



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION
ON THE APOSTOLATE OF JESUIT EDUCATION**

Friday, 24 May 2024

[Multimedia]

I wish to thank you, in my name and on behalf of the Church, for the work you carry out in the Jesuit schools and in the other schools associated with the mission, which have decided to join in the apostolic effort of the Society of Jesus. It is true that Saint Ignatius and the first companions did not consider the importance of the schools at the beginning of the founding of the Society. But it is equally true that very soon they became aware of the immense evangelizing potential and welcomed it with enthusiasm and dedication. Without doubt, the Jesuit schools have ensured that the message of the Gospel continues to be listened to by the new generations, accompanied by their characteristic academic and intellectual rigour. But the centre is, and must continue to be, Jesus. Therefore, the Jesuits, through study programmes and activities in the schools, have been committed in order to enable young people to enter into contact with the Gospel, with service to others, and thus to contribute to the common good. The Marian Congregations were a precious example of how the Jesuit education intended to invite its students to become agents of change and evangelization in their context. It was about ensuring that from a young age they learn to discover God present in others, especially in the poor and marginalized. This is true education: accompanying young people so that they discover in service to others and in academic rigour the construction of the common good.

The New Global Education Compact I have promoted is intended to update educational efforts so that young people are prepared and begin to change the mindset of an education only for “my” personal success into the mentality of an education that leads them to discover the true fullness of life, when one uses one’s personal gifts and abilities in collaboration with others, for the construction of a more humane and fraternal society and world. We need to pass from the culture

of the self to a culture of “us”, in which a quality education is defined as such by its humanizing results and not its economic results. This means – as I have repeated many times – putting the person at the centre of the process. And it was what Fr. Arrupe repeated to us often, insisting on “educating people for others”. Fr. Arrupe was well aware that the quintessential person for others was Jesus, the true man with and for others.

As you well know, the best way to educate is by example, modelling in ourselves what we want in our students. Jesus educated His disciples in this way. This is how we are required to educate in our schools. Therefore, everything you can do to make the educators in your schools understand this calling existentially is important. Placing the person at the centre means putting educators at the centre of formation, offering them preparation and accompaniment to help them discover their potential and their deep calling to accompany others. Placing the person at the centre means de-centering from ourselves in order to perceive others, especially those at the margins of society, and who not only need our help, but also have much to teach us and to offer us. We all gain when we welcome among us the poorest and most defenceless!

Naturally, as I indicated in my letter when I confirmed the *Universal Apostolic Preferences for the Society of Jesus*, the first preference is indispensable for understanding the meaning of education in the Society, because without a true relationship between educators and the Lord, none of the rest is possible. We must insist on this. I am therefore happy that you are holding the International Seminar in Yogyakarta – to be able to explore how we share the treasure revealed in Jesus with young people – and that the young can experience His liberating and salvific mystery. But we will succeed only if we see in their educators – including fathers, the first educators in families – this relationship with God and profound respect for others and for creation. For the, our colleges must also be educators of educators, teachers of teachers.

I am glad to be able to count on you to promote a new global education pact. Without it, our world, which already suffers so much violence and polarization, will not be able to create a future full of hope, nor will it overcome the grave challenges that concern it and which oblige us to become more aware of the fact that we share the common home of our world. Educating is a work of sowing and, as Holy Scripture says, many times we “sow in tears [but] reap with shouts of joy!” (cf. *Ps 126:5*). Education is a long-term task, requiring patience, where the results are sometimes unclear; even Jesus did not have good results with the disciples in the beginning, but He was patient, and He continues to be patient with us to teach us that to educate is to wait, to persevere, and to persevere with love.

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