

Our commitment can improve the world



Pastoral Care of Education

Dear Sisters,

¿Do you understand what you are reading?... ¿How can I understand unless someone explains it to me? (Acts 8, 30)

This phrase from the Acts of the Apostles sheds light on the section on the Pastoral Care of Education in the Congregation's Apostolic Plan. And it is important to remember that the main protagonist of the book of the Acts of the Apostles is the Holy Spirit (who led Philip to the eunuch). Who could explain to us in a better way, all that we do not understand? Is there perhaps a better guide, a better teacher? Experience will have already taught us that, behind the formators, teachers and lecturers we have had in life, there is hidden that promise of Jesus contained in the fourth Gospel: the Holy Spirit will come and teach them all things (John 14:26). We can affirm that every educational process that makes people grow, that opens horizons and develops potentialities is induced and guided by the Spirit.

This issue of INFO is dedicated to Educational Pastoral Care that we carry out as part of our mission. Many efforts have been made in these months to ensure that the task of education is not interrupted by the pandemic. The testimonies that we will read, speak of difficulties and achievements, of challenges, learning, experiences... With time, we will also know the deeper consequences that it is leaving on children, adolescents and young people having studied for many months, online, locked up in their homes, communicating virtually with their teachers and seeing their peers and friends on a computer screen. Psychiatrists and psychologists are already talking about it. We can assume that, like every life experience, they will be rewarded.

The educational task lies at the origin of our congregation; in the chaotic situation of a society in crisis and in the concern of the Good Mother and the Good Father to form the hearts of people. They were convinced that transforming the heart is the key to evangelization. And this is what the first chapter of the Constitutions (our identity card) states: "In order that God's reign may be present, we seek the transformation of the human heart..." (Const, 6). This is a major task that we carry out in the various formal education centres that we have in many countries, but also in so many pastoral tasks of informal education and human development.

To form the heart of people is to form their sensitivity. Accompanying them to discover their own identity, so that they can adequately direct emotions and affections towards their ideals in life. It is helping them to become aware of their impulses and desires, and to order them according to the values and principles they want to live by. It is, therefore, a matter of forming that personal inner core where, in the end, decisions are made for life.

Pope Francis says in this regard: "an authentic education must maintain a balance between the three human languages: that of the spirit, the heart and the hands," so that thought, feeling and action are coordinated in a balanced way in each person called by God to life. Educational Pastoral Care must ensure this, so that children and young people who are sensitive to human suffering and aware of the real problems of humanity will grow in their commitment to the Kingdom of God.

With my very best wishes,