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Pope calls for educational alliance to promote care for common home

Pope Francis launches the Global Educational Alliance initiative to shape the future of humanity by forming mature individuals who can overcome division and care for our common home.

By Devin Watkins

The Vatican will host a meeting on 14 May 2020 in the Paul VI Hall to reflect on the theme "Reinventing the Global Educational Alliance".

The Holy See Press Office announced that the Pope has invited representatives from various religions, NGOs, academia, and cultural and political leaders to attend, in hopes of endorsing the "Global Compact on Education".

Renew dialogue

Pope Francis lent his support to the initiative on Thursday.

In his written message, the Pope said the meeting “will rekindle our dedication for and with young people, renewing our passion for a more open and inclusive education, including patient listening, constructive dialogue, and better mutual understanding.”

The goal, he stressed, is to develop “a new universal solidarity and a more welcoming society,” adding that education is key to driving positive change.

In an educational village

“Never before has there been such need to unite our efforts in a broad educational alliance, to form mature individuals capable of overcoming division and antagonism, and to restore the fabric of relationships for the sake of a more fraternal humanity,” he said.

Quoting an African proverb – “It takes a whole village to educate a child” – Pope Francis called for the creation of an “educational village”.

In such a system, he said, everyone would participate according to their respective roles to form a “network of open, human relationships.”

The Pope called it an alliance that “integrates and respects all aspects of the person, uniting studies and everyday life, teachers, students and their families, and civil society in its intellectual, scientific, artistic, athletic, political, business, and charitable dimensions.”

And he laid out several steps towards creating this “educating village”.

Along paths of fraternity

For this project to succeed, Pope Francis said, fraternity must be allowed to flourish and discrimination swept aside, as he urged in the Document on Human Fraternity signed in Abu Dhabi with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar.

The Pope said the first step is finding “the courage to place the human person at the center.” This means recognizing the world’s interconnectedness and re-thinking economics, politics, growth, and progress, giving pride-of-place to an integral ecology that rejects the throw-away culture.

Next, Pope Francis called for summoning up “the courage to capitalize on our best energies”. The *status quo* should be replaced by giving education “a long-term vision”, to create a new humanism. The result, he added, will be “men and women who are open, responsible, prepared to listen, dialogue and reflect with others, and capable of weaving relationships with families, between generations, and with civil society.”

The Pope said a further step is “the courage to train individuals who are ready to offer themselves in service to the community.” Service, he said, is the “pillar of the culture of

encounter”, and means helping the neediest of people and discovering that “there is more joy in giving than in receiving.”

To direct history

Pope Francis concluded by inviting everyone to commit themselves to improving their communities and to promoting “forward-looking initiatives that can give direction to history and change it for the better.”

“Let us seek solutions together, boldly undertake processes of change, and look to the future with hope.”

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