



Educating from the heart

*“But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my name,
he will teach you all things.
and he will remind you of everything I have said to you.”
(John 14: 26)*

Dear Sisters,

The preliminary chapter of the first Constitutions of the Brothers and Sisters, approved in 1817, states: “To imitate the childhood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we open free schools to educate poor children of both sexes. We also have colleges...”

As in the beginning, education remains central to our mission. The decree approving the current Constitutions (1985) states: “Gathered in fraternal communities and faithful to the teachings of the Church's Magisterium, the sisters contribute to evangelisation and education in the faith, especially through teaching, educational and pastoral activities”.

Our mission focuses on Jesus as a teacher and his distinctive teaching style. Other institutes emphasise his life as a preacher, missionary and healer. For us, an important reference point will always be Jesus's teaching, characterised by his moral authority, which inspired admiration, respect, and innovation...

All Christians are called to participate in the Church's evangelising mission according to their abilities. Catholic schools and colleges must take evangelisation into account in their educational programmes and activities. This concept is encapsulated by the term “evangelising education”, which the Church has used since the mid-twentieth century. It encompasses the development of all

dimensions of the human being, including the intellectual, emotional, physical, social, religious and spiritual.

Evangelising education incorporates religious education into its teaching and learning processes, using education as a means of transmitting the Christian message and its values. Its purpose is to provide an all-round education for children, adolescents and young people from a Christian perspective, encouraging the balanced development of all aspects of their personality. It also fosters discipleship to Jesus, encouraging commitment to social transformation towards a more humane, just and fraternal world.

As openness to transcendence is a dimension of human life, the integral development of every student should include religious content that encourages them to relate to God. The Church has consistently advocated for the right to religious education, urging leaders not to deprive students of this right.

Education and evangelisation are thus inseparable processes that complement each other. Education provides students with the conditions necessary for evangelisation, while evangelisation gives them direction, meaning and purpose.

One of the great joys I have experienced in recent years while visiting the countries where we live has been getting to know the educational centres. I have seen the enthusiasm with which Sisters of different ages work in them. I have witnessed the affection and dedication with which they support their students. I have also seen many lay teachers and support staff who are committed to the congregation, its charism and spirituality, and who are dedicated with creativity and passion. I have appreciated how even the oldest schools are constantly updating themselves to keep up with the times in terms of technology, strategies, methods and contemporary demands. I have also valued the emergence of different responses to other challenges, such as non-formal education, particularly in newer establishments.

Although we can continue to say that the family is the first school of faith, that parents are their children's first catechists, and that each family is a domestic church, we know that this is far from a reality in many places and for various reasons. While our current educational centres may differ greatly from those established by the Good Mother and the Good Father during their lifetime, they are equally vital for thousands of families in today's world.

Let us hope that Jesus the Teacher continues to encourage our evangelising efforts in education.

Embrace you with affection.