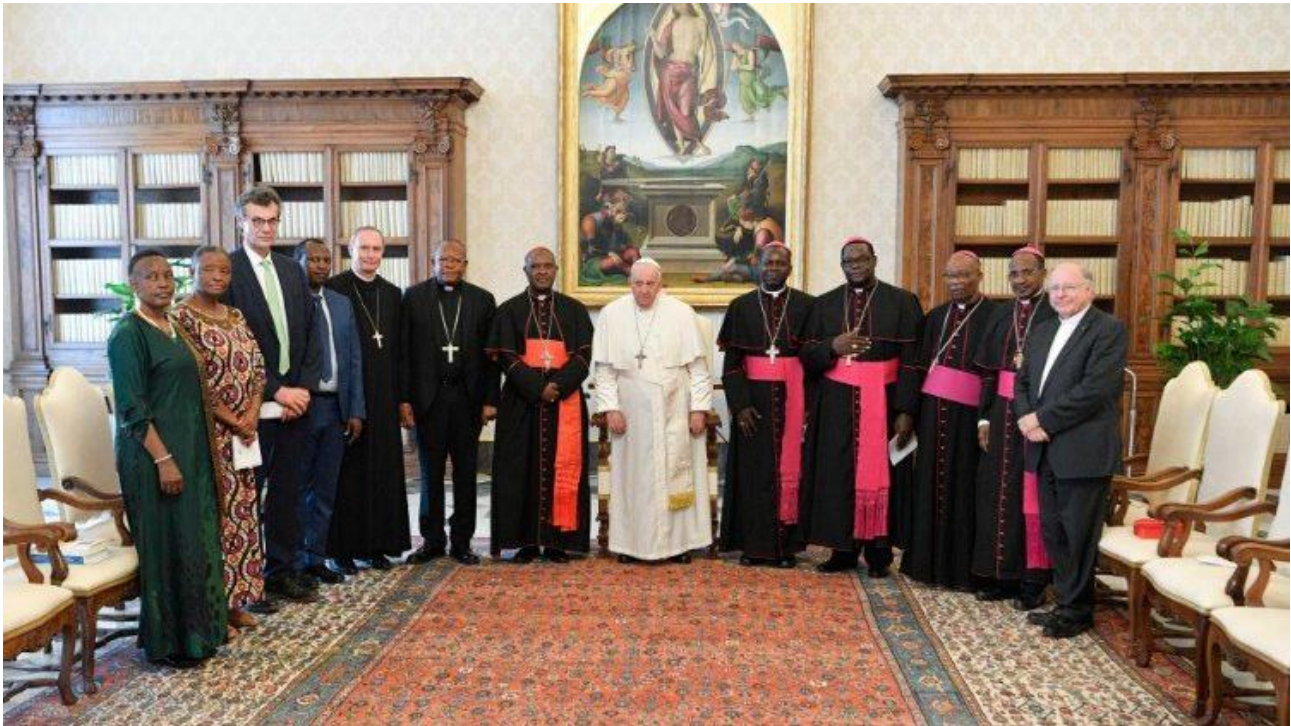




The Holy Father receives the African Educational Pact from the 'Fondation Internationale Religions et Sociétés'
"WE LOOK TO AFRICA WITH GREAT CONFIDENCE"



**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE 'FONDATION
INTERNATIONALE RELIGIONS ET SOCIÉTÉS**

Thursday 1 June 2023

Good morning to you all... Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I am pleased to welcome you today, along with the important news you bring with you, that of the "African Educational Pact".

I know that this Pact is the fruit of the International Symposium you held last November in Kinshasa, with the patronage of the Episcopal Conference of the Congo, organized by the International Foundation of Religions and Society and the Catholic University of the Congo.

In that Symposium, attended by numerous bishops, priests, scientists and scholars from various African countries, and beyond, you reinterpreted in African style the Global Educational Compact, which I launched in September 2019. I congratulate you, because you were the first to produce a continental Educational Pact. You have shown that you have well

understood what I was aiming for with this initiative, that is, that the Global Educational Compact should become a local reality, the result of reflections carried out from your own context and cultural resources, and that it should be attentive to the educational needs of the territory.

As you know, since the beginning, I thought of this project in the light of a proverb from your African wisdom, to emphasize that community dimension of education that has always been part of your centuries-long educational tradition: "To educate a child, it takes an entire village". It is an educational alliance ideally underwritten by all members of the village, for whom the task of accompanying each child is not the exclusive responsibility of the father and the mother, but of all members of the community. Everyone, therefore, has the duty to support education, which is always a choral process. In education, we must risk more and speak as a choir. Last February, speaking to the Pontifical academic and educational institutions, I said: "Be a choir". I am saying the same to Africa: "Be a choir". This community dimension of

existence is perfectly expressed in the famous African aphorism, “I am because we are”.

The African Educational Pact should contribute not only to recovering and strengthening this community and horizontal dimension of relations, but also to highlighting the other, equally ancient, vertical dimension: the relation with God. Some



African peoples, as we know, came to conceive of monotheism well before other civilizations. Subsequently, Africa opened up with great enthusiasm to Christian proclamation and it is currently the continent that sees the greatest increase in the number of Christians and Catholics. Therefore, the African Educational Pact, besides the motto “I am because we are”, is based with justifiable pride, on the affirmation, “I am because we are and we believe”. There is faith there.

You, brothers, are the shepherds of the youngest continent in the world: your greatest wealth is indeed them, the young. When I had that Zoom call with young African university students, I was astounded by the level of intelligence of those young people ... smart, intelligent. And I commented on this. I urge you to listen to the voice of the young, and their ideas, without authoritarianism: the Spirit also speaks through them, and I am sure that they will be able to suggest good and surprising things to you.

May you invest your best energies in their education. After the policies of mass education, which characterized the first post-colonial decades, it is time to work together with local governments for the ever-greater qualification of education, especially by training teachers well, valuing them and creating the conditions necessary for the dignified exercise of their profession.

We look at Africa with great confidence, because it has everything it needs to be a continent capable of charting future paths. I refer not only to the major mining resources and to economic progress and peace processes; I think above all of educational resources: the values of traditional African education, especially those of hospitality, welcome, solidarity; these are values that integrate perfectly in the Educational Pact. Christianity matches the best part of every culture and helps to purify what is not authentically human, and therefore not divine either.

You can count on the thought of many African philosophers and pedagogues. In this way you will be able to imitate the example of many figures of missionary educators and statesmen educators such as, for example, Nelson Mandela, who in his

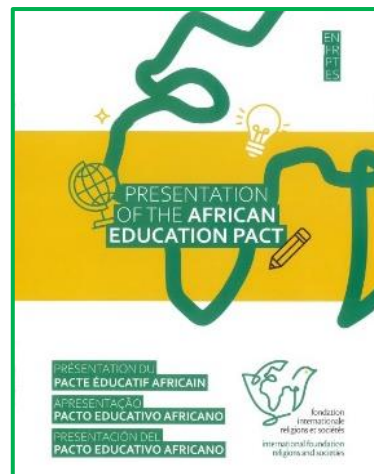
country, oppressed by apartheid, rebuilt unity between the different races through reconciliation and education. Indeed, he maintained that education is the most powerful tool that can be used to change the world.

You can also be inspired by another great statesman, the Servant of God Julius Nyerere, known as the “teacher”, who was able to create educational policies for the growth of all his countrymen, regardless of economic or social conditions. He was sustained by his Catholic faith and stated that without the celebration of the Eucharist it would have been impossible for him to fulfil his work.

Dear brothers and sisters, with the African Educational Pact, you once again confirm the words of Pliny the Elder: “Ex Africa semper aliquid novi”, “Africa always brings forth something new”. This Pact is a novelty that is developing from two great roots: traditional culture and the Christian faith. And, as another African proverb says, “When the roots are deep, there is no reason to fear the wind”.

I thank you for your commitment, and I hope that the African Educational Pact will also be followed by other continents. May the Virgin Mary, Mother of Africa, accompany you. I bless you from my heart and I ask you, please, to pray for me. ■

A single document published in four languages
THE AFRICAN EDUCATION PACT



I. Internal organization of the Church:

1. Start from the texts of the Magisterium on the Church in Africa: Ecclesia in Africa and Africa munus;
2. Work with all structures related to education in a synodal spirit and be attentive to the issue of diversity;
3. Accompany

- Catholic intellectuals in public and political life;
4. Safeguard the place of women in Catholic educational structures
5. Create/revitalise a/the continental commission on education at SECAM level;
6. Establish regional commissions for Catholic education;
7. Create or strengthen Catholic education coordination offices at parish, diocesan and national levels;
8. Ensure collaboration of competences between episcopal conferences, sharing expertise and human resources;
9. Accompany families in their role in the education of their children.

II. Catholic schools

1. Emphasize, in each educational institution of the Church, a policy of having a percentage (between 5 and 10%) of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and families benefiting from a scholarship funded by the faithful and the parents of the learners. This internal and ecclesial solidarity is also valid for boarding schools;
2. Creating boarding schools is recommended especially in social contexts where financial resources are limited.
3. Guarantee a synodal management of Catholic schools collaborating together as lay men and women, priests and religious;
4. Increase the access of girls to quality education
5. Ensure education for Christian citizenship in order to prepare citizens capable of committing themselves to a democratic society and to the common good;
6. Safe place: the Catholic school must be a safe place where children and adults in general, especially the vulnerable, are safeguarded, protected, respected and treated with dignity. It is therefore important to have policies and procedures for safeguarding and protection against abuse of any kind;
7. Establish and propose a pedagogical project highlighting the values and mission of each educational institution based on Christian principles;
8. Introduce or promote education for beauty and interiority;
9. Train learners in critical thinking skills to resist all forms of manipulation;
10. Introduce and/or strengthen ecological education and encourage ecological practices

III. Governments

1. Basing on ancestral values offer educational systems that promote the learning of national languages and an openness to foreign languages, in order to develop the talent of learners according to the needs of society and to form world citizens rooted in their local cultures.
2. Organize Commissions for Educational Assessment: this is also valid for the Church.
3. Provide financial and social support to the most disadvantaged families in their mission of education;
4. Legislatively assure the protection of vulnerable people.
5. Be attentive to civil societies (especially those that promote Christian values).
6. Increase the education budget in order to improve the state of infrastructure and the quality of education.
7. Ensure the quality of initial and ongoing teacher education and provide teachers with decent salaries;

IV. Catholic universities

1. Encourage practical research and teachers and students exchange;
2. Formation for all students in Christian philosophy and anthropology;
3. Encourage contextual and comparative grounded theologies;
4. Entrust the 7 themes of the Global Education Pact to 7 major Catholic Universities of the continent;
5. Strengthen innovation and creativity in all areas of university education;
6. Guarantee that a percentage (5%-10%) of student enrollment is secured for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

GCE Meeting of the Rectors of Parana (Brazil) UNIVERSITIES AND GCE IN CURITIBA



Inspired by Pope Francis' call for a Global Educational Covenant, several higher education institutions in Curitiba initiated the construction of a Local Educational Covenant at a meeting held on 20 June 2023 at the Pontifical Catholic University of Parana in Brazil (PUC-PR).

The event, which brought together several higher education institutions in Curitiba, was aimed at presenting the **Global Compact on Education** and its implications for universities.

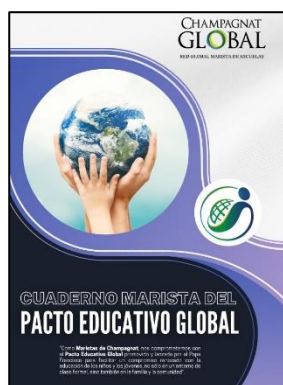
From Rome, the representative of the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education, Father Ezio Lorenzo Bono, illustrated Pope Francis' proposal and the seven commitments it contains: putting the person at the centre, listening to the younger generations, promoting women, giving responsibility to the family, opening up to welcome, renewing the economy and politics, and taking care of the common home. Recalling the university ideals of John Henry Newman (1801-1890), the priest and educator also spoke about the role of universities in the face of contemporary challenges, recalling that an ideal university programme must cover all aspects of human experience, especially from an ethical point of view. It is not just a matter of providing information and developing technical skills, but of forming the person in his or her fullness.

Afterwards, the participants had the opportunity to discuss the topic and share experiences in their institutions, leading to the proposal of a forum to promote cooperation between higher education institutions around three emerging issues that relate to the goals of the **Global Compact on Education**: university outreach, emotional health and listening.

In addition to the Rector of the PUCPR, Br. Rogério Renato Mateucci, host of the event, the meeting was attended by leaders and directors of the Faculty of Education of Colombo (FAEC), the Faculty Estácio, the Faculty INESUL, the International Faculty ESIC, the National Faculty of Education and Higher Education of Paraná (FANEESP), Faculty São Basílio Magno (FASBAM), Faculdades Vicentina, FAE Centro Universitário, Gran Centro Universitário, Instituto Federal do Paraná (IFPR), Instituto Superior de Administração e Economia (ISAE), UniCesumar, UniOpet, UNISENAI, Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR) and Universidade Positivo (UP).

From VaticanNews: <https://www.vaticannews.va/pt/mundo/news/2023-06/pacto-educativo-global-debatido-curitiba.html>

BUILDING THE GCE IN MARIST SCHOOLS



(Marist Brothers Article)
The Congregation of Marist Brothers Schools (Marist) has a network of 600 schools on 5 continents. On 8 and 15 June 2023, the school community was invited to participate in a webinar with the central theme: Building the **Global Compact on Education** in the Marist

School.

The meeting had a twofold objective: on the one hand, to continue to deepen the theoretical framework and the essence of the **Global Compact on Education** and, on the other, to share the good practices that are being implemented in many schools to embody Pope Francis' proposal.

Thanks to the generosity of Brother Juan Antonio Ojeda (La Salle), project manager of the International Office of Catholic Education (OIEC) and consultant to the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education, we were able to attend an excellent presentation on the implications of the Global Compact in schools. Among the very interesting ideas he presented, the following are worth highlighting:

- The Covenant proposes a global look at what happens outside schools. In 2019, the Pope said that 'educational institutions must be open to listening to life, to communities, to their sorrows and joys, to their memories and desires... and thus create other possibilities'. H. Juan Antonio recalled that education is a universal right and that as a global world we need quality education for all. Therefore, we must remember that to educate is to love, to give hope, to enlighten, to liberate, to serve and to educate for service.
- Bearing all this in mind, we must understand the Covenant as a way of reaching out to the other, through a transparent, sincere and friendly dialogue, which implies a real desire to understand the other's position and word.
- To achieve the objectives proposed by the Pope, the following four steps can be considered:
 1. we build the pact in each centre by involving students, teachers, administrative staff, families, ... We must feel the need for the pact, the need to work together and with others.
 2. we must build the pact with the other schools in the city, Catholic or non-Catholic, private or public... We must imagine solutions, set priorities, look for where we can and must make change.
 3. we have to build the pact with the municipality, associations, parties or trade unions, entrepreneurs, etc. For this we must plan and act, so that it does not remain a mere dialogue.

4. we have to build the pact at national and international level, with governments, authorities, creating networks of centres, etc.

After a very enriching conference, the Marist Notebook of the **Global Compact on Education** was presented, which brings together various activities and dynamics carried out in some Marist schools to promote the seven commitments proposed by the EYP and which came about in response to the invitation of the International Catholic Education Office to co-create a notebook of experiences and dynamics to be shared with all educational and social groups interested in promoting the covenant.

<https://champagnat.global/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ES-CUADERNO-PACTO-EDUCATIVO-GLOBAL-1.pdf> ■

H. Juan Ojeda engaged in a series of lectures THE EDUCATIONAL PACT IN MEXICO



In June 2023, several important events took place in Mexico where H. Juan Ojeda spoke on the topic of GCE.

On 22 and 23 June an International Symposium on Christian Social Thought was held at IMDOSOC (Mexican Institute of Social Doctrine) to mark the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Institute. At this Symposium, H. Juan Ojeda gave a lecture on GCE with the theme: 'Challenges and Opportunities of the **Global Compact on Education**'.

On 24 June 2023, a Seminar-Workshop was held by the CNEP (National Confederation of Private Schools of Mexico), which brings together the country's Catholic schools. The theme of the Workshop was 'Lidering the Educational Covenant from the Catholic School'. More than 200 directors and teachers from Catholic schools in the country attended this meeting.

Finally, two conferences were held at La Salle University in Mexico City, one in the centre and the other in the periphery of the city, concerning the **Global Compact on Education** and its implications and comparison with the UNESCO report 'Re-imagining our Futures Together'. A new social contract for education'. These lectures explored what the Pope has said during his pontificate about education and the **Global Compact on Education** ■

RESEARCH ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN TIMES OF CRISIS



This Congress had 300 participants and 76 communications from Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Colombia, Spain and Italy. Entirely in online mode, the International Congress Educational Covenant and Human Rights was held on 29 and 30 June 2023 and had the theme 'Reflections in times of crisis: democracy, society and nature'. The event was organised by the *Universidad Católica Silva Henríquez* (Chile), the *University of Notre Dame* (USA) and the *Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná* (Brazil), three institutions that are part of the **Global Compact on Education's** scientific committee in union with the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

The main objective of the Congress was to promote the sharing of knowledge and academic experiences on Human Rights, but also to revive among researchers and institutions what is recommended by the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*: "Every University, as a University, is an academic community that, in a rigorous and critical manner, contributes to the protection and development of human dignity and cultural heritage through research, teaching and the various services offered to the local, national and international community" (Ex Corde Ecclesiae, 12). Indeed, the theme of dignity and human rights emerges as one of the five pillars supporting the idea of the university in the perspective of the **Global Compact on Education**.

In the programme, the thematic axes included: 1) People-based education with a focus on human rights; 2) Youth, politics and society; 3) Gender, intersectionality and violence: studies and/or experiences on the impact of gender-based violence; 4) Indigenous peoples, environment and climate crisis and 5) Human rights and memory.

In the words of Dr. Nathalia da Costa, researcher at UCSH and one of the organisers of the event, during the two days of the Congress "we were able to reflect, on an international and interdisciplinary level, on various topics and share research results that showed us that the problems studied are similar throughout the region. Education plays a very important role in identifying them and in seeking alternatives that lead us to respect and guarantee human rights, with the aim of building a more just world, where no one is excluded".

According to the PUCPR delegate to the Scientific Committee of the **Global Compact on Education**, Dr Rodrigo de Andrade, the Congress bore witness to what it aims to do, "promote collective and cooperative work". Initially conceived by three universities from different countries, the event became even more diverse and dynamic by bringing together people from many other institutions and nationalities. In this sense, Rodrigo emphasises, "we are in tune with Pope Francis, forming a real village around the theme of Human Rights, realising that we think and work in a similar way". Certainly this work will continue through an international network of researchers, which tends to contribute enormously to the global success of a humanist educational proposal".

At the end of the event, the creation of an international network of researchers in Education and Human Rights was announced, with the aim of ensuring a permanent dialogue on the topic and promoting cooperation between people and institutions. More than 30 signatories already integrate the initiative.

From VaticanNews:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/pt/mundo/news/2023-07/congresso-internacional-debate-pacto-educativo.html> ■

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GCE VADEMECUM IN SLOVAKIAN



In June 2023, the Vademecum of the **Global Compact on Education** in Slovakia was published on the initiative of the Christian Movement for Children:

eRko - Hnutie kresťanských spoločenstiev detí Bratislava, Slovakia.

This new translation is in addition to the existing ones that can be found on the GCE website: <https://www.educationglobalcompact.org/it/villaggio/vademecum/>

Soon there will be a revision of the Vademecum in light of the creation of the new Dicastery for Culture and Education and the consequent opening of the Educational Pact to the cultural dimension. ■

TRANSFORMING THE PRESENT, WEAVING THE FUTURE

Big names from the Brazilian education sector gathered in Salvador de Bahia to discuss new trends in education in Brazil. Promoted by the National Association of Catholic Education of Brazil (ANEC), the VI National Congress of Catholic Education was held from 29 June to 1 July and had as its theme 'Transforming the Present and Weaving the Future of Catholic Education: Covenants and Commitments'. The congress brought together some 2,000 people at the Congress Centre in Salvador, including religious, specialists in various areas of knowledge, as well as teachers and heads of institutes from all the states of the country and exhibitors.

There were 40 speakers, with 10 lectures and panel discussions, 13 thematic rooms and 23 parallel programmes at ExpoANEC - a space for exhibiting companies with the most innovative educational solutions - who debated topics on the main challenges for the Catholic education segment, as well as discussions on the post-pandemic education market, innovation, sustainability, digital transformation, among others.

The opening speech was delivered in a video message by Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

OPENING ADDRESS BY CARDINAL JOSÉ TOLENTINO DE MENDONÇA

It is with joy that I greet ANEC at the start of the proceedings of this important meeting.

I take this opportunity to greet the President, all the members of the Board, all the distinguished guests, His Eminence, the Bishops, all the academic representatives, and to say that it is a great joy that the Dicastery for Culture and Education can be represented both by my greeting and by the presence of our official, Father José Miguel Cardoso, who will represent the Dicastery at this meeting.

In my greeting, I would like to begin by commenting on a word of the Holy Father Pope Francis in a frequent address to educators. He said: 'In an age saturated with information, often transmitted without wisdom and critical sense, the task of forming present and future generations of Catholic teachers and students is more important than ever'. This is very true because the task of an educator in this time, which is not only composed of so many changes, but truly represents a change of epoch, is more important than ever. And in his speech, which I would like to comment on here in the presentation, the Holy Father focuses very much on the sapiential dimension of the work of the educator and recalls those questions that the poet T.S. Eliot asked himself: 'Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?'. We indeed live in an age saturated with messages, but there is a loss, in the sense of true wisdom and true



knowledge. What can we do? The Holy Father says: "as educators you are called to nurture the desire for truth, goodness and beauty that dwells in the heart of every person, so that all may learn to love life and be open to its fullness".

I would like to dwell for a moment on this beautiful expression: 'Educators, you are called to feed desire'. It made me think of a chronicle by the great Brazilian pedagogue Rubem Alves, entitled 'The art of producing hunger'. He says something curious, quoting the poet Adélia Prado. He says: 'Adélia Prado teaches me pedagogy. She says: I don't want a knife or a cheese, I want hunger. Eating does not begin with cheese. Eating starts with the hunger to eat cheese. If I am not hungry, it is useless to eat cheese, but if I am hungry for cheese and I don't have any, I will find a way to get it'. Rubem Alves replies: 'I suggested many years ago that to enter a classroom, students and teachers should pass through a kitchen. Cooks can give lessons to educators, because they know that banquets do not begin with the food that is served, they begin with hunger. The true cook is the one who knows the art of producing hunger'. I think the Holy Father's words correspond very much to these ideas of Adélia and Rubem Alves. For the educator, his primary task is to ignite desire. Therefore, it is not just a matter of transmitting knowledge, but of working on the dispositions of the person himself, igniting in him the hunger, the thirst, the will for knowledge and for that human adventure that knowledge means. It is therefore very important for the educator to be a master of desire. He must know how to interpret the human person well, to know him in order to create in him not just a collage of concepts, but the capacity to welcome the integral experience of knowledge. Rubem Alves said: 'Knowledge that is not born of desire is like a wonderful kitchen in the home of a man suffering from anorexia'. We cannot talk about food, about cooking, about wonderful dishes to an anorexic. We must create the desire to feed ourselves, otherwise the banquet will not be served. Miguel de Unamuno said: 'To know for the sake of knowing is inhuman'. The task of the educator is not only to transmit knowledge, but to create in the learner the possibility of being the

protagonist of an integral human adventure, where knowledge plays a real and living role. Then the Holy Father says: 'This implies this art of creating desires, it implies innovative forms on the part of educators. Educators must risk innovative ways, combine research with best practices, so that educators can follow the person in a process of integral human development. A meeting like this of the ANEC is very important, it is extremely timely, because the teacher cannot live off yesterday. Yesterday is not enough. The educator feeds on the future. The educator is always at the beginning. Educators share and integrate best practices. Educators ask questions, live with these questions, even when they are challenging. Educators know that their work is fundamentally a construction, and a construction has no end point. An educator's work does not have an end point, at most it has a comma, a semicolon, a dash, but it does not have an end point, because it is always under construction. I remember a poem by a young Angolan poet, Ondjaki, which is called "Construction" and says: "Construction of the house and the inside of the house. Construction of a fire and flames and ashes. Construction of a person, from wrapping to books, construction of love.



Construction of sensitivity, from pores to music. Construction of an idea through what the other has said. Construction of poetry and the feeling of poetry. There is something 'de' in the word construction. Deconstruction of prejudice, deconstruction of misery, deconstruction of fear, deconstruction of rigidity, deconstruction of ego bloat. Simple deconstruction as an exercise. The deconstruction of poetry through its rebirth. Construction,' he concludes, 'is a word that makes you sweat when it is uttered'. The itinerary of an educator, his mission is sweaty. There is a sweat associated with construction and deconstruction work.

We educators, for example, have grown a lot in educational situations, we have grown a lot in building educational communities. Teachers learn a lot and grow a lot with their pupils. Construction and deconstruction. This learning, this not being afraid of innovation, this not being afraid of the future. We in education really feel we are living through a momentous change. Not being afraid of change, but looking for new tools that can be a place of construction of encounter and wisdom. But this, it is like living a great love. I believe it cannot be said enough that the task of an educator can

only be explained as a love story. For it is one of concentration, of giving, of imagination, of desire, of fruitfulness. This of which the semantics of love tells us is something very close to what is experienced in the educational task. While preparing this short greeting,



I heard Vinícius de Moraes' voice explaining the conditions necessary to live a great love. I went to read it and found in that song many aspects that can help us to see what the task to which we are called really is today. Vinícius de Moraes says: 'To live a great love requires much concentration and much wisdom, much seriousness. The task of the educator is not a dispersive one. We must make all that we are converge in the educative activity, it is a moment of great concentration, like the acrobat at the top of the rope. He must concentrate all his muscles, all his thoughts, to be one. The educator and the educational context must also experience this feat of concentration. 'To live a great love,' Vinícius continues, 'you must first become a knight and be completely of your lady, no matter what. There is a dedication, there is a surrender'. In the life of an educator there is a totality. This is what Fernando Pessoa said through Ricardo Reis: 'To be great, be whole: nothing / of yours exaggerates or excludes. / Be whole in everything. Put as much as you are / In the least you do. / So in every lake the whole moon / Shines, because it lives on high'. To be great, be whole. To experience great love, one must realise the truth that there is no great love without accepting the difficulties that are inherent in reality. If, as educators, we do not have the capacity to accept the real, the imperfect, the incomplete, the barely sketched out, that which is at the beginning, the crust, the shell, the difficult beginning, even disappointment, we do not become true connoisseurs of the freedom of love. The task of an educator is made of falling in love, it is made of believing, it is made of this educational passion that makes us understand how education is truly the device of transformation, it is a sowing of hope that we sow in the human person. But all this is done with a lot of work, commitment, constant care. This is what Vinicius says: 'permanent care is needed'. Therefore, for this novelty in the field of education that Pope Francis speaks of, we must fulfil all these conditions, which I have quoted using the poetry of Ondjaki and Vinícius de Moraes, but which each of us, in a more



scientific discourse, recognises.

Pope Francis says, and with this I want to conclude my greeting: 'we must break with the imaginary of education according to which educating consists in filling the head with ideas. In this way we educate only automatons, macrocephals, not persons'. Sometimes there is an exaggerated partial and one-sided preoccupation with transmitting ideas and content, as if the act of education were summed up there. Pope Francis has a much more integral vision. He says that to educate is to risk the tension between three things that for him are in harmony: head, heart and hands. There has to be harmony between the intelligence, the emotional side and the practical side, the experiential side, because I have to think and feel and do, and feel what I think and do and do what I feel and think. And that is harmony. Now, the great risk is that we remain in a conceptual vision and we don't value the dimension of emotionality, of sensoriality, and we become emotionally illiterate. Students may be very good at maths, language, geography, but illiterate emotionally, because they have not worked on human skills, on affective skills. The educator must become a teacher, a master of harmony. And he must desire, he must dream of a country in which everyone becomes a master, in which those we educate also become masters of their own humanity. There is a text by a Portuguese writer, José de Almada Negreiros, that I would like to share with you and with which I conclude my greeting: 'I dreamed of a country where everyone became a master. Everyone would begin by making the pen and nib with which he would listen to the universe; then he would extract from the raw material the paper on which he would write the confidences he received directly from the universe; then he would go down to the bottom of the rocks for the black ink of the squids; he would engrave letter by letter the characters with which he would compose his words; and he would take out from the tree the press where he would print the discoveries he would send to others. This was how everyone in this country became a Master. That was how the Masters wrote the sentences that would redeem mankind.

As a final, concluding word, I borrow Pope Francis' words to educators and make them my own with a big hug. The Holy Father says: "Dear educators, do not let yourselves be discouraged by the difficulties presented by the educational challenge. Educating

is not a profession, but an attitude, a way of being. Be witnesses with your life of what you communicate. The educator conveys knowledge and values with words, but he will only be incisive if he accompanies his words with witness and consistency of life. Without consistency, it is not possible to educate. You are all educators, and there are no delegations in this field".

May it be a wonderful ANEC meeting, unforgettable days and fruitful work.

May God bless you.

Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça
Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education ■

Speech by Card. De Mendonça at the Centro Astalli
 on the occasion of Refugee Day 15-6-2023

THE INDIFFERENCE THAT BLINDS



These are the words of those invisibles, those forgotten stories that Pope Francis wanted to give voice to in so many messages. This was recalled by Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Holy See's Dicastery for Culture and Education. Ten years ago, the Pope's visit to Lampedusa, "to a contemporary frontier, invisible to the eyes of so many, faceless, emptied of a history" lifted "the veil of indifference that prevents us from seeing others. Not seeing and not reacting in front of a drama, a genocide, is something monstrous. We are co-responsible for all these human massacres". "Build hospitality instead of hostile insensitivity" is the cry that has continued to resound for ten years. As in the 2018 peace message, in which the gaze that rests on refugees is "contemplative": "The Pope looks at them as a resource, not just victims or a problem, but teachers of humanity. We need to work on cultural citizenship". Closure, the prelate concludes, 'is a declaration of death for ourselves'.

Extract from:

<https://gesuiti.it/rifugiati-in-gioco-il-futuro-dei-diritti/>



GLOBAL COMPACT
 ON EDUCATION

Journal



P. José Miguel Cardoso¹

1. The miracle of the multiplication of pencils

In 2015, while visiting the island of Sal in Cape Verde in the Atlantic Ocean with a group of friends, we visited a typical village one day to deliver school supplies. When we arrived, we didn't know that the number of children exceeded the number of materials we were carrying, which left us a little embarrassed. We started to distribute the school materials and realised that there were not enough pencils for everyone... until one of the older children did this: he took his pencil, broke it in half, kept part of it... and gave the other half to a younger child.

Starting with this authentic contemporary 'miracle', which we could call 'the multiplication of the pencils' (a bit like Jesus' miracle of the 'multiplication of the loaves and fishes'), it reminds us of the ultimate goal of education: to build a more human, fraternal and equitable society.

In this sense, the first word is to thank you for the silent and demanding work that all of you, in the difference and in the context of your functions, do for the education of the younger generations, teaching them to share pencils: that is, to share knowledge and study conditions. Furthermore, Pope Francis left us with a crucial phrase that has become an authentic pedagogical refrain. The Holy Father says: "we cannot change the world unless we change education"². To which we could add: we can *only change education if we change the style of educating*.

Having said that, undoubtedly one of the greatest risks of schools/universities is told to us by Caetano Veloso in one of his famous songs: wasting time, to the point that we have to ask for more time afterwards (cf. 'Oração do Tempo'). Schools and universities

differ from other social organisms because they offer human existence a specific and non-repeatable time: it is a once-in-a-lifetime time to be formed!

In general, it is certain that education must be enriched by various contributions from the fields of anthropology, sociology and psychology, which, in their specificity, contribute to a more personalised process adapted to the challenges of contemporary youth. And during this National Congress we will certainly hear brilliant and important reflections to rethink education today.

However, since this is a National Congress of Catholic Education, I believe it would be crucial not to forget the *fundamental root of our education, which often tends to be forgotten, since the essence of a thing is always in its origin*³. Perhaps we need to look at Jesus in a 'more pedagogical' way in order to understand what pedagogical horizons Jesus still points to today. And why? Because, as the title of your Congress indicates, "*Transforming the present, weaving the future*" also implies looking at the past, that is, at the origin and source of our Christian identity. This is where the difference in our pedagogical identity comes from, as the recent document of the Congregation for Catholic Education, entitled: *The identity of the Catholic school for a culture of dialogue* (2022) describes in more detail.⁴

For this reason, we divide our reflection into two moments: first, to rediscover the root that distinguishes a Catholic education; second, to articulate the pedagogical principles of Jesus with the **Global Compact on Education** (Pope Francis), so as to strengthen that education that is capable of changing the world.

2. Rediscovering the roots of Catholic education

¹ Conference at the 6th ANEC National Congress (29 June 2023, Salvador da Bahia - Brazil).

² FRANCIS, *Address to participants at the fourth meeting of Scholas Occurrentes*, 5 February 2015.

³ Cf. HEIDEGGER, 'The Origin of the Work of Art (1935/36)', 5.

⁴ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *The Identity of Catholic Schools for a Culture of Dialogue* (Instruction), Vatican City 2022.

Among the many characteristics that describe Jesus' identity, one of them is the figure of "Jesus the teacher" (Jn 13:13). But going deeper, from his biography we grasp this crucial principle of the (human) dimension of Jesus: before being a teacher, he was a pupil; before being a trainer, he was an apprentice; before teaching, he learned. To be more precise, Jesus trained for 30 years in order to be a trainer for only three years. Let us now look in detail at these two moments and what content we can draw from them for contemporary education.

2.1 Jesus grew in stature, wisdom and grace

Jesus' formation can be summed up in this sentence from the Gospel, written after the account of his being lost and found in the Temple when he was 12 years old: "he grew in wisdom, stature and grace" (Lk 2:52). That is to say, a formation encompassing the physical (stature), spiritual (grace) and intellectual (wisdom) spheres. During this long period of formation (30 years) in Nazareth⁵, despite other formators⁶, Mary and Joseph are the most decisive formators, introducing the child Jesus to the following dimensions of human formation: domestic, practical, religious and affective⁷.

Regarding the domestic dimension, Jesus learns from Mary the domestic chores of daily life, as well as the art of outer and inner contemplation (Lk 1:19; Lk 2:51c).



In the practical dimension, he learns from Joseph the art of carpentry (Mk 6:3; Mt 13:55), "physical work that involves the body, especially the hands, that requires concentration, patience and silence, that implies creativity, rigour and precision"⁸. Moreover, "in the house, Jesus experiences the human realities that we will contemplate later in his public life: sleeping and waking, getting up or sitting down to eat, drinking and eating".⁹

It was also Mary and Joseph who introduced Jesus to the religious dimension, both through the teaching of traditional prayers, the meaning of Jewish festivals, the practice of domestic liturgy and the pedagogy of personal prayer. In fact, the practice of individual (night) prayer that Jesus performed during

his public life (Mk 6:46; Lk 5:16; 6:12) "must be based on a habit acquired from youth"¹⁰ at home.

And as far as the affective dimension is concerned, we can assume that the feelings Jesus manifested during his public life were formed during his life in Nazareth (...), (where) he developed a rich affective life: capacity for affection, compassion, joy, sadness, weeping, fear, anguish, emotion, impatience or disillusionment¹¹.

It is clear from these four dimensions that the paternal formation of Mary and Joseph is not only theoretical but also practical; that it is not only an individual but also a social formation. We can therefore reiterate that it is an integral formation, aimed at the integral (and not only partial) growth of Jesus.

2.2 Jesus Master

After the training phase, Jesus begins the training phase with the beginning of his public life (30 years). Regarding the style of Jesus' training, the aspects are undoubtedly innumerable, but here we will limit ourselves to three.

First, Jesus offers an education for all (without exclusion). Jesus does not choose a uniform group of apostles, but a heterogeneous group in which everyone has different stories, gifts and services¹². And it is especially to this group that Jesus presents himself as the "trainer of the future trainers" of his Church. At the same time, Jesus does not only train this small group, but all those he meets: both those who do not accompany him on a daily basis (Mk 5:18-19; Lk 8:38-39), those who appear sporadically (Lk 19:1-10), those who come from other regions (Mk 9:38-39; Lk 9:49-50), and the crowds that embrace all social strata (Lk 6:17-19).

Secondly, Jesus educates to transform lives. One of Jesus' most recurrent forms of teaching was parables. What does this mean? It means that Jesus does not speak in a metaphysical way understandable only to an elite, but speaks in a simple way and for everyone, whose parable allows a greater pedagogical effect than a simple instructive discourse: it is not an abstract narrative, but a narrative that allows the hearer to incarnate himself within the story of the parable itself, triggering in him an ethical reaction of confrontation with his own life¹³. In other words, Jesus' training does not only aim at the transmission of content, but also at changing the hearers' own lives.

Thirdly, Jesus educates to the limit. Besides words, Jesus also educates through experience, that is, the experience of the limit, which basically aims at avoiding two extremes: anthropological pessimism and human omnipotence. On the one hand, the experience of failure, when in the Beatitudes discourse Jesus announces the future difficulties and setbacks that the disciples will go through in their

⁵ Despite his two years of exile in Egypt (Mt 2:13-23), as well as other peripheral journeys and pilgrimages to Jerusalem on the occasion of Jewish festivals, most of Jesus' time before the beginning of his public life was spent in Nazareth: Mk 1:9; Mt 2:23; 4:13; Lk 2:4.39.51; Jn 1:45-46; 19:20; Acts 10:38.

⁶ Cf. BEGASSE OF DHAEM, *Mysterium Christi*, 143.

⁷ Cf. CARDOSO, *Onde está o teu filho? Para uma pedagogia quotidiana diante da crise familiar*, 64-67.

⁸ BEGASSE OF DHAEM, *Mysterium Christi*, 153.

⁹ BEGASSE OF DHAEM, *Mysterium Christi*, 152.

¹⁰ BEGASSE OF DHAEM, *Mysterium Christi*, 154.

¹¹ BEGASSE OF DHAEM, *Mysterium Christi*, 155.

¹² Cf. Mk 3:13-17; Mt 10:1-4; Lk 6:12-16; 9:1; Jn 1:40-49; Acts 1:13.

¹³ Cf. RICOUER, "Position and Function of Metaphor in Biblical Language", 106.

mission (Mt 5:11) and, as such, Jesus appeals to a trust in God that never abandons the human. And on the other hand, the *experience of success*, when the 72 disciples (Lk 10:2-12) are sent on their mission and then return happy because things went well (Lk 10:17), Jesus rebukes this attitude of human arrogance because one must remain humble, since everything must be seen as a merit of God acting through human action, and not an exclusive merit of man (Lk 10:18-19). In other words, Jesus' education is not just theory, but makes life experiences a form of learning that complements theory: otherwise education is reduced to utopia.

In this sense, if we mentioned earlier that Mary and Joseph were the great formators of Jesus up to the age of 30, we must now add another decisive formator who becomes more visible during Jesus' public life: the heavenly Father, as the evangelist John explains in particular. Several times we see Jesus refer to the Father (prayer, dialogue, testimony), showing that, even though he was a formator, Jesus maintained the humility to accept advice and to continue to form himself with the Father¹⁴, in an *ongoing formation*.

Now, on the basis of this approach to our Master, we draw two brief conclusions: firstly, that no one can educate without having been previously trained and in continuous formation; secondly, that we are always a 'work of others', so no one learns only for himself, which makes us responsible for the education of others. In other words, Jesus, as a teacher, trains trainers so that they then become trainers of other future trainers, in an inter-temporal chain that reaches up to the present day.

Having said this, and to make the vitality of Jesus' teachings more plausible, let us turn to a comparison between the life of Christ and the '**Global Education Covenant**'.

3. Jesus in the face of the Global Compact on Education

As many of you are aware, in 2019 Pope Francis launched an idea¹⁵ that came to fruition on 15 October 2020: the creation of a **Global Compact on Education** 'involving a range of political and educational bodies in a commitment to pedagogical renewal.

Bearing in mind the general lines of this **Global Compact on Education**, it would be important to reread it now in the light of our central formator, Jesus Christ (whom we have analysed in the previous point), thus giving a Christological vision to this document. In this line, we will analyse these seven principles under four keys: the enumeration of some current pedagogical risks, the contribution of the pedagogical contents of Jesus, the pedagogical competences to be developed and the proposal of some practical pedagogical challenges (which will then have to be adapted in the best way to each school situation) to implement this same **Global Compact on Education**.

3.1 Putting the person at the centre

Since God has created us different and unrepeatable, education, while being group-based,

must aim at the growth of each individual in his or her uniqueness. It is not a matter of subjecting personal identity to a community ideology, but of interweaving personal identity with community identity.

One of the risks that globalisation poses to education is the *standardisation of the population through the standardisation of education*, i.e. the fitting of people into certain social models, often subservient to certain economic interests.

Faced with this scenario, Jesus taught us that "the Sabbath was created for man and not man for the Sabbath" (Mk 2:27-28). What does this mean? That the purpose of the law must be to promote the human and not to ostracise it. Because the risk of any ideology is to become totalitarianism: to annul diversity¹⁶. And the typical richness of Brazilian culture implies further pedagogical attention: knowing how to integrate all students, despite their ethnic and cultural differences.

It is therefore the task of schools and universities to *educate on uniqueness*. Because a person is not worth for the number of likes he or she has on instagram, but is worth because he or she is an unrepeatable being loved by God. And this is the starting point for a concrete challenge: in addition to personalised pedagogical accompaniment, could we not challenge young people to keep a 'student diary' in which they tell their 'unique academic story'?



3.2 Listening to the younger generation

Another risk in *education is the adultisation of teaching*. That is, education designed by adults, based on adult expectations and according to adult intuitions. It is true that adults must be protagonists in education, but this cannot ignore one of the principles of *Evangelii Gaudium*: reality is superior to the idea¹⁷.

Jesus, in one of the most beautiful passages of the Gospel, leaves us this pedagogical refrain: "Let the little ones come to me" (Mt 19:14-15). It is not only adults who have things to teach young people, but also young people have things to teach adults¹⁸, namely: their humility, their joy, their honesty and, above all, their curiosity.

It is therefore up to schools and universities to take up the challenge of *educating to listen*: to listen to the anxieties and questions of younger students, involving them in the educational project. As the philosopher Simone Weil explains, listening implies

¹⁴ Cf. CARDOSO, *Onde está o teu filho? Para uma pedagogia quotidiana diante da crise familiar*, 68.

¹⁵ Cf. FRANCIS, *Message for the launch of the Education Pact*, 12-9-2019.

¹⁶ See ARENDT, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 437-459.

¹⁷ Cf. FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 231.

¹⁸ Cf. FRANCIS, *Christus vivit*, 246.

approaching the other in order to be able to listen with quality and, in listening to the other, we listen to ourselves. It is like breathing: we empty ourselves (exhaling) and then fill ourselves (inhaling) with others, enriching each other.¹⁹

In the face of today's generation of young people with 'earphones in their ears', it is important to challenge educational agents to this dimension of listening, for which we leave a concrete challenge: in order for students to have a greater consultative role in school decisions, would it not be useful to create pedagogical mechanisms that foster a 'listening culture' that listens to students' questions and wishes?

3.3 Promoting women

Fortunately, since the mid-20th century, women have assumed a greater role in social life, precisely because they have had the same educational opportunities as men. However, we know that even today, in many parts of the world, various forms of *discrimination against women in schools* exist, so this achievement is not yet complete.

The very attitude of Jesus in approaching women (Mk 1:29-31), in meeting women (Jn 4:5-26), in healing women (Lk 13:10-16), in defending women (Jn 8:3-11), in instructing women (Lk 10:38-42), in accepting women as part of the group of disciples (Lk 8:1-2)... reveals how God never underestimates the dignity of women. In fact, in the Paschal Mystery itself, it is women who occupy a prominent place, especially the mother Mary: when the men flee, it is women who remain there to accompany Jesus on the road to Calvary (cf. 4th/6th/8th station of the Way of the Cross), to stand with Him at the foot of the Cross (Jn 19:25-27), to be the first to confirm His Resurrection (Jn 20:11-18) and to await the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:14). And, as if this were not enough, in the same ecclesio-genesis we observe a strong female protagonism, both in missionary collaboration (Acts 16:15, 40) and in the service of the diaconate (Rom 16:1).

As such, it is also up to schools and universities to *educate on equality*. And this is where we start with a concrete challenge: couldn't the promotion of a few events that elucidate the biography of some women who have marked the very history of mankind contribute to triggering greater female consciousness in a society that is still very patriarchal? And today we salute the memory of Saint Sister Dulce (1920-1992), promoter of this Congress. Truly, the world is not only built with great presidents, great scientific discoveries or big muscular speeches, but it is also built with small gestures, as this nun taught us.

3.4 Empowering the family

Our first school is not the primary school, nor is our first teacher that educated person who teaches school, because our first school is our family and our first teacher is the womb (hands) of our own mother²⁰. In light of this fact, we can never give up the umbilical relationship between school and family. The risk is to fall into a *school pedagogical hegemony* that educates young people outside their family context. We must create this vital circularity between these two communities: the family and the educational

community. Otherwise we create an *existential dualism* with effects on the pupil's personality: it cannot be one person in the family and another at school, but the same person growing in harmony in these two communities that complement each other.

As we showed in the previous section, the family was a decisive element in the very formation of Jesus (Lk 2:52), from his birth to the beginning of his public life. And today we must not be afraid to affirm that the family is also a place of formation, and therefore we must defend the 'pedagogical exclusiveness of the family'. What does this mean? It means that there are certain contents that, if not transmitted by the family, will not be transmitted or will be transmitted in a distorted way. In summary, I share a brief summary of a previous reflection in which I present a pedagogical proposal of eight practical exercises that a family can develop in its daily family context and which I define as the eight *beatitudes*



*of sonship*²¹. These are: blessed are the children who have dreams; blessed are the children who master the grammar of emotions; blessed are the children who know the biographies of their parents; blessed are the children who lend their sneakers to their brothers and sisters; blessed are the children who learn from their defeats; blessed are the children who get dirty in nature; blessed are the children who believe without having seen; blessed are the children who mourn the death of their relatives.

It is therefore up to schools and universities to *educate for life*, the life that comes from the family. And here other specific challenges open up: do we celebrate Family Day in a dignified manner at school, or do we strive to celebrate only other civil and cultural holidays in an effusive manner? In the educational process, are we aware that behind a student there is always a family history, often marked by moments of fragility and rupture?

3.5 Openness to reception

A further risk of education is to *educate only for academic results*. The ranking of schools based on average results, from which a hypothetical higher credibility of an educational institution derives, cannot be the ultimate reason for its existence. Not neglecting this detail, educational institutions must also be able to create study opportunities for the poorest and educate them without discrimination, as well as foster in their students this feeling of solidarity with the poorest.

¹⁹ WEIL, *Waiting for Godot*, 147.

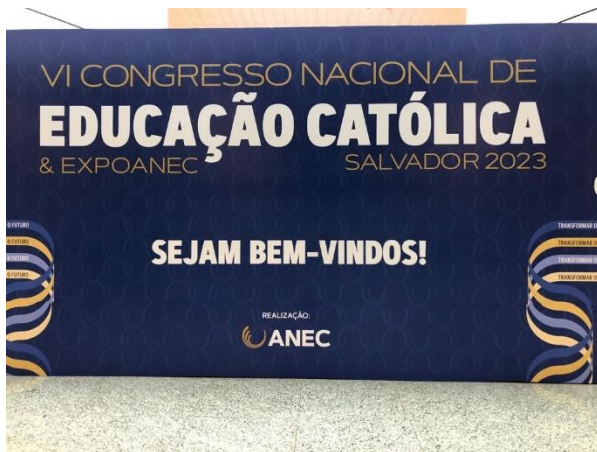
²⁰ Cf. RECALCATI, *The Mother's Hands*, 19-24.

²¹ Cf. CARDOSO, *Onde está o teu filho? Para uma pedagogia quotidiana diante da crise familiar*, 104-131.

Jesus himself was an example of this, so we should note this small detail: Jesus, rather than speaking "of" the poor, "of" the frail and "of" the marginalised, spoke "with" the poor, "with" the frail and "with" the marginalised (Mk 1:33-34). It is thus up to schools and universities to *educate to frailty*, especially in this time when it seems that only the young, the beautiful and the famous are valid²². And this is the starting point for a concrete challenge: in addition to the study visits that schools organise to learn about monuments and emblematic places, would it not be appropriate to also organise visits or volunteer exercises for students in paediatric hospitals or nursing homes (authentic "monuments of humanism"!) to awaken this sensitivity to fragility?

3.6 *Renewing the economy and politics*

Another risk associated with the previous one is the ultimate goal of education: *to train only professionals and not citizens*. Because the ultimate goal of education is not the personal glory of the student, but to enable the student to transform his or her context, through his or her professional skills, to build the highest possible good. In fact, the most important thing in education is not that the student gets top marks, but that the student earns top marks. Added to this is another element: his vocational training must make him a 'social watchdog' of the political and economic system in which he lives, through his critical gaze and denunciation of injustice,



so as to ensure a fair social balance²³.

This leads to a serious problem: politics can be manipulated by a few rather than discussed by all. Therefore, it is up to schools and universities to *educate the community*, instilling in students this responsibility for the common good, as Jesus teaches us in his Beatitudes (Mt 5:3-10).

And therein lies another concrete challenge: can we not create social solidarity campaigns in our educational institutions, thereby developing the political awareness of our students?

3.7 *Caring for our common home*

Faced with a generation that has learnt to control everything at the *click of a mouse* on digital platforms, "a 'square' where young people spend a lot of time".²⁴ it is important to be aware that *life is not reduced to the digital world, but that there is also a real world*.

²² Cf. GALIMBERTI, *The Myths of Our Time*, 44-46.

²³ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Educating for a Humanism of Solidarity*, 16-19.

The ecological issue has become more than ever a question of the survival of humanity itself. If the world is 'a common home' shared by all, then everyone must feel responsible for the care of this home²⁵. Jesus himself showed special concern for the environment, both when he instructed the apostles through contemplation of nature (Mt 6:26) and when he demonstrated his divine power by restraining the force of nature (calming the wind: Mk 4:39).



It is therefore up to schools and universities to *educate on ecology*, taking them away from the slavery of the digital world to an active dimension in the real world. And this is the starting point for a final concrete challenge: in the midst of extra-pedagogical activities, couldn't schools offer 'environmental experiences', such as volunteering in the cleaning of nature parks or a simple nature pilgrimage?

4. **From consumers to pencil manufacturers**

Finally, the 1997 film *Rebel Genius* (*Good Will Hunting*), winner of two Oscars in Hollywood, tells us the interesting story of a young student with above-average intelligence, but whose life goes through a huge youthful storm. But throughout the film, there is an unspoken question that troubles the viewer's thinking: what is more important in education, learning things or learning how to live things?

I believe this is the great challenge of education today. And let us not forget: when Jesus became incarnate in this world, he only came to teach us one thing. He only came to teach us how to live. Here lies the deep root of a Catholic education: to educate according to the One who is the great "trainer of trainers". For if the Gospel bears little fruit today, perhaps it is because the words of the formators are only human words, and not the words of God²⁶, because they have become detached from their source (Jesus Christ).

Finally, I leave this question for our consideration: if one day one of your students does not have a pencil to write with, are you able to break your pencil and give him the other half?

■



**GLOBAL COMPACT
ON EDUCATION**

²⁴ FRANCIS, *Christus vivit*, 87.

²⁵ Cf. FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 203-208.

²⁶ VIEIRA, *Sermão da Sexagésima*, IX.

CONVERSATION ON EDUCATION AND EQUITY



Most Excellent Lady Ambassador of Spain to the Holy See, Doña Isabel Celaá Diéguez,
Most Excellent Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished guests, dear friends,

I think that Pope Francis defines the current moment very lucidly and clearly when he says: "it can be said that today we are not living in an era of change, but in a change of epoch. It is not just an economic-financial crisis. It is not just the turbulence of the markets. It is not just the precarisation of labour in the 21st century and the worsening of social imbalances. It is not just the impact of technologies and the clash of paradigms in the age of knowledge and information. It is a radical change that affects above all the way humanity lives its existence in the world. Today, most human beings understand that they are in the midst of a revolution - which is technological, but also civil and anthropological - and which has a precise aim: by changing the shape of our actions towards reality, it also aims to change the configuration of our experience of the world and, by extension, of our awareness of ourselves. We are in the eye of the storm and we will have to, as individuals and societies, find a way of balance that we do not yet see clearly.

One of the difficulties of the present time is that our societies resemble more the heterogeneity of a disjointed mosaic than an aggregating, unitary image. Already the philosopher Ortega y Gasset²⁷

asked perplexedly: "how is it possible that a society that has achieved such a high degree of scientific and technical development can produce such a disqualified existence?"

Pope Francis, speaking in 2015 to participants at a world congress on education, recalled the delicate responsibility that the education system has in the current situation. When schools uncritically reproduce the asymmetries (economic, social or otherwise) of the world in which they find themselves, when they do not strive to transform their context, responding positively, for example, to the universal right to education, but fixate on an overly selective and elitist educational model, a crisis of confidence is created.

"This," says the Pope, "is a world reality that makes us ashamed. It is a reality that leads us to human selectivity and which, instead of uniting peoples, distances them; it distances the rich from the poor; it distances one culture from another"²⁸. At the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, Pope Francis left this vibrant challenge that concerns all of us: 'educational communities have a fundamental role, an essential role in the construction of citizenship and culture.... How necessary it is to go to the concrete!'"²⁹.

I will focus my brief exposition on three basic principles.

1. Education is always an act of hope that, from the present, looks to the future.

I find in this phrase of Pope Francis an admirable synthesis of the meaning of our meeting today to talk about education and equity. Dealing with education - the Ambassador knows this well, due to her experience first as Education Councillor in the Basque Government and then as Minister of Education in the Spanish Government - is a gesture of intergenerational solidarity, because the fruits of the educational process can only be reaped in the future. Like the farmer who plants a seed, the educator also makes a gesture of hope and expectation. The educator can only hope, and even wait, that the work done today will bear fruit in a few years, sometimes decades. I think we all retain the memory of a professor, teacher or educator who has deeply marked our lives. In many cases, this recognition has, alas, come too late. Only many years later do we realise the great life lessons that person had left us. The true educator is aware of this, and knows that the first lesson he or she must learn is that of patience.

Moreover, the reference to the plant world is not accidental. Even the very concept of culture comes from the agricultural world. It was Cicero who was the first to use the term culture when he defined

1. ²⁷ Cf. J. Ortega y Gasset: *La rebelión de las masas*, Espasa-Calpe: 1955.

2. ²⁸ Pope Francis, *Speech to the world of culture* - Cagliari, Sardinia (2013)

3. ²⁹ Pope Francis, *Address to the Pontificia Universidade Católica do Equador* (2015).

philosophy, -in the pregnant etymological sense of the pursuit of knowledge and not in the technical sense of an academic discipline



-, *cultura animi*, that is, a cultivation of the soul, a work of tilling, ploughing, planting, caring and also of hope. This is also why Pope Francis recalls the importance of initiating processes when he proposes one of his four principles of action, *time is superior to space* (Evangelii Gaudium, nos. 222-225).

This should caution us against the temptation of efficiency and performance at any cost, because that would be a flattening of the present. Certainly, we would all like our students to get the best scores in the assessment tests of international agencies. But sacrificing the truly important issues to immediate results would be a very serious strategic and prospective mistake. Pope Francis, in his colloquial and direct style, poses a burning question: "Sometimes I wonder who are those in today's world who are really concerned about creating processes that build a people, rather than obtaining immediate results that produce easy, quick and ephemeral political gain, but which do not build human fullness" (Evangelii Gaudium, 224).

Let us say, then, that educational action looks to the future, needs long time frames and growth processes on a human scale. And so, precisely because it concerns the future, we must start today, without delay.

What is at stake, in fact, is the future of humanity. Pope Francis has repeated this constantly since the beginning of his pontificate: we must care for the common home that is our planet, and build a more fraternal world. At stake is the very survival of humanity as a species on this planet, and also of the planet itself as a habitable place. These two major concerns are closely linked, and also form the substance of the Pope's thinking, expressed in his encyclicals *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli tutti*. Well: caring for the common home and building a more fraternal world pass through education. The future of humanity depends on education today. On the

educational model we choose, on its anthropological assumptions, and on the possibility for all to access it, depends our future. We may not be able to see it, but it would be an act of intergenerational selfishness to disregard the fate of humanity and the planet just because we will no longer be there.

2. Educating is everyone's business.

The second great observation I would like to recall here is that educating is everyone's business. This is the great insight behind the **Global Compact on Education** that Pope Francis launched in 2019, inviting everyone to build educational alliances with a view to a more fraternal world. He famously drew inspiration from an African proverb that goes like this: 'it takes a whole village to educate a child'. It could also be translated by saying that 'a person is a person through other people'.

A great Brazilian pedagogist, Paulo Freire, also expresses himself in similar terms when he says: 'No one educates alone. Men educate themselves in communion'³⁰. In his conception, man is inserted in history as an uncompleted being who places in lifelong education his



aspiration to evolve. But to achieve this, he needs a community. No teacher, no matter how good he or she is, no school, no matter how advanced in pedagogical techniques, will be able to accomplish this task alone. It needs others, it needs alliances, an educational pact with all the agents in this process: the family, first and foremost, but also associations of all kinds, sporting, cultural, local authorities, parishes and faith communities, all are involved in the educational process, and therefore, are called upon to collaborate.

No one can have the monopoly and exclusivity of education; and while governments must regulate the general content and the levels to be reached, they cannot take over the educational process, but rather place themselves at the service of families and parents who are primarily responsible for the education of their children, who in turn need to be helped and supported.

3. Education and equity.

This brings us to a third general principle, equity. At the beginning of the Second Vatican Council's

4. ³⁰ P. Freire, *Pedagogia do oprimido*, Paz e Terra, Rio de Janeiro, 2002.

declaration on education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1, there is an unequivocal statement: 'All men of every race, condition and age, by virtue of their dignity as persons, have an inalienable right to an education'. We thus start with the assumption of equality, a principle delivered in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where it states in Article 1 that 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights'. But of course, equality in dignity and rights does not mean homogeneity or absence of differences. That is why equity is also needed, which aims to offer everyone not only equal rights, equal tools or resources, but also equal opportunities or possibilities. To use a sports metaphor, in competition the rules must be equal for all, but we rightly separate competitions according to gender, weight and age, because otherwise the fundamental principle of fairness and equal opportunities in sport would be lacking. Non-fairness or in-equity, etymology teaches us, becomes iniquity. *Iniquus*, iniquitous, originally meaning not fair, not equitable, becomes synonymous with bad.

Applied to education, equality means that all people have the right and the duty to receive an adequate education, governed by common standards, with common access criteria and common resources. But this is not enough if at the same time the same opportunities are not offered to all and thus, the barriers that prevent the weakest from accessing quality education are overcome. Merit is not the consolidation of the advantage of those who are already widely favoured in social terms. Merit is giving real opportunities to those who have none.

It is to this mission that great pedagogues and teachers have dedicated their work. I remember Don Lorenzo Milani, whose 100th birthday we celebrated last 27 May, and whom I would like to take as my guide now.

Don Milani knew that education is the key to restoring dignity and possibility to those who have been unfortunate in the 'lottery' of life due to family origins or historical circumstances. Don Milani wrote from his experience in the school in Barbiana, a remote village where he spent the years from 47 to 67, opening a school for young children of peasants and workers, firm in the need to adapt the entire educational process to the recipient, that is, to make it fair. He prophetically insisted: 'When you have thrown into today's world a boy without an education you have thrown into heaven a sparrow without wings'.

To achieve educational equity, we must address and overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of those who need it most. Pope Francis has noted that educational 'in-equity' is a form of social injustice and rightly urges educational institutions and society as a whole to act with solidarity and compassion towards the most vulnerable.

Educational systems need to be rethought and transformed to be inclusive and respectful of students' diversity. As Pope Francis states, 'inclusive education is a challenge, not just for some schools or educational institutions, but for the whole of society. We must work together to remove the physical, economic and cultural barriers that prevent access and full participation of all students.'



This is about making an effort among all educational agencies to ensure that everyone has the same opportunities. And that is why Pope Francis has invited everyone to create a great **Global Compact on Education**.

Conclusion.

To conclude these words of mine, I would like to remind you that education is a journey, an achievement and not a handout, and therefore an ongoing quest. It is only through a responsible act by which man makes up his mind for it and commits himself to it that a fundamental creative act is produced. But, for this, the school cannot become a club of the privileged or just a feeder to this society of blatant asymmetries and exclusion of entire multitudes of human beings. The educational pact can only be rehabilitated when education is universal and inclusive.

In the apostolic exhortation *Evangelium Gaudium*, the Pope makes a decisive appeal: "Let us not allow hope to be stolen!"³¹ (no. 86). It is an exhortation not to become discouraged in the face of the difficulties of this historical season, but rather to face it enlightened by the confidence that the Christian promise radiates. Instead of globalising fear, Francis exhorts us to 'globalise hope'. Those who inhabit the world of education cannot afford to be without hope. "Man cannot live without hope and education is a generator of hope. Education, in fact, is to give birth, to make grow, it is part of the dynamic of giving life. And the life that is born is the most bubbling source of hope..."³².

Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça
Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education ■

5. ³¹ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), n°86.

6. ³² Pope Francis, Address to the Plenary Session of the Congregation for Catholic Education (2017).

CIVILISATION OF UNIVERSAL AND HUMAN BROTHERHOOD

To commemorate 60 years of diplomatic relations between Senegal and the Holy See, 14 June 2023 the Embassy of Senegal to the Holy See organised a Symposium at the Augustinianum Congress Centre in Rome, under the patronage of the Dicastery for Culture and Education. It was an opportunity to pay homage to Léopold Sédar Senghor, poet, writer and father of Senegalese independence, a model of "universal civilisation and human brotherhood".

Card. José Tolentino de Mendonça delivered the opening address with a tribute to the figure of Léopold Senghor.



SPEECH BY CARDINAL JOSÉ TOLENTINO DE MENDONÇA

I am very pleased to open this symposium, with so many distinguished speakers. The theme is particularly important because it focuses on the political, human, cultural and artistic lessons of a true African leader such as Senghor; indeed, his ideas are not only very relevant, but also necessary. Scholar, poet, political leader, philosopher, singer of the 'negritude', Senghor has much to say not only to Africa but to the entire world, and the cultural and political debate of our time must usefully rediscover him. Today we emphasise an essential concept in Senghor's thought, that of the 'civilisation of the universal'. A scholar of his thought rightly asks whether in the era of "global, neo-nationalist and ethnicist post-modernism" it is not particularly stimulating "his valorisation of the 'mestizaje' and his wish for a meeting of cultures at the rendezvous of the universal".³³ This is a key point in the architecture of the thought of Senegal's first president, and I believe it should be understood in its topicality.

Senghor was born in the midst of the colonial era, during which it was claimed that European domination was justified by its 'civilising mission': the 'white men's burden' in Kipling's words. Reading Senghor's educational path would seem to be that of an ideal 'black-skinned Frenchman': a student first in Dakar in the seminary, then, thanks to his successes, at the prestigious Louis le Grand lycée in Paris, later at the Sorbonne, he even became a teacher of Literature in 1936-37 at the 'Descartes' lycée in Tours. Senghor, however, throughout this long journey of education, does not dream of being a mere 'assimilated' into France, he does not want to amputate from his soul

all the African cultural, historical, emotional and family deposit. Together with other young men of value, such as Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas, he got together in 1935 around the magazine 'L'Étudiant noir', which became the workshop of the concept of 'negritude', a key word in the cultural and political interweaving of the following years. Without wishing to summarise the rich and lively debate that surrounded the introduction of this category, I would like to point out Senghor's use of it. For him, this concept was certainly meant to encapsulate the specificity of African culture and civilisation, and of African man in

general, in all its richness and harmony. Senghor writes to fully explain how this identity was present in him since childhood:

On the occasion of my First Communion, which I made at the age of ten, in the fervour, we were presented with heavenly bliss as the contemplation of God: that is, of a white-bearded old man. I found this really dull and monotonous. And [...] I dreamed that heavenly bliss consisted of singing and dancing before the throne of God, like David. Of singing with the Angels, in polyphonic chorus. And our wings were blue, red and variegated in colour. It was already the first sign of my taste for Letters and the Arts. For poetry [italics in the text, ed.], in the etymological sense of the word, as the Greeks understood it, but also the Senegalese. As our people put it, again, identifying 'song' and 'poem' as 'words pleasing to the heart and the ear'.³⁴

For Senghor, 'negritude' is a tool for a cultural and political battle, but not to be understood in an isolationist or worse self-referential sense: on the contrary, it is used in a completely relational form, as the specific African contribution to humanity's journey towards a new and fascinating civilisation. It has been rightly observed: 'Formed in the image of "civilisation", i.e. Europe, Senghor felt the germs of a personal rebellion against the condescension of the colonial mentality germinate in him very early on; he forges "the idea, not the word, of a different but equal black civilisation".³⁵

Politically attracted to Marxist socialism, as a useful alphabet for deciphering the modern and humanising it, Senghor nevertheless wants the cultural and political elements born in the European context to meet the African historical, cultural and social universe in a fruitful way. Fascinated by the thought of Teilhard de Chardin, he makes an original

33 Barbara Cannelli, 'Appointment with the Universal. Senghor's political-philosophical work and the reconstruction of Africa' in *Africa*, LVII, 2, 2007, p.176.

34 Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Ce que je crois. Une mémoire pour demain*, Grasset, Paris, 1988, pp.24-25.

35 Kaiudi Claver Mabana, " Léopold Sédar Senghor et la civilisation de l'universel ", in *Diogenes* 2011/3-4 (n° 235-236), pp. 3-13.

synthesis of the Jesuit writer's theological categories, thanks to which he creates a true cosmogony. The unstoppable journey of humanity towards the "Omega Point", described by Teilhard as the Christ, the fullness of humanity and divinity, becomes in Senghor the journey of humanity, as a whole, in its different civilisations, towards a new synthesis: "the Civilisation of the Universal", an appointment of giving and receiving for all civilisations. Not the expansion of a single dominant, imperialist civilisation was to mark the future of the world, but a new humanism resulting from a fruitful exchange between civilisations.³⁶ Senghor wrote:

*The civilisation of the Universal will be the common work of all races - of all different civilisations - or not at all. In this sense, this Open Negritude is a humanism. It has been singularly enriched by the contributions of European civilisation, and has enriched it in turn. Humanism in this 20th century of pan-human convergence can only consist in this trade of the heart and spirit: in this giving and receiving.*³⁷

The idea of the 'civilisation of the universal' goes hand in hand with the ideal of universal brotherhood proposed by Pope Francis in the **Global Educational Pact** project. At the beginning of this month (1-6-2023), the 'African Educational Pact' was handed over to the Holy Father, i.e. a local concretisation of the **Global Educational Pact**. In the speech delivered on that occasion, Pope Francis invites us to imitate the example of many missionary educators and statesmen educators such as Nelson Mandela and the servant of God Julius Nyerere. To these two, in my view, one could also add Leopold Senghor, for his educational policies that have also influenced those of other African countries in recent decades.

Senghor's writings had an attentive reader in Giovan Battista Montini, who was always interested in the currents of thought of the Francophone world. The concept of 'negritude' is expressly quoted in a very important speech on the occasion of his trip, as Pope, to Africa, when he observed to the bishops present that, if they knew how to avoid the traps of a sterile ethnic self-referentiality, "you will be able to formulate Catholicism in terms congenial to your culture, and you will be able to bring to the Catholic Church the precious and original contribution of 'negritude', of which it has particular need at this historic hour".³⁸

Montini has in Senghor an important reference, both political and cultural. He is one of the African presidents most frequently received by Paul VI.³⁹ There is a predilection for the path that Senegal is

taking under the leadership of its first president⁴⁰, because in the eyes of Paul VI it can become a model both of a post-colonial state not hostile to Europe and its civilisation, and of Islamic-Christian cohabitation in the sign of a Christianly enlightened humanism. Senghor was deeply convinced of the need for



fraternal Islamic-Christian dialogue for the common good, a concept he developed in a 1960 paper⁴¹. These were themes of great interest to Montini, traces of which can be found in his address to Islamic personalities in 1969 in Kampala, but which were soon to become the source of the first initiatives for dialogue and Islamic-Christian encounters by Monsignor Pignedoli.⁴²

Undoubtedly, these are themes that make us realise the importance of Senghor's thought, which seems extraordinarily relevant today.

We lived through the years of globalisation with the illusion that we had entered a new order of humanity, which many proclaimed to be definitive: democracy, free markets, free movement of capital, connection of the world via the internet, an individualistic view of life, everything seemed to be going smoothly towards a definitive unification of humanity, under the sign, however, of homogenisation. Today we find ourselves in a different, more divided world, and we are confronted with resurgent nationalisms and oppositions that go as far as open or threatened conflict. Senghor's dream of building the future of the world as a new humanism, in the fruitful 'cross-fertilisation' of cultures and civilisations, is therefore still precious for everyone today: also for this Europe of ours, so that what Senghor sang in 1939 never happens again:

*I see the leaves fall on the false shelters, in the trenches / where the blood of a generation flows
Europe burying the yeast of nations and the hope of new races.*⁴³

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36 See Souleymane Bachir Diagne, "Lire Marx avec les yeux de Teilhard", in Assemblée Nationale - Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, *Léopold Sédar Senghor: la Pensée et l'action politique*, Actes du colloque organisé par la section française de l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, Paris 2006, pp. 17-26.

37 Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Liberté 1. Negritude et Humanisme*, Paris, Seuil, 1964, p.9.

38 Paul VI, Homily, Eucharistic Celebration at the Conclusion of the Symposium of the Bishops of Africa, Kampala, 31 July 1969.

39 In the fifteen years of their pontificate, Nyerere and Senghor were the African presidents to total the most papal audiences: four each. See A. Dupuy, "Paul VI et la diplomatie pontificale", in *Paul VI et la modernité dans l'Église*, Actes du colloque organisé par l'École française de Rome (Rome 2-4 juin 1983), École française de Rome, Rome 1984, p. 459.

40 These are not words of circumstance those pronounced to Senegalese pilgrims by Paul VI: "Votre Pays Nous est cher, Nous le disions au Président Senghor en l'accueillant au Vatican, le mois dernier, et Nous le redisons publiquement, il y a quelques jours [...] Nous avons suivi avec intérêt la marche du Sénégal dans les voies de l'indépendance et les multiples activités de ses autorités, tant spirituelles que temporelles." General Audience of Paul VI, Wednesday, 12 August 1964.

41 S. B. Diagne, op. cit., p.21.

42 See Angelo Romano, "L'Africa di Paolo VI", in Agostino Giovagnoli - Giorgio Del Zanna (eds.) *Paolo VI. Il Vangelo nel mondo contemporaneo*, Guerini, Milan, pp.153-185.

43 "Luxembourg Garden 1939", in Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Canti d'ombra ed altre poesie*. Edited by Franco De Poli, Passigli, Florence, 2000, p.57.

'YOU ARTISTS ARE ALLIES OF GOD'S DREAM'



*Pope Francis in his video-message for the re-launch of the **Global Compact on Education** (15-10-2020) writes: "We appeal in a special way, in every part of the world, to the men and women of culture, science and sport, to artists, to media workers, so that they too may sign this pact and, with their witness and their work, become promoters of the values of care, peace, justice, goodness, beauty, welcoming of the other and brotherhood". In the meeting with the artists in the Sistine Chapel (23-6-2023), he relaunched the appeal to sign the same alliance with him: "I feel you are allies for so many things that are close to my heart, such as the defence of human life, social justice, the last ones, the care of the common home, the feeling that we are all brothers". With the new Dicastery for Culture and Education, Pope Francis' Educational Pact is also renewed, opening its gaze not only to the world of School and University, but also to that of culture and art, thus recovering its original nature. In this beautiful speech at the meeting with artists, Pope Francis takes up the themes that are closest to his heart and that are 'codified' in the objectives of the **Global Compact on Education and Culture**.*

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO ARTISTS FOR THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE VATICAN MUSEUMS' COLLECTION OF MODERN ART

Sistine Chapel Friday, 23 June 2023

Good morning and welcome. Here [in the Sistine Chapel], we are surrounded by art... and by artists: yourselves. Welcome!

Thank you for accepting my invitation; I am happy to be with you, because the Church has always had a relationship with artists that can be described as both natural and special. A natural friendship,

because artists take seriously the richness of human existence, of our lives and the life of the world, including its contradictions and its tragic aspects. This richness risks disappearing from the view of the many specialized disciplines that respond to immediate needs, but find it difficult to view life as a polyhedron, a complex and multifaceted reality. Artists remind us that the dimension in which we move, even unconsciously, is always that of the Spirit. Your art is like a sail swelling with the wind of the Spirit and propelling us forward. The Church's friendship with the arts is thus something quite natural. Yet, at the same time, it is also a special friendship, especially if we think of the many periods of history that we have traveled together and which are part of the patrimony of everyone, whether believers or non-believers. Mindful of this, let us look forward to a new season of rich fruits in our own time, born of a climate of listening, freedom and respect. People need those fruits, those special fruits.

Romano Guardini once wrote that: "The situation of the artist is not unlike that of a child and even that of a visionary" (L'opera d'arte, Brescia, 1998, 25). I find these two comparisons intriguing. For Guardini, "a work of art opens a space into which we can step, in which we can breathe, move about and encounter objects and persons as they open up before us" (ibid., 35). It is true that in the encounter with art, boundaries become more fluid and the limits of our experience and understanding broaden. Everything seems more open and accessible. We experience the spontaneity of the child filled with imagination and the intuition of the visionary who grasps reality.

For the artist is a child – by this I mean no offence – who gives free rein to originality, novelty and creativity, and thus brings into the world something new and unprecedented. In doing so, artists unmask the lie that man is a “being towards death”. We must certainly come to grips with our mortality, yet we are beings not towards death, but towards life. A great thinker like Hannah Arendt affirms that the hallmark of humanity is the ability to bring newness into the world. This is part of our richness as human beings: to bring newness. Even in nature, procreation brings newness with every child who comes into the world. Openness and newness. That is what you bring, as artists, by cultivating your own originality. In your creations, you always put something of yourself, as unique beings like the rest of us, but for the sake of creating something even greater. With your talents, you bring to light something exceptional; you enrich the world with something new. I think of those words found in the Prophet Isaiah, where God says: “Behold, I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Is 43:19). In the Book of Revelation, God says the same thing: “See, I am making all things new” (21:15). The creativity of the artist can thus be said to share in God’s own passion for creation, the passion with which he created. You are sharers in God’s dream! Yours are eyes that see, eyes that dream. It is not enough simply to see; we also need to be able to dream. As a Latin American writer has said, we human beings have two eyes: an eye to see what is before us, and another to see our hopes and dreams. When someone lacks these two eyes, or sees things only with one or the other, something is lost. The ability to see our hopes and dreams... artistic creativity... It is not enough simply to see; we also need to dream. As human beings, we yearn for a new world that we will not see fully with our own eyes, yet we desire it, we seek it, we dream of it.

As artists, then, you have the ability to dream new versions of the world, to introduce novelty into history. New versions of the world. That is why Guardini also says that you are like visionaries. You are a bit like prophets. You can see things both in depth and from afar, like sentinels who strain their eyes, peering into the horizon and discerning deeper realities. In doing so, you are called to reject the allure of that artificial, skin-deep beauty so popular today and often complicit with economic mechanisms that generate inequality. It is not a beauty that attracts, but one that is born dead, lifeless. A fake, cosmetic beauty, a greasypaint that conceals rather than reveals. In Italian, the word for “makeup” is also the word for “trick”, since a touch of deception is always present. You want to distance yourselves from that kind of beauty; instead, your art strives to act as a conscience critical of society, unmasking truisms. You want to make people think, to be alert; you want to reveal reality also in its contradictions and in those things that it is more comfortable and convenient to keep

hidden. Like the biblical prophets, you confront things that at times are uncomfortable; you criticize today’s false myths and new idols, its empty talk, the ploys of consumerism, the schemes of power. This is an intriguing aspect of the psychology of artists: the ability to press forward and beyond, in a tension between reality and dream.

Often you do this with irony, which is a marvelous virtue. Humour and irony are two virtues we need to cultivate more. The Bible is rich in touches of irony, poking fun at presumptions of self-sufficiency, dishonesty, injustice and cruelty lurking under the guise of power and even at times the sacred. You can also serve to discern genuine religiosity, which is all too often presented in trite or demeaning ways. As visionaries, men and women of discernment, critical consciences, I consider you allies in so many things that are dear to me, like the defence of human life, social justice, concern for the poor, care for our common home, universal human fraternity. The humanness of humanity is dear to me, the human dimension of humanity. Because that is also the great passion of God. One of the things that draws art closer to faith is the fact that both tend to be troubling. Neither art nor faith can leave things simply as they are: they change, transform, move and convert them. Art can never serve as an anesthetic; it brings peace, yet far from deadening consciences, it keeps them alert. Often, as artists, you attempt to plumb the depths of the human condition, its dark abysses. We are not all light, and you remind us of this. At the same time, there is a need to let the light of hope shine in that darkness, in the midst of our selfishness and indifference. Help us to glimpse the light, the beauty that saves.



Art has always been bound to the experience of beauty. As Simone Weil wrote: “Beauty seduces the flesh in order to gain entrance to the soul (*L’ombra e la grazia*, Bologna, 193). Art touches the senses in order to enliven the spirit, and it does so through beauty, which reflects things that are good, just and true. Beauty is a sign of fullness; it makes us spontaneously say of something: “How beautiful!” Beauty makes us sense that life is directed towards fullness, fulfilment. In true beauty, we begin to experience the desire for God. Many today hope that art can return more and more to the cultivation of beauty. Certainly, as I have said, there is also a kind of beauty that is futile, artificial, superficial, even dishonest. Cosmetic beauty.

I believe that there is an important criterion for discerning the difference, and that is harmony. True beauty is in fact a reflection of harmony. Theologians speak of God's fatherhood and Christ's sonship, but when they speak of the Holy Spirit they speak of harmony: Ipse harmonia est. The Spirit creates harmony. The human dimension of the spiritual... True beauty is always the reflection of harmony. If I may say so, harmony is the operative virtue of beauty, its deepest spirit, where the Spirit of God, the great harmonizer of the world, is at work. Harmony exists when elements different from each other nonetheless form a unity, different from each of the parts and different from the sum of the parts. This is not easy; only the Spirit can make this possible: differences that do not become conflicts, but mutually integrating diversities, and unity that is not uniformity but open to multiplicity. As at Pentecost, harmony works these miracles. I like to think of the Holy Spirit as the one who takes the greatest disarray – we can think of the morning of Pentecost – and then creates harmony. A harmony that is not balance, because harmony is born out of imbalance; harmony is something more than balance. How much we need to hear this message! We live in an age of media-driven forms of ideological colonization and devastating conflicts; a globalization that standardizes everything coexists with any number of particular interests that are closed and self-absorbed. This is the great danger of our time. The Church too feels the effects of this. Conflict can act under a false pretense of unity, from which arise divisions, factions and forms of narcissism. All the more do we need to make the principle of harmony dwell in our world and eliminate uniformity. As artists, you can help us to make room for the Spirit. When we see the work of the Spirit, which creates harmony from differences without destroying or standardizing them but bringing them into harmony, we come to understand what beauty really is. Beauty is that work of the Spirit which creates harmony. Brothers and sisters, let your artistic genius pursue this course!

Dear friends, I am pleased that we have been able to meet. Before taking leave of you, I have one more thing to say to you, something close to my heart. I would like to ask you not to forget the poor, those especially close to the heart of Christ, those affected by all of today's many forms of poverty. The poor too have need of art and beauty. Some are living lives of great hardship, and so have even greater need of this. Usually, they have no voice to make themselves heard. You can choose to become the interpreters of their silent plea.

I thank you and once more I affirm my esteem for you. I hope and pray that your works will prove worthy of the women and men of this earth, and render glory to God who is the Father of all and whom all seek, also through the testimony of works of art. And finally I ask you, please, in harmony, to pray for me. Thank you.

■

CZECHIA AS AN EDUCATIONAL VILLAGE



After the encouraging results of the International Conference "Region as an education village", held in Brno, Czechia, last December, where the message from the Prefect of the DCE Cardinal Mendonça addressed to us was received with great esteem, the National Pedagogical Institute, the Festival Meeting Brno and the Educational Institute for Moravia, on 26 June 2023 took another step together in the direction proposed by the Global Educational Pact. The international event entitled 'The Czech Republic as an educational village' took place during the eighth Festival Meeting Brno, which opened with a dialogue on peace with the Presidents of the Czech Republic and Slovakia Petr Pavel and Zuzana Čaputová. This created a platform, between the end of the school year and the beginning of the holidays, where important players in the field of education came together to assess the significant phenomena of the last few months and to emphasise the importance of leisure time. This year, the integration of Ukrainian pupils and students deserved special attention with stories from

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Ukrainian teachers. The Czechs received the largest number of war refugees per capita since the beginning of Russian aggression in Ukraine. In addition to Education Minister Mikuláš Bek, his deputies and many other dignitaries, the conference was attended by Hans van Mourik Broekman, the headmaster of Liverpool College, the most successful school in the UK, Sofia Carozza, the author of the podcast The Pilgrim Soul from Cambridge University and Harvard, and Martin Kríž, head of curriculum reform at the Slovak Ministry of Education. This was followed by dialogue and a festive evening meeting at the Spielberg fortress above the city, in a light and humour-filled atmosphere typical of the festival. In short, a tradition was born to be developed. We invite you for a further stage on 24 June 2024, this time the title of the festival will be: 'Europe as education village'.

David Macek ■

At the General Audience, the Pontiff, speaking of St. Mary MacKillop, recalled the need for the "Educational Pact".

'TO EDUCATE IS TO HELP ONE THINK WELL'

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Today we must have a bit of patience, with this heat! Thank you for coming, with this heat, with this sun. Thank you very much for your visit!

In this series of catecheses on apostolic zeal, we are encountering some exemplary figures of men and women from all times and places, who have given their lives for the Gospel. Today we are going far away, to Oceania, a continent made up of many islands, large and small. Faith in Christ, which so many European emigrants brought to those lands, soon took root and bore abundant fruit (cf. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania*, 6). Among them was an extraordinary religious sister, Mary MacKillop (1842-1909), founder of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart, who dedicated her life to the intellectual and religious formation of the poor in rural Australia.

Mary MacKillop was born near Melbourne to parents who emigrated to Australia from Scotland. As a young girl, she felt called by God to serve him and bear witness to him not only with words, but above all with a life transformed by God's presence (cf. *Evangelii gaudium*, 259). Like Mary Magdalene, who first encountered the risen Jesus and was sent by him to bring the proclamation to the disciples, Mary was convinced that she too was sent to spread the Good News and attract others to an encounter with the living God.

Wisely reading the signs of the times, she understood that for her, the best way to do so was through the education of the young, with the awareness that Catholic education is a form of evangelization. It is a great form of evangelization. In this way, if we can say that "each saint is a mission, planned by the Father to reflect and embody, at a specific moment in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel" (Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 19), then Mary MacKillop was especially so through the founding of schools.

An essential characteristic of her zeal for the Gospel was caring for the poor and marginalized. And this is very important: on the path to holiness, which is the Christian path, the poor and marginalized are the protagonists, and a person cannot advance in holiness if he or she is not dedicated to them too, in one way or another. They, who are in need of the Lord, bring the Lord's presence. I once read a phrase that struck me; it said: The [real] protagonist of history is the beggar. Beggars are the ones who draw attention to injustice, that is, to the great poverty in the world. Money is spent on manufacturing weapons, not on providing meals. And do not forget: there is no holiness if, in one way or another, there is no care for the poor, the needy, those who are somewhat on the margins of society. This care for the poor and the marginalized drove Mary to go where others would not or could not go. On 19 March 1866, the feast of Saint Joseph, she opened the first school in a small suburb of South Australia. It was followed by many others that she



and her sisters founded in rural communities throughout Australia and New Zealand. They multiplied, because apostolic zeal is like that: it multiplies works.

Mary MacKillop was convinced that the purpose of education is the integral development of the person both as an individual and as a member of the community; and that this requires wisdom, patience and charity on the part of every teacher. Indeed, education does not consist in filling the head with ideas: no, not just this. What does education constitute? Accompanying and encouraging students on the path of human and spiritual growth, showing them how friendship with the Risen Jesus expands the heart and makes life more humane. Educating and helping them to think well: to listen carefully (the

language of the heart) and to do good (the language of the hands). This vision is fully relevant today, when we feel the need for an "educational pact" capable of uniting families, schools and society as a whole.

Mary MacKillop's zeal for spreading the Gospel among the poor also led her to undertake a number of other charitable works, starting with the "House of Providence", which was opened in Adelaide to take in the elderly and abandoned children. Mary had great faith in God's Providence: she was always confident that in any situation, God provides. But this did not spare her from the anxieties and difficulties arising from her apostolate, and Mary had good reason for this: she had to pay bills, negotiate with local bishops and priests, manage the schools and look after the professional and spiritual formation of her Sisters; and, later, she suffered health problems. Yet, through it all, she remained calm, patiently carrying the cross that is an integral part of the mission.

On one occasion, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, Mary said to one of her Sisters: "My daughter, for many years I have learned to love the Cross". She did not give up in times of trial and darkness, when her joy was dampened by opposition or rejection. Look at this: all the saints faced opposition, even within the Church. This is curious. And she faced it too. She remained convinced that even when the Lord gave her "the bread of adversity and the water of affliction" (Is 30:20), the Lord Himself would soon answer her cry and surround her with His grace. This is the secret of apostolic zeal: a continuous relationship with the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, may Saint Mary MacKillop's missionary discipleship, her creative response to the needs of the Church of her time and her commitment to the integral formation of young people inspire all of us today, called to be a leaven of the Gospel in our rapidly changing societies. May her example and intercession support the daily work of parents, teachers, catechists and all educators, for the good of young people and for a more humane and hopeful future.

Vatican City, 28 June 2023 ■

EDUCATING AND EDUCATING OURSELVES ON SUSTAINABILITY

According to FAO data (of 2021), some 828 million people in the world do not get enough food to survive, and in contrast there are almost two billion overweight people, 800 million of whom are obese. These numbers are increasing, as are deaths due to overeating.

The causes of hunger in the world are many such as misery, poverty, wars, famine, natural disasters (floods, tropical storms, droughts); climate change with rising

temperatures; pollution, pandemics, food wastage (every day 1/3 of food is thrown away). In countries at war, malnutrition rates are even higher because crops are destroyed, people abandon their homes and concentrate in large centres where there is no way to find food.

Other causes of hunger are: water crisis; land grabbing and its exploitation to produce biofuels and animal feed; reduction of arable land. Others see overpopulation (more than 9 billion people by 2050) as a further cause of world hunger.

The main problem is actually poverty. In the poorest countries, many people live on less than \$1.25 a day (in several African countries, many live on even less). To eliminate hunger in the world, EUR 22 billion per year would be needed. Is this figure too high? Let us then consider that the United States of America spends hundreds of billions on military spending every year: for the fiscal year 2023 alone, the US has earmarked 858 billion dollars for military spending.

What should we do as educators, to educate and educate ourselves on sustainability?

First of all, we need to be informed about how public money is managed by the government, institutions and various international organisations, how foreign aid is managed and what conditions are imposed by donors. Fight against laws that penalise the weakest and poorest; defend workers' rights and fair wages; organise petitions, petitions to demand more investment from governments in the fight against poverty. Support inclusive economic growth that promotes equality. Support organisations that fight poverty (NGOs, religious and charitable associations, etc.), especially those that promote self-sustainability: help people and



nations become self-reliant. Keep an eye on organisations that receive money for the poor or for children and spend more on their own functioning than on helping others.

In the fight against poverty, women play a key role. It is necessary to educate in responsible motherhood and fatherhood. Enhance local communities to become autonomous. It is also very important to do voluntary work to become personally involved. Organise

fundraisers for charities, help the homeless, ask for monthly stipends for the poor. Come into direct contact with the poor, without discrimination and respecting their dignity. Encourage sustainability policies to protect the weakest, prevent natural disasters, control markets and prices, ensure environmentally sustainable programmes, inclusive policies that involve poor communities with targeted investments, diversify the economy and revive the agricultural sector. Invest in employment, youth, fundamental rights, equal opportunities and social safety nets. A good practice is to provide lunch for rural pupils to boost their participation in school, improve their health and learning capacity.

One of the most effective remedies to solve world hunger would be a complete reversal of the current market, a change in economic rules and current food production systems. Large agri-food producers dictate the rules of the world market and thus contribute to the spread of world hunger.

This is why Pope Francis indicates as the 6th commitment of the **Global Compact on Education** to study new ways of understanding economy, politics, growth and progress, at the service of man and the entire human family in the perspective of an integral ecology.

We must change our eating habits: do not waste food (1/3 of which, as mentioned above, is wasted) or water.

Another important contribution is to eliminate or at least drastically reduce meat consumption. In this regard, Pope Francis told the young Europeans gathered in Prague in July 2022 at the EU YOUTH CONFERENCE: 'The other proposal I would like to recall concerns care for the common home. Here

too I was pleased to note that, while previous generations talked a lot and concluded little, you on the other hand were capable of concrete initiatives. That is why I say that this time may be the right time. If you do not succeed in turning this self-destructive trend around, it will be difficult for others to do so in the future. Do not allow yourselves to be seduced by the sirens that propose a life of luxury reserved for a small slice of the world: may you have 'big eyes' to see all the rest of humanity, which is not reduced to small Europe; may you aspire to a life of dignity and sobriety, without luxury and waste, so that all may inhabit the world with dignity. It is urgent to reduce the consumption not only of fossil fuels but also of many superfluous things; and likewise, in certain areas of the world, it is appropriate to consume less meat: this too can help save the environment. In this regard, it will do you good - if you have not already done so - to read the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, where believers and non-believers alike find solid motivations to commit to an integral ecology. Educate, therefore, to know not only oneself and others, but also creation'.

Awareness-raising campaigns are needed to reduce meat consumption: three quarters of arable land is used to produce food for animals so that humans can eat their meat. If these crops were converted to produce food for people and not for animals, the hunger problem would be greatly alleviated. It is estimated that meat eaters consume four times more of the earth's resources than those who do not eat meat. The option of eliminating or reducing meat consumption, as you can understand, is not so much a matter of love for animals and respect for their lives or their rights, but it is above all a matter of love for humans, so that everyone can have food to live with dignity and eat a healthy diet. It is a philosophy of life, it is not wanting to consume for oneself alone the resources that could feed four other people.

Eat more fruit, vegetables and cereals instead. Do not waste food: keep it to eat later (ask for take-away when going to restaurants). Consume less fat, salt and sugar. Eat locally produced food (preferably from your own garden) and avoid industrial products. Use glass bottles to fill (avoiding plastic bottles). Respect the environment without polluting it by not using plastic. Avoid printing or photocopying to save ink, paper and trees.

Commitment to sustainability is the key to a better future, and each of us will have to choose carefully and creatively how to contribute to this project.

P. Ezio Lorenzo Bono, CSF

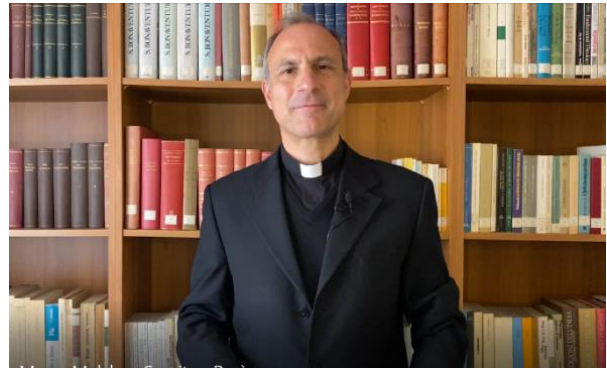
of the Secretariat for the Global Compact on Education

(from: Famiglia Nostra News, 6-2023.

<https://www.sacra-famiglia.it/index.php/news>) ■



THANK YOU MONS. MELCHOR SANCHEZ



Mgr. Melchor Sanchez de Toca, former Undersecretary of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, was transferred in June to the Dicastery for the Cause of Saints.

The **Global Compact on Education** committee thanks Mgr. Melchor for his dedicated and sympathetic work on the **Global Compact on Education** in recent months, and wishes him well in his new and important mission.

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THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION AT WORLD YOUTH DAY



From 1 to 6 August 2023, on the occasion of the 38th World Youth Day to be held in Lisbon, Portugal, the GCE Restricted Committee will be present with a stand, which young people can approach to deepen their knowledge and dialogue about this great educational project of Pope Francis. Together with a group of young people from the Catholic University of Portugal, the committee members will be available to dialogue with young people from all over the world in four languages: Portuguese, Italian, Spanish and English. See you soon!