ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE CONFERENCE SPONSORED BY THE 'ORGANIZACIÓN DE UNIVERSIDADES CATÓLICAS DE AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE' (ODUCAL)

Clementine Hall, Thursday 4 May 2023

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning! I greet Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendoça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, and thank him for his kind words. I greet the President of ODUCAL, Ing. Rodolfo Gallo Cornejo, the Vice-Presidents of the Andean Sub-Regions, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean and the Southern Cone.

And I greet you members of the Organisation who are in Rome to commemorate the 70th anniversary of its creation. You have come united by the collaborative and fraternal spirit that characterises the organisation, and you have come together, on this particular occasion, to enrich the bonds and strengthen the network by working in communion. ODUCAL, founded in Chile by Archbishop Alfredo Silva Santiago, Archbishop of the Diocese of Concepción, with the support of other universities, is made up of 115 universities, which currently represents 1,500,000 students, more than 110,000 lecturers and more than 5,000 academic programmes of different levels. It is the largest organisation within the International Federation of Catholic Universities (the FIUC). This makes the organisation enjoys solidity in its academic work and, at the same time, has in its hands a great responsibility, both for the present and the future of Latin America. One of ODUCAL’s objectives is rightly to ‘contribute to the formulation of public policies related to education, both in national and especially in supranational spheres’.

In this sense, and looking at the reality of our Latin America, "poverty and inequality are a scourge that is deepening instead of diminishing. The pandemic and its consequences, the aggravated global context in the political, economic and military spheres, as well as ideological polarisation, seem to close the doors to development efforts and yearnings for liberation. The current crisis is not only an opportunity to see the exhaustion of economic systems and models, but also pushes us to overcome prejudicial solutions such as those that feed the patterns of ideological, emotional, political, gender and cultural exclusion polarisation’ [1].

In any case, let us not be frightened by ‘chaos’, for it is precisely from there that God draws his most beautiful and creative works.

If the word ‘university’ derives from ‘universe’, meaning the ‘totality of all things’, the adjective...
'catholic' reinforces and inspires it. In fact, 'catholic' means 'according to the whole', 'from the whole'. And there is like a reference to harmony here, no? Your task is to help form Catholic minds, capable of observing not only the object of their interest. An extremely precise and focused gaze can become fixed, fixated and exclusionary. It has the precision of a radar, but loses the view. Instead, being 'Catholic' means having a panoramic view of the mystery of Christ and the world, of the mystery of man and woman. We need minds, hearts, hands at the height of the panorama of reality, not the narrowness of ideologies. I give an example of a Catholic outlook, referring to the beginning of Gaudium et spes, the Constitution dedicated by the Second Vatican Council to the Church in the contemporary world.

Stating that 'the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the people of today, of the poor above all and of all those who suffer, are also the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the disciples of Christ' (n. 1), Gaudium et spes speaks to us of human life 'catholically', not selectively. It is interested in the whole existential condition and not just one part - the happy or the sorrowful - because the glory of God dwells in all of them. If joy attracts to such an extent that the voice of pain of those near and far (and even sometimes one's own, the joy that anaesthetises) is muted, it is only short-breathed euphoria. This joy does not heal wounds, it covers them, and covered wounds become infected. On the contrary, if attention to one's own and others' pain depletes the energies of hope, it becomes an excuse to shy away from risk, from the courage to invest in life again, even if it has disappointed us. Pain becomes an excuse to despise the daily bread of consolation, which the Lord does not fail to provide even on the hardest day. You are university men and women with breadth of vision, so be 'Catholic!' In this sense of the term, not sectarian 'Catholics'. You are Catholics and therefore, because you are Catholics, be university men and women! I am convinced that the catholicity of mind, heart and hands, promoted by your Universities and your Association, can contribute decisively to the healing of the very painful wounds that offend our beloved Latin America today, where the rich are getting richer and richer and the poor are getting poorer and poorer. Feed the fire lit by God in Latin America, feed it in this way. And the Global Compact on Education, which I entrusted to the then Congregation for Catholic Education and now to the new Dicastery for Culture and Education, will also help you in this. I have learned with joy that many universities coordinated by your Association and the Association itself are energetically promoting ideas and projects inspired by the Global Compact on Education. Please continue. I believe that the Pact - not only educational, but also cultural - contributes significantly to what is called the 'third mission' of the university. It is good that universities have missions. A Catholic university must be missionary, that is, with its doors open to the outside world, since mission is the inspiration, the drive, the effort and the reward of the whole Church. Perhaps the university's mission is to form social poets, men and women who, by learning the grammar and vocabulary of humanity well, have the spark that enables them to imagine the unprecedented. Do not forget this expression: train social poets. By studying language, which has a very long history, their panoramic soul makes them explorers of the future. Perhaps the university's mission is to prepare social choreographers, men and women who see in the people a dance, a dance where everyone contributes to the grace of total movement and no one is excluded. Social choreographers, it is bold to say, but that is the meaning. And if I were now to translate the word 'mission' in an academic context, I would use the word 'research'. The researcher has a missionary mind and heart. He is not content with what he has, he goes searching. The missionary knows the joy of the gospel and is eager for others to taste it. Therefore, he leaves the homeland of his convictions and habits, going to unexplored places. He knows the Gospel, but he does not know what fruit it will bear in that foreign soil. It is precisely the tension between knowing and not knowing that propels him forward and protects him from the presumption of knowing everything. He knows, and allows himself to be surprised by what he will know. That is why the missionary loves reciprocity: he teaches and learns, convinced that everyone has something to teach. Thus the seeker, if he is not willing to go out and learn, will give up who knows what wonderful knowledge, mutilating his own intelligence. It is very sad to meet intellectuals, men and women of great intelligence, but with mutilated intelligence. May your universities, as individual academic institutions and as a network of Catholic universities, become world-renowned research centres. Even so, they will form missionary minds. Brothers and sisters, I thank you for what you do. Move forward! Go forth! May Our Lady accompany you. I bless you from my heart and ask you to please pray for me.

Thank you.

On 3 May 2023, the Convention promoted by the "Organización De Universidades Católicas De América Latina Y El Caribe" (ODUCAL) was held at the LUMSA University in Rome to mark the 70th anniversary of its creation. The theme of the Conference was the Global Compact on Education, and the hundreds of activities related to the Educational Pact, undertaken by the universities of the three areas of Latin America from 2019 to the present, were communicated.

In his opening address, the Cardinal Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education presented the theme: 'The situation of Catholic universities in today's world, challenges and perspectives'. The conference concluded with an address by Bishop Guy-Réal Thivierge on 'Faith and Culture in Dialogue in the Catholic University'.

The following day, the conference participants met with the Holy Father in a private audience, where the Pope emphasised that the university's mission is to form 'Social Poets'.

INTRODUCTION

Greetings to the President, Vice-Presidents and other members of ODUCAL. Welcome to the Eternal City, the place where the pillars of the Church, the Apostles Peter and Paul, rest, and where we also find the living memory of so many inspired teachers who made the Christian experience a source of knowledge and science for the good of humanity. I thank you for allowing me, as Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, to address a reflection on the challenges and prospects of the Catholic University in today's world.

Such a topic deserves careful dialogue and, above all, leaden feet to convince us that, in the current waiting situation, as Pope Francis tells us, reality is superior to the idea. By this I do not mean that ideas should be despised or degraded. It is rather that if there is no constant dialogue between reality and the idea, we could fall into the temptation of turning our assessments of Catholic universities into discourses full of "angelic purisms, declarative nominalisms, projects that are more formal than real, ethicalisms without goodness, intellectualisms without wisdom" and, what is worse, we could end up building a Catholic institution that lives "in the realm [...] of sophistry".

Therefore, my words will not be a recipe book to address our present and future problems. Rather, they will be a reflection, based on some biblical texts and the wise words of our beloved Pontiff, with which we will approach the experience of the dual reality to which you belong, namely your Catholic University and ODUCAL. This is because, on the one hand, each of you belongs to an Institution, exercising the difficult task of Rector. On the other hand, you are ODUCAL: an organisation with inter-institutional cooperation mechanisms that enable you to realise your goals of creating networks, programmes, observatories and special working groups. These mechanisms, led by the different universities, promote the academic exchange of teachers, students and administrative personnel; they generate instances of research and training involving Catholic universities across the American continent. These mechanisms, therefore, rely on your ability to network, to promote networking, and to network. In biblical words: revise the networks, cast the networks and upload the networks. These network-related actions guarantee what the Pope called for in the Post-

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2 Cf. FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii gaudium, no. 231.
Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christus vivit, namely that our organisations, our universities be "in mission" (no. 222) and thus academic institutions that evangelise through the quality of studies, excellence in research and fidelity to their identity and mission. Let us therefore look at this network concept, which I have just mentioned, and from there respond to the challenges and prospects.

**Review of networks**

In Mark's Gospel we are told that Jesus "went on for a while and saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were also in their boat and casting their nets" (1.19a). The evangelist's text is placed at the time of the calling of the first disciples, who will later be instituted as apostles. Jesus calls them while they are mending the nets, that is, mending the nets, repairing the nets, cleaning the nets or, as the Royal Academic Dictionary puts it, repairing is "examining a finished work to correct its imperfections". In any case, in whatever meaning, net overhaul is an action that is done after fishing and prepares for the next one, or is done even before, in anticipation of the next one. Let us dwell, then, on these meanings in order to deepen the mission of ODUCAL and, consequently, of our Catholic universities.

ODUCAL is called upon to contribute to improving the social and cultural fabric. It is no secret that "many forms of injustice persist in today's world, fuelled by reductive anthropological views and a profit-driven economic model that does not hesitate to exploit and discard. While one part of humanity lives in opulence, another part sees its dignity trampled upon and its fundamental rights ignored or violated" (Laudato sì', n. 22). It is therefore necessary to review the actions of our universities in defence of human beings and society. A Catholic institution that remains indifferent to the social problems surrounding it will collapse sooner or later.

Networks are also overhauled when we take care of them. There are many ways to do this. Pope Francis suggests the volunteering of our professors and young university students. He says: 'University students can join together in an interdisciplinary way to apply their knowledge to solving social problems, and in this task they can work side by side with young people from other Churches or other religions' (Christus vivit, nos. 170; 172). I believe that in Latin America the many forms of voluntary work - which are one of the expressions of the university's third mission - can change the face of their societies. It is a matter of being present, of helping, of 'seeking recurring spaces of dialogue rather than confrontation; spaces of encounter rather than division; paths of friendly disagreement'.

Reviewing the networks means repairing the family situations of our young people. Higher education institutions often seem to forget that their students live and grow up in a family. Some, unfortunately, have no family at all. This invites us to rethink our university ministry, which should include the integral growth of young people. St. John Paul II's Ex corde Ecclesiae states that among the criteria promoted by the Catholic University is 'the significance of the human person, [...] linked to the eminent value of the family, the primary cell of all human culture' (no. 45). This, then, reminds us that without the 'we' of a family, 'the lives of our university students will not only be increasingly fractured, but also increasingly conflictual and violent'.

You overcome the nets when you look at reality. In this, thank God, your universities have grown considerably. Research centres and observatories are starting to become an increasingly strong and proactive institution. However, it is important to emphasise that 'the researcher who effectively advances in his analysis, [...] thanks to the work of other sciences and knowledge, opens himself up to a fuller and more complete knowledge of reality' (Fratelli tutti, n. 204). In the words of the Apostolic Constitution Veritatis gaudium, our specialised centres must apply the principles of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in research (cf. Proem, 4c). These principles also require the presence of theological science. I know that not all of you have an ecclesiastical faculty of theology, but I hope this does not exempt you from including it in the dialogue with the other sciences. "Faith

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2 Francis, Address to the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, 17 January 2018.

3 Ibid.
never reduces the space of reason, but opens it to an integral vision of man and reality, and defends against the danger of reducing man to human material."  

Now, to pass over the nets, hands are needed. Let us imagine for a moment the hands of fishermen. They are probably rough and calloused. This is because the task of lowering the nets is not done once and for all. It is a mission that must be performed often and with dedication. Otherwise, there is a risk that the net will break or the fishing will not be successful. From here we learn that those who lead Catholic universities are necessarily called to be as dynamic as reality is dynamic. To claim to evangelise in higher education with a ten-year-old model is a sign of comfort and too selfish hands. Imposing a perspective as dogma is always counterproductive. Similarly, fishermen's hands are also sensitive to discovering problems in the net. Your hands and those of ODUČAL will be fruitful if you do not tire of giving and offering the gift received from God himself.

**Casting nets**

Let us return, once again, to the Gospel of Mark, to reflect on this second action related to the nets. The author relates that "as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the water, for they were fishermen" (1:16). This event is related to the previous one, i.e. it occurs when Jesus calls the first disciples. However, the evangelist John also recounts the casting of the nets. It takes place after the resurrection. The Johannine text says: "Jesus said to them, 'Cast the net from the right side of the boat and you will find it. They cast it and it became so full of fish that they could not drag it'" (21:6). Thus, with the two evangelists, we are at the beginning and the end of Jesus' public life, as if to say that Christ's disciples are called to cast their nets at all times and in all conditions.

If we apply this concept to ODUČAL and Catholic universities, we understand that your mission is permanent and constant. It does not just occupy a chronological age of human beings, let alone a moment in education. It is about remembering that education can be initial, but also permanent. In this regard, according to UNESCO publications, I would like us to look together at the so-called third mission. In the civilised world, so to speak, the growth of knowledge with productive value means taking on the knowledge triangle that has education, research and innovation as its basis. These are the three pillars of the knowledge triangle in the knowledge society. The third mission of the university means institutionally assuming the knowledge triangle on the basis of two main

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4 FRANCIS, Address to the World of Culture, Sardinia, 22 September 2013.
yearnings for liberation. The current crisis is not only an opportunity to see the exhaustion of economic systems and models, but also an opportunity to overcome prejudicial solutions such as those that fuel ideological, emotional, political, gender and cultural polarisation and exclusion⁵. This worrying situation obliges us to seek solutions in our institutions as well. The constant complexity of the situation in Latin America requires Catholic universities to be a laboratory of thought in which to promote reflection and debate on the quality of political life and the institutional axis, as well as on crucial issues relating to dialogue, civil coexistence and the protection of fundamental freedoms. A workshop in which to rethink the modalities of the relationship between believers and civil society, bearing in mind that politics is the highest form of charity (Paul VI).

In this perspective, to be effective, it is necessary to implement cultural formats and innovative training initiatives and, among these, it is urgent to devise a leadership school for good governance of institutions, also possible online, and open to those who wish to contribute to the destiny of Latin America through commitment in society and institutions, as a sign of those values of freedom and social justice that are at the basis of the Church's social doctrine.

But it is not a matter of reading the social encyclicals of the Popes, nor of summarising everything in four concepts. It is above all, taking into account age and level of education, a matter of imparting this thought, using good pedagogy and practice in the field. In short, it is a matter of transforming our universities into a place of formation in solidarity. How to do this? Pope Francis tells us: "The discernment of reality, assuming the moment of crisis, the promotion of a culture of encounter and dialogue, direct us towards solidarity, as a fundamental element for a renewal of our societies [...]. There is no future for any country, for any society, for our world, if we do not all know how to be more in solidarity. Solidarity, therefore, as a way of making history, as a vital sphere in which conflicts, tensions and even opposites reach a harmony that generates life⁶.

**Loading Networks**

The last point of my reflection concerns the loading of the nets. Once again, we read in the evangelist John: "Simon Peter got into the boat and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish; there were a hundred and fifty-three of them, and though they were many, the net was not torn" (21:11). We observe the situation of the Apostle Peter, who performs an action that requires strength and precision, but, above all, he takes the net on his shoulders, carrying the fruit of Jesus' miracle. This makes us think of the responsibilities that the Successor of Peter has given, as the fruit of a worldwide reflection, to all educational institutions at all levels. I refer to the **Global Compact on Education**. I know that many of your universities have carried out many activities for the promotion and implementation of this Covenant. I thank you on behalf of the Department. The echo of your good deeds has reached here.

Distinguished Rectors, we wish to thank you for the seriousness with which you have accepted Pope Francis' proposal. As you know, in September 2019, the Holy Father issued an invitation to all those working in the fields of education, culture, science, sport, art, communication, etc. to form a worldwide alliance with the aim of educating the new generations and all of humanity to Universal Brotherhood. To achieve this objective, the Pontiff indicated the seven known commitments: 1. Put the person at the centre of all educational action; 2. Listen to the younger generations; 3. Promote women; 4. Empower the family; 5. Open up to welcome; 6. Renew the economy and politics; 7. Taking care of the common home.

In these three years, the Latin American continent has perhaps responded most enthusiastically to this invitation, carrying out numerous activities at all levels, such as seminars, meetings, educational projects, training courses, international congresses, publications, coordination, etc. In this regard, I would like to highlight the initiative of the Pontifical University of Paraná, which last February launched a 'Global Compact on Education Bureau' with the mission of organising and coordinating events, promoting research in the

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⁵ CISAV, Latin America: Diagnosis and Challenges, Dossier February 2023, p. 23.

⁶ FRANCIS, Address to the World of Culture, Sardinia, 22 September 2013.
thematic areas of the Educational Covenant, and creating networks with other universities. This is certainly a good practice to be inspired by: if it is not possible to create an Educational Covenant Bureau in every university, I suggest at least the creation of a national university bureau as a reference for all universities in the country.

The university world is called upon to do a very important and specific job, that of developing scientific research on the topics of the Global Compact on Education. Eleven universities from around the world have been chosen as leaders in research on these issues, with the task of creating partnerships with other universities. We note with pleasure that, among these eleven universities, three are Latin American (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá Colombia; Universidad Católica Silva Henríquez de Santiago de Chile; Pontificia Universidad Católica do Paraná Brazil). However, if in the beginning the project of the Educational Pact was mainly addressed to the world of schools and universities, now, with the creation of the new Dicastery for Culture and Education, the invitation is also addressed to the world of culture, entertainment, sport, etc. Catholic universities, as the cultural vanguard of the Church, can play a decisive role. In a land of gigantic political, economic and ecological contradictions, it is essential to seek solutions. Your universities could carry out many activities in this regard, promoting initiatives in the area of the so-called Third Mission, to which I have already referred. I therefore urge you to renew the Third Mission of your universities, centring it on the Educational Pact, to join forces and realise Pope Francis' dream of changing the world through education and culture. The Jubilee of 2025 will be the occasion to take stock of the situation and to bring together the contributions of all in the realisation of this great project that is dear not only to the Pope, but also to our Dicastery to which this mission has been entrusted. I ask you, with Peter, to carry forward the joyful network of the Global Compact on Education.

CONCLUSION

The celebration of the anniversary of an organisation such as yours cannot be limited to the remembrance of what has been done, but must above all spur us to look ahead, to rediscover enthusiasm in the mission, to plan courageous steps to better respond to the expectations of the Church and the academic university world. And it is providential that your 70th anniversary falls in the period in which all the structures of the Roman Curia are called to renew themselves with the Apostolic Constitution Praedicate Evangelium, with which I hope you can then "make known to all and bring to life the 'new' communion that in the Son of God made man has entered into the history of the world" (no. 4).

Faced with the inherent multiculturalism of the present and the worrying polarisations that exist, what would be the best place to do hopeful work with our universities? The very word universitas is an emblem for us, because it suggests a circular horizon embracing the most diverse subjects. It is up to the universities, then, to become capable of promoting and disseminating, even outside the academic environment, initiatives and tools to orient themselves in the complexity of reality, avoiding the dominant stereotypes and trivialisations.

Thank you very much.

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

At the conclusion of the ODUCAL Conference, Prof. Monsignor Guy-Réal Thivierge, Secretary General of the Gravisissimum Educationis Foundation, presented a profound reflection on the theme "Faith and Culture in Dialogue in the Catholic University". Mgr Thivierge illustrated in the first part "Cultural Status of Revelation" the three inseparable characteristics of Christian revelation: transcendence, historicity and universality. In the second part, 'Cultural Status of Revelation and University Teaching', he took up the three characteristics, starting from a pluralist conception of the Catholic university that welcomes among its students, professors and administrators from different cultural, social and religious backgrounds. He concludes his speech by saying that we, more than different cultures, are made up of all the cultures of the world, of all religions, and this manifests itself when we welcome the other as a brother, as witnessed by the representatives of religions who met on 5 October 2021 in dialogue with Pope Francis to promote together a Global Compact on Education for an integral humanism.
On 18 May 2023, OIEC celebrated World Catholic Education Day, the central theme of which was the commitment of the International Catholic Education Office and all its partners to the Global Compact on Education (GEP). In the webinar with the five continents, Hervé Lecomte, Secretary General of the OIEC, invited everyone to "break down the walls" and "open up to the outside world", going out to meet others in order to dialogue, make agreements and reach lasting understandings that will allow us to generate a new education that will make possible a more human, solidary, fraternal and sustainable world. We must dialogue with everyone, Catholic and non-Catholic, and also with our Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish brothers and sisters.

For his part, Brother Juan Antonio Ojeda, OIEC project manager, encouraged everyone to build the pact from the local level, collaborating and creating joint projects between schools and with other sectors of the municipality. Firstly, she encouraged everyone to respond to the 'EYP Questionnaire' that will allow us to diagnose, inspire and share experiences, indicating that the deadline to respond has been extended until 30 June 2023; secondly, during June 2023, the book will be published: "Building the Global Compact on Education from the Territory", which shows us an inspiring and feasible way to create local covenants and enable the emergence of educating cities or regions, committed to the local, with a global openness; thirdly, a Workbook is being developed with tools to facilitate the mobilisation of the different educational and social sectors of the city in the co-creation of this alliance.

Afterwards, Prof. Augusto Ibáñez, from the Editorial SM, shared with us the main criteria that emerged from the Seminar organised by the UISG-USG Education Commission entitled: 'The EYP. A lever for the transformation of Catholic schools', held in October 2022 with the participation of more than 400 people from 68 countries and 55 religious congregations. Some of the criteria are:

- Appreciative and relational leadership, pedagogy of care, team building, accompaniment, etc.

Finally, Fr. Ezio L. Bono greeted all participants and encouraged them to redouble their common efforts to promote the Covenant in each territory.

H. Juan Antonio Ojeda

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**LAUNCHING IN BRAZIL 'RELIGIONS AND EDUCATION'**

Through a webinar, on 11 May 2023, a booklet was launched in Brazil entitled: 'Religions and Education: Towards a Covenant for Education', which summarises and provides an educational roadmap for educational communities and other religious and social agents, and Pope Francis' meeting with leaders of religions with the aim of uniting wills around the Covenant and improving education.

Among many organisations, the webinar presentation was sponsored by ANEC (National Association of Catholic Education of Brazil), CNBB (National Conference of Bishops of Brazil), Jesuit Educational Network, CRB (National Conference of Religious), Laudato Si' Movement, REPAM (Pan-Amazonian Network of Brazil), etc.

Brother Juan Antonio Ojeda (OIEC) presented the pamphlet and the other leaders of the various associations encouraged them to disseminate it, to work on it and to establish dialogues and meetings with the other religions in the country, to engage together in this local and global alliance.

H. Juan Antonio Ojeda
"DUC IN ALTUM": ADVANCING INTO DEEPER WATERS

MESSAGE FROM THE CARDINAL PREFECT OF THE DCE TO THE REDE DAMAS EDUCACIONAL

Dear Sister Marcela Sarmento Cavalcanti
President-Director of the Damas Educacional Network
and the other Sisters and Educators of the 'Rete Damas Educacional'.

It is always a great joy for us to be able to address a greeting and a word of thanks and encouragement to those who dedicate their entire lives to the education of the new generations, and that is why we are very happy today to address you, whose charism is that of “Sacrificing oneself and consecrating oneself entirely to youth”. There is no more beautiful mission than this: to invest in the new generations to build a better future and, as you say about your mission, “to build a sustainable society”.

I was pleased to see that your mission, as you repeatedly say, is “to incarnate the current face of Christ the educator”: education, in fact, is something that must always accompany the times in order to be effective in the formation of today's man, always remaining open to the current challenges and the constant transformations in this time of so many changes.

The current challenge that the Holy Father has issued to the world of education is that of the Global Compact on Education, which you know very well and which we already see embodied in your charism and projects.

As the purpose of education, you indicate that of "leading young people to discover ways of living faith and citizenship in the context of modernity", a purpose that is in harmony with what our dear Pope Francis says about the purpose of education, when he speaks of the four pillars of education: "To know oneself, one's brother, creation and the Transcendent". Especially this last pillar is the one that supports and gives meaning to the first three: "to know the Transcendent". This is why the Pope has repeatedly told educators: "We cannot keep from the new generations the truths that give meaning to life".

The first commitment of the Global Compact on Education that the Pope proposes to us is to "place the human person at the centre of every educational process, to highlight his or her specificity and capacity to be in relationship with others. You are implementing this with all your might by desiring the integral education of the human person as you have written: "we push our students to be the protagonists of their own stories, to develop new skills and to awaken their artistic, sporting, human and spiritual side".

We urge you, dear Sister Educators of the Damas Educacional Network, to open yourselves to all people, especially the most fragile and vulnerable, accepting the invitation of the Pope who indicates as the fifth commitment of the Global Compact on Education that of "Educating and educating ourselves to welcome, opening ourselves to the most vulnerable and marginalised" in our societies. Although public schools must necessarily charge fees to support themselves, take care that your institutions are not exclusive (and exclusionary) places, but can also welcome the most needy. Let us say the schools you lead, that they are not exclusive places, but places where inclusion is practised and this focus on fighting social inequalities is always present.

So "Duc in Altum - Advance into deeper waters": have the courage to try new paths and not just follow the tried and tested ones with the excuse that they are safer. An educator cannot continue to open only the doors that are already open. The Pope invites us to try, to attempt new paths, challenging us to truly be a Church that moves forward, urging us to work in the field of education, always open to the challenges of today's world.

One of the great challenges of today's world, as you know, is that of artificial intelligence, which is a great challenge for the world of education: let us not close ourselves off from the proposals and be afraid, “Duc in altum!" Let us strive to understand not only the dangers but also the benefits that these technological innovations bring to the world of education and society.

Lastly, another great challenge launched by the Pope with the Global Compact on Education is the creation of networks between the various educational institutions: your "Network of Educational Ladies" is already a first important response, but it will have to expand by networking with other educational networks, Catholic and non-Catholic, to work together to build the Global Education Village, where everyone, but really everyone, each in a different way of course, but everyone, takes on the same objective of building universal brotherhood, which is, if you like, the ultimate goal of the Global Compact on Education.

I thank you for your mission, I thank you for this journey that your Congregation has been on for almost 200 years, and I urge you not to be content with what you already are, with what you have achieved, but to maintain that inheritance which is the thirst, that evangelical aspiration that makes us always go further. "Duc in altum", so that you always know how to make a difference to help build a better world, a world where it is not difficult to love. To all of you we cordially impart our blessing. Congratulations.

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

Prefect of the DCE on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the Religiosas da Instrução Cristã (RIC) Institute
The X Meeting of the "Integra Confessionais" Network was held on 21-24 May 2023 in the monastery of Itaici (Indaiatuba-SP-Brazil). It was attended by about 250 people, members of 100 religious congregations dedicated to education and representatives of 800 Brazilian Catholic schools-universities. The meeting was organised by the FTD publishing house, whose mission is to support so many religious congregations in their educational mission "Nossa missão é apoiar a sua". The theme of this 10th Meeting "Performance in management and excellence in results" was addressed by various superiors and managers of the Marist Brothers' school-university network. Participants and speakers included: the Education Sector Councillor of the Education and Culture Commission of the CNBB Fr. Julio Cezar Resende, the heads of the ANEC network and the CRB, and the Magnificent Rector of the University of Lisbon Prof. Antonio Novoa.

The Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education (DCE) Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça sent a video message in which he spoke about education based on the slogan of the meeting: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5).

2. This biblical passage, which you have taken as the motto of your meeting, brings us to the first great sign of the divine identity revealed by Jesus. The scene does not take place in a sacred place or at an important Jewish religious feast, but at a simple wedding, which is the human feast par excellence where love is celebrated. Remember that, according to Jewish tradition, a wedding feast lasted three to five days, so it was always necessary to provide plenty of food and drink for the guests during those days.

It is in this context that at one point in that party, the wine runs out and the bride and groom are in turmoil because they have to end the wedding party early, much to the embarrassment of the family.

Starting from this situation, we evaluate the attitude of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in three gestures. First of all, we see that Maria is attentive! She is the first to notice the lack of wine. And where there is a lack of wine, there is a lack of joy, celebration and the beauty of the family reunited.

Secondly, we see that Mary intercedes for us! It is she who goes to Jesus, who warns him of the situation and insists that he do something. Mary is not a woman blocked by complaints, she is a Mother! And as a Mother, she is certainly proactive presence and participation in this important meeting to reflect on the current challenges of Catholic education, on the theme: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5).

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when she turns to Jesus and says to him: "My son Jesus, look at that family!". Finally, we notice that Mary is at work! She knows that God works in this world with our collaboration. It already happened with her when she opened her heart so that the Son of God could dwell in her. Mary teaches us that service is the criterion of true love and the hallmark of Christian institutions. In the school no one can be excluded, because everyone is of equal value. This is why the school must always be the closest hospital, the first seedbed of hope, the essential reference group for the growth of young people. It is in this context that we heard the central phrase of this event of yours: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5).

3. I am happy to leave three concrete challenges for Christian education with reference to this attitude of Mary. First of all, Pope Francis pointed us to this pedagogical principle: "We will not change the world if we do not change education". And these three challenges must always have as their horizon the seven commitments of the ‘Global Compact on Education’ that Pope Francis presented in October 2020.

3.1 Educating for attention and listening
A first challenge is to educate on attention and listening. Unfortunately, today we listen little to others because we are uncaring, with all the damage that this lack of listening to others brings to our lives. Contrary to appearances, mindfulness is a difficult but necessary exercise: it is not a simple innate quality, nor a mere sporadic act of the human will, but an exercise that implies constant effort. It is an exercise that implies two conditions: emptying oneself and getting closer to the other. Emptying ourselves implies mentally freeing ourselves of the thoughts, desires and worries that overwhelm us in order to make ourselves capable of listening to the other. Hence the second condition: only by approaching the other can we listen to him with quality and, by listening to the other, we listen to ourselves. It is like breathing: we empty ourselves (exhaling) and then fill ourselves again (inhaling). This is why we can say that ‘attention is creative’ because it enriches us and enriches others. This is how it was for Mary: her attention to others at Cana expresses her high quality of knowing how to listen.

In the face of today’s generation of ‘eavesdroppers’, it is important to challenge young people to this art of ‘attention’ that allows them to listen, because they must not be puppets of others but must form their own conscience in order to be the authentic protagonists of their life story.

3.2 Educating to recognise limits
A second challenge is to educate to impossibility. In fact, to educate to impossibility is to educate the young person ‘to the sacredness of the limit’: that in life we cannot have everything, we cannot know everything, we cannot be everything, we cannot do everything. It is to assume our condition as creatures: we are finite and must know how to live within our ontological possibility. There is an existential impossibility that inhabits us and that we must know how to accept and live. It is about discovering the difference between the ‘idealised self’ and the ‘real self’.

For the generation that has learnt to control everything with an easy click on digital platforms, a ‘square’ where young people spend a lot of time!, it is important to be aware that life also involves efforts, sacrifices, defeats and disappointments. But in the midst of the storm, we must be able to see the new opportunities that God opens up for us. In truth, we must not only thank God for what He gives us, but also for what He does not give us. It is up to us to do what is possible and to let God, in his will, do the impossible for us. The figure of Mary interceding for us, like the Wedding at Cana, is the certainty that young people are not abandoned to themselves, but that God is particularly attentive to them.

3.3 Educating for fraternity
A third challenge is to educate to fraternity. In his message for World Peace Day 2023, Pope Francis says: "we can no longer think only of safeguarding the space of our personal interests (...) but we must rethink ourselves in the light of the common good, with a sense of community, as an ‘us’ open to universal fraternity”. Yes, young people are also called to a social commitment, because they are not just spectators of the world, but rather actors in reality: they are ‘God’s now’ and through them God has much to work in history. And one of the focal points of education must be this: to look at the other not as an adversary, but as a brother; not as an enemy, but as a fellow traveller; not as a stranger, but as a pilgrim.

Mary did not limit herself to observation and intercession, but also to action. Without action, observation and intercession lose their profound meaning.

4. To conclude, it only remains for me to wish you all a fruitful pedagogical work, praising once again this beautiful initiative, and leaving as food for thought the following question: in the mission of school teaching, what is more important to communicate to young people: teaching things or teaching how to live things?

Cardinal José Tolentino Card. de Mendonça
Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education
I. BRINGING WATER TO THE SEA
When I received the invitation to give the keynote address at this important national event on Catholic education, I said to myself: but what am I going to do in Brazil? To carry water to the sea?

a) The ecclesial context of Brazil.
In fact, Brazil is among the countries that have responded most to the invitation of Pope Francis' Global Compact on Education. This is due to a very effervescent Latin American ecclesial background, especially since the 1960s with the impetus given by the Second Vatican Council. The highlights of these last decades: The Latin American Bishops Conference (CELAM) produced the prophetic documents of Medellin, Puebla, Santo Domingo and Aparecida. A very courageous and innovative theological reflection (the dean of my theological faculty in Northern Italy used to say that Liberation Theology was the most important theological phenomenon of the post-conciliar Church). The grassroots ecclesial communities. The fraternity campaigns in Brazil during Lent (a recent one on education). The educational organisations linked to CELAM, the CNBB, the CRB and many other national and international educational and inter-congregational networks (FIUC, OIEC, ANEC, FTD...).

b) The pedagogical context in Brazil.
In the field of education, Brazil has always been at the forefront with great and important pedagogues: Paulo Freire (he is the 3rd most searched name on Google worldwide in the area of humanities). The great Darcy Ribeiro (Minister of Education and first rector of the University of Brasilia) and his educational policies in favour of indigenous peoples. And many other pedagogues and educators. In the field of didactics I would like to mention José Carlos Libâneo (whom I also invited to our university in Mozambique).

c) Educational networks and the Global Compact on Education.
At the beginning of this May 2023 in Rome, there was a meeting of ODUCAL (Organisation of Catholic Universities of Latin America) focused on the Global Compact on Education, and we were surprised to learn of the hundreds of educational activities related to the Educational Covenant carried out by these universities over the last three years.

So I said to myself, ‘if I don’t go to the sea to get water, then I will go to the ‘sea’ to get water’.

II. THE NEW DICASTERY FOR CULTURE AND EDUCATION (DCE).

a) The new Prefect.
In October last year, at the first meeting to present His Eminence Cardinal Tolentino de Mendonça as the new Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, he, after praising all the work done by the previous Congregation for Catholic Education, asked everyone to ‘fall in love’ again. We realised that a poet had arrived to lead the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

Inspired by these words of the Prefect, I too, having praised all the immense work that you, educators and your institutions have done so far, ask you to ‘fall in love’ again. I have not come, therefore, to lecture you on education nor on the Global Compact on Education, but only to stimulate you to fall in love again with the great mission of education, to become ‘educator poets’. Pope Francis told participants at the conference ‘Education: the global pact’ (7-2-2020): ‘You cannot educate without inducing beauty, without inducing the heart to beauty. Forcing the issue a little, I would dare say that an education is not effective if it does not know how to create poets’.

b) The DCE and the Global Compact on Education (GEP).
The DCE consists of two main areas, Culture and Education. The latter area has two sections: that of Schools (there are approximately 220,000 Catholic schools worldwide with 62 million students) and that of Universities (1,700 Catholic universities worldwide with 11 million students).

Then there is a section that cuts across the two areas of culture and education, which is the EYP Secretariat, of which I have been a member since 2020. The EYP was entrusted by the Pope to the then ‘Congregation for Catholic Education’. Since last year, with the creation of the new Dicastery for Culture and Education, the Global Compact on Education also takes on a new configuration, opening up not only to Schools and Universities, but also to the world of Culture, Art, Entertainment and Sport: hence a Global Compact on Education and Culture.
III. THE PEG: A POINT OF NO RETURN

a) A new perspective on education
As I have already told you, I would like to take up some suggestive insights from the speeches of the last three years of Pope Francis on the Educational Pact (the speeches of the Cardinal Prefect on the EYP in recent months are also very important and we will take them up on another occasion).

The EYP changes our perspective and idea of education and invites us to review and reformulate curricula, programmes and educational projects according to this new perspective. We know that many educational organisations are already working on their statutes and curricula to bring them in line with the EYP’s suggestions.

If at the pastoral level the Church cannot ignore the new perspective indicated by the Pope with Evangelii Gaudium (which, as the Pope himself says, is a mixture of Evangelii nuntiandi and the Aparecida Document), so too at the educational level we cannot ignore the perspective indicated by EYP in the future.

b) The EYP in motion.
EYP is not something static, but in constant movement and growth. In a publication last year, I compared it to Ravel’s ‘Bolero’, the initial melody of which is continually taken up and enriched with new instruments each time. It is like a tree that, from the seed sown (on 12-9-2019), produces many other seeds that spread around the world and make a forest grow. It is like a village that grows bigger and bigger: the educational village that needs to be built is what the Pope is talking about when he quotes the African proverb: ‘it takes a whole village to educate a child’.

c) The foundation of the PEG.
Another African proverb: ‘When the roots are deep, there is no reason to fear the wind’. I am not presenting the epistemological foundations of EYP here. If anyone is interested in the question of the foundations (the deep roots) of EYP, I refer you to a chapter in a forthcoming OIEC publication on the inculturation of EYP, where I sketch out some ideas for a theoretical foundation of the inculturation of the Global Compact on Education in a local context, following the methodology I have learnt here in Brazil of the three mediations: socio-analytical, hermeneutical and practical.

IV. LAUNCHING AND RELAUNCHING THE PEG

a) The first message: the launch of the EYP.
On 12 September 2019, Pope Francis invited all educators and leaders to a world meeting that was to be held on 14 May 2020 in Rome, but was postponed to October of the same year due to the Covid-19 epidemic. Due to the fact that the pandemic had not yet been resolved in October, the meeting was suspended and the Pope relaunched the EYP with a second video message on 15-10-2020.

b) Second message: the seven commitments.
In this new message, the Pope indicates a new educational path that aims at a more united idea of the world, indicating seven commitments in the field of education for the years to come. First: to put the person at the centre of every educational process, but beware, it is not a question of individualism but of the person in relation to others; second: to listen to the voice of the younger generations so as not to run the risk of drawing up projects that do not concern them; third: to promote women and the participation of girls in education; fourth: to strengthen the family as the first educator; fifth: to be open to welcoming the other, especially those most in need; sixth: to renew the economy and politics so that they may be at the service of the entire human family; seventh: taking care of our common home, protecting the environment through renewable energy and adopting more sober lifestyles.

V. THE TRANSCENDENTAL DIMENSION OF EDUCATION

a) The Meeting of Representatives of World Religions.
The transcendental dimension of education appears clearly in the Meeting of the Representatives of the World’s Religions, who gathered for the first time to talk about education (on 5 October 2021). In his opening address, which preceded the interventions of each participant, the Pope indicated the four pillars of education: “know thyself”; (Temple of Delphi and Socrates); 2. “know thy brother”, to educate in the acceptance of the other (cf. Brothers All; Document on Human Fraternity, Abu Dhabi, 4 February 2019); [These documents are read in Muslim schools, but in ours?]; 3. “know creation”, to educate in the care of the common home (cf. Enc. Laudato si’); 4. “know the Transcendent”, to educate in the great mystery of life.

It is a matter, says the Pope, of an integral formation that is summed up in the knowledge of...
self, of one’s brother, of creation and of the Transcendent. And he launches an appeal that he will repeat on other occasions: “We cannot keep silent to the new generations the truths that give meaning to life”.

b) Christian dimension of education.

If in the Meeting with the Representatives of World Religions the reference to transcendence had to consider the presence of different religions, in the meeting with the participants of the Conference on the lines of development of the Global Compact on Education (1 June-2022), the Pope indicates the Christian dimension of education: “Recover the centrality of the person as a creature who in Christ is the image and likeness of the Creator. This is the great truth of which we are bearers and which we have the duty to witness and transmit also in our educational institutions. We Christians are the custodians of the greatest anthropology that has ever appeared on the face of the earth and on which we cannot/should not be silent, as the Pope says: “To be silent about the truths about God out of respect for those who do not believe, would be, in the field of education, like burning books out of respect for those who do not think, erasing works of art out of respect for those who do not see, or music out of respect for those who do not hear”. [It is tragicomic to see how in schools it is forbidden to have crucifixes or nativity scenes out of respect for non-believers, and on Halloween schools are filled with empty pumpkins, with no respect for those whose heads (pumpkins) are not empty].

VI. ENEA’S CHOICE.

(a) Anchises and Ascanius.

In the same speech (of 1-6-22), the Pope suggests a suggestive model of an educator, that of Aeneas, the great Trojan hero who, after the defeat of Troy, flees from the burning city, carrying his old father Anchises on his shoulders and holding his young son Ascanius by the hand. Aeneas, says the Pope, is saved ‘not alone, but with the father who represents his history and with the son who is his future’. Thus, educators are ‘called to value the past and to accompany the young steps of the future’.

b) Enea and the EYP.

In this choice of Aeneas, the Pope glimpses the principles of the EYP: ‘in every educational process it is necessary to always put the person at the centre and aim at the essential’. In fact, Aeneas does not bring material goods with him, ‘but only the father and the son. The roots and the future, the promises’. Moreover, the choice of Aeneas shows that “we must not forget that it is fundamental to educate in service”. Anchises and Ascanius, as well as representing tradition and the future, are also symbols of the weak sections of society that must be defended, rejecting the temptation to discard, to marginalise'. [Hence the question: in our educational institutions, do we pay special attention to the weaker segments of society?]

VII. EUROPEAN YOUTH CONFERENCE

a) No to elitist education.

In July last year (2022), Pope Francis sent a message [in my opinion one of the most beautiful of all EYP messages] to young people gathered at the EU YOUTH CONFERENCE in Prague. There he launches some strong and very resonant messages on education: he tells young people not to aspire to enter elitist educational environments, because these will not change the world, indeed they will have every interest in maintaining the status quo and increasing their profits, but he urges them to give themselves to educational experiences that educate to the growth of the person, to the common good. "It will be," he writes, “these experiences of solidarity that will change the world, not the exclusive (and exclusionary) experiences of elite schools. Excellence yes, but for all, not just for some'.

I think the Pope is referring to the big colleges, where they pay many tens of thousands of dollars a year. Among these are also Catholic colleges. And here in Brazil? Are our schools only for the elite? NB. Of the 62 million students in Catholic schools worldwide, about half are African. Catholic schools are not and should not be synonymous with schools for the rich. Unfortunately, since Catholic schools do not have state funding, they have to make families pay to survive, but this does not exempt us from caring for the poorest].

b) Educating for sustainability.

Another surprising invitation, again in this message to young Europeans, concerns sustainability: the Pope calls for ‘reducing the consumption not only of fossil fuels, but also of many superfluous things’ and ‘in some regions of the world it is convenient to consume less meat’.

It is well known that the massive farming of meat animals is a huge detriment to the environment: most arable land produces food for animals. If they were converted to produce food for humans, world hunger would be greatly alleviated. It is therefore necessary to educate people to consume less meat.

And the Pope continues his exhortation to young people: ‘Do not be seduced by the sirens that propose a life of luxury reserved to a small slice of the world: have “big eyes” to see all the rest of humanity, ...; aspire to a life of dignity and sobriety, without luxury or waste, so that all may inhabit the world with dignity’.

c) Conscientious objection. Another great invitation is that of conscientious objection and the Pope proposes the example of Franz Jägerstätter as a model: "I would like to invite you to get to know an
extraordinary figure of a young objector, a young European with ‘big eyes’, who fought against Nazism during the Second World War, Franz Jägerstätter, proclaimed blessed by Pope Benedict XVI. Franz was a young Austrian peasant who, because of his Catholic faith, made a conscientious objection to the injunction to swear allegiance to Hitler and go to war. Franz was a cheerful, nice and carefree boy who, as he grew up, thanks also to his wife Francesca, by whom he had three children, changed his life and matured deep convictions. When he was called to arms, he refused, because he felt it was unjust to kill innocent lives. His decision provoked harsh reactions from the community, the mayor and even family members. A priest tried to dissuade him for the sake of his family. Everyone was against him, except for his wife Francesca who, even though she knew the enormous dangers, stood by her husband and supported him to the end. Despite flattery and torture, Franz would rather be killed than kill. He considers the war totally unjustified. If all the young men called to arms had done as he did, Hitler could not have carried out his diabolical plans. Evil needs accomplices to win’.

The Pope referred to the war in Ukraine "where, as usual, a few powerful people decide and send thousands of young people to fight and die. In these cases, it is legitimate to rebel".

Thus, educating for peace, for conscientious objection.

VIII. GLOBAL PACT OF BEAUTY.

a) Saint Ursula: woman of exceptional beauty.

To the young people participating in the “Ursuline Global Compact on Education” last September (2022), the Pope launches an invitation to make a “Global Pact of Beauty”. Inspired by Saint Ursula, "a woman of exceptional beauty", the Pope says to every young person: “Let your beauty emerge! Not the one according to the fashions of the world, but the real one. In a world suffocated by so much ugliness, let that beauty emerge that has always belonged to us, from the first moment of creation, when God made man in his own image and saw that he was very beautiful. This beauty must be spread and defended. Because if it is true, as Prince Myškin says in Dostoevsky’s The Idiot, that beauty will save the world, we must be vigilant so that the world saves beauty. To this end, I invite you to celebrate a ‘global pact for beauty’ with all the youth of the world, because there is no education without beauty’.

b) Divine beauty.

And he makes it clear that “the beauty we are talking about is not that which folds in on itself, like Narcissus who, in love with his own image, ended up drowning in the lake in which he was mirrored. Nor is it the beauty that resigns itself to evil, like Dorian Gray who, when the spell was over, found his face disfigured. We speak of beauty that never fades because it is a reflection of divine beauty: our God is inexpressably good, true and beautiful. And beauty is one of the privileged ways to reach him (cf. Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, 167)’.

(c) Call to action.

The Pope goes on to say: "Do not isolate yourselves from the world by shutting yourselves in your rooms - like Peter Pan who does not want to grow up, or like the young hikikomori who are afraid to face the world - but always be open and courageous like Saint Ursula, the ‘little bear’ who had the courage to undertake a long journey with her companions and intrepidly faced attacks to the point of martyrdom. Be ‘little bears’ who do not shirk their responsibilities. If young people do not change the world, who will?".

IX. EDUCATING FOR PEACE.

(a) Pope St John XXIII.

To the students and teachers who participated in the meeting on education for peace and care (in November of last year 2022), again in the context of the Global Compact on Education, the Pope proposed two other witnesses: ‘The first figure is St. John XXIII. He has been called the ‘Good Pope’, and also the ‘Pope of peace’, because in those difficult early years of the 1960s, marked by strong tensions - the construction of the Berlin Wall, the Cuba crisis, the Cold War and the nuclear threat - he published the famous and prophetic Encyclical Pacem in Terris. It will be 60 years old next year and is very topical’, so he invites everyone to reread it.

(b) Martin Luther King.

The second figure is that of “Martin Luther King, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1964, who gave the historic speech in which he said: ‘I have a dream’. In an American context strongly marked by racial discrimination, he made everyone dream with the idea of a world of justice, freedom and equality. He said: ‘I have a dream: that my four young children may one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the dignity of their person’”. And after asking everyone to dream big, he urged them to become ‘poets of peace’.

X. SPIRITUALITY OF EDUCATION.

Let us end our discourse by talking about the spirituality of education.

(see the last two pages of this Journal: “Reflections on Education and the Global Compact on Education; THE HEAD AND HEART WELL DONE. The ‘educational project’ of the Holy Spirit and the Global Compact on Education”.

P. Ezio Lorenzo Bono, CSF of the Global Compact on Education Secretariat
A working document was launched in Latin America with the aim of elaborating a Latin American Educational Pact. This document was prepared in the framework of an agreement between the Latin American Bishops' Council (CELAM) and the Conference of Jesuit Provincials of Latin America and the Caribbean (CPAL), in order to present Pope Francis' thoughts on education.

The text written by Fr. Luiz Fernando Klein S.J., provides an account of this thinking that also includes the contributions of the General Conferences of the Latin American and Caribbean Episcopate: Education “is a privileged place of formation and integral promotion”, says Medellín; Puebla outlines the factors adverse to education and denounces the frustration of young people due to lack of access to higher education; Santo Domingo points to the challenge of dialogue between Christian humanism and technical culture; Aparecida, on the other hand, points to the need for dialogue between Christian humanism and technical culture. Aparecida, for his part, states that there is “a particular and delicate educational emergency due to a clear market interest”, which expresses itself in a growing anthropological reductionism, since education is conceived “predominantly in terms of production, competitiveness and the market”.

The Message of the Episcopal Commission for Education: 'Towards an Argentine Educational Pact', calls for attention to rethink the course of education in the country, inviting a broad dialogue between all the sectors involved in the educational task: teachers, managers, politicians, religious, civil associations and entrepreneurs. The appeal picks up the line of work proposed by Pope Francis with the launch of the Global Compact on Education.

The bishops emphasise the need to put education back at the top of the agenda and propose a working method that will lead to a consensus that translates into concrete proposals for educational policies. Seven meetings have been scheduled between October 2022 and May 2023 to foster dialogue in view of an Argentine Educational Pact that will involve the different actors in the education sector.

The proposals that emerged from these meetings will be presented to officials and representatives from across Argentina's political spectrum and to candidates for prime minister in 2023, the executive and legislative branches, as a contribution to everyone's commitment to education.

DIALOGUES IN MEXICO ON THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION

The Educational and Cultural Pastoral Commission of the Mexican Bishops' Conference, since 2020, has created a series of online meetings entitled 'Dialogues for Hope', in order to bring the Church closer to the world and thus encourage academics, entrepreneurs, intellectuals, professionals, university students, parents and society in general, to have a look of hope and solidarity.

On 2 May 2023, it was the turn of Bishop Melchor Sanchez de Toca, Undersecretary of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, who in a dialogue with his interlocutor, Father Eduardo Curral, explained what the Global Compact on Education is and what it is not.

On 22 May, instead, it was the turn of Fr. David Jasso Ramirez, Technical Secretary of the Mexican Bishops' Conference, who spoke about the 'Global Pastoral Project, Synodality and Global Educational Pact'.

Full interview with Bishop Melchor: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZKM-nob4mM
On 31-05-2023, Prof. Antonella Sciarrone Alibrandi, Undersecretary of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, received an African Delegation headed by Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, Archbishop of Kinshasa (DRC) and President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM). The draft of the African Educational Pact (in four languages), resulting from the International Symposium in Kinshasa, organised by the International Religions and Society Foundation at the Catholic University of Congo, was delivered. This Covenant, which stems from the experiences of pastors and theologians and university investigators, is intended to be an African appropriation of the Global Compact on Education. It is structured in four parts: Internal Church Organisation; Catholic Schools; States; Catholic Universities. The hope is that this African Educational Covenant will result in an effective dynamic of the new evangelisation for the glory of God and the salvation of the African man and woman.

In her speech, Professor Sciarrone praised this initiative, the first of its kind, as Africa is the first continent to develop a Continental Education Pact, and urged that this project be disseminated and implemented in all countries of the African continent.

In the afternoon of the same day, a Conference on the African Educational Pact organised by the Embassy of Belgium to the Holy See and the International Religions and Society Foundation was held. Prof. Sciarrone attended this conference representing the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

The following day, 1-6-2023, the delegation headed by Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo delivered the text of the African Educational Pact to the Supreme Pontiff in private audience. In the June issue of the GCE Journal we will publish the full text of Pope Francis’ address to this delegation.
AFRICA: CONTINENT OF THE FUTURE

On 8 May 2023, a meeting was held at the Palazzo Altieri in Rome. The main speakers were Prof. Lucio Caracciolo, Director of the renowned geopolitical magazine LIMES, and Ambassador Pasquale Ferrara, Director General for Political and Security Affairs - MAECI. During the meeting, Dr. Nicola Tomasoni presented the project of the Village-Educational "House of Peace" that the NGO SFERA is implementing in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This project, as highlighted by H.Exc. Angelo Zani, Archivist and Librarian of the Holy Roman Church, is part of the Global Compact on Education of Pope Francis. The meeting was moderated by Prof. Filomeno Lopes, philosopher and Vatican News journalist, who emphasised Pope Paul VI's special attention to Africa and the impetus he gave to the independence process of African countries.

PONTIFICIAL CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF PERU AND THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION

The Rector of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP), Prof. Dr. Carlos Garadea Grau, met with the Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça on 2 May 2023 at the DCE. In the cordial meeting, the Rector presented the general situation of his university, which has 31,000 students and 2,500 professors. He emphasised how young people are subject to rapid change and how the university seeks to accompany and help them in this process. Finally, he presented a report on the initiatives undertaken by the PUCP with regard to the Global Compact on Education, focusing on the theme ‘Education for a democratic life with environmental awareness’.

INSPIRELI AWARDS AND GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION

On 25 May 2023, the Under-Secretary of the DCE, Monsignor Melchor Sanchez and the Under-Secretary-Assistant Monsignor Carlo Maria Polvani, received at the DCE the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the Holy See, His Excellency H.Exc. Václav Kolaja, together with a delegation from the organisation “INSPIRELI Education”. This organisation's projects relating to competitions launched worldwide involving thousands of university students from all over the world were presented. Prof. Dr. and Dipl.-Ing. Karel Smejkal, presented the INSPIRELI AWARDS project-competition, the world's largest competition for young architecture students, to make proposals for the reconstruction of the port of Beirut after the disastrous explosion of 2021. They expressed their wish to include this project as part of the Global Compact on Education initiatives.

MEETING WITH GCE LEAD UNIVERSITIES

On 29 May 2023, an online meeting was held with the contact persons of the Global Compact on Education of the 11 lead universities of the five continents. The meeting, attended by the Under Secretaries of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, Msgr. Melchor Sanchez de Toca and Prof. Antonella Sciaronne Alibrandi, was moderated by Prof. Maria Cinque. The Referees illustrated the state of the art of their universities’ work on the GCE thematic areas entrusted to them. The meeting concluded with an illustration of the participation of the Dicastery for Culture and Education in World Youth Day Lisbon 2023. A stand will be set up where young people will be able to learn more about and discuss the GCE.
In 1999 with his successful book 'The Well-Done Head', Edgar Morin proposed a reform of thinking and teaching in order to overcome the hyper-specialisation of knowledge and the disjunction between the various sciences. Starting from Montaigne's admonition 'it is better to have a well-made head than a well-filled head', he aimed to prepare subjects capable of facing the challenges of globality and complexity.

Twenty years later, in the wake of this thought, Pope Francis launched the Global Compact on Education in 2019, "to give a soul to formal and informal educational processes, which cannot ignore the fact that everything in the world is intimately connected" (Message for the launch of the EGP, 12-9-2019). The Holy Father takes up and relaunches at a higher level the challenge of reforming thinking and teaching, aiming not only at building a well-made head, but a well-made head and heart, that is to give a soul to education.

If for the secular culture engaged in the field of education it is fundamental to provide those being educated with the ability to articulate scientific culture with humanistic culture, for Pope Francis in addition to this it is fundamental to give a soul to education, without which education would be a "soulless beauty". When we speak of the soul of education (or the "spirituality of education"), we do not mean something "extra" to be added as if it were an accessory, but we mean the deepest truth of education, its ultimate goal that Christian educators cannot keep silent in the name of a secularism or ecumenism that ignores the transcendental dimension of existence. Knowing the truth about God for us Christians is not an optional extra or a private fact relegated to the 'tastes' of each individual, but it is what determines the authenticity of life and therefore it is something that cannot remain alien to educational discourse. In our view, something similar to what happened with the famous 'querelle on pure nature and grace' also takes place with regard to education: there is no 'natural education' to which a 'supernatural education' is added, but for Christians there is only a 'supernatural' education that encompasses and surpasses all human knowledge and orients it to its ultimate end. The ultimate end that awaits us is nothingness, and we firmly believe that we did not bring our children into the world so that one day they would disappear into nothingness. Silencing the transcendental dimension in education out of respect for non-believers, as Pope Francis has said, would be like burning books out of respect for those who do not think, turning off music out of respect for the deaf, or hiding art out of respect for the blind (Address to the International Conference of the Global Compact on Education 1-6-2022).

The 'educational project' for believers is the one reaffirmed many times by the Pope, namely the integral formation of the human person, the centre of every formative process, which includes all the dimensions of the human being. "One cannot educate without inducing beauty" says the Pope, where beauty (pulchrum) coincides with verum and bonum. It is therefore a "supernatural" education where the Holy Spirit becomes the Educator par excellence through his 7 gifts with an itinerary that takes us, as in an ascending circular vortex, to an ever higher level. The Holy Spirit has an 'educational project' that has as its end the vocation assigned by God to every man, that is, the attainment of the full maturity of Christ, or in other words, forming to holiness. One can and must be educated to holiness.

For Edith Stein, education is the supreme art whose master is the Holy Spirit and in which man is a humble collaborator" (Cf. Eric de Rus, "L'art d'éduquer selon Edith Stein. Anthropologie, éducation, vie spirituelle", Cerf, Ed. du Carmel, Ad-Solem). The seven commitments indicated by Pope Francis in the Global Compact on Education, (cont.-->
presuppose the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit, which aim to form a well-made head and heart:

four of these gifts concern our mind (counsel, science, intellect and wisdom) and three concern the will or heart (fortitude, fear of God and piety). The first four gifts of the Holy Spirit, which help us to form a well-made head (educate intelligence) are:

- The gift of COUNSELING is the gift of knowing how to listen to God's voice, to his counsels. So educate our children to be attentive to the voice of God who speaks to us in many ways, especially when they have to make important decisions, when they feel confused, when they do not know which way to go. Here is where the gift of counselling helps to discern, to trust wise people who accompany us in understanding the right choice to make. Those who experience accompaniment, especially in discerning their own vocation, will learn to accompany others in their discernment.
  
The fruits of this gift are confidence, serenity, inner peace.
- The gift of SCIENCE is the gift of knowing the truth of the world, that is, of studying and knowing creation in its truth, as God's creation. Educating our children in the serious and rigorous study of all the sciences in order to come to not only know but also love and cherish the world, nature, and creation as a gift from God.
  
The fruits of this gift are admiration, awe, gratitude.
- If the gift of science makes us know the truth of the world, the gift of INTELLECT makes us know the truth of God. Educating our children to read inside things (intus-legere), to discover the deeper truth. It is a gift that makes us discover and understand the revealed truth and helps us account for our faith.
  
The fruits of this gift are Prophecy, thoughtfulness, foresight.
- If the gift of science and intellect make us know the truth of the world and of God, the gift of WISDOM makes us taste (sápere) the beauty of this knowledge, anticipates the happiness of God, of paradise. Wisdom is not only knowledge (there are scholars of God who do not believe in God, or others, such as demons, who know God) but it is knowledge that becomes life, joy, beauty, joyful experience of supernatural realities. Educate our children to live and taste what they know and learn to discern good and evil.
  
The fruits of this gift are the art of knowing how to live well and the joy that comes from feeling a friend of God.

After these four gifts that help us form a well-made head, the other three gifts help us form a well-made heart (educating the will):