Marianist Education and Context

Juan de Isasa, SM

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Volume 3

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Preface

The publication which we present here forms a part of the collection of *Marianist Education: Heritage and Future,* a series of essays on Marianist education that came out of a project which began to take shape, four years ago, under the leadership of the Assistant General for education of that time.

We Marianist religious have been creating educational works since our very origins, almost two centuries ago. Today we continue all over the world to dedicate the best of our human and material resources to education. The practical implementations are accompanied, as always, by reflection about the task to be accomplished, the ways of responding creatively to novel and unforeseen situations, and the means for transmission of our experience and wisdom to new generations of educators.

In this way, the Marianist educational tradition has been enriched over the years, nourished by the reflection, competence

and creativity of those who carry on the initial commitment. Marianist educators – at the beginning all were Marianists, while today almost all are laity – have known how to maintain an on-going dialogue with their environs so that their formational goals might continue being incarnated in each human situation.

Again today, current circumstances demand our attention. The internal conditions of the Society of Mary and of our own establishments need our renewed planning. The growing development of Marianist works in new countries and cultures, along with the consequent need to transmit to them an up-to-date Marianist pedagogy, as well as the majority presence of lay persons in almost all the positions of responsibility, are realities that mark the way forward in Marianist education.

Given these considerations, the idea arose to undertake the project of *Marianist Education: Heritage and Future.* The desire to deepen and to develop the content of the document on our educational characteristics impelled us to create something new. The growing interest in knowing our charism and the current contributions of the educational sciences have inspired and oriented our efforts. The new circumstances facing the youth and families of the societies where we are present urge us along in this task.

The books which form the collection are intended to respond to these needs. They are the result of a process of study, re-

flection and dialogue, and are meant to offer guidelines for a Marianist education capable of inspiring individuals and of transforming society. The target readerships are the many diverse groups of men and women interested in Marianist education: *Marianist religious* currently dedicated to education, both those who are now preparing themselves for it and those who have consecrated their entire lives to it; *lay persons* who direct, animate and teach in a Marianist institution, so that they can take on an educational project that might give meaning to their efforts and fill them with enthusiasm; *pastoral workers and other educators*, so that they might accomplish their task with awareness of the principles and motivations which inspire Marianist works; *those who animate and govern* Marianist life according to diverse levels of responsibility; *parents of the students,* who also begin a process of formation when their children enter an educational institution. The project is also directed to *alumni,* to *the society* in which we are present and to all those interested in education. Finally it is directed to local churches, so that they might understand more deeply what the Marianist educational works intend to do.

The ultimate goal, of course, is to better serve the *children and young people* who come to our educational institutions, and who are the principal addressees of all our efforts.

The purpose of this whole project is to offer a good instrument for promoting formation, reflection and dialogue in different Marianist surroundings. It can serve, at the same time, as a point of reference and of inspiration for local educational

projects. For that reason it includes theoretical reflections, as well as more concrete proposals. The *Characteristics of Marianist Education* are thus framed in a comprehensive study that intends to be thorough and rigorous, but yet accessible.

The ensemble of the work consists of various segments, each of which is developed in an independent publication. The purpose of the first segment, *Charism and Educational Mission,* is to show how the Society of Mary's dedication to education is closely related to its very identity. In the segment on *Educational Principles* we intend to plumb the depths of the foundations of Marianist education utilizing the contributions of anthropology and theology, showing the vision of society, of the world and of the person which we try to form, as well as of the educational institution where the work is to be carried out. The third topic addressed is the *Context*, given that the Marianist institutions must take account of, along with general principles, the needs, expectations and conditions proper to each locale, as well as of the advances of the pedagogical sciences and new technologies. The fourth segment treats the *Identity* of Marianist education, the heir of a rich tradition with distinctive traits that respond to the principles studied in the preceding chapters. The fifth section deals with the *Educational Activity* which is developed in diverse institutions and considers as well some agents and specific addressees. The sixth theme refers to *Animation and Leadership* of the Marianist educational works, since the accomplishment of their objectives depends in great part upon those who bear the burdens of leadership responsibility. Under the title of *New*

Education in New Scenarios, we intend to bring together in the seventh section the contributions of countries or continents more culturally distant from the Western environment in which Marianist education was born, or where there is as yet less of a tradition. The elaboration of the last section, *A Project Open to the Future*, is foreseen for later. In it we will try to develop what are for us today, as the fruit of a *creative fidelity,* the Mission and the Vision of a Marianist education that looks toward the future.

To carry this whole project forward we have enjoyed the collaboration of a very valuable team. Among the authors are religious and lay persons, men and women, immediately engaged in the Marianist educational mission or fulfilling diverse responsibilities in this field. All of them know well the Marianist educational praxis and its history. The majority have been teachers, directors, department heads, researchers in pedagogical sciences or coordinators of the Marianist mission in their respective countries.

The book now in hand is, then, the third volume of the collection. It carries the title: *Marianist Education and Context*. Marianist institutions see themselves as part of civil society and integrated into it. Besides general principles, they must take into account the needs, expectations and conditions specific to each locale. Here we consider the need to know the social, cultural and ecclesiastical challenges thrown up in the places where Marianist institutions are working, so that we can offer valid alternatives and attain in each one of them

our formational goals. The Marianist institutions, moreover, cannot ignore the advances in the pedagogical sciences nor the new theories about education. They must be open to these contributions, knowing how to differentiate between what is valid and what is not. The new information, communication and learning technologies, which are clearly impacting educational processes and the operation and organization of the institutions, deserve particular attention in this section.

Although it is not specifically treated here, it must not be forgotten that Marianist education is present today in surroundings and cultures in which the Christian tradition and experience are those of a minority who live among other beliefs. The careful study of each one of those contexts in their various places is fundamental for establishing and sustaining in them a Marianist work.

The author is Juan de Isasa, a Spanish Marianist brother. A Licentiate in Physical Sciences and in Theology, he is quite knowledgeable about Marianist education, a field in which he worked for many years and in which he held various positions of responsibility. He was Director of the Colegio Nuestra Señora del Pilar in Madrid and spent several years as President of the Grupo Editorial SM. He is the author of numerous articles and conferences on Marianist education. We sincerely thank him for the work he has accomplished here, a pleasant and very lucid read, as well as for the time he has dedicated to it. Our thanks go also to those who have contributed to it with their suggestions and input toward bettering the text.

Marianist education will have a future if we are capable of responding to the changes of time and place, all the while remaining faithful to the original insights. New adaptations will be needed, new pathways explored, but in this way the tradition will be enriched even more, and our educational project will continue to fulfill, now and in the future, a qualitative and relevant role. And so, it will be able to continue *to give life and life in abundance.*

Essodomna Maximin Magnan, SM
Assistant General for Education
May 2014

INTRODUCTION
CONTEXT AND PARADIGM

1. WHEN AND WHERE

When we begin the reading of a novel, in most cases, from the first page onward, the author informs us of the place and time in which the story will unfold.

In recent successful Spanish novels, the beginnings bear out this rule almost to the letter:

> *"Rio de Janeiro 1816, Pedro de Braganza y Borbón recently celebrated his 18th birthday and is in love."* (Moro, Javier. *El imperio eres tú.* Planeta, 2011).

> *"Barcelona, December 1957. That year at Christmas time, every morning dawned laced with frost under leaden skies."* (Ruiz Zsapón, Carlos. *The Prisoner of Heaven*. Harper Perennial, 2013).

A slight bit more, almost two pages, was used by the Nobel Laureate in Literature, Mario Vargas Llosa, for the setting of his most recent novel, *The Dream of the Celt:*

> *"Ever since that gray, rainy April morning in 1916 when, numb with cold, he was arrested in the ruins of McKenna's Fort, in the south of Ireland…"*

But the best known example is the beginning of *Don Quixote* in which are set down, though with a measure of ambiguity, the place and time in which the adventures of the "Man of La Mancha" took place.

> *"Somewhere in La Mancha, in a place whose name I do not care to remember, a gentleman lived not long ago, one of those who has a lance and ancient shield on a shelf and keeps a skinny nag and a greyhound for racing."*

Consider, perhaps, this strange beginning of *Oliver Twist* in which Charles Dickens refuses to give exact references concerning the moment and place in which the story develops.

> *"Among other public buildings in a certain town which for many reasons it will be prudent to refrain from mentioning, and to which I will assign no fictitious name,…."*

We have to place ourselves in a time and space to understand what we shall be reading, all the more so to understand how we are going to live. We have to place ourselves in the appropri-

ate space and time in order to draw correct conclusions with regard to language, behavior, etc. A phrase or action not noted or badly placed in time and space, one that makes little or no sense, can lead us to a wrong interpretation.

2. THE CONTEXT

We can think of this space-time dimension in many ways. At times we refer simply to "space-time", at times "historical context" or simply "the context."

In the popular Spanish *Diccionario Clave* (Madrid: Ediciones SM, 2012) there are two acceptable definitions of the word *contexto*:

> *"1. In linguistics, the setting upon which depend the meaning and the strength of a word, a sentence or a fragment of a text.*
>
> *2. The situation or physical surroundings in which it is considered a fact ".*

The example used by that dictionary to demonstrate the real meaning of the first definition shows quite clearly the tremendous power that the context holds:

> *"If you don't understand a word, perhaps you can deduce its meaning from its context."*

That is to say that, besides the structure, the context is also a key to interpretation.

It must be noted also, that words, concepts, ideas…change, and sometimes radically, according to the context in which they are used. We could give many examples of this potential for change. Just think how much in a short time in our own Spanish the meaning of words like *colega* [colleague] has changed.

Similar examples can easily be found in any language.

In a book published by the Ediciones SM, *El muchacho bien educado* ["The Well-Educated Boy"], which was used in our schools in the 1940's, '50's, '60's, there are expressions, ways of acting, references to the family…which just a few years later seem to us totally out of place and out of context: *Un plato bien colmado arguye glotonería* ["A full plate combats gluttony"]. Today the words *colmado, arguye* and *glotonería* are hardly ever used. A boy of today would not understand that sentence at all.

That book, by Don Antonio Martínez (never signed by the author), shows how the context of words and social usages changes, sometimes radically, in just a few years.

3. PARADIGM

The concept of "paradigm" can help us understand better the sense and importance of what we call "context." "Paradigm" is a grammatical and linguistic term that is in some way equivalent to "theoretical framework."

Thomas Kuhn gave "paradigm" its contemporary meaning, when he used it to refer to the set of practices that define a scientific discipline during a specific period of time.

And he defined it this way in his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*:

> *"[A paradigm is] … a constellation of group commitments, values, methods…shared by the members of a specific community"*

This is the sense in which the word "paradigm" is understood here; *i.e.,* the "paradigm" provides the context within which different theoretical models are developed. Paradigm is one way of understanding reality.

The paradigmatic models provide the "context" within which theories are formed and provide the general guidelines for grouping diverse theoretical frameworks. So "paradigm" represents one way of seeing reality.

In general, and especially in the world of the sciences, changes of "paradigm" are usually drastic, even though the sciences appear to be mature and stable. Regarding this apparent "stability", Lord Kelvin's statement in 1900 is famous: "Nothing more remains now to be discovered in the field of physics. All that is lacking are more and more precise measurements."

Five years later, Einstein published his work on special relativity. The "paradigm" of Einstein's relativity reduced Newton's "paradigm" to a particular case within a new theory that was broader and more general.

"Paradigm" is also *Weltanschauung*, "worldview," a way of understanding the world, reality and the human being. In this sense one can say that a "paradigm" is the set of experiences, beliefs and values that affect the way in which an individual perceives reality, and the way in which he reacts to that perception.

Moreover one must always remember that the thought patterns dominant in a society are supported by organizations, social leaders, educators, communications media, etc., *i.e.*, by all the persons and groups of persons that we can call social stakeholders.

Hans Küng, in *Christianity: Essence, History, and Future*, applies the concept of "paradigm" to the history of Christianity, explaining how this religion has been expressed throughout the centuries by shaping itself in different "paradigms":

> *We shall have the opportunity to see the enormous dramatic quality which this history of Christianity acquired in which a faith community, small at the beginning, but which then grew with an extraordinary rapidity, went through an entire series of basic religious changes in responding to ever new great worldwide historical challenges; in the long term revolutionary changes of "paradigm" (p. 75 in Spanish version).*

One can say that a dominant "paradigm" refers to the values or thought systems of a society at a specific moment in time.

To sum up, in a "paradigm" are: an implicit presupposition of what can be understood, a way of understanding how knowledge can be acquired and a lifestyle marked by a definite ethic.

4. THE SOCIETY OF MARY CHANGES CONTEXT

The history of the Society of Mary is rather short, a mere two centuries. But that does not prohibit there having been, in those two hundred years, great changes which, although they certainly cannot be called "paradigm" shifts in the broad sense of Kuhn's definition, we can say that we are dealing with changes sufficiently profound that many values, methods and principles of the Society of Mary have been altered, entailing the need to rethink them time and time again. The newly-born Society of Mary went within a few years of its foundation in southern France to Franche-Comté, Alsace, Switzerland, and shortly afterwards to Austria, the USA and Japan. In its dedication to teaching it ran the anything but easy gamut from private education to public schools, normal schools and technical schools. Here were significant changes, all of which undoubtedly affected the nascent congregation which was seeking to find its place in society and in the Church itself.

Very significant was the initial radical culture shock which faced the Marianists upon their arrival in Japan. Until then,

the various methods with which they had been working had many common elements, and could be said to belong to what was called Western culture. But Japan presented a completely different context. Therefore they had to learn and understand the medium in which they were to live and move. A practical example makes the point. In the narratives of the French religious who arrived in the country of the Rising Sun, they recount that on the first day of class, when the teacher ordered the students to enter the room, the pupils did not move. The director of the first Marianist school in Japan, Bro. Heinrich, recalls it thus:

> *It is difficult for you to imagine how much fun the classes are. These youth come to us without knowing a single word of French or English. To have them enter the classroom for the first time, I used the universal language of signs. They seemed to understand me, but stopped at the door. I repeated my invitation a first and a second time, and only then did they decide to enter. It is the Japanese custom to be asked three times before accepting. Then, after entering the classroom, a new ceremony: three successive bows, at right angle, to which one must respond if one does not wish to be seen as poorly educated. With signs I asked them to be seated, and again it took three invitations.*

(La Société de Marie au Japon 1887-1932, J. Vernier. Chaminade Gaku-en, Tokyo, 1933. [translated from Spanish])

The teacher quickly learned that, in the Japanese culture, it is a sign of a good education to wait until an order is repeated before following it.

They were in a context quite different from that to which they had been accustomed.

Before arriving in Japan, the Society of Mary had begun its work in the United States of America. In 1849, even during the life of the Founder, Fr. Leo Meyer had crossed the Atlantic to start the American sojourn of the Society. There the culture shock was not so strong. The United States was a country formed by waves of immigrants from many European countries. In particular, in the region where the Marianists began their work the dominant population was of German origin. It was with them that the religious began their work in that country.

In several countries of North Africa, also, the Society was established towards the end of the 19th century, specifically in Tunisia, Libya and Syria, where Marianist works were founded. That in Tunis, which still exists, is now celebrating its 120th anniversary.

As with America, in these places the culture shock was less strong, since in general the work of the brothers remained quite circumscribed within the French or European (sometimes Maltese) community, although in truth our door was never closed to the native students of other religions or cultures. These last, however, were never sufficient in number

to set the tone of the school. On the contrary, what they were looking for was the French culture, language and education.

Soon however, these works ran into difficulties and those promising beginnings began dying little by little.

In 1883 there were 15 Marianist religious in North Africa in several educational works, which enjoyed prestige and which appeared to have a very bright future.

Although, for reasons we have just mentioned, there were no great cultural differences, there were details that called for some minor adaptation to the real situation. On several occasions the religious tried to obtain permission to wear frock coats of a lighter material to better withstand the heat of those latitudes. They did not receive this permission nor the authorization to wear straw hats instead of the usual felt ones.

In the schools that the Spanish religious opened in Morocco, in the Spanish protectorate zone (Tetuán, Tangiers, Alcazarquivir [el Kasr el-Kebir]), even though that outreach was especially dedicated to the Spanish and European colony resident there, there were always Jews and Muslims who had their own religion classes and Arabic language classes. Furthermore, given the special circumstances that prevailed, these were the first co-ed schools, coming many years before this type of education would spread and even become obligatory in many places.

Education, just like any other human activity, depends to some degree upon the context within which it takes place. To ignore this reality is, simply, to perpetrate a lie. Few human activities are as practical as education. One is educated for living. Even more, a student is educated for his future life, where he will be pursuing his own active career. This means that the teacher must not only know the present context, but also in a certain sense must be able to understand, or at least intuit, how conditions that shape what we call the context are going to change.

If this has always been difficult, it surely is more so today, since changes, while they have always occurred, now come more rapidly than ever. Who could have imagined, just 15 years ago, that in our current schools we would have to limit the use of the students' cell phones, that the school would have to be connected to the Internet in many or in almost all its classrooms, that there would be cases of addiction to the Internet or to electronic games….

The way of doing school work, the textbooks, the blackboards, everything that has to do with the educational process has changed radically, and it is necessary to adapt permanently to the changes.

5. A CASE OF PARADIGM IN EDUCATION

In 1837 the Society of Mary was taking its first steps. It counted hardly half a dozen works, and was still in quest of what might

be the defining feature of the new Institute. The writing of the *Rule* was just being completed; there was no extension beyond the borders of France. The Guizot Law in 1833 had deregulated primary education, allowing a significant increase in the possibilities of work in the field of education.

Meanwhile, in that same year of 1837 in England, Victoria ascended the throne. She was to mark an entire epoch, and in her reign of more than sixty years, one can say that she created a new "paradigm" for teaching: Victorian education.

There are many elements that make up that model; a few can be highlighted here.

England went through a great economic development occasioned by her victory over Napoleon and supported by her maritime dominance, which contributed to her hegemony in trade. The British Empire was consolidated, giving that people a putative moral, economic and social superiority that became the model in many areas for the rest of Europe. Education was based on these presuppositions, accompanied by a rigid puritanical morality which, at least outwardly, was strictly enforced. It may be said, however, that, hidden from the public eye, it was possible to live by a double moral standard in secret that permitted or tolerated behaviors that in public would be severely condemned. Thus "Victorian education" was built up.

6. TODAY'S PARADIGM

Today there is no less an educational "paradigm" whose principal elements, at least, it is important to understand.

There are numerous studies on the topic, but we will consider only three aspects that can be found in any current educational model.

6.1. The much vaunted "globalization."

Even if not comfortable with its name, we all have an idea of what "globalization" means, since even in the smallest details of our lives we feel the effects of this phenomenon.

There are some who advocate *mundialización*, because "globalization" does not always signify a world-wide extent of the phenomenon. Nonetheless, in spite of such misgivings, the term "globalization" has prevailed.

According to the dictionary of the Spanish Real Academia, the term ("globalization") means: "Trend for markets and businesses to spread, reaching a worldwide dimension, that transcends national borders."

Already in 1961, McLuhan spoke about a "global village," but it has been predominantly since the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the fall of the Iron Curtain, that the configuration of factors that we call "globalization" has occurred.

This is not the first time that the world has been "globalized." At the time of Alexander the Great, what was then the known world was Hellenized. The language, the customs and the culture of virtually all the Mediterranean Basin became Greek. There was resistance on the part of some, especially of the people of Israel, but in the end the Greek vision of the world imposed itself, and the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek.

We are conscious of being part of a world in which borders are easy to pass, if indeed they still exist. The Europeans move around their continent without needing a passport. Many countries use the same currency and undergo the same economic hardships.

Popular music is listened to throughout the world, while certain fashions in clothing and modes of acting are imitated everywhere.

But for a cultural element to help its consumers to become properly socialized, it has to be chosen, received and developed as their own. If not, the only thing that element does is to create a passive consumerism. A foreign cultural element is enriching insofar as it is integrated and not merely consumed.

Globalization, therefore, especially in its cultural aspect, is a dynamic process that is never stifled.

A young American named Bill Gates achieved what the human race had sought for centuries: he gave it a common language.

We can use a computer in any country in which we may find ouselves. With it, we all speak the same language with no need of a translator.

6.2. The abundance and facility in communication and information.

Today it is very simple, and in most cases without cost, to access any type of information.

This development is enormously positive, as long as one is able to choose and filter the part of the available information that is needed and useful at the moment for what one wants to do. Otherwise, an excess of information can be contradictory and confusing rather than a help.

The mobile phone is an instrument already used by children from a very early age. Access to every kind of information is open to all, and only in some dictatorships are there restrictions on accessing the immense amount of information that is available. If in the past one had to learn how to find information, today one has to learn, first and foremost, to organize and evaluate it. Communicating is not only easy, but we have the feeling of being in communication all the time. In addition, and this is not an entirely positive characteristic, there has arisen the idea that all access to information should come free of charge, so that the rights of authors/composers raise complicated and controversial issues.

6.3. The technologization of life.

Although their operations are not even superficially under-stood, we increasingly use technical instruments that at times are of great complexity. We are scarcely able to utilize a small part of that complexity, leaving fallow the greater part of the capacities of these instruments.

Curiously, with many people this enormous technologiza-tion has found a place along side a return to divination, to the exotic, the mysterious. Perhaps this phenomenon is due to the fact that technology does not satisfy all of a person's cravings, and that "emptiness" leads, with apparent ease, to sharing the use of the Internet with a credulous reading of horoscopes.

To these three characteristics of our current "paradigm," we can add three others more interior to the person and which mold the manner of living, especially of today's youth. Javi-er Cortés points them out in Educar para evangelizer, raíces para la esperanza [Educate to evangelize, bases for hope] (Foro SM nº 5. Province of Spain).

6.4. Uncertainty as vulnerability.

The experience of uncertainty has always accompanied the evolution of humanity and its various cultural manifestations. But this uncertainty was found in many cases within the con-text of specific worldviews, which shared the possibility that persons and peoples might construct their own narratives of

meaning and, therefore, of identity. This function was exercised preponderantly by religion over many centuries. In more recent times "modernity" itself constructed a new story which also worked as a guide vis-à-vis uncertainty and shared scripts for personal and social self-actualization, fundamentally based on the key idea of universal progress. This new modern paradigm, in its various and multiple versions, broke the predominance of religion as the point of reference in face of uncertainty, but it itself has fallen by the wayside through the second half of the 20th century because of many factors, among them the realization of the horrors that humanity has been capable of committing. For a long period of time, one thought and acted out of a paradigm of unlimited progress, confident in the capacities of human reason.

If we look at nature herself through the entire history of evolution, we discover that, in face of uncertainty, three response mechanisms have been developed. The first is that of inert matter: resistance. The way in which the stone tries to survive unforeseeable changes around it is nothing but resistance relying upon the strength of its own make-up. The second is represented by living beings. These, in contrast to inert matter, have available a greater flexibility for adaptation and evolution. Today there exists a third group that interacts with uncertainty: cultivated beings, humanity proper with all the creative power of its culture. In this case, the successful mechanism that has been being consolidated as a challenge to the uncertainty of surroundings has three moments: knowledge, planning and anticipation. Intersubjectivity lets us share a knowledge that

crystalizes into a plan and the plan allows us to take the initiative in face of our surroundings. So it is as if humanity has been generating a cumulative response of multiple cultural elements available today to the men and women of our time.

This little review of the evolution of nature and of humanity can be very useful for our reflection. Any attempt at resistance makes us like inert matter and is bound to a progressive loss of matter right up to its deformation and disappearance. Adaptation and evolution can give us greater longevity, but it will always be the environment that writes the script; at the end, we would be only the mimetic outcome of external circumstances. I believe it is not hard to recognize both typologies in the failure of Catholic schools, however numerous they might sometimes seem.

We still need to delve into the way that educated persons handle adaptation. Curiously enough, the possibility of successful survival in an uncertain environment is directly proportional to how independent one is of that very environment. From adaptation to independence--one makes progress in uncertainty if one gains independence with respect to the environment. The application of this principle of nature's evolution to the educational situation that concerns us is of extraordinary importance. Only by being grounded in a profound cultural undertaking that proceeds from a refined understanding of humanity's wisdom, will we be able to successfully confront uncertainty. The question, then, is directed to each one of us and to our institutions, and its content is the quality and strength of our undertaking.

From this perspective we can well understand the passage from uncertainty to vulnerability. To the extent to which undertakings become blurred or subjectivized, as we shall see a bit further on, or simply disappear, uncertainty, a stubbornly perennial and constant fact of life, becomes fear, terror or helplessness, producing an existential experience in vulnerable persons.

6.5. The subjectivization of the I.

Since G. Lipovetsky began in the decade of the 1980's his reflection upon the so-called second individualist revolution of modernity, the years since have only gone deeper into this phenomenon. Culture has walked this path with a firm footstep, as has reflection itself upon this process, about which today no one has any doubts. The "I," in its search for consistency, takes the road of individuation, *i.e.,* it dissociates itself from traditional models and securities, from external controls, from general moral laws and takes up as personal and non-transferable its own construction, taking as its point of reference and its ultimate criterion of judgment the I itself. It seems as if its greatest wish is to focus on the recognition of individuals as the carriers within themselves of all the rights that must be recognized and respected, regardless of all that has been generated by institutions. This process leads to several other facts, no less significant, that have to do with widespread disaffection with traditions and institutions.

It is not necessary to go much deeper into this obvious reality in our culture in order to notice its immense importance for education. On the one hand, the perspective of those whom we are educating has changed radically; their goal is no longer integration into structures of meaning that are more or less social, but the personal construction of the "I." But at the same time this same situation opens up to education an entire world of things that must be taught in an explicit manner and which need to be seen with interiority, affective life, experience of the self, *etc*. Think, for example, about the current explosion with regard to spiritual understanding. Thus, as in every human phenomenon, we are looking here also at a situation which opens up new possibilities for educational work

6.6. Identity in diversity.

In fact, one task that all education must carry out is that of supporting the formation of the identity of persons. For a long time the formation of identity was based on two great pillars, the identification with specific models of being person that were incarnated in various witnesses, and the integration into communities or meaningful groups with various degrees of institutionalization. As LI. Duch states, identity develops in the interaction of the person with various receptive structures that accompany the *in-fans* (one who does not speak) until his emergence as a person capable of speaking to himself a word of identity. These receptive structures (co-descendence, co-residence and co-transcendence) have gone into crisis and today, as Javier Elzo says, we have passed from one paradigm

of formation of identity based on identification, to another, the key to which is in the construction of identity through experimentation. In fact, personal experience has become the highest authentic judge for establishing the validity of offerings of meaning and it decides its final configuration in the subjectivized "I."

This project of identity construction cohabits, moreover, with a growing phenomenon, also the fruit of a cultural globalization grounded in the new possibilities of technology. One speaks here of the intense experience that we have of diversity. It is not that diversity did not exist before; it is simply more keenly present now. Persons of the Muslim faith have existed for centuries, but today in Spain mosques are not now a matter of history, but are present in our towns and cities.

This presence of what is different, of the enormous variety of possibilities of meaning, along with the previously mentioned process, makes the transmission in education of the Christian identity as a mode of formation of the personal and social "I" much more difficult. To construct and maintain strong identities in this context is a very difficult task.

To conclude this first section of an overview of the context, I would like to raise a point that, from my point of view, is crucial for meeting our challenge in Christian education. The preceding analysis shows clearly that the key to the situation in which we are living is a cultural key. By that I am not saying that there exist no structural elements in our world that play a

determinative role in this situation. I am simply stating that I believe the times are long gone when socio-cultural phenomena could be interpreted through patterns of structures and superstructures. To put it another way, the determinism of economic structures is not so much in the configuration of social classes as in the fact that the very economic system itself has been converted into the quintessential cultural broker. Capitalism, as V. Verdú has put it very well, abandoned some time ago its capitalism of production function to become a capitalism of seduction, the instrument of choice which is none other than that of determining, in a self-interested manner, the pretended autonomous options of consumers, thus invading the space wherein lies the very meaning of their own life.

This intense relationship between culture and the possibilities for determining the meaning of life has been pointed out by various authors, among them Baudrillard.

In the reflections upon different contexts of education that follow, there will always be present, in one form or another, these characteristics of current society, as much in its social dimension as in its more individual aspects. It is with these that we must deal in order to do our work and to accomplish our mission.

DIVERSE CONTEXTS

1. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

1.1. Society, a danger for the individual?

There has long been discussion about the influence of society in education. Since Aristotle defined man as a political animal, *i.e.,* one who lives in the *polis*, in the city, it has been clear that society has an impact upon the individual, forming him in some way; it is not merely an abstract frame of reference in which his life plays out.

There have been, however, many attempts to address the issue of education as a purely individual matter without societal influence or, in any case, without a negative influence.

Crusoes, Émiles, Tarzans, Wolf Men… have proliferated in the attempts to find formulas or individual explanations for the educational process.

In 1719 *Robinson Crusoe* was published. It is the single English book most printed and read after the Bible. Its diffusion was, from its beginning, enormous, and although classified as children's literature, its author Daniel Defoe was not thinking specifically about children when he wrote this novel.

In reality, it seems that, being based upon some actual facts about some shipwrecked persons, the book is a hymn to the reigning colonialism and Puritanism in England at that time. The English gentleman who is the hero of the novel is capable of surviving, in spite of the forces of nature being unleashed time and time again. Robinson belongs to an upper class, capable of educating other inferior races and of transmitting to them his own lifestyle and values.

An analogous case is that of Tarzan (1912), an English aristocrat (Lord Greystoke) abandoned in the jungle, or of Mowgli, who in some respects takes on the image of the founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, mothered and educated by a she-wolf.

The best known instance, surely, is that of Rousseau's *Émile*, since in this case the author actually tries to develop an explicit theory of education which has indeed always had a great influence on its theoreticians. The title says it quite clearly: *Émile ou de l'éducation.*

The great question that Rousseau asks himself is how can man maintain his inborn goodness in the midst of a corrupt society. Since he is the work of the Creator, man is good at birth.

Society makes him bad.

His book was banned and burned in Paris and in Geneva, but his ideas served as a point of reference for the educational system born in the French Revolution. Divided into five parts which correspond to the various stages of the evolution of the person, the best known text, and the one most militated against, is the so-called "profession of faith of the Savoyard vicar," in which he advocates a natural religion that does not require Divine Revelation.

In each of these instances, there is an attempt to avoid the influence of society.

1.2. ACTUAL EXPERIENCE

Many of the ideas we have just perused have a strong utopian component. Modern societies want an education that includes everyone, which gives possibilities to whomever and that avoids in a particular way any differences arising from the background of the person to be educated. Significant in this regard is the experience of "Summerhill," a school created in 1921 in Dresden, transferred to England in 1923, named for the place in which the school was located. The motto of that educational experiment is "Do as you please."

The school began with five students and currently enrolls some 75 pupils, aged between 5 and 18 years.

The function of a child is to live his/her own life, not the life that his/her anxious parents think he/she should live, nor a life according to the purpose of the educators who think they know best. (A.S. Neil, founder of Summerhill)

Neill refused to let tests and examinations define the rhythm of education. The rhythm is set by the student. The role of the educator is in a certain way subject to the will of the pupil, and not even to that of the parents. The teacher is transformed into a kind of instrument in the hands of the pupil.

It would seem difficult through such a subjective process to fit, without anything more, into the life of society, which necessarily imposes some rules, demands some requirements and carries certain commitments.

This and other similar experiments surely offer some important insights and values, but they remain quite impractical in the real order; the proof is that this school never exceeded a hundred students, not to mention the price that an educational system *à la carte* must cost, a system in which each one organizes himself according to his own taste and seeks to follow his own personal rhythm.

1.3. The Christian model

The Christian vision of the human person differs considerably from that just described.

For the Christian, the person is above all made in the image of God, an image indeed distorted at times, but always a true image.

Starting from this conviction, the human person is a being that can become better, that can rise again after a fall, and can definitely always count on the help of God himself.

The person has something contradictory, something complex within himself, that keeps him always in a process of change, and with a possibility of becoming better. We are never satisfied with the point at which we find ourselves in any given moment, since we are always looking for more. We love our society, but we want to change it.

Already since the beginnings of Christianity this "being in the world," yet aspiring towards another place, was one of the marks which characterized the followers of Jesus.

In reality we want to make of society the Kingdom that Jesus announced, all the while knowing that it is really an ideal at which we will never arrive, but towards which we strive.

In setting an educational model for ourselves, these thoughts carry a fundamental weight. We seek to better our society, to make it more human, and to participate in that transformation with all our strength.

The Christian educator, therefore, educates above all to inculcate values, those values of the Gospel, easily shared even by those who do not believe, which configure what Jesus called the Kingdom: honesty, acceptance, forgiveness, the quest for peace, fraternity....

The first article of the 1948 *Declaration of Universal Human Rights* of the United Nations says that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

And the Marianist *Rule of Life*, for its part, states:

> *Whatever our tasks, we act in the name of Jesus, announcing the redemption of all in Christ and the transformation of the world into his kingdom* (Art. 64).

And a later article says:

> *Others work principally in the fields of education and culture, aiming to show that the human person can be fulfilled only in response to God's plan* (Art. 69).

The Christian educator, although a realist, has to incorporate in himself a lot of the utopian, of the nonconformist. In other words, he has to play a bit of the prophet in denouncing injustices and proclaiming the future.

1.4. IMPLEMENTATION

Given all that we have said, it does not seem possible that we leave education at the margins of society and neglect its influence, both in its positive and its negative elements. Nevertheless, education has to carry some countercultural element. It deals ultimately with preparing the student to improve the situation in which he now lives. To accomplish that certain things have to change.

In our world there are many types of societies. Seeing from within our own, we always run the risk of thinking that all are equal, but that ours is the best. To live in a society does not mean being non-critical about it. On the contrary, to be truly engaged with society means to discover, with genuine insight, its faults and to be empowered with more right to expose them. We do not forget that education is for the future.

In many cases, for our Christian educators, it is the Gospel itself that impels us towards a certain counter-culturalism that does not accept all the presuppositions that the society in which we live tries to impose. One certainly needs to know how to read the signs of the times. One must discern among those signs which ones should remain and develop, and those which should made to disappear because they diminish the person, degrade him, or simply don't let him grow.

To make judgments of value is always difficult, but a comparison with the Gospel of the values which each society promotes and encourages is unavoidable. Therefore there has to be a work of discernment with respect to the influence that a

society exercises in the process of education. This discernment is expressed in the ideology of the institutions or in the programmatic documents on education which institutions develop and, in our case, the Society of Mary itself. Yet the concrete application is in the hands of the teacher. He it is who is responsible for its application.

Daniel Pennac says:

> *The great "prof" must incarnate before the students a love of his work, a passion for what he is teaching, a gift to the students and the feeling of a leader. He was always interested in forming an opposition to fashions, to the local mentality and, on the other hand, he wanted to develop himself in the shade, or better in the light of a master in whom he discerned an exemplar for himself*[1].

In some countries there is freedom to confront power in a Christian way. In others, the place and role of the woman in the society…. Today there is no confrontation between science and religion in the fields of creation, the origin of man… as there was in the 16th century, when the heliocentrism defended by Galileo was condemned by the Church, while at the same time in the Jesuit schools that theory was explained "as probable." Saying "probable," one might avoid falling under suspicion of heresy. "It was probable, only probable, that the earth circles the sun."

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[1] The quotation, not literal, is from *Chagrin de l'école.*

Nevertheless, the great confrontations between science and faith arise today around life issues: abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research…. In these questions, the "social context" is not always in agreement with Christian thought.

Reviewing Christian history, one must admit that we were not always up to the level of the situation and its circumstances. Nevertheless the ability to ask forgiveness and to get back up is a fundamentally Christian attitude.

Today the influence of the Church in society is much less than it was in the past in the Western world. That ought to make us think that what society admires in Christians is not so much our educational system as our quality of mercy. We need to reflect upon whether we ought not to base our education precisely on that quality, that is, on mercy. That ought to be the influence that the Church should exercise upon society, not only through its social works, but also in the educational ones. Without neglecting in any way the technical and professional aspects, we ought to make that mercy permeate everything.
Surely another utopia!

2. THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

Today there is no doubt that education is a professional work and, as such, it is wrapped up in legislation, subject to programs that are too often changing and to academic, administrative and other demands of all kinds.

There are many educational models at work today in the realm of the Catholic school. There are places in which it is prohibited or persecuted, other places where it is tolerated, and still others where it is supported and recognized.

It would be ingenuous today to consider the Catholic school from a position of advantage or privilege. In those countries where that used to be the case, the situation has changed radically. In addition, today the Church claims no special consideration nor any preferential treatment. It has to compete with other educational offerings.

The history of France at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th was very significant in this regard, and the consequences for the Society were quite important. Chaminade's own life was sufficiently agitated to the degree that he was not overly affected by the different changes that the political context underwent during the years that he lived.

After the great waves of the Revolution, in the years of the Bourbon Restoration and of the resurgence of religious life, he founded the Society of Mary in a new form and with structures adapted to the new situations.

Nor was the orientation towards teaching clearly defined from the outset, and various forms of apostolate were tried out as new possibilities arose. From secondary education to primary, from professional schools to normal schools, the first Marianists were trying to settle upon their own manner of understanding

teaching and looking for the right kind of pedagogy that would characterize the newborn institute.

Throughout its history, the Society of Mary has known, in very diverse countries, situations that were difficult because of the political vicissitudes of the moment. Sometimes there were real persecutions. In all situations, the Marianists understood how to react and to adapt to sometimes difficult circumstances in order to push ahead with their educational apostolate.

Two instances were especially important in the history of the Society. One came at the beginning of the 20th century, in 1903, when the Society of Mary legally disappeared in France as a consequence of the anti-clerical laws about education. It was a demise that had been foreseen for several years in which legislation was little by little suffocating the religious congregations, especially those devoted to education. Precisely because this situation was foreseen, the Society was very well prepared to face it, when it did occur, with the least amount of losses. The religious were secularized and the works had to be sold. Parents and former students organized companies that bought many of those works and contracted with the religious to staff them.

A similar situation occurred in Spain later, beginning in 1931. The Republican laws were at times clearly directed against the Society of Jesus, but their effects impacted upon all the religious. The so-called "religious question" was one of the great problems of the Republic, which tried, and partly suc-

ceeded, in promulgating clearly sectarian and discriminatory laws. The solutions adopted were very similar to those which had been applied in France at the beginning of the century. This episode ended, unfortunately, with a civil war in Spain, in which 14 Marianist religious died, seven of whom have been beatified by the Church.

These persecutions directed against the religious congregations do not usually have the effects intended by those who unleash them. At the same time, in all the cases in which the political situation has been aggressive against the religious, leading even to persecution, both the hierarchy and the religious authorities have sought calmness, peace and an evangelical response to the difficult situation being experienced.

At a particularly difficult moment, the Superior General of the Society of Mary at the time, Fr. Joseph Simler, wrote the following reflections about the situation as it was happening in France at the beginning of the 20th century:

> When the Church is protected by the civil power, its members are exposed to the evils of well-being, which lead to laxity. On the other hand, the civil power gives the impression of honoring the Church but only in order to subject her and make her an instrument of its own domination and influence; then she falls asleep in a facile illusion, in a deluded security; the exercise of zeal falls into a simple routine and one ceases to be an apostle" (J. Simler, *Circular of October 21, 1901;* cited by A. Gascón, *Historia general de la Compañia de Maria.* Tomo II, p. 905).

In our day, and in most countries, political influence on education occurs above all in the area of curricula. It is the political power that decides, changes, qualifies and organizes the curriculum which must be followed, sometimes to the letter. Economic conditions also exercise a great influence upon the manner in which the educational institutions can carry out their task, as well as upon the students who are able to attend them. This factor involves not only the available resources, but also the policies followed by different countries. In many cases, the difficulties in this area constitute a determining factor.

There are many countries in which the works can be maintained only through the contributions of the families of the students. Those works must see to it that the cost of tuition and fees is not so high as to put the continuity of the institution in danger, or that only families with substantial resources can pay. They have to provide also for a generous scholarship fund for students not able to pay all the expenses so that they can keep the schools open to the entire population.

In other places the public authority is responsible for a large part of the expenses, which allows the institutions to be able to accept most of the families that want to come to them. That guarantees a relatively safe survival and operation under adequate conditions. This is a government option, which is not always understood or favored by all sectors of society or by all political forces. This advantageous situation did not happen by chance; there had to be, first all, work at creating a mentality within the society – especially among the sectors most affected,

such as the families—of presence and of dialogue where the political decisions are made. That is one more reason for not forgetting the need to be present and to participate actively in the organizations through which one can have an influence upon the decisions of the public authorities.

The autonomy of institutions and the mutual respect among them constitutes one of the most evident signs of democratic maturity. Unfortunately, it is an ideal that is difficult to attain. On the contrary, the more imperfect the democracy, the more some institutions try to interfere with others. In general, education is one part of the social structure that in many instances this interference represents an attempt at control.

In education, just as in other elements of life and society, the Church must put forth its principles, its ideas and its efforts, without trying to impose them. It must do so while respecting other positions, at least when they do not attack the deepest and most sacred elements of the human person.

There is question, therefore, of a delicate balance, which too often gets upset in one direction or the other.

3. THE ECCLESIASTICAL CONTEXT

3.1. Some history

The Church, therefore, has an age-old tradition in education, namely pedagogical resources, studies and research, institutions, personnel - consecrated and non-consecrated from religious orders and congregations - in a position to provide a significant Church presence in academic institutions and educational activity, in general. (Synod of Bishops: XIII Ordinary General Assembly, *Lineamenta* 20.)

In fact, the Church has always considered one of its missions to be to teach, to announce, to proclaim the message of Jesus. In this message is implied helping all to develop themselves as persons, to know how to be in the world and in society, to understand the reality around us and ultimately grow through the knowledge and development of the diverse qualities of each person.

Certainly, the history of the followers of Jesus has been rich in the field of education; it is filled with moments in which its contribution was decisive, opening up new paths in this area. Consider the cathedral schools, the universities, the ratio studiorum of the Jesuits, the birth of many congregations, for men and for women, dedicated to education, with new and sometimes daring styles and formulae, the implantations in mission countries…. At key moments the Church has managed to have input and impact upon education, and has preserved and expanded the cultural heritage of society.

The Society of Mary was born in the midst of that new sprouting of persons committed to education in the 19th century, especially in France. At that time the Church saw only the dangers in the world and so held a very negative vision of the history of humankind and of what was being called "progress." One must not forget that she had just come out of a long persecution that had produced many martyrs, and after a time when the Emperor Napoleon had humiliated the Pope in forcing him to sign a Concordat that, at its root, was nothing more than a new trap and an attempt to set up a national church detached from Rome.

On the other hand, the Enlightenment was attacking believers and the Church. There was certainly in that epoch a lack of prominent figures who could defend the Church with "enlightened" arms, so that it fell into facile apologetics and into reservations of all kinds in order to escape contagions and worse evils. There is nothing strange, therefore, about the defensive language of pontifical documents of the times.

Gregory XVI, the pope who published the laudatory decree for the Society of Mary, wrote in his encyclical Mirari vos that history had to be seen under the sign of "a conspiracy of evil men who cannot be looked upon with any indulgence, but must precisely be repressed with the rod" (August 15, 1832).

Pius IX shared a similar opinion when in the Syllabus, or list of 80 errors which he had to condemn, he enumerated the dangers which lie in wait for the faithful. The document is

divided into 10 chapters, in which he points out the different errors which attack society and which must be corrected with a strong hand: errors about faith, about nature, about the Church, about ethics. In one of these sections he lists this error:

> *The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization.*

3.2. THE TURN-ABOUT OF VATICAN II.

In 1959 a great many Catholics received with amazement the announcement by Pope John XXIII that he was convoking an Ecumenical Council. Many had to look in theological dictionaries to find out what this assembly meant for the Church and what it might mean for the life of Catholics.

The years of preparation were not easy ones, since from the very first day there were clearly two positions among those responsible for developing the documents. One tendency thought that it should be a council for defending the Church against the evils that were attacking it, while the other group believed that the moment had arrived for the Church to open up to the world and to engage it in dialogue.

Out of fear of the Curia authorities, the Pope submitted everything to discussion in announcing the convocation. The Vatican machinery, resigned before that inevitable meeting, knew how to maneuver in such circumstances: maintain strict

control of the agenda and the work through the Holy Office (the more conciliatory and preferred designation at that time for the Inquisition).

The spirit would not be that of Vatican Council I, but rather that of Trent, with its severe anathemas against ideas that no good Catholic could hold. As Cardinal Ottaviani explained it in the first phases of the Council: "We must be aware that the style of the Councils is concise, clear, short and that it is not that of sermons or pastoral letters of some bishop, nor even of the encyclicals of the Pope. The appropriate tone is that which has remained hallowed through the practice of the centuries."

The Council, however, was proceeding through channels different from those envisioned by Ottaviani. Not the least of the reasons for this was that there were more than 2000 bishops in the conciliar hall, and less than half were Europeans. There was fresh air; there were youthful approaches. In addition, the press helped to see that the discussions of the conciliar Fathers became known throughout the entire world, which could speak and have its voice come, albeit feebly, to the bishops meeting in Rome.

So the words of John XXIII on December 25, 1961, were very new and opened up a particularly positive dimension for the Church and its relationship to society in the Apostolic Constitution *Humanae salutis*, when he affirmed:

> *Indeed, in obedience to the warnings of Christ the Lord exhorting us to interpret the "signs … of the times" (Mt 16:3),*

among so much gloomy darkness, we can perceive not a few indications that seem to portend signs of a better future for the Church and the human race.

Here were words full of hope, of welcoming and not of condemnation or fear. Even more, this was the beginnings of a new language from the Vatican. Not of condemnation, but of understanding and affection. The Council used the expression "signs of the times" on four other occasions. According to Chenu, it was not just another formula, but one of the three or four most significant formulas in the conciliar documents, so that without it, it is impossible to understand Vatican II. Years later, John Paul II, in a catechesis in November 1998, confirmed not only the validity of this expression, but also its currency and importance.

The signs of the times are significant indications of the presence and action of the Spirit of God in history.

Being "indications," -- *i.e.*, not clear evidence without disagreement or doubt -- such signs are not definitive, and one must know how to read them. So one must begin by loving the times that we are living, in order thus to be able to perceive them appropriately. In reality, it has to do with knowing how to discern the connection between history and the Spirit of God, in such a way that the new questions allow one to understand anew, here and now, the gospel of Jesus.

From reflection upon those two ecclesial contexts which, risking oversimplification, we can call the negative and the posi-

tive, there arises necessarily a question: should the Church educate her faithful in fear or in hope? Without a doubt, it is difficult to understand the world and its complexities. The fear of the new, the strange, the different, can be a perennial danger. Generally speaking, it is the interpretation we place on facts that produces more fear than the facts themselves. In this area also, Vatican II signified a change for the Church.

The document especially dedicated to education, *Gravissimum educationis,* indicates the fundamental points upon which the educational activity of the Church and of Christians must rest. This Declaration was promulgated by Paul VI in the public session of October 28, 1965, after a final vote that garnered this result: 2290 votes in favor and 35 against. There had been up to seven previous redactions of the document, which was finally discussed between November 17 and 19, 1964. At the beginning of October of the following year, 1965, the text was already prepared for its reading and final approbation by the plenum of the Council.

The preamble of the document states unequivocally:

> *The Sacred Ecumenical Council has considered with care how extremely important education is in the life of man and how its influence ever grows in the social progress of this age. Indeed, the circumstances of our time have made it easier and at once more urgent to educate young people and, what is more, to continue the education of adults. Men are more aware of their own dignity and position; more and more*

they want to take an active part in social and especially in economic and political life. Enjoying more leisure, as they sometimes do, men find that the remarkable development of technology and scientific investigation and the new means of communication offer them an opportunity of attaining more easily their cultural and spiritual inheritance and of fulfilling one another in the closer ties between groups and even between peoples.

The document first highlights the universal right to education:

All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education (5) that is in keeping with their ultimate goal,(6) their ability, their sex, and the culture and tradition of their country, and also in harmony with their fraternal association with other peoples in the fostering of true unity and peace on earth.

It requests that psychology, pedagogy and didactics be taken int account when educating, in order to assure a harmonious development of the child.

Protected by this universal right to education, Christians have the right to a Christian education which, without being exclusionary, maintains the criteria of Christian faith and morality and vindicates the right of the Church, as a human society, to educate.

The document then passes on to insist upon the right of parents as the primary educators of their children:

Parents who have the primary and inalienable right and duty to educate their children must enjoy true liberty in their choice of schools.

Significant is the similarity of this paragraph to Article 26 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* proclaimed by the UN in 1948:

> *(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.*

> *(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.*

> *(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.*

The development of that UN *Declaration* was a painstaking endeavor, and various committees of experts participated in

the different draft stages. The final redactor of these articles was the humanist René Cassin, a French Jew, born in Bayonne and Nobel Peace Laureate of 1968. The Chilean Hernán Santa Cruz commented:

> *I realized quite clearly that I was participating in a truly significant historic event, where consensus was reached with respect to the supreme value of the human person, a value which did not originate in the decision of a temporal power, but in the very fact of existing, which is the basis of the inalienable right to live free of privation and oppression, and to completely develop one's own personality. In the Great Hall… there was an atmosphere of genuine solidarity and fraternity among men and women of all parts of the earth, which I had never seen in any international setting.*

The similarity between the declarations of the UN and of the Council is proof of the harmony possible between society and the Church when it comes to speaking about the human person, his possibilities and his dreams.

The Conciliar document goes on to stress that the school is the ideal place for educating, since in it the intellectual faculties of the student are cultivated and the capacity for right judgment is developed. Furthermore, the school helps to introduce us into our cultural patrimony, it promotes the sense of values, prepares for professional life and also promotes the feeling of friendship.

The Christian school, like any school, seeks to give a formation to its students in a communitarian climate of freedom and charity.

> *The influence of the Church in the field of education is shown in a special manner by the Catholic school. No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth. But its proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity….* (*Gravissimum, 8*).

This document of the Council is the point of departure for all the Church's later reflection upon education. Starting from it, there have been innumerable occasions in which the Church has spoken about education in its different facets and forms, countries and contexts. Today there continues to be a very clear awareness of the importance and need for education and educational institutions in the task of the New Evangelization, to the point where the Pope referred to the current situation as an authentic "educational emergency" (cf. Benedict XVI, Address to the Participants in the Convention of the Diocese of Rome, June 11, 2007).

3.3. The Meetings of CELAM (Latin-American Episcopal Conference)

We now choose to follow the trail of CELAM, the conference which brings together the bishops of the continent that is home to the greatest number of Catholic Christians in the world. It is, moreover, a young region, with a proportion of

youth much higher than that of Europe and with possibilities for development yet to be discovered. It is, therefore, a place with a special vitality, a place in which the Church is taking on an important role.

Following the star of the conferences of the bishops of Latin America, one can see the evolution of the Church's thinking with respect to education.

Before the beginning of Vatican Council II, in 1955, the first conference of the bishops of Latin America took place in Rio de Janeiro. The meeting had been prepared in Rome and the bishops were convoked to address the issues that were presented to them. In the matter of education the great concern of the assembly was centered on the formation of the clergy proper, especially of the native clergy, and on the seminaries. The laity were considered as "auxiliaries to the clergy."

The second meeting, held in Medellín (Colombia) in 1968, was very different from the previous one. The topics, presentations and papers had been prepared throughout the different locales of Latin America. CELAM, created during the Council, was the organization charged with preparing and running the meeting, which would have an enormous influence upon the Church in those countries and would set a clear and courageous reference point for the topics addressed there.

In Medellin, the Church seriously committed herself to the process of change amomg the peoples of Latin America and

highlighted education as a fundamental and decisive factor in the future development of the continent. The great effort that was needed was the extension of education to all levels of society. Up to that time, it was clearly evident that education had been restricted to the privileged elite, so that many of the more disadvantaged children lacked any form of education whatever. So the first task was this: make access to education available to all.

In this regard the bishops noted the problem of the Indigenous, who were marginalized and obliged to enter into a system of education that they found foreign to their identity. They had to be given the tools necessary to create their own development.

Medellin was highly critical of the traditional form of education dominant in those countries. It was, said the bishops, too abstract and formalistic a formation, solely concerned with transmitting knowledge. It must be acknowledged that the majority of the Church's schools were in that situation. In place of it they proposed a "liberating" education which could "make the student take charge of his own development," a creative education, an education that went beyond the walls of the school. For parents as the first teachers, the vision of education as simply a preparation for the mere obtaining of academic credentials had to be overcome. The school must be a community integrated with the greater local community, dynamic and open to dialogue. In many places, that meant the need for a transformation penetrating right to the cultural, social and spiritual core of the community .

These ideas were heavily influenced by the recent encyclical *Populorum progressio* of Paul VI, who gave several addresses in the same line during his visit to Medellín. Clearly the Church was committed and made an important prophetic denunciation. Peace cannot exist without justice, and this requires an on-going effort; peace always ends up being the fruit of true love.

Also significant was the option at Medellin for youth, who represented at that moment an important majority of the Latin American population. The Church was adopting a welcoming attitude, especially towards the poorest. That attitude was refreshing, exciting and evangelical.

Eleven years went by before the next meeting of the bishops in Puebla, Mexico. During those years there had been enormous polemics, confrontations and apprehensions. For some, Medellín had gone too far in its commitments.

In Puebla they began from a definition of "culture" derived from *Gaudium et spes*:

> *The word "culture" indicates the particular way in which the peoples — men -develop their relation with nature, among themselves and with God (GS 53b) so that they can arrive to a "true and full humanity" (GS 53a).*

Culture is a creative activity which covers values and the forms in which they are expressed. The Gospel must not destroy these values, but on the contrary integrate them.

The school is defined as "a locale of evangelization and communion." Emphasized is the fact that the number of Catholic schools on the continent has decreased, but at the same time it notes that "there is a growing awareness of the need for the presence of committed Christians in public or private educational structures that are not run by the Church. Catholic educational centers are opening up more and more to all segments of society" (Puebla, *Final Document*, 112).

The bishops are conscious of the growing demand for education, but also realize that many times the criteria that are used to respond to this need are purely political and do not always give due attention to those who are the poorest.

There is an increasing presence of the laity. They are no longer merely auxiliaries, and the religious are questioning themselves about their role as educators. The traditional shape of the Catholic school is being lost, in that religious men and women had formerly made up the majority of the educational workers. The idea of an educational community has been born and is picking up strength. Perhaps it is the topic of the laity and their role in the school that marks a real turn at Puebla from Medellín. There is also an insistence that education must be liberating, critical and accessible to all.

In 1992 the Conference met in Santo Domingo (Republica Dominicana), the first diocese of the Americas. To the bishops of Latin America were added those of the Caribbean area, with their own problems and characteristics. This meeting gener-

ated less accord than the two previous ones, perhaps due to the deliberate intention not to follow the risky path that had been opened at Medellín and Puebla.

They spoke of education as assimilation of culture and of the need to confront new educational values with the person of Christ, the true revealer of the mystery of man. Although the gospel cannot be identified with any particular culture, it must be capable of illuminating all of them.

The 5ᵗʰ Assembly took place in Aparecida, Brazil, in 2011. In that meeting it was recognized that in Latin America the Church has been the developer and animator of the culture, and that this is an essential support for evangelization.

Education is a public good. Many countries have experienced success in extending it to all the social fringes, while in those in which this has not yet been accomplished, there has been nonetheless an enormous advance. Education is no longer a luxury for a few. One must be aware of the huge efforts that these countries have made in this field.

Today communications media are breaking into the educational field as new agents. What Aparecida called "the new Areopagi" have arisen. The programs must promote the integral formation of the person. Precisely because there are new elements in the educational process, we must hold ever more strongly to both personal and ecclesial identity.

It is easy to follow through this brief section the evolution of the thinking of the Church about education. New challenges demand new responses from those who have to confront them. The Church appreciates more and more the role of education, seeing it as a privileged way of incarnating the gospel.

3.4. What can be CONCLUDED?

From the path that we have just followed, it is easy to see how the Church's concern for education has evolved over the past several years: from a fear of freedom in teaching, to a demand for it; from considering education as something exclusive and reserved for a few to the quest that it be something accessible to all; from considering the laity as merely auxiliaries to priests and religious to looking upon them as true craftsmen of Christian education; from using a magisterial method to seeking the collaboration of social communications media and the new technologies.

If we review the statistics of the Catholic educational institutions, we see how much those works as well as the religious dedicated to them have, in many countries, experienced a strong decline in recent years. In addition, the median age of these religious has risen considerably, requiring a different placement, more humble and simpler roles for these persons, leaving them with barely any direct role in the actual management of the institutions. This process doesn't occur over a short time nor without real suffering on the part of many, who are brought face to face with their

own limitations and come to see how their life's work is now in other hands.

Moreover, the Church does not enjoy in many places the prestige that it once had in the past. In those areas, polls show the decline of its influence in society and in the degree of confidence placed in it. This evaluation does not negate the fact, however, that institutions linked to the Church, such as NGO's and charitable associations, continue to enjoy great prestige (Cf. *Barómetro Continuo de Confianza Ciudadana*. Metroscopia. Julio 2011).

There is no doubt that the scandals involving pedophilia, widely aired by communications media, even though they are many times concerned with situations long past, have shaken confidence in the Church and in its educational institutions. The hierarchy itself has recognized that it did not know how to respond appropriately in many cases and tried, in misguided fashion, to hide the facts.

Nevertheless, a recent poll of the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago showed that the happiest profession is that of priest, followed by that of firefighter and, in sixth place, that of teacher. The report noted that the happiness shown in these professions occurs in spite of the fact that they are poorly paid, have a high level of stress and in many cases lack social acceptance.

In the more "secular" countries – in a manner of speaking – or in those of the West in which the Church and the Christian

count for less, where legislation is often opposed to the doctrine of the Church and where there is a high level of educational competency, the educational institutions of the Church enjoy prestige and experience difficulty in admitting all those who want to attend.

These seem to be contradictory responses, which in part reflect the complexity of the situation and the problems that result from drawing conclusions too precipitously.

3.5. THE FUTURE

The broad lines set out by the Council and by the CELAM conferences remain in force and continue to be the foundation of what can and should be Catholic education. With the rapid changes going on in the world of the school, it is even more necessary that we never claim that our "confessional" status exempts us from professionalism or the need to stay current. The times rather demand that we develop ever more as qualitative professionals and that we stay up to date with media, methods and facilities for education.

In trying to gain some foresight, we can say that Catholic education in the years to come must take into account the following elements:

3.5.1. We live in a world that is ever more competitive. Christian education will enjoy no privileges nor exceptions, but perhaps face additional difficulties due to its confessionalism.

On the other hand, the requirements of the states for education are going to become even stricter and will try to reach down into the minutest levels so that in one way or another they will try to homogenize all educational styles. All political regimes, from the most dictatorial to the most democratic, have a great interest in the education of children and youth, and often fall into the temptation of supplanting parents in the task of choosing the type of education for the young.

In this context, one must offer high quality services in order to compete with other similar offerings. Christian education has to win its own place in society by providing the best education possible, the schooling most suited to the times and most coherent in its approaches and its practice.

3.5.2. The right of parents in the education of their children is an indisputable principle.

More and more we encounter family models different from the traditional: separated parents, homosexual or single-sex couples, adoptive or foster families. These situations make it sometimes complicated to uphold this principle.

The Christian school, therefore, will have to attain a delicate balance between the principle and the reality. Often one will walk a fine line between the two, and surely there will have to be answers improvised on the fly. In every case, it must be taken into account that the children are not the causes of the potentially problematic situations of their parents, biological or not, but the victims.

3.5.3. The Christian school needs to define and put into practice its school model.

This is a joint task, which will not be easy, given the traditional autonomy of the institutions belonging to dioceses and to religious congregations. The latter have always tried to emphasize specific approaches, flowing from the charisms of the congregation, beyond the more general Christian elements that are shared in common. That does not mean that the charismatic elements must be abandoned, but that there must be an effort to set them within the more general framework of Christian education. To lose the charism, the special insight of each congregation, would be an impoverishing loss. On the other hand, not to stress the common elements would be to lose the strength in belonging to a broader and more universal organization.

3.5.4. New management styles.

The traditional form of management of many Christian institutions has followed a model that we could label "family-style." It relies upon good will and loyalty to the congregation. It has been a effort at times remarkable, at times stagnant, since many persons labored at work for which they had no preparation. This model is less and less viable, especially in matters of economic management. New formulas must be found, some of which are already in practice, in order to solve everyday problems.

The future of education will find necessary important investments in new technologies and ever more personal-

ized systems. These investments will have to be made over against unavoidable austerity and the gradual diminution of resources.

3.5.5. International networks.

As religious congregations we have an immense potential for creating international networks to facilitate exchanges, language learning and acquaintance with other cultures and societies.

In the same manner we can seek ways to open ourselves to places and countries in the process of development in order to contribute to the progress of those peoples. The range of ideas is infinite, and although we may have only begun to exploit those possibilities, it would be absurd not to continue to do so in the future, when it is one of the directions being discussed about education.

This field is wide open, and we need to move forward without fear of making mistakes. Our possibilities are limitless even if they have been neglected for so long.

Furthermore, it is possible, and should not prove too complicated, to create wider networks with other religious congregations and to broaden the offerings, to give specialized attention to topics, and definitely come up with proposals attractive to a society which needs these alternatives.

3.5.6. The role of the laity.

It is difficult to be "the owner" and to transfer power of decision to other bodies. Nevertheless, that transfer is already a reality, given the lack of personnel. Moreover, the lack of vocations, at least in the West, does not permit us to envisage a future that will be any different from this reality we have just acknowledged.

The laity is taking on the majority of the work in the religious schools, and lay persons already occupy positions that just a few years ago were not open to them.   Upon them now falls, and will continue to fall in the future, the burden of Christian education. Generally speaking, the experience is very positive and necessity is complemented by this conviction: the new situation spurs us to give to the laity the role that belongs to it in the Church and in society. Appropriate formation, however, is needed for that role; this will require an on-going and expensive effort, but one that is absolutely necessary.

3.5.7. Recovering our models.

Here I am using the word "model" as it is understood in science. In recent years, a "model" in science is something richer than a simple thing to be copied or imitated. It deals with a theoretical scheme of reality, which facilitates the understanding of something more complex and allows for repetition of the processes which the model represents.

Throughout history we have numerous cases of persons or groups who have brought positive elements to education, have renewed pedagogy, and in general have supported advances. Within our own brief Marianist history there are many such cases of renewal. It is not a matter of simply imitating or copying them, but of trying to understand the spirit which animated them, the vision they came out of and the circumstances in which they were put into effect, in order to try to understand and repeat the processes that occurred.

One example would be the Collège Stanislaus. It is not possible today to reproduce that environment, that society and that educational model. It is possible, however, to analyze the elements that shaped that experience and to try to use those that are still valid, updating those elements that have become obsolete or unattainable. This means studying carefully our history, our current situations and, once better acquainted with them, using all the potential to be found in them.

3.5.8. And yet, to maintain the vision.

Ours is not the worst time that the Church and the congregations have gone through throughout the centuries. Indeed moments of crisis have always ended with new opportunities that open up in unexpected ways. It will be no different now.

The vision must be maintained, because our wealth is not in the buildings, in the number of religious dedicated to teaching, or in the immense number of students. Our true riches lie in

being able to announce the Good News of Jesus in a world that is different, new, suffused with technology, but which is loved by God just as before. That Good News is as valid today as it was yesterday or will be tomorrow. Even if the proclamation has to be made in less favorable situations, that does not lessen the value of the message nor impair the transformational capacity that it has always had.

We might repeat here, once again, the classic saying of McLuhan: "The medium is the message." The Good News is that the truth can give value to all the rest. It continues to be Good News for all.

The article by Javier Cortés cited above ends with this call for hope:

Hope is not optional. It constitutes a nuclear element of the human experiment/experience. We live more in the future, read with the password of our stocktaking of the past, than in the present itself, if this latter exists in truth. And like every human reality hope is called to be renewed from the interior. Today, very probably, to live with hope demands, pun intended, great virtue. Few signals in our situation invite us to hope, yet it is the time, as Christians did on other occasions in history, to incarnate it in our life and in our commitments to evangelization as an authentic rebellion against a situation that pretends to be inalterable.

We need only one condition: to situate ourselves at the roots -- in the first place in our own experience as believers and

in the second place in our being believers in the evangelizing mission of the field of education.

There is no hope without confidence, or better, confidence itself is the mature fruit of hope. It is up to us to interiorize the recommendation of Jesus: "We are useless servants; we have only done what we had to do." With a sense of security, let's do what we have to do.

4. THE PEDAGOGICAL CONTEXT

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Man always needs to communicate the information and experiences that allow him to survive. Teaching, therefore, has always been an occupation, born alongside the species from the moment of its inception.

> *The mutual influences between education and society are more than obvious. Who can deny today the influence of education upon a country's cultural, social, economic, sanitary, scientific, and other developments? The growth of societies would be sterile if it could not rely upon a quality education. I mean, how can anyone deny the desire and aspiration of having a lot (universal in its basic and secondary levels) of good (quality) education? Evidently, however, for that quality education are needed knowledgeable men and women, experts in this area of knowledge, who understand what is happening today in educational circles, who know how to interpret the various current proposals from different authors, who can evaluate the frequent pedagogical experiments that come up, who know how to enrich the different political currents, who are capable of integrating technical advances into education, who can evaluate and interpret legislation and school administration, curricular designs, teaching materials, the relationships between the academic and extracurriculars, etc.*

> *We need experts in education, aware that it, like the person to whom it is directed and the social framework within*

which it is carried out, is in a constant flux, more or less profound or perceptible, but real. (Marta López Jurado, *Educación para el siglo XXI.* Ed. Desclée. Pp.26ff)

Today education has a complete frame of reference. Yet there has always been a human effort to try to teach, to educate, to transmit knowledge....

Already in the ancient eastern cultures, poorly known and considered when we refer to the history of education, we can discover some fundamental features that characterize their formative process: **traditionalism** (a doctrinal deposit that must be conserved and transmitted); **a principle of authority** (reverent acceptance of the contents, esteem for the master or priest who transmits them); **exclusivism** (power and knowledge monopolized by the ruling classes or sects). Both in the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and in Egypt there already existed "schools" or "houses of instruction" that covered a whole range of knowledge.

In the Western world, the foundations of culture – and therefore of education – are to be found in the Greco-Roman and paleochristian civilizations, which brought to the West philosophy, law, the concept of the person and his transcendence, the value of liberty.

In Greece were stressed the value of the person and his autonomy, ethical rationalism, the importance of aesthetic desire. Man is an autonomous being, but also capable of creating

community and of living in the *polis.* It was the Greeks who developed a true philosophy of education, *i.e.,* a theory about the content and form of the transmission of knowledge. To educate was considered an art. Later, the structure of the Greek and Hellenistic schools remained for a long time a reference point: the primary school of the *didaskalos*; the secondary school of the *grammatikos*; the higher schools, with a great diversity of models, and other "lesser" forms of instruction.

In Rome there occurred a similar development in the art of educating. To the Greek theory of education were added important nuances. In contrast to the Greek idealism, action was valued over contemplation, the individual and family life were affirmed, law was created, and in general a greater realism was applied to the educational processes (habit and exercise as learning resources). The Romans' interest in the school came later and in it they followed the Greek organizational framework.

Christianity introduced an important element into the Greco-Latin culture. More than knowing for the sake of knowing, it was interested in knowing how to live in accord with certain ideals. The Greek and Roman wisdom acquired a deeper meaning. The Christians did not create their own schools at the beginning. The profane culture was assimilated in the common schools, and the development of all one's human potentials was accepted as a normal requirement.

The Middle Ages, a long and complex period, was characterized culturally and educationally by theocentrism, the search

for a synthesis between faith and reason and the progressive opening up to new knowledge, with the consequent appearance of new teaching models and the consolidation of others. The Church developed its own pedagogical system for forming clerics and men of the Church. The ecclesiastical schools (at the beginning monastic, later also cathedral and presbyteral schools) were opening up little by little to the "lay" or "secular" youth, and schools run by the Church arose. Some were transformed into universities. The guilds of artisans provided apprenticeships for the different trades.

The Renaissance was characterized above all by Humanism, which broadened the horizons of formation well beyond theology to various fields of knowledge. Grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, history and geography were fundamental disciplines. Moral and intellectual formation were the two pillars of education. In that epoch the first didactic treatises were developed. The bourgeoisie found in pedagogy an instrument for economic and social progress.

The religious ruptures and reforms later gave way to new pedagogical currents. In the Catholic camp an important role was played by the Jesuits, whose initial decision had been "no studies or lessons in the Society." Nevertheless, they soon became aware of the enormous evangelizing potential that was offered by education, and in the Constitutions approved by Paul III there were several chapters in Part IV dedicated to how "to instruct in letters and other means of helping."

Very soon they became aware that the experiment of the Messina school, the Society's first, had to be articulated in some kind of document that would allow a repetition of the praxis and would define a method proper to the Society. This document came to be called the *Ratio studiorum*, which Father Jerónimo Nadal had completed for its first edition in 1599 and which held force until 1773, when the Society was suppressed. When the Society was reestablished in 1814, the *Ratio studiorum* was updated and later, at various times, was revised to bring it up to date and to refine it as time went by.

In spite of its age, the *Ratio* is a very significant example of a Christian educational model that has influenced not only the Society of Jesus but also many other religious congregations. We mustn't forget that Father Chaminade had a brother who was a Jesuit, Jean-Baptiste, who took charge of his formation at Mussidan. It is not surprising, then, that the Marianist tradition resembles in some aspects the Jesuit style of teaching.

Today, surely, it would be impossible to have a *Ratio* valid for all the schools, in all the situations and countries in which the Society and the Church are at work. But the great insights that are to be found in the *Ratio* continue to have value, and the pedagogical principles that inform it are applicable today, insofar as it is concerned with consistency and experience as applied to the practice of educating. The method is based on authority and discipline and has demonstrated its efficacy for many years, in the course of which it was adopted by many of the Church's educational institutions.

There was no lack of innovation, as in the use of "cases" to resolve problems, the formula used today in the better schools of business, or in the importance given to teaching languages different from the mother tongue, or in explaining heliocentrism, although only "as a probable doctrine" since it was still under suspicion by the Church.

From the end of the 16th century various religious congregations dedicated to teaching began to be founded (Piarists, Barnabites, Somascans, Ursulines of Brescia, Brothers of the Christian Schools,…), as well as other institutions committed to the renewal of the school.

In 1630 there had appeared the *Didactica magna* of Comenius, who was considered "the father of pedagogy," because he established its fundamental principles and gave it the status of a science. Comenius is also considered to be the inventor of the textbook. This expert in pedagogy, born in Moravia, lived through the Wars of Religion in person. He had to go into exile when the Emperor imposed Catholicism. Comenius, who belonged to the Hussite "Brethren," had to flee to Poland, and later he collaborated in the educational reforms in several countries. His pedagogy started from one fundamental principle: "A smile rather than a stick." It has to do, he said, with making the internal seeds that all children have germinate with appropriate experiences. To achieve that, one must start from natural methods, such as induction, observation, the senses and reason. One must insure that the development of the person be harmonious, and therefore a true educational reform must be accompanied by a moral reform.

The 18th century (the "Century of Lights") brought the culmination of the Modern Age and the passage into the Contemporary Age. It was the period of the Enlightenment, which, although not having precise and uniform traits, can be characterized by certain common parameters, such as rationalism, naturalism, deism, utilitarianism. In the field of education an open, obligatory, uniform and free national education was called for, intended to form cultivated, autonomous and free persons. To that end the states tried to establish educational policies that facilitated access to education for all. There was also promotion of the importance of scientific, technical and professional training.

The State needs educated citizens. One of the principles of the new age, therefore is the necessity for education. The rights of citizens must be incarnated in persons conscious of their rights and the consequences of those rights. So the rulers made efforts to insure that education become a reality and, above all, that it be not just a privilege of the wealthier classes.

The ideas of the Enlightenment, the new teaching methods that insisted upon the participation of the student in learning, the heritage of the empiricist philosophers who insisted upon employing all the senses in learning, the development of active methods and the desire to establish a friendly school-student relationship--these are some of the elements that formed part of the educational approaches of those years. The discussion was, therefore, assured.

4.2. THE VARIOUS PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIMENTS IN THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES IN FRANCE. THE FIRST MARIANISTS AND THEIR TEACHING.

Beginning with the Enlightenment a great rationalist optimism came to the fore. Without instruction there is no virtue, and without virtue the citizen is neither happy nor contributing to the prosperity of society. Montesquieu said that the people had to be educated in order to maintain social order and productivity. In reality it was the bourgeois class who directed and controlled society.

The rulers of the Ancien Régime had already taken some measures for schooling the people. Later the revolutionaries followed the same path. But in their zeal to abolish the institutions of the Ancien Régime, they disbanded the seminaries, the university colleges and all the institutions that, for the most part, were in the hands of the Church.

From the end of the 18th century and throughout the 19th, and as a consequence of its political vicissitudes, France passed many laws that regulated the educational system. It was precisely in this period that the first educational works of the Society of Mary were born and that what we could call "Marianist pedagogy" began to take shape.

To Fr. Jean-Baptiste Lalanne, the "first Marianist," Father Chaminade had confided his plans for the future, before the founder had done so with anyone else. Lalanne was also one of those who would most influence the gestation of the Marianist

method of educating. Not only was he a man dedicated professionally to this work, but he also had outstanding training and an enormous capacity for innovation, accompanied by a very remarkable originality.

Lalanne was involved in relations with the liberal Catholic circles, whose public medium was the newspaper *l'Avenir.* Chaminade confessed that he did not read that publication. He said it alarmed him, and that it was not legitimate to transfer into the order of historical principles the physical principle of "from chaos to order"; this principle is false since only the act of creation can take that step. Today, of course, men would not think that way, be they theologians or physicists. Even if not aligned with the liberals, Chaminade wanted the Society of Mary to participate in the regeneration of education in France.

Lalanne had the daring necessary to pursue participation in the process of liberalization of the faith. Marianist pedagogy was born in this broth of liberal culture that regarded the person capable of self-governance.

His support was not merely theoretical. In 1830 he gave a famous speech in St. Rémy about education as the guarantor of liberties. It drew a positive response, and from it there later followed several publications in which the principles of education for liberty were defined. In spite of this, Lalanne did not obtain either at St. Rémy or in Bordeaux the authorization needed for offering a complete curriculum

and for allowing the students to be dispensed from the final examinations at an official center.

As the Society of Mary began to develop, and several institutions of primary, secondary and trade schools were taken over…, there were two methods that challenged the model of centralized authority in teaching. One was the so-called "Lancaster method" or mutual teaching. This was more acceptable to the liberals and essentially consisted in having the more advanced children in the school help the teacher to teach the slower ones.

The other method was known as the "simultaneous method"; it consisted of dividing the students into three groups, each of which had its own teacher. This was the system used by the LaSalle Christian Brothers and required a greater number of teachers, which made teaching more expensive and sometimes prevented some municipalities from hiring them for the town school.

There was a lot of discussion about which was the better method to use, and during the school vacation of 1820, a mere three years after the foundation, the directors of the Marianist schools met for the first time to discuss this issue. The determinations of the summer meetings were formalized in the *Constitutions of 1839*. In Article 267, which said that "… the Superior General, at stated intervals… assembles the Directors… to review the methods…."

So it was from the beginning that Marianists were concerned with finding a particular teaching style that would distinguish them from the other institutes. There appeared very soon, therefore, several "*Regulations,*" both for the students and for the religious. They insisted that authority had to be "centralized and paternal."

Although "our methods of teaching differ little from those of the (LaSalle Christian) Brothers," as Father Chaminade wrote in his appeal to the King in 1825, the Marianists adopted what they called a "mixed method."

In 1824 two religious, Bros. Monier and Laugeay, wrote the Society of Mary's first *Method of Teaching*, which came to be known as the "Old Method." In 1830 it was revised, and in 1831 appeared the *General Regulations for Marianist Schools*, known as the "New Method." Both the first and the second stressed the concern that should exist for achieving an integral formation that encompasses the whole person and not merely the intellectual dimension. In the Society of Mary's first *Constitutions of 1839* it was very clear that teaching is the path that leads to education.

Later, in 1841, was developed the "Mixed Teaching Method" or "Mixed Method," and shortly afterwards Chaminade wrote in a letter: "the unity of method is an absolute condition for the future in our establishments" (20-VIII-1842).

Lalanne intended to write about the special method, that is, the one he wanted to use in the normal schools. In connection

with these, he wanted to develop a school of arts and crafts for the practicum training of future teachers.

In those years the first Marianist textbooks were published, which were known as "the classics of the Society of Mary." From the first years onward, religion was considered in the Marianist institutions as more a form of relationship with God than as a cluster of more or less routine practices. Likewise since the beginning, the Sodality was considered as the best complement to the work of the school and as a source of future vocations to the Society.

In the civil society of those times, education was conceived of as one of the possible paths to achieve cohesion and progress, and the Church itself also understood it in that way. As the years went by, the parliamentary democracies were proliferating; education was one of the principal concerns of the public authorities, inasmuch as they needed a certain affirmation, as well as the insurance of the enjoyment by all the citizens of the rights obtained. The Industrial Revolution had changed the way of life and brought about an significant exodus of population from the rural areas.

The bishops encouraged the birth of the institutions dedicated to teaching. The State used the Church at the beginning as an ally. Later, from the middle of the nineteenth century, it would become a rival for control of culture and society. The liberal state wanted to keep education under its own control.

4.3. THE PRESENT

At the end of the 19th century there arose a strong pedagogical movement that had its origins in the theories of Rousseau, Pestalozzi and others. It was not a single current, but an amalgam of several trends, and was known in its overall form as the *New School.*

It was not a highly organized movement, nor did it even have a single name; in America it was known as *Active School.*

Included in the conglomeration were all the pedagogical attempts that in those years were made to improve the traditional school. Some lasted only a short time, but others have continued on into our own day. Its basic ideas survive in part in the currently dominant ideas on education. Despite the great variety of these ideas, some characteristics can be highlighted that are common to the type of school they sought to create: schools that were child-centered; oriented to life; physically active; aimed at cooperation and interdependence in community relations.

The movement achieved a certain order and cohesiveness through congresses, reviews and associations. With time its strength was diluted in the overall pedagogical currents that arose after World War II, fostered by the international organizations that developed during those years. Contributing to this same dilution was the growing prosperity of the First World countries, which spurred them to try to substantially improve the educational system.

The first "new schools" appeared in France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Italy at the end of the 19th century. In Geneva there was, from 1899, an international Office of the "New Schools," directed by Adolphe Ferrière, which developed near the university of that Swiss city. It was a true center of pedagogical development. Later, in 1929, there was created a "New Education League" that developed a lineup of 30 bases for clarifying the objectives and methods of the movement.

Among many others, the methods of Montessori and Decroly stand out. Both began with concerns for children with mental disabilities, and both Montessori and Decroly were medical doctors. Decroly insisted upon observation of nature and respect for the child and the formation of his personality. He was opposed to rigidity in discipline. Better known was Maria Montessori, the first woman to earn her degree in medicine in Italy. At the beginning she worked actively at bettering the situation of women, and from there went on to pedagogy, convinced of the value of training for improving the feminine social condition. For her, education was based upon a triangle formed by love, the environment, and the child. In Spain, her theories were applied to catechesis in Barcelona, where they experienced much success until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

The New School stressed the importance of an active role for the student, in a way that would take into account what he wanted to learn according to his own interests. This changed the role of the teacher radically as he became a guide for this process. The

founder of one of these pedagogical tendencies, John Dewey, stressed that "man is made to live within a social medium, as if the school were in practice a community in miniature, with a strong democratic sense that favors collaboration and mutual assistance among the citizens; it is necessary to bring the industrial progress reached so far in order to put the individual in touch with what has been achieved and to encourage in him the need to achieve new and even higher goals."

Throughout the last century pedagogy developed in several directions, each one stressing one element considered fundamental, an element which in some way frames the entire process, strengthens it and stimulates it.

One current which could be called *socialist* or *Marxist* came out of the ideas of Marx and Engels. For them, the school of the proletariat trained workers and that of the bourgeois, bosses. This dichotomy had to be done away with, and to achieve that the school should be capable of giving a total education, in which each one might develop all his potentialities for a society that would truly furnish equality of opportunity.

Other pedagogical currents, specifically those which formed the *anti-authoritarian movement,* stressed freedom of the individual from any type of imposition, which required a new approach to the educational relationships, especially between teacher and student. Everything must be at the service of individual freedom.

Even though he can't be included in these movements, the figure of C. Freinet must be noted, whose cooperative pedagogy was inspired by Marxism. His methodology tallied with the progressive movement of the New School. Following those ideas, he introduced work into the school as a formative method. He himself had come out of a difficult childhood and had to make great efforts to acquire his own education. He founded a workers' cooperative in his own town. He was a member of the Communist Party, although expelled in 1953 for being too critical of it. For Freinet, education and work had to go together in what he called the principle of cooperation. It is necessary to create an environment in which there are mediating elements between the student and the master, and there is no better mediator than work in common. The printing press and the work with it are the center of the school. The textbooks need to be free and developed by the students, with the help of the teacher. In the school work plans have to be set up and assemblies held. Freinet was accused of being Stalinist on many occasions, in spite of his expulsion from the Party. The school he proposed resembled the Party and bore the tone of being a preparation for future militancy.

In other pedagogical currents the development of the individual was prevalent. These are the theories of the *personalist* type, which emphasize the personal dimension over the social. They do not reject the social aspect of the person, but the personal characteristics of each individual demand that the social matrix come into play only secondarily. It is a pedagogy of dialogue in freedom between teachers and students. The criteria to be

applied in pedagogical activity are based in receptivity, confidence, acceptance of one another. The person, in order to grow, must adhere to a system of values that he freely adopts.

Along this line, E. Mounier used the term *anthroposphère* to describe the environment which allows the person to grow and mature in an integral fashion. It comes out of the principle that the human person is a spiritual being endowed with values that are freely accepted and lived in an engaged manner. A certain discipline is necessary in the school to help the child. Mounier defended the freedom of education. The State must guarantee this freedom, being concerned only that there exist an equality of access to education, without turning itself into the educational agent.

There are various models that give primacy to the individual and his human dignity vis-à-vis the domination of the State which tries to keep in its own hands all the resources related to education. These models condemn equally the bourgeois individualism and the totalitarian systems of whatever stripe. The principles of these trends are trust, responsibility, acceptance and authenticity. The goal is the integral development of the person.

The Brazilian Paulo Freire was the creator of the movement of *Popular Education,* which spread rapidly beginning in 1964, the year in which political changes in Brazil forced him to leave the country after spending time in prison. Freire's basic idea was to attain through literacy and education a critical

attitude that would help to overcome the situation of oppression experienced by so many people in Latin America. It was a pedagogy of "consciousness raising" in which were mixed Marxist and Existentialist elements. Freire's pedagogy fits into the enormous variety of the pedagogical trends that stress the need to change unjust structures that perpetuate poverty and misery in large segments of society. The changes have to be produced through a liberating education. Educational reflection must be accompanied by action aimed at transforming and humanizing the world.

More recently, the didactic modifications promoted by the educational systems of several countries have been based on an approach to the processes of teaching/learning that derive from "Constructionism," following the studies of Piaget and the suggestions of Vygotsky. On the other hand, the actual need to unite theoretical knowledge with its use in practice and with the values that ought to inspire the life of persons has brought about a highlighting of the need for training in "competencies." This approach would deal with developing the capacities of the person so that he might be able to face up to the different situations – complex and, occasionally, problematic – which he might encounter in his work and his life. For that is needed a holistic character formation, which goes well beyond the limits of any single discipline or subject.

Education has ceased to be something isolated and now receives support and help from other sciences, such as psychology, sociology etc. It goes deeply into child psychology in order to improve

the process of learning, and it analyzes the social setting so that education might have a positive influence on it. In addition, it establishes controls and evaluations that allow pedagogy to have the status of a science to its fullest extent. It allows for applying different techniques to improve the pedagogical process. At the same time, education is becoming ever more an active process. The child, the subject of education, is not merely a receiver, but becomes an agent of his own education.

There is no lack of proponents, on the other hand, who advocate the need to have the school disappear since, according to them, it makes individuals clones for a consumer society. In the eyes of these thinkers schooling ends up killing all creativity and is incapable of serving the potentials of each person. These ideas constitute what we might call the theories of "deschooling/unschooling". With the new communication techniques, it is becoming increasingly feasible to opt for a completely personalized education, on the margin of the official programs and curricula that form the established educational system.

In recent years, on the other hand, it seems that we have discovered that education and economics go hand in hand. There is an attempt to demonstrate, above all in neo-liberal circles, this close bond. Education comes to be considered as a state investment and economic growth is linked to the capacity of the state to educate.

One could continue pointing out schools of pedagogy, diverse tendencies and styles of education, that are currently at the

disposition of educators. Selection among them is sometimes done as though one were in a supermarket and other times concentrating on ideological motives. It is certainly not easy to decide exclusively for one or the other trend, since, faced with the choice, one can see positive elements in many of them.

Nor would it be possible today to hold to one "Marianist method" that would serve for all the countries and circumstances in which we are developing our educational work. Rather, one must take into account the advances in the pedagogical sciences along with a series of elements from our tradition and our convictions – perhaps simple and certainly shared with many others – in order to arrive at practical solutions for each situation. The fundamental attitude that ought to guide us is that wise and prudent "adaptation to the times," so characteristic of Marianist pedagogy since its beginnings, according to the Founder's motto: "New times, new methods."

From the point of view of its social function, education throughout the 20th century has always been considered a right to be accorded to all citizens. It is not a luxury nor an opportunity reserved only to those who can pay for it. The democratization of education is a common principle for all states, of whatever type. Enormous efforts have been made in many places so that education, up to the end of the secondary level, might reach everyone and not be the privilege of a few. In many places it is taken for granted that the State pays for it. Some persons advocate a *single* school system, public, obligatory and free.

In any case, today there is a general conviction that education must come to all, even if at the moment this goal is still far from being realized in many parts of the world. No one doubts the decisive importance of education for the development of peoples and for personal quality of life, nor its irreplaceable role for advancing towards the ideals of peace, liberty and social justice.

Connected to this aspiration to the *universality* of education, there is today more and more of a demand for *quality.* Where there has been success in providing schooling for all, there now arises the question of raising the level of education. It is not enough that everyone be in school; now we need to achieve a genuinely qualitative level of teaching. This interest is not new, but today it is taking on more relevance; it shows up in a systematic form and intends to touch all the students in school. The concern in our day to improve education has given place to a great development in educational research, with methods similar to those of other scientific disciplines.

While there is a fundamental agreement about its meaning, the concept of "quality" includes different definitions, reference points and goals, including sometimes contradictory ones. The definition of "quality" is determined by four basic factors or criteria, with greater or lesser importance given to each one of them: freedom, efficiency, equity and social cohesion. In the debate not only didactic or methodological questions come into play but, above all, fundamental ideological options.

In Marianist education there has always been a commitment to quality. At stake is the combining of the above criteria in such a way that all are present in a balanced manner. The commitment to quality, furthermore, has always been accompanied among us by the desire to provide students with a comprehensive education which, based on the Gospel, touches all the dimensions of the person.

4.4. PERMANENT ELEMENTS OF EDUCATION

In spite of the changes that have come about through the centuries in what we call "education," and of those changes which might take place in the near future, a certain series of elements can be highlighted that seem to be always present in the act of educating.

The first can be called "perfecting." Education is always oriented towards bettering the person, to make him freer, more human, better prepared for life, more….. One educates in order to achieve a change for the better in the person being educated. The contrary would make no sense at all. No one educates in the direction of regression, to worsen the situation, or to reduce the capacities of the subject being educated.

A second trait is "socialization." One is educated to live in society, to form a part of the society in which one lives. The presumption is that education helps in this regard. It teaches us the ways of acting, gives us the abilities to be useful, prepares us for present and future challenges.

The *multiplicity of influences* that come into play in education constitutes a third characteristic. An absolute asepsis is not possible. The style of the institution, the teachers' way of thinking and living, and many more things influence the student, in the same way as do the neighborhood in which he lives, the family's lifestyle, etc. Hence how important it is that the teachers act in harmony with the school's ideals. Everything has its influence. Everything educates.

Another common characteristic is the fundamental role of *the person of the educator*. Education is, above all, the result of a confluence of personal relationships. It is, therefore, shocking that the teaching profession, which has so many demands and requires so many competencies, is not sufficiently valued in many countries. Sometimes one can see a certain degradation of the role of the teacher, of his authority, of his place in society. Indeed, in some places protective legislation has been needed. Specifically, the social networks are becoming a prime arena used for attacking, insulting, threatening and ultimately humiliating teachers. The impunity that anonymity gives and the facility of use of these technical media permit an outright and frontal attack against some of them. What is more, parents are not in many instances the best defenders of their children's teachers.

The fifth trait is more of a *purpose*. One educates so that each student might develop himself as a person, achieve the necessary maturity, be able to integrate himself into the world of work, and ultimately grow personally to the degree possible. Education is, therefore, always an unfinished work. We are continually growing, perfecting ourselves. Today, more than

ever, there is stress upon the need to work at educating oneself throughout life, in a continuing education.

We can say that education makes sense to the degree to which it furnishes the means to guarantee one's future. One must know how to get ahead. Today, not only are changes profound, but they affect all the aspects of our society and our lives. An educational institution, today as in the past, makes sense and is successful to the degree to which it is capable of responding to the needs of the society that it serves.

5. THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN EDUCATION

5.1. THE CHANGES AND THEIR RHYTHMS.

It is obvious that over time there are constant advances, changes and new situations which configure our history in every epoch. The advance is not always linear, and sometimes movement masks what is, in fact, a actual retrogression.

Nor do changes occur with the same rhythms everywhere in the world. We are generally too accustomed to speaking out of the context called "Western," forgetting what we ought least to forget: to wit, the rest of the world, which encompasses the majority of the human race.

Nor is it necessary to repeat that "every past age was not better, only different." Flights of nostalgia are of little value for a host of reasons, among them that changes allow no way back to the past in the majority of occurrences we are dealing with.

In general there is a certain fear of the new. The Church, for example, has reacted at times with caution, and sometimes with fear. Just remember the warnings and barriers erected against that "infernal" invention of the cinema. Pius XI, in his encyclical *Divini illius magistri* of December 31, 1929 (n. 76), wrote about *the world and its dangers.*

> *In our epoch the need for a more extensive and careful vigilance has grown, because the occasions of moral and*

religious shipwreck for inexperienced youth, above all in an impious obscene literature sold at a low price and diabolically propagated through cinematographic spectacles, which offer to the watchers without distinction every kind of representations, and ultimately also through radio broadcasts which multiply and facilitate all kinds of readings. These extremely powerful means of popularization which, controlled with sound principles, can be of great usefulness for instruction and education, are subjected, unfortunately, many times to the incentives of evil passions and to greed for profits…. How many young persons, lost through the spectacles and licentious books, today are bitterly bewailed by their parents and their teachers!

It seems that, in face of new challenges, the Church's fundamental concern in those times was merely to take means of precaution, which indicates, in the final analysis, an acceptance of these novelties from a stance at once fearful and defensive.

Today, what is new in this process is the rapidity with which change occurs and the fact that change encompasses all fronts and not only some specific aspects of human life. According to the most reliable statistics, in barely ten generations the world population has doubled, with all the advantages and problems that entails. In just a few generations we have also doubled life expectancy, which in the West now averages about 84 years. Without a doubt this is the change which can affect us most, given that it means more free time, a prolonged retirement with a good quality of life, the increase of years of living together for couples,

etc. It is no wonder that there are so many opportunities for leisure and culture for seniors, and that there occur breakdowns of marriage, even violence between couples at surprisingly advanced ages.

Man always wants to know the future, to know just where we are going. We have made, and we continue to make predictions about what we hope for ourselves and for the new generations. Alas! it is very difficult to envision what the future holds for us. Witches, diviners, fortune tellers and a host of characters supposedly able to tell us what is going to happen are proliferating today more than ever. Just surf TV channels during the night hours.

Even the great scientists were incapable of foreseeing the tremendous changes that were coming. In 1900 William Thomson, better known as Lord Kelvin, trying to discourage Max Planck from studying physics, told him: "There is nothing new to discover in physics now. The only thing left is to make more precise measurements."

Even in the middle of the 20th century one had the impression that the journey of progress was over. The president of IBM thought, in 1943, that the world market for computers would not go beyond five units. A little while later, in 1949, in *Popular Mechanics,* one of the most widely read reviews in the United States--with press runs of millions of copies--assured its readers that the computers of the future would be so reduced in size as "not to weigh more than a ton and a half."

Towards the end of the decade of the 70's, in 1977 in fact, the founder of Digital Equipment Corporation, which later would be transformed into Compaq/HP, believed that "there is no reason why anyone would want to have a computer at home." Even Bill Gates, the creator of Microsoft in 1981, was sure that "640 KB of memory capacity should be sufficient for whatever."

Not all lacked the vision to see what might happen in the future. Edison, already in 1922, was sure that "the moving picture is destined to revolutionize our educational system and, in a few years, to extensively, if not completely, replace the use of textbooks." It did not happen precisely that way, but change did occur and the "moving picture" took up a preferred place in education.

The speed of change is such that of the ten professions most in demand in the United States in 2010, half did not exist in 2005.

One cannot say that this growth and development occurred in a homogeneous fashion, all at once in all areas and places. It was the world of communications that evolved most rapidly. To understand that, one need only realize that if the world of the automobile had followed the same rhythm of advances, a car's engine, running without pause, would consume in an entire year no more than 16 liters (4 gallons) of fuel.

There will soon be more than two billion Internet users, and an average laptop computer today hits 110 gigaflops, mean- ing more than 110 billion operations every second. Today's

automobile has more computer power than was carried by the Apollo capsule that put the first man on the moon.

Nevertheless, the advances are not produced by the stimulus of human needs that must be met. Rather, it appears that many times new needs are created instead of innovation responding to satisfy already existing needs. What we offer youth in this area is certainly not always what they most need or what can most help them to grow. In the rush towards so-called progress, there is no clear scale of values nor defined priorities. Had there been such, surely the great problem of hunger in the world or that of infantile mortality would long ago have been addressed. The abundance of the few seems to advance in direction proportion to greater shortages for the many.

Tim O'Reilly, an expert on digital content, says that in the immediate future there will be no more need for maps. The car will know where we are going. It will take us there, and itself do the parking. But, he adds, the price to be paid is high:

> Is *privacy dead?*
>
> *Yes and no. Technically it is dead. It is evident that we are all controlled. Think about a spy movie when someone plants a device in a car in order to be able to follow it. Today we all pay for carrying a cell phone by which we can be located second by second, yard by yard. The problem is not that that information exists, but how it is used. Is it used without*

the consent of the persons? Is it used to discriminate against
someone? You have to work on that now.

It is precisely education that can help to remedy these difficulties and make progress a more humanizing instrument.

5.2. TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE

Since the beginnings of the human race, since the so-called *homo habilis*, technology and culture have progressed together.

When *homo sapiens* buries his dead, he is giving at bottom just another proof that technology and culture continue to be united and advance together.

In the Neolithic Revolution, the discovery of ways of obtaining food through agriculture, leisure time appeared simultaneously, which man then used to engage in commerce, art and, unfortunately, wars.

For centuries there was no need to seek additional forms of energy, since the institution of slavery provided enough cheap manpower. The Renaissance taught us the value of man and of art, and modern man discovered the scientific method. At the time of the so-called Industrial Revolution, we began to look for the greatest possible output with the least expenditure of energy. Energy now seemed ever cheaper and more accessible.

From the beginning of World War II, there were four great movements in science and in the technology that goes hand-in-hand with it: the nuclear movement with the development of atomic bombs and nuclear energy; the aerospace movement, with the race to conquer space; the computer movement; and, finally, that movement which touches on life, its origins and its footprints in the genome.

One cannot say, however, that in these movements science and culture have made progress together. Rather, there has occurred a separation that, insofar as science has gone forward and become more specialized, has become greater and more incontestable. It seems that scientific research, for all the positive benefits it has brought, has not been accompanied by the reflection needed on the part of the human sciences. And research, if not accompanied by the broader reflection that philosophy, sociology, psychology can contribute, can end up in dangerous situations.

If this panorama presents a genuine dilemma, only education can remedy it. It is not merely a question of using the new technologies, but of knowing their meaning, their significance, their possibilities and their limits. Using some very powerful tools without knowing their scope is dangerous, because they can easily backfire.

In this sense, and in relation to the new technologies, education must meet certain protocols:

- First it will have to be discerning, faced with the introduction of the new technologies into education. Even though it is actually being done much too frequently, one should not simply put at the disposition of very young people instruments with enormous capacities for interactive communication.

- Secondly, science must not be treated as some kind of superreligion above any other form of thought or analysis. Scientific research is neither better nor worse than other forms of research.

- A third protocol is that the value of the aesthetic must be recovered. Even in science it is a value to be considered. Dirac has said that if a formula, beyond being certain, is beautiful, so much the better.

- The fourth point refers to the need to limit in some way the society of abundance while at the same time there coexists, next to it, a society in great need. Millions of children suffer hunger. In stark contrast to the excesses of a few stand the most basic needs of the many.

- Finally, as believers we seek to find a new spirituality which might be capable of being incarnated in the situations in which we live, one that would be valid for the current moment without renouncing any of the successes achieved.

Science advances when none of the rights of the human person are forgotten. If in its progress science becomes dehumanized, it is not worth the effort. We need to try to bridge the

enormous abyss that today separates the humanities and the sciences. It is, finally, a question of two human activities that can meet and many times travel together.

5.3. THE RESISTANCE TO CHANGES

Profound cultural changes have always brought accompanying resistance and critiques. Their acceptance has rarely been easy; there is difficulty in replacing the old ways of doing things that seemed so evidently right. Basically, to change means to lose something; the resistance of the "professionals" comes out into the open and seeks to justify itself.

The invention of writing was attributed to the Egyptian god Thoth. It allowed the Egyptians to become more knowledgeable and to have a better memory. But there was a risk, said Thamos, that by trusting in writing forgetfulness would be implanted in the soul. Those who use writing for their knowledge "seem to understand much, but the majority of them understand nothing."

The Greek alphabet marked the beginning of an important cultural revolution. Its efficiency permitted the passage from a merely oral culture to a written culture. Transmission of knowledge no longer had to be done by the spoken word; instead it became possible to do it through writing.

We arrive at the beginning of the 5th century before Christ. Plato writes the *Phaedrus.* As did the great Socrates, he walks and carries on a conversation:

> *"But," said Socrates, "there is something yet to be said of propriety and impropriety of writing.… He would be a very simple person … who deemed that writing was at all better than knowledge and recollection of the same matters…* (Translated by Benjamin Jowett: http://classics.mit. edu/Plato/phaedrus.html)

In any case, Plato, the writer, makes Socrates admit in his dialogues that fixing thoughts in writing does have some advantages. His big question is whether, in writing down one's thoughts, a part of the depth necessary for doing philosophy is not lost?

Until an easy and convenient form of writing was achieved that allowed so many to post their thoughts, only that which was remembered comprised the content of thought. Incorporation of writing into the intellectual process broadens enormously the possible contents of that process. One might say that writing frees thought from the narrow limits of memory.

So mankind set out on the wide path of writing. First they used clay tablets; later, about 2500 BC, the abundant Egyptian papyrus. Later it was parchment and, at the beginnings of the Christian era, the closest thing to our current book was produced by sewing together several pages of parchment.

As the technology improved and writing was encouraged, the latter acquired its new forms. Reading was also evolving. Syntactical and orthographical rules were born that made

reading easier. It became ever more simple to decipher texts and integrate them into our thinking. Augustine's anecdote is well known, how in 380 he was amazed to see his master Ambrose reading quietly. The custom at the time was to read aloud, as a public act. Little by little it began to be a private matter, a personal activity.

The brain certainly faces a daunting task in attempting to decipher the written signs, interpret the words, the sentences and the meaning of what is written, and endeavoring to cover this long distance in the shortest amount of time, almost instantaneously. Reading is indeed a profound activity. Socrates' fear has been conjured away.

Reading requires an intensity of concentration while, as the neurologists point out, the human brain tends towards the dissipation of its attention and must ever adapt itself to new demands.

> *Our senses are attuned to change. Stationary and unchanging objects form part of the background and in large part are not perceived.*
>
> (Maya Pines, Howard Hughes Medical Institute)

Reading a book is, therefore, not really a natural process, since the brain must not be allowed to give attention to anything other than the book itself. The technology that facilitated reading and invented the book was such that it demanded that our brain work in a new direction. If that process had not been

developed, surely the brain would not have felt the obligation to make these adaptations.

New forms of writing arose in parallel. Now reading was used not only for matters concerning the religious. The literature of escape was born. Likewise the improvements in the material form of the book changed the experience of reading. It became more convenient and accessible.

Many centuries later, the invention of the printing press revolutionized the world of culture and teaching methods. Again there arose opposition from the erudite, who in a certain way saw their monopoly on knowledge threatened. In the year 1445 Gutenberg was able to unite several technologies to produce one of the great inventions in the history of culture: the printing press. Francis Bacon said of it that it had a greater capacity to change the world than all the armies that ever marched. In just half a century more books hit the street than had been produced in the preceding fifteen centuries.

They were right who said that the first printed books were not as beautiful as the earlier illuminated codices, in which the knowledge up to the time was recorded. The technical difficulties of the production of paper, however, and imperfections in printing type were soon resolved, with the result that books became again objects of beauty.

Later, just as had happened with reading, the material components of the book, paper and the manner of production

and distribution, were improved. Printing of books spread throughout Europe and soon through America; the Spanish took the press across the Atlantic in 1539, installing in Mexico City the first one in the New World. By the end of the 15th century there were more than 250 cities that had this new invention.

The press was the great conduit through which the Reformers spread their ideas. As usually happens, the process of printing became suspect from the beginning. Fust, who had inherited the apparatus for printing and had discovered the commercial possibilities of the phenomenon, was held at the entrance to Paris because he was carrying so many books. His volumes were considered to be the work of the devil. In England in 1660 the first book ban was imposed.

Writers know that someone reading their work will appreciate it. Readers are capable of reliving the situations that the books narrate, of traveling to the places that the protagonists visit, of feeling what they feel. Thus we enrich our own experiences. The brain of the reader acquires a special agility and certain abilities that allow the "effort to read, to decipher, to understand" to be transformed into a pleasurable act.

Centuries have passed, albeit but five, and we are once again in a moment in which the infrastructure of knowledge is changing. Following the appearance of the telephone and the radio as infrastructures of communication and transmission of information, the last half century has witnessed the invasion

of television, videos, videoconferences, etc., into our social life, as well as into education environments. It now would seem that those earlier communication innovations had held only a tenuous place in the educational field before the later appearance of the electronic communications media. Today, however, they are returning and acquiring importance through their interfacing with the resources of the Internet, making their contents easier to publish and distribute.

Among many persons, accustomed as they are to the use of one technology, resistance is logical when they are confronted with new ways of effecting the transfer of knowledge from teachers to pupils. Generally, we are satisfied with what we are doing; it seems to us that our tried and true manner of approaching problems, the way we've always done it, is the appropriate, most logical and natural way. We don't realize that many times our trusted formulas were established many years ago for very different situations than those which we must face up to today. Already in 1862, Lincoln said:

> The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise -- with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. (December 1, 1862 Message to Congress).

One of the great differences between today's changes and the "revolutions" of the past is that at this time everything is changing, not merely one aspect of the culture or of teach-

ing. If there was once a "Copernican Revolution" that made everything begin to be different, the times we are now living in are not far from a similar experience. Nicholas Carr, in his book *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to our Brains* (*The Atlantic Monthly,* June 6, 2011), a source for many fruitful ideas, says that in order to understand what the computer means in our world, we must put it right alongside objects that are part and parcel of the way we perceive reality, like the clock and the map. We can no longer do without these latter. With the computer, something similar is beginning to happen.

Since the time of ancient Rome, chalk and slate were used; only recently have new technologies begun to displace those ancient instruments. Yet we can be sure that the change is already here. If it is true that we spent years speaking about new technologies, without really knowing well just what we wanted to say, now it is impossible to turn back. Although they may take time to reach general use, although their usage may be unevenly spread, teaching now relies on them. Moreover there are some indications beginning to come clearer that point the way in which things are moving. The personal computer and the "tablet" are today the key instruments that are going to change the teaching model, the way of transmitting knowledge; they are, most definitely, the instruments that will be inseparable from us throughout our lives.

5.4. THE FRENETIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TECHNO-LOGIES.

Today the term *Information and Communications Technology (ICT)* is used to designate the complex of technical media that come out of the computer, telecommunications, microelectronics and genetic engineering. Although not always accepted as the equivalent, it is commonly used as a synonym for "New Technologies."

Aside from the adding machines of the 16th and 17th centuries, the first computer dates from 1944. IBM constructed its first computer in 1953 and had to wait until 1983 for the PC to be born. At that time it was a machine that cost $6,000.00 with a RAM memory of 512 KB and a hard disk of 20MB of memory. Today, thirty years later, a smartphone has available 2000 times as much RAM and 800 times as much solid storage.

In 1947 Bell Laboratories in the United States produced the first transistor. Not until 1971, however, did a microprocessor, containing 2300 transistors, become available for commercial use. It was actually a CPU (Central Processing Unit). In 1965 two computers had achieved a connection across thousands of miles through the telephone. The Internet was born.

The Internet is a complex of networks that use the same protocol and that permits different physical networks to function as a single network. It all began in 1969 with ARPANET, which connected three universities in California and one in Utah. And in 1990 was born the protocol "www" that made possible

the querying of hypertext files and the use of the Internet as a means of transmission. This is not the only protocol which we use to access the Internet. Others are e-mail, file transmission, conversations on line, etc. With the growth of available data appeared search engines that, using different criteria, help to find what is sought with ever greater rapidity.

When the first Internet connections began, the available technology (band width) did not allow more than the sending and working with texts. Soon music and pictures traveled the Net with total ease. Texts, music and pictures are treated in the same way; as a consequence, they become mixed and end up perhaps losing their own particularities. The computer is a library, a museum and a concert hall all at the same time.

With the beginning of this century came the awareness that the Internet was evolving into a peer-to-peer model of information exchange. It was moving from being a tool for inquiry, a great World Library, to being a truly humanistic environment where people live their lives in the exchange of information without barriers.

The first Internet was baptized as Web 1.0 and, of course, the second received the name of Web 2.0. The terms were invented by Tim O'Reilly in 2004. On Web 1.0 the contents were essentially static, being seated in servers that were administered by Webmasters, persons with technical know-how. Nevertheless, Web 2.0 is not merely a way of presenting information or a new technology; it is an attitude, it represents the transi-

tion towards a virtual world centered on persons and not just on information in itself. On Web 2.0 persons go from being mere consumers of information to being producers, content builders, creators of culture. It has been possible to put this philosophy into practice thanks to the advances in hardware and software of the last decade: open API's, evolved programming languages, new communications protocols, ever better and cheaper portable computers, tablets, mobile phones, WiFi networks, 3G and 4G, cloud storage, etc.

The Web 2.0 concept tries to define this new reality in which persons no longer use the Net as a tool for inquiry but as a habitat where their relationships are developed, somewhat as if it were a virtual extension of one's physical self.

Today the computer is an instrument familiar everywhere. There is, however, one aspect that is even more surprising than the universal extension that it has acquired, namely, that, for the first time in history, all the inhabitants of the world speak one same language. In whatever corner of the globe, in front of a computer one knows how to communicate with it and, through it, with a person perhaps thousands of miles away. In 2006 the Internet had a little less than one billion users, and it was anticipated that by 2015 there would be two billion. This has been a frenetic and rapidly unfolding history which, according to many experts, has only just begun. We have yet to see the most amazing progress, and what we are saying here now will probably have to be updated and revised in scope within a few years.

Technological development allows the price of computers to come down continuously, so that they become more and more accessible. Many governments and institutions give them or make them so available that anyone can have his own computer, without the need to reckon the wealth of possibilities for the use of public computers. Surely we would have never imagined that access to the Web through free WiFi would become common at newsstands or on city public service buses, as we can see today in many cities. Increasingly, access to information, and hence to learning is more widespread and reaches virtually all sectors of society.

When we turn on the computer, we enter, whether consciously or not, into a new world, without borders, within reach of anyone, open, exciting…. It has so much potential for change that something so integrated in society and in our customs as correspondence has changed totally. No one writes letters anymore. One sends "e-mails." And make no mistake, it is not just the medium that has changed. What has changed is the literary genre, including the spelling.

In reality, this revolution has been on the way for some time now. In 1964 Marshall McLuhan insisted that "the medium is the message" and that the death certificate for the linear mind had already been issued.

> *The effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts; rather, they alter the patterns of perception, continuously and without resistance.* (Translated from Spanish).

For many years educators have spoken about the new technologies while still using chalk and slate, which for centuries were, and to some degree continue being, the best allies of the teacher. Yet after so many years of talking about "letting the wolf come," it has arrived and intruded with all its force. It might be added that, in spite of so many years of warnings, it has taken the world of education by surprise.

In analyzing the situation, at times we try to defend ourselves by saying that what has changed is only the framework. That is false. McLuhan himself adds:

> *Our common response to all the media, especially the idea that what counts is how they are used, is the dormant stance of the technological idiot. The content of a medium is merely the piece of meat carried by the robber to distract the watchdog of the mind.* (Translated from Spanish).

"What unites is the final cause," said the Stagyrite. When dealing with the binomial of education and ICT, there can be no doubt that the final cause is not the technology, but education, towards the improvement of which all efforts, both pedagogical and technological, should be directed. A quote attributed to Nicholas Negroponte says it with a metaphor: "When you point with a finger, the dog looks at the fingertip, while the man looks at where the finger is pointing" (quoted in Ibañez, Augusto. *El papel de las TIC en la educación*. FSM. [*The Role of the ICT in Education.*] The author follows up by asking where we educators are looking. It seems, without a doubt, that on

many occasions we look more at the finger than at the place towards which it is pointing.

According to the most recent statistics, over a short period of time, the amount of time we spend connected to the Web has doubled. It seems this is not because the hours devoted to watching TV have diminished. Surely, it is the hours dedicated to reading that have declined, with one clear consequence, before all else: our way of accessing knowledge has changed from the book (text) to the image.

That shift will have an immediate consequence. The attention demanded by a text is greater than that demanded by a picture. Our attention, therefore, "relaxes." Since the information that we received through the Net is fragmented, so also is our perception of things fragmented. We are moving from a printed culture to a multimedia culture and therefore are changing the stimuli that our brain receives. Neurologists say that by changing the stimuli, the brain reconfigures itself into a different form. Different experiences provoke different ways of thinking.

The computer, with all that goes with it, is in the classroom, and will not go away. Publishers all over the world, and especially the publishers of textbooks, are working to meet their new role in the education of the future. They have to know what to do and how to do it. There is not much time for thinking about it.

5.5. THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN THE CLASSROOM.

To discuss the role of ICT in education is to turn our attention to how its application affects the acquisition of the knowledge and competencies that prepares our students for fitting into the context in which we live; a new context, which we might call the "information and knowledge society." In fact, those two elements characterize our society: the enormous capacity for the rapid and efficient distribution of information, and the potential for transforming it into knowledge. We can't separate the impact of ICT in the area of education from that which it has in society overall.

Although it might appear as an oversimplification, when we speak of new technologies in education, we are speaking above all of the introduction of the computer as an educational tool. Jut a few years ago the presence and importance this tool now has in the classroom was unthinkable. The computer, in its many different forms, allows for the use of various programs, access to the Internet, the possibility of having easily avail-able a huge amount of information, as well as the interaction of the student with the machine and a facility for the teacher to explain his content matter. In that context one can speak of "new literacies" in describing the learning of new ways of creating and communicating content through texts and other formats, like the image, audio, video.

No direct and automatic relationship can be established be-tween the use of ICT in teaching and an improvement in the students' academic progress. To think that ICT just by them-

selves are going to improve education is naive. We have to avoid a facile illusion that we are going to solve all the problems of education with these new technologies. On the other hand it is evident that the new technologies do offer many possibilities from which education can benefit. The characteristics that make them potentially valuable for learning might be summed up as follows:

- *They facilitate access, storage and management of great quantities of information, interrelated and updated.*

- *They encourage effective processes of communication and personal relations, without depending upon space-time limitations.*

- *They permit interaction between the participants in the learning process and between them and the teaching materials.*

- *They offer the possibility of developing content and activities of a collaborative and participative nature wherein group-work attitudes can be fostered.*

- *They can constitute a motivating element in themselves, for involving us with the students' lives; the use in the practice of teaching of the digital media which are now a constant in the lives of the students, as for example the social networks, can be something attractive and interesting for the students.*

- *They offer us free virtual resources which can be used as complements to printed or more traditional materials. Indeed they can constitute by themselves efficient teaching materials.*

- *They let us use animations and simulations of real conditions, because the images and the sounds, now digitalized, are most qualitative.*

- *They facilitate reorganization and render more flexible the practice of teaching and the learning process. They offer resources that facilitate the modification of the formative process as new educational needs become known.*

(Sonia Mª Santoveña, en *Educación para el siglo XXI*, 210. Desclée 2011).

We have already pointed out how the appearance of Web 2.0 has involved a paradigm change which, naturally, also has its repercussions in the field of education. This impact will doubtlessly be greater in the media in which initiatives are being developed to allow its services to be used as teaching tools. The teacher and the most classical resources now cease to be the sole fount of information. New virtual areas are opening up that allow the students to interact in a dynamic way and can be converted into facilitators of learning: blogs, social networks, tablets and smartphones, virtual campuses, e-learning platforms and collaborative work.

ICT can certainly operate as mediators in the relationships among students, teachers and content, and as shapers of new learning spaces.

The didactic use of the new technologies constitutes, as we can see, a field that is still open to exploration. But it can't be said that its integration into the field of teaching is a static educational fact. To the degree to which we use them, we shall

be capable of "parallel processing information, accessing information from different perspectives, the learning oriented towards problem-solving or associated with immediate reward systems" (A. Ibañez, *op.cit.*).

There are, moreover, several proposals that try to provide for their practical use a theoretical basis following different pedagogical models. Some are based in the *New School*, highlighting the centrality of the student in strategies in networked learning. Others, for example, prefer an appeal to integrative models based in *constructivist* principles, which emphasize the responsibility and the active role of the student, the construction processes being shared by the teacher (tutor) and the student himself, research and collaborative projects, and continuous and formative evaluation.

> *Ultimately, the theoretical and practical framework proposed for grounding the integration of advanced technologies in the teaching/learning process must constitute a firm basis that guarantees the psycho-pedagogical quality of the resources. The importance of previously acquired knowledge or the relevance of active behavior in the teaching/learning process, the orienting and facilitating activity of the teacher, the didactic organization, the virtual work space, the materials, the theoretical and practical activities and the communication process all together constitute a complex of elements that, integrated, will aim at facilitating reflective practice and learning by doing; i.e., learning to learn.*
>
> (Sonia M. Santoveña, *op. cit.*, p. 230)

One of the difficulties that must be overcome for technological innovation to be useful is purely material, but no less important for that fact. In many situations the classroom must be transformed in order to integrate computers into teaching. It is evident, on the other hand that, in many places where educational reforms were carried out, political interests took precedence over pedagogical considerations. To have computers in the classroom is a sign of progress and modernity, and educational administrations fall into the temptation of introducing them into classes even in the absence of any plan for using them, or of teachers prepared to put them at the service of the students. It seems too obvious to state, but it is of prime importance is to know how to improve the teaching/learning processes with these media in everyday use.

> *Institutions do what any organization is accustomed to do when it incorporates a new function: They fit it into the existing model in order to keep on doing what they have already been doing, but that is not enough to generate a real transformation.*
>
> (A. Ibañez. *Op.cit.*)

In today's society one must be prepared to confront whatever comes, and even if we were able to foresee it, we must prepare for the kind of society that is coming. Today the problem is not in the accumulation of knowledge, but in having criteria for seeking it, choosing and ordering it. And these competencies "presuppose a combination of practical abilities, knowledge, motivation, ethical values, attitudes, emotions and other social

components and behavior that work together for effective action" (DeSeCo Project of the OECD).

We can consider, especially, the advantages in using ICT in teaching when we want it to be more personalized. In most countries there are serious problems about the outcomes of education. Even those that can lead us to feel satisfied have room for improvement. Typically, academic failure, which in some places has a very high rate, is a clear indicator that the system has to be improved, so that the least possible number of children see themselves sidelined by it and frustrated in their expectations of life.

Generally speaking, when someone makes a mistake he corrects it and returns to the right path. No one should deviate from this, because there is no other way. There is only one way. Certainly the system has produced great successes, but also great failures, because it doesn't take into account the enormous richness and variety of human capabilities. There are classical cases: Einstein was a poor student, because he was bored in class. He was not interested in what was going on there. Only when he found a quiet job that did not demand a great deal of mental energy but also could allow him the time needed, did his genius blossom to produce a revolution in thought and physics.

Many people spend their lives never knowing for sure just what capabilities they have. Even worse, they are convinced that they lack ability, because they were incapable of shining

in the standard tests to which they had been subjected. So sometimes a rigid educational system alienates the person from his own talents; thus a great human richness is wasted since lost talents are always irrecoverable.

The new technologies allow education to be made more personalized and adapted to each child, trying to cover the specific needs of each one, a goal that remains difficult to achieve in the classic schoolroom. "Coffee for all" [a Spanish expression referring to the post-Franco political autonomy granted to 17 communities and 2 enclaves] doesn't work in school. Up until now that personalization was fundamentally an attempt to reduce the number of students in the classroom so as to allow the teacher to give closer attention and devote herself more specifically to the person of each student. Now the tools we use in the classroom will make it easier for each student to follow a different rhythm, his own, without being compelled to be in step with all the others.

It is still too early to have reliable results from the application of ICT in teaching. Nevertheless it appears that one of the most notable differences is not that the children learn better with a computer than with a classic book, but that the habitually slow learners improve their levels when they use the new technologies. The ICT allows the teacher to more easily individualize the pedagogical process and to follow concrete programs for concrete needs.

On the other hand, in the schools in quite a few countries there is now a new phenomenon: in their classrooms those schools

have students from an enormous variety of backgrounds. Many are having difficulty with a new language to be learned and find themselves submerged in a strange new culture which they find hard to accept and understand. For this "little UN" that some schools have become today, the new technologies can be a lifesaver.

The school can then become a more creative place, in which different abilities can be developed. Human growth is not linear, nor does it follow the same rhythm in all. It is an organic process in which many times the outcome is unforeseeable. What the school has to do, and what the teacher need pay attention to, is to give to all students the possibilities and the resources that make possible their own growth. When we do what we like to do, that for which we are most gifted, we are not only happier but also more useful for the rest of humanity. Just as natural resources become ever more scarce and must be used with moderation and care, so also human talents cannot be squandered, because we need all that richness in order to survive. It must be remembered, however, that those resources often lay hidden and that it takes effort to make them flourish. Instead what we sometimes do is abandon the search for them, leave them hidden and miss out on possibilities for the person and for his environment.

Marianist education has always tried to take into account individual differences; each student, each person, is a world apart with his own proper richness ("…it suffices for every

one to be as God wills him to be. Hence [the religious educator] is careful not to reject as bad what is not absolutely good; …. " *Constitutions of the Society of Mary* [1892], art. 267). On the other hand, Marianist education has never been afraid of the new challenges that confront it. It has even had insight for anticipating the future. Getting ahead of the present, offering a vision of the future and preparing students for the life that will be theirs, has always been one of the fundamental goals for teachers in the Society of Mary.

The Spanish Marianists created Ediciones SM more than eighty years ago. What began in a modest and familial manner is today an important enterprise known throughout the Spanish-speaking world. This publishing house has always been characterized as having been born in the classrooms and for having the capacity for innovation. Many of the advances in textbooks in Spanish had their origin and point of departure in Ediciones SM. It is a showcase for the capacity of Marianist education to interpret the situation and for its desire to get ahead of the times. Although the following has only an anecdotal character, it is interesting to read today a story included in a book on the natural sciences published by SM in 1962. It describes in a prescient way "Food in the Future":

> … *the restaurant was a wide room very busy at that moment. Only one man attended quite comfortably to all the patrons, since all his work was reduced to handing out and collecting bottles and cans at the bar.*

— *"For me, E-26 third meal, taste 5, and for a drink half-bottle of H-12," said Javier as he approached the barman.*

— *"Also for me, E-32 taste 7 and a full bottle of H-10, since I sweated a lot this afternoon," added Javier.*

In a moment he had in hand the boxes and the bottles, both made of plastic, which contained his meal and his drink. The label on each of them indicated in detail the calories, vitamins, proportion of the three basic food types, etc., which they contained…. There was also a device for electronically heating the meal….

5.6. THE RISKS OF ICT.

Nevertheless, in the educational process based on the new technologies not everything is positive.

In an interview published in *ABC* newspaper of Madrid on October 30, 2011, a journalist asked a well-known juvenile judge, Emilio Calatayud:

> — *Some years ago, I became aware of the need for computers to be only in the living room of homes, in order to protect the children. What can we do now if they all have the Internet on their mobile phones?*

> — *In this respect it's getting worse. We are beginning to have addiction problems with computers, and we are seeing al-*

legations of ill treatment by parents of their children. When you investigate, the Internet is behind it. If the family tries to limit the boy's use of it, the attempt to block that addiction triggers a stunning rebellion.

— It's true that they are perpetually connected to the social networks.

— And when they don't have it at their disposal, they can lose control. It's an authentic withdrawal symptom! But as yet we have not become aware of the magnitude of the problem. It is by changing the way we think, making things easier for us, eliminating the need to search for hours, that we can relax our effort… but perhaps what is more human in us is what we have that is less computable, like memory, thought, the capacity for emotion and empathy.

Recently an alarm was sounded about a specific aspect of the new technologies, which did not appear at the beginning. It has to deal with the quality of information that one can sometimes encounter in the material on the network. Worse yet, occasionally and voluntarily, someone will spread false information, intending to appear scientific and to plant false ideas, which, being apparently backed up by authorities and supported by many netizens, end up seeming true.

From its beginnings, the Net has been thought of as a global information center, a new type of library, with the sum total of human knowledge at our fingertips. To all that has come

about may be added a further detail: in addition to the already existing items offered in its vast collections, we users can also deposit in it our own books, pamphlets or scribbles with little or no quality control…

Such information gathering at the popular level -- when it is equipped with smart institutional and technological settings — has become tremendously useful, giving us Wikipedia and Twitter. But it has also opened up thousands of sites that undermine scientific consensus, invalidate data that have been securely certified, even promote conspiracy theories. Has not the time come to establish some kind of system of quality control?

A recent article in the medical journal Vaccine sheds light on the online practices of one such group, the global anti-vaccination movement. This movement consists of a diffuse coalition of false scientists, journalists, parents and celebrities who believe that vaccines can cause disorders such as autism, a claim that has been thoroughly discredited by modern science.

Although the anti-vaccination movement is nothing new — the first religious reactions to vaccination occurred at the beginning of the 18th century -- the ease of auto-publication and of search made possible by the Internet has given the movement a significant boost. Thus, Jenny McCarthy, an American actress who has become the public face of the movement, has openly admitted that much of what she

knows about the evils of vaccination comes from "the University of Google," a "knowledge" that she shares with nearly half a million followers on Twitter. That's the kind of online influence of which Nobel Prize winning scientists can only dream. Richard Dawkins, perhaps the most famous working scientist, has only 300,000 followers...

Today, anyone who googles topics like "Is global warming real?" or "risks of vaccination" or "Who was responsible for 9/11?" is just a few clicks away from entering into one of those communities....

The key is to get a database of controversial statements that match the freshest possible consensus of modern science, a huge challenge that projects like Dispute Finder are addressing decisively.

The second option, which does not exclude the first, is to go about having search engines take more responsibility for their indexes and to exercise more rigorous control in presenting the results of searches on topics such as "global warming" or "vaccination".

This long quote[2] from Evgeny Morozov's has been taken from *El País* of 02/02/2012. Morozov is a Visiting Professor at Stanford University and Professor at the New America Foundation. The

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[2] Translated from the Spanish version.

Spanish edition of his work, *The Internet Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (Public Affairs, 2012), will be published by Destino. The warning that the author gives is very significant about to what extent the Internet and the new media, given the breadth of their extension, their massive diffusion and the easy access they have, can be a potential school of deception.

Nevertheless, these dangers don't seem to make any impact on today's youth.

> *When going online, you discover millions of friends in a chat room. I'm too old for that, but how can the Church be present in these places? We must go where they meet on the Internet, to the places where they chat and have their blogs. They distinguish between the "digital selves", like those for whom the Net is home and the "digital immigrants" like me, who go online only occasionally.*

And a little later this same author, Timothy Radcliffe, added:

> *"We found a profound lack of confidence in absolute truths. In cyberspace the truth is manifold. The netizen is bombarded with truths that are mutually incompatible. The network is a huge market full of opinions, in which one chooses that opinion that he feels is the truth … In virtual reality, the truth is what you want it to be. "* *(Being Christians in the 21st Century…)*

Heidegger said in the 1950's: *"The tide of technology can captivate, seduce, bewitch and dazzle man to the point where computer*

thinking someday could come to be accepted and practiced as the only way of thinking" (quoted by Carr).

There have been several experiments, one on BBC, showing that when it is much easier for a number of people to find a solution to a problem, they then find it more difficult to resolve the issues that follow. It is somewhat as if, as we become more comfortable, we also become more incapable of solving problems. It has always been said that those who had to overcome great difficulties when they were young are the ones who have known how to succeed in their business life. In the computer world, we increasingly seek "friendlier" environments that resolve problems for us without our having to confront them directly ourselves.

Moreover, the search engines are becoming not only ever faster and more powerful, but also more accurate when it comes to locating a topic, a word or just an idea. They deliver to us ever broader results, which are at the same time poorer, however, less developed and more superficial.

Our minds are getting used to working with automatic routines based on on-going stimuli that themselves are increasingly powerful and flashy. Nevertheless, we need peace and quiet in order to get perspective on the stimuli that strike us and to make them our own, which is the way to guarantee that they do actually enrich us.

Neurologists say that the more human the emotions, the more they need peace and quiet. The neuronal operations at the

source of these types of emotions are slower than others. For example, the human brain can rapidly process the signs of physical pain; those feelings that go along with psychological pain, however, are slower. The more distracted we allow ourselves to become, the less capable we are of experiencing feelings like empathy or compassion. If things are going too fast, we are incapable of assimilating the emotions that relate to the mood of others. Our capacity for contemplation is diminished.

One question under a strong debate today is the concept of the "copyright." What for some persons is a violation of the rights to intellectual property is for others a necessary "sharing" in this new order, in which information flows in all directions and in which anyone can be an actor in the elaboration of new contents, in the creation of culture. The way in which we exchange information has evolved dramatically in the last few decades, but not the laws that protect the rights of the author. Most recently we have seen the government of the United States promoting the most restricted concept of copyright. Enforcing that model requires a broad deployment of means of control by Big Brother to guarantee that anyone who uses, modifies, copies or distributes information of any type must pay for it. This model certainly recognizes the need of the massive multimillion-dollar movie and music industries to be able to continue with their business model. And at the other extreme we have Richard Stallman and his idea of "Free Software." Richard Stallman defends software freedom at three levels: freedom to be copied, freedom to be modified and freedom

to be redistributed. This freedom is not strictly synonymous with gratuitous action; that is, Stallman considers it ethical to be paid for services, but never to protect the code from being freed and to be paid for it (the code). His concept of Free Software, transferred into culture, has inspired the creation of the *Creative Commons* licenses, which differ from the classical copyright by allowing the author to deliver the rights to copying, distribution and modification to others.

The debate is still open and laws vary considerably, depending upon the countries. We must be trained not only to obey the law, but above all to act ethically in any situations involving the copying/distribution/modification of the information that is put before us daily in the world of the Web.

It is difficult to find a just system for payment and remuneration. On the other hand it is not difficult to insist upon training children to responsibility from the very beginning. Piracy on the Web, which reaches alarming figures in many places, can be combatted effectively only through education. Campaigns are necessary, but they will never achieve the effectiveness that can be achieved if there is education from the beginning about respect for intellectual property, as difficult as that might be to preserve.

5.7. THE NEW MODEL OF THE TEACHER.
 Unless an innovation come into the classroom through the teacher it will no doubt crash. For the teacher to bring in an

innovation, he needs to be convinced that this new tool is going to facilitate his work. Likewise he needs to understand how to use it without running into problems in front of his students.

The new technologies pose a new challenge to the educator. It is self-destructive to contemplate them merely from afar, at the "user-level," or to try to prevent their introduction into the classroom. They are already there; they are going to continue to be there, although certainly their forms and ways of being used will evolve.

It is probably because the generation that was born with the Internet is not yet employed in teaching that the new technologies have not yet become generally used in teaching. It is very difficult for a teacher to use a tool with which the students are more familiar than he himself is, and in the use of which the disciple can correct and teach the master. The next generations of teachers will come with those abilities already acquired and will handle those instruments as something normal, although there will always be new devices coming onto the scene. They will, however, understand the implacable logic of computing and will move with ease among the classroom facilities. It will be more difficult for those whom this revolution has overtaken at a more advanced stage of life and who have had to jump onto the moving bandwagon. There is a need to set up programs for on-going teacher training.

The teacher must be prepared to confront an exponential growth in the information to which his students have access.

What he has to do, above all, is to help them to order and screen that knowledge. This he must do "one-on-one," that is, virtually on an individual basis, so that each student will be provided with information different from that of his classmates.

> *The characteristics of today's society greatly complicate the task of teaching…. Society is ever more individualistic, with a superabundance of information and activity and, consequently, little time remains for reflection, calm communication, social development, construction of values and the search for personal and collective identity. And these last are the traits which give greater meaning to the educational endeavor.* (A. Marchesi, *Presente y futuro de la reforma educativa en España*).

Forming criteria will be the essential work of the teacher. Raw, disordered information, without criteria for discernment, is worth very little and will prove confusing to the mind.

What are needed are reflective teachers, prepared for using the technologies in the classroom, who have been raised in the socio-educational paradigm out of which they want to further the teaching/learning process. [Needed are] Teachers who are flexible enough to adapt themselves to diverse learning situations, with a capacity for creativity, but in touch with reality and having positive attitudes towards what is an undeniable possibility for a different way of teaching and learning.

(F. Vilchez. *Tecnologías aplicadas a la educación y procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje en el aula*, Fundación Encuentro 2010)

It means stepping up the activities which favor reflection, critical thinking and the creation of frames of reference. Ultimately it means promoting areas for guiding the student's experience and his life-planning, more than insisting upon the amount of knowledge. A well-made head is better than a well-filled head.

Thus we arrive at the keys to education in the digital society. To form heads with criteria instead of filling them with data, to teach how to understand human fragility and to confront uncertainty. In short, developing the foundations of competency for learning how to be, learning how to live together, learning how to think.

In order to move ahead in these challenges it is necessary to put the potential of ICT at the service of the various projects: to improve the ways of sharing and collaboration in the families; to incorporate new actors who collaborate in the activities of the school, such as the alumni, volunteers or members of NGO's; to encourage networks of schools around a great cross-institutional project connected with the educational mission of the school.

And, of course, to encourage in ERE (Enseñanza Religiosa Escolar [religious education in the school]) the educational use of the social networks. We have already seen that forcing the academic presence into those spaces is counterproductive and that there is a need to work from outside in order to achieve being invited in. The so-

cial networks are like a patio, a place for conversations among equals. But good teachers incorporate the patio as a place for broaching topics that it is impossible to treat in the conventional classroom, and the same thing has to be done with the virtual patio of the networks. Communication with the students in these virtual spaces need not say things, but listen and challenge; to challenge always as a way of signaling that one is listening, with sympathy and ability. The social networks offer us these spaces for horizontal relationships that, used well, allow us to get to where the students themselves are and to influence them on their own ground. A quality conversation in these spaces generates sympathy and respect for the teacher.

To sum up, we have to situate ourselves before the technologies, and also coming out of the ERE, seeing in them an authentic opportunity for the educational world, a lever which, with its fulcrum in the educational plan, amplifies the effect of the educational effort and enhances the mission of the school and of the teacher.

<div align="right">(A. Ibáñez, o.c., p. 19).</div>

Surely it is here that the educational institutions can do more. It means preparing, bringing many teachers up to date about the meaning of all this, presenting it as neither an enemy nor an incomprehensible novelty.

5.8. THE POSSIBILITIES FOR RELIGION CLASS AND CATE-CHESIS.

Naturally, the incorporation of the new technologies into a religion class is no different as to its possibilities and problems than is incorporation of these media into any other subject. The only difference lies in what each has for specific subject matter. Nevertheless, in catechesis, where the pressure of the programs is less and there is greater freedom for organizing the time, the possibility of using these media is surely more open.

We are accustomed to say that, in the Reformation, the Protestants opted for hearing (reading the Bible, sacred music) and the Catholics for seeing (Baroque art, visual catechesis, etc.). Today the possibilities for the image are almost infinite. We render practically everything "in image", and we do so, indeed, without huge machines or special exhibits.

The new technologies can help us to find, choose, order, relate, evaluate and judge information. Above all, they can make activities more interactive and interesting, which in the case of religion and catechesis takes on even greater importance.

The teaching materials available for religion and catechesis are increasing in quantity and quality. One can see the places in Palestine where Jesus walked, contemplate the footprints of the faith that remain in the old cathedrals, assist at the big events that gather Christians together, and remember as we look back through history.

In this field the use of social networks offers possibilities. It would allow easy contact among persons in different locales and the sharing of identical interests. This can help to maintain a greater sense of community and awareness of the big community. ICT promotes communication and closeness in such a way that we are able to better visualize the situation of a community wider than that to which we belong. It takes us out of our narrow immediate environment, our little problems, and lets us feel closer to others, share their problems and their world. This possibility, used well, can help us to enhance the communitarian dimension essential to all Christian formation.

There is, nonetheless, a danger, namely, that the idea of friendship can become devaluated. A "friend" is not merely someone who responds to a message and gets included in your list of friendships. A true friend is someone who wants and seeks your good. Friendship is reciprocal and surely one of the richest experiences a human being can enjoy .

We have before us a great challenge but, as always, challenges come paired with great visions. Religious teaching, and specifically that of the Marianist, must confront these times with a strong dose of realism and of hope. So the Marianist teacher will have to work hard in a new field that we must continually get to know better, and be convinced that our message is translatable and comprehensible when wrapped in the new technologies.

6. THE MARIANIST CONTEXT

6.1. THE *RULE OF LIFE.*

If we want to understand the *Marianist context*, in which we have to develop our educational activity, our first resource, other than the Gospel, must be our *Rule of Life.*

In it, in a form that is concise but tremendously clear and explicit, are pointed out the characteristics that our work as educators must have.

In the first book:

> *Whatever our tasks, we act in the name of Jesus, announcing the redemption of all in Christ and the transformation of the world into his kingdom* (Art. 64).

In the following article there is added an important qualification making reference to the Mother of Jesus:

> *We seek, in our apostolic work, to grow in her virtues of courageous faith and docility to the Spirit, in her human sensitivity and openness (Art. 65).*

In these brief sentences there is an entire program: to act (in the name of Jesus), to announce (the redemption, to all), to transform (the world into the Kingdom), to seek, to grow, to take risks, and doing all that with docility to the Spirit, with human sensitivity and with openness to every human need.

It is an evangelical form of expressing the way in which an activity ought to develop. Here there are no references to the obligations, punishments, rigor, discipline, rules, etc. that frequently dot reflections about education.

Stated with all clarity, our educational activity as Marianists must be saturated, in every place and time, with that aroma which emanates from the gospel of Jesus, which is the "good news." Starting from there, we can think about the forms, the means or the concrete implementations. This reference to the gospel, however, and through it to Jesus and his mother, must be the key to what we call the "Marianist context."

Further along, when speaking of the Marianists apostolate, Article 74 highlights the fundamental role of education for Marianists, and terms similar to those above are used to describe the type of education which should characterize us:

> *For us, education is a privileged means of formation in faith. Through this means, we aim to sow, cultivate, and strengthen the Christian spirit and help it flourish in the human race.*

We have used new words that indicate positive attitudes: aim, sow, cultivate, strengthen and help flourish. That "help flourish" is particularly evocative, in that it eliminates any kind of narcissism or disembodied spiritualism.

In later articles (75, 84 and 90) are noted the personal characteristics which the Marianist educator ought to possess.

These articles are especially important, since they also point out in a certain way the conditions which the lay teachers who work in a Marianist school should meet: ability to adapt and collaborate with everyone, availability for service, apostolic boldness, continuing and balanced formation.

The Marianist *Rule of Life*, in its 1983 edition, revised in 2006, includes, as is logical, the already long Marianist tradition in this matter, bringing it up to date, adapting its language and attending to new situations which have arisen in the almost two centuries that the Society of Mary has been serving the Church and civil society.

I am convinced that this program, presented today to young teachers, is not only up to date, but highly attractive in its ideas, its manner of expression, but above all in the great dynamism and gospel content that it carries within itself.

In the second book of the *Rule of Life*, Chapter 5 is dedicated to the *community of mission* and in it there is a section especially dedicated to education.

Again all empty spiritualism is avoided in pointing out that the Marianist fulfills his mission, "not only by religious instruction" (Art. 5.10), but through the professional quality and Christian character of all his teaching.

Traditionally, the Society of Mary has tried to achieve sound professional training; its members obtain the appropriate

academic degrees, expand studies beyond the country of origin, share experiences, attend meetings, symposia and other events related to education.

Certainly, at times the practices employed in the Marianist schools have not been understood or accepted by everyone. To some they might seem too risky or perhaps too advanced. Remember the experiments of the *Sillon* in France or the "instructional analysis" in Spain, which brought about a great deal of suffering, inflicted especially by the massive incomprehension and fanaticism with which these initiatives were attacked.

Nevertheless, besides the good will that was at the root of these and other experiments, at bottom they were responding to another appeal of the *Rule of Life*, which notes that we must continually seek an appropriate presentation of the faith, which "requires constant adaptation."

The *Rule of Life* insists that we must try to make every Marianist school a true community in which all--students, teachers, parents, co-workers, religious-- help one another in their personal growth. This is the path towards being able to give "the testimony of a life rich in [Christian and human] values," which is indeed the only way to achieve the "integral development of the person."

> *Marianists, who teach, witness to a life enriched with both human and Christian values. They contribute in a special way to our common mission by their professional com-*

petence and their sensitivity to the human and spiritual growth of all members of the school community (Art. 5.12).

The complete man and woman whom we aspire to form must have a critical mind and the desire to find the truth, both in theory and in action; they have a compelling call to work for justice and peace in order to try to build a more just society, where people respect and help each other.

In this context offered by the *Rule of Life* are to be found the loom necessary for being able to weave true Marianist education, regardless of particular theories or ideas. Here is the summary of the work to be done now and in the future, just as it was done in the past. The language is clear, concise and leaves no doubt about the main priorities for all of us.

It also calls attention to the fact that it deals with ideas that are absolutely current and which cannot be considered outmoded, obsolete, or lacking in freshness.

We could say, I sincerely believe, that Marianist education is really open to a future that without a doubt will be difficult, but possible and visionary.

6.2. THE CONTEXT OF THE MARIANIST SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THEIR HISTORY.

The origins and backgrounds of the first Marianists were quite diverse: aspirants to the priesthood, teachers, businessmen

and workingmen. What they had in common, besides being Bordelais, was an enormous concern for the future of the faith in France after the tidal waves of the Revolution and the imperial adventures. It was a mission country. Practically all the ecclesial structures had to be rebuilt.

In those circumstances the earliest Marianists were convinced that it was necessary and urgent to begin with the education of children and youth. In the young was the true future of the French Church. They were the ones who were really going to make the nation Christian, to renew France in many aspects that the Revolution had changed. They were the ones who would have to move forward in a nation in which there could be no going backwards.

With a broad vision, that first group of religious launched out upon the adventure of education, opening the first Marianist teaching institution. From the beginning they were successful in their work. Their style was pleasing. They had a malleability that other congregations lacked. As a result they enjoyed great success. From the outset they sought the places in the educational panorama of their time in which the new Congregation could locate itself: secondary schools, rural schools, normal schools, orphanages, professional schools.… Nor were the times in France sufficiently quiet to help them to focus their initial objective.

For years, the school was the maternal womb of the Marianists, the place of their origin and the place where they felt useful.

Here they made their most valuable contributions to civil society and to the Church. Even the *working brothers* were prepared to complement the work of the teachers in the schools, while the priests served as school chaplains who focused their ministry within the setting of the school.

The Society for many years dedicated the best of its human resources and its material goods to the schools. Whether it built a new plant or adapted already existing structures, the activity developed in them represented a wholehearted commitment of effort.

In the old *Constitutions* it even said that "the religious go to the parish church only when it is necessary to take the students there." The parish was a different institution, where it was difficult to fit in. Some good friendly relationships, collaboration and closeness were enough. The parish was another world.

The Marianist school became the center of the intellectual and Christian life of the students. Catechesis was done there, as were First Communion and if possible Confirmation; on many occasions there was also place for celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony and on not a few occasions a funeral. The Founder wanted to accompany young people from the cradle to the grave, and that was precisely what the Marianist school tried to do.

For many religious the school was in their very DNA. They lived *in and for* the school. They prepared to be good teach-

ers, and they did it in the house and out of the house. The Office of *Instruction* supervised the good operation of "the school establishments." As might be expected as part of this overarching effort, the parents, the alumni and all those who might have any relationship with the school, were attended to spiritually as best as possible. There arose the Affiliates, the alumni sodalities, alumni associations, the work of St. Joseph and many other initiatives that had their center in the school.

Given all that, any religious who had difficulties as a teacher suffered a serious crisis, that included a vocational one. It was not only his profession as a teacher that was at stake, but his very identity as a religious itself. There were cases of lost vocations because some did not think they were inclined to classroom work and regarded that activity as indissolubly linked to the Marianist vocation.

Analyzing the activities of the religious from today's perspective, their huge work load, their austerity in resources and their generosity in care for their students is amazing. At the risk of exaggerating, there were those who said they wanted to die teaching in the classroom, that is, at their post, in the place where they were most really themselves. The good Marianist missed his students during vacations, time he certainly used to prepare himself better to do his work well.

So it is not at all strange that there was a plethora of initiatives related to the work of the teacher: exchange of notes, collaboration in class preparation, textbooks in various subjects,

new methods, etc. The Marianist school was a nursery of new proposals, of continuous innovations.

The superiors saw to it that this situation became ever more enriching. There were constant circulars from provincials and superiors general which addressed the educational enterprise. The book *Pédagogie marianiste* by Father Paul Joseph Hoffer certainly marked the culminating point of this trend.

This book was published in 1956 and its Spanish edition in 1961. In it Hoffer begins with the history of Marianist education and then highlights its characteristics and its various facets: physical, intellectual, moral, social and religious education. In the third part he describes what ought to be the personality of the Marianist educator.

Those were years of expansion and grand projects. Vatican Council II was in full swing. It appeared that the Church had finally caught the rhythm that civil society was asking of it. For a long time *Pédagogie marianiste* was studied, appreciated and sought after by many people, even those outside the Society of Mary, who knew and admired its educational work.

Casting a look back, and gathering the memories of the experience of many former students, including my own, the general feeling remains very positive. It is also shared by innumerable parents of the students, friends, lay teachers, etc., with whom discussions on this topic often recur. In general those religious who were our teachers were not especially brilliant in their

work. Rather most were average and even in good situations, some were under-prepared for that work, for example, those who taught language classes. Nevertheless the general feeling remains very positive.

There was always a united body of teachers and a common plan, that made itself felt and overcame individual limitations.

Daniel Pennac had a similar experience in his school, which he recounts in one of his books:

> *The teachers who saved me and who made me a teacher were not trained for it. They did not worry about the origins of my weakness in school. They lost no time in seeking the causes and even less in preaching at me. They were adults confronting adolescents in danger. They thought it was urgent. They tried time after time, day after day, until they could get me out of that danger. They literally picked us up again. We owe them our life.… It is difficult to explain, but occasionally a single word is enough to save an adolescent. The glance of an adult, supposedly someone secure and stable, can give the stability that the adolescent needs. To teach is to start all over again. If we fail to set our students in the present indicative, if what we know and the taste for it don't catch on with the students, their existence will be forever empty. Certainly we will not be the only ones to blame for their failure in life, but we will have participated in it. A year of failure at that age is an eternity.*

These are confessions of the author, in which he narrates his own history as a difficult student who had the good luck to find in his teachers a lifeline. He indicates clearly that it was not any special preparation nor the fact that they were extraordinary persons, but the attention to the student, the interest in his situation, and definitely the affection in the act of educating that made of that poor student an extraordinary teacher. This anecdote reinforces what we are saying about Marianist education.

What is left behind as the positive residue of those school years is, I think, the consistency. There was a plan that everyone followed, and each one according to his own position, including those who did not work directly in teaching, applied himself to carry out the plan to the end.

So it did not matter if such and such a teacher was still completing his studies or that another one could not keep a rein on the class. The education in the Marianist school was something over and above the individual person, the personal faults or the limitations of each one.

It is very possible that the secret was in the affection. Those teachers loved their students. That was evident and it produced a feeling of respect for the person, even from the littlest on up. The boy was the center of things. The teenager was the center. The youth was the center. Ultimately, the person was the center.

In addition, there was no pressure that could damage the personality of the student. In *Jesuits: a Multibiography,* a magnificent book about the outstanding moments of the Society of Jesus, Jean Lacouture quotes a philosophy teacher who, in the 1940's and 1950's taught classes in the Jesuit school in Bordeaux and in the Marianist school in the same city: Lycée St Joseph de Tivoli and École Sainte Marie Grand Lebrun. In analyzing the style of both institutions, he points out that in the Jesuit school the discipline was enforced very visibly on the exterior, but was not really internalized by the students. On the other hand, in the Marianist school the discipline, which appeared more relaxed on the outside, was better accepted and lived by the boys. Probably unintentionally, it was nonetheless applying the Marianist style of education, which ultimately produces personal benefits at a deeper level.

The model of the Marianist school was always the Collège Stanislas in Paris. That institution, founded by three priests linked to the University of Paris, tried above all to establish dialogue between the faith and the culture of their time. The Marianists who directed the Collège Stanislas (Lalanne, Lagarde and Ninfey) took advantage of this setting, which was so well suited to their style of teaching, in order to put into practice the Marianist model of education. It was a style that had already produced magnificent results for the young Society of Mary and that now that it was in Paris could be showcased to the entire country.

At Stanislas emulation was the key to the system. The student had to be, not first in class, but the best he himself could be.

Each one should strive to reach his top level performance and try to help others to achieve it as well.

During the days of the Commune in Paris, from March 18 to 28, 1871, Stanislas was transformed into a First Aid station under the direction of Fr. Lagarde. The behavior of the director, the teachers and the students earned for the school an increased prestige and an almost heroic aura.

Stanislas was the Marianist school *par excellence.* Others had to match it according to the best of their abilities.

It is well known that Alfonso XII de Borbón attended this school while living in exile with his mother, Queen Isabel II. Less known is the anecdote that, when as King of Spain, he negotiated with the Order of St. Augustine to take charge of the Monastery of San Lorenzo del Escorial, he placed as a condition that they open a school, which still exists today, bearing the name of Alfonso XII. He wanted it as similar as possible to the Collège Stanislas where he himself had studied. To make that a reality, he made available laboratory materials and other pedagogical tools that could give the Alfonso XII school the air of Stanislas.

Among the characteristics proper to Marianist schools, no less important is a profound respect for individual liberty, which is not incompatible with discipline and order. This respect means that there is never coercion of the person, that religious activities have always been balanced and without exaggerations.

Ultimately the climate has always been demanding, yet without neglecting the necessary respect for the student.

Always, long before the liturgical reform encouraged by Vatican Council II, in the Marianist schools Masses were celebrated with congregational participation. A good example is the prayerbook used by the students which in many respects was in advance of the Council in its effort to make the liturgical celebrations truly participatory.

The mixed composition of the Society has traditionally been one characteristic difference between Marianist institutions and other Catholic schools. Normally they belong to congregations of brothers with chaplains comng in from outside, or to congregations founded fundamentally by priests. The schools of the Society of Mary have always been more unique. In these the religious, whether priests or brothers, have been integrated into the teaching and pastoral functions of the school; this has made the educational community into an integrated whole in which the lay religious, priests and seculars share a level of equality.

6.3. THE PRESENT.

Over time, the situation in the Church and even more in civil society began to change. The Marianists opened other works, among them parishes, taking on new roles and responsibilities that had nothing to do with the school, and they needed preparation for those.

One can justly say that they always did it with a great ecclesial sense, a great generosity, and no little effort. They put their works and their resources at the disposition of the Church and civil society, and sought new formulas of engagement and detachment, more in accord with the times they were living through, trying to be faithful to the gospel and to their own time.

New works were opened in places where school work was either not necessary, or not possible, or was not considered a priority, so that several new foundations began without any school activity. Some continue on today without it. The thinking was that our mixed structure offered strong possibilities for a new form of parish apostolate.

Many Marianists certainly thought that the Council was going to be the moment when the Church would abandon excessive clericalism. It seemed that the hour had come for a congregation that had always boasted about not making distinctions between priests and lay members. Unfortunately, looking back at the Church over the years, it did not happen that way. The cleric, although it is never said explicitly, occupies a rung above the layman. The latter, among whom we include women, with rare exception, have few important places in the Church structure.

In several countries new ways of handling ownership and management had to be found. Local laws indicated for each locality the guidelines for action. It was certainly necessary to choose models and to negotiate with the educational authorities.

More recently, in large part because of the dearth of vocations and the aging of the religious, the Society has been obliged in countries with a long Marianist tradition take a new stance in the work of the schools, even to the point of closing some of them.

At the same time, a huge effort has been made to prepare and integrate lay persons into positions of responsibility. Those who were once called "auxiliaries" are now those who are bearing in large part the burden of our educational works.

What then is the place of the Marianist religious in the school, in the university, in the work of education? Merely to be the "Owner" of the work? Can a work be Marianist without Marianist religious? These are the questions that make us reflect today.

We need to continue, when possible, the direct work of the religious in the educational endeavors, especially in countries with less tradition. It is there that one really learns the meaning of "Marianist pedagogy." In addition, we will have to rethink in some places modes of presence in the school, living there, but with hardly any brother working in it, or perhaps without even living in it. No doubt there are many ways to contribute, especially offering our experience. But above all it behooves us to offer receptiveness and mercy, sympathy and a positive vision, companionship and closeness. These are fundamental elements in the educational process.

My mother … had a wonderful sense of humor, and I learned from her that the highest forms of understanding we can

achieve are laughter and human compassion. (The Making of a Scientist, page 19)

Those are the words of Richard Feynmann, Nobel Laureate in Physics in 1965.

In addition, we can transmit the Marianist model of educating. If we visit the Burger King in Tienanmen Square in Beijing and the one in Times Square in the center of Manhattan, we will see that they are exactly alike in all details. If the multinational Burger King has succeeded in transmitting its establishment model, why isn't it possible to do so with a school?

The concern is to get the most possible out of the resources we have available, which though diminished over the years, remain huge. For example, we have not taken advantage of our international character. At a time when languages are absolutely necessary and exchanges more frequent, we should have specific programs of exchange not only involving students but also teachers.

We could create a large pool of data from educational experiments, offering teaching resources that can be used all over the world. We could likewise create networks of exchanges among the students, chats about various topics, etc.

In short, it is not about catching up, but staying where we are today. In the end we shall say that we are useless servants and have done only what we had to do.

EPILOGUE

Throughout these pages, we have tried to develop the "context" in which our educational work is done. They have been written from a very specific perspective. I know only very superficially the American contexts. Moreover, I am unacquainted, unfortunately, with the African and Asian contexts, in which the religious environment of the Marianist educational work has to be considered very carefully and specifically for each place.

It would be impossible, however, to try to cover all these worlds and cultures. So that these reflections might have some usefulness, it is necessary to consider, with them as one's starting point, the nature of one's own situation and what the concrete contexts are within which we develop our educational work.

To help this process of refining and specifying, we propose further on some paths for analysis by way of questions for reflection and discussion. They are presented as suggestions, to which others can be added, for personal consideration or

for possible group dialogues, so that the contents of the text can be gone into in depth and applied to the concrete situation of each educational center — be it a high school or elementary school, a university or a non-formal work of education.

Educating is such a complicated work that it eludes any attempt at systematization. Perhaps it is the poets who best describe what it is to educate. A Spanish poet, former student of the Colegio Marianista of San Sebastián, Gabriel Celaya, says it in these words:

> To educate is the same
> as putting a motor on a boat…
> you need to measure, weigh, balance…
> and start it all.
> So,
> One needs to raise up in the soul
> A bit of a sailor…
> A bit of a pirate…
> A bit of the poet…
> And a kilo and a half of concentrated patience.
>
> But it is consoling to dream
> While one works,
> That that boat, that child
> Will go a long way on the water.
> To dream that this ship
> Will carry our cargo of words
> To distant ports,
> To far-off islands.

To dream that one day when
Our own boat is sleeping,
Our flag
Will journey on
hoisted on new boats.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

0.1. How would you define the educational paradigm that we experience today?

0.2. What have been the most significant changes in it over recent years?

0.3. In which aspects have we progressed and where are we stuck?

1. SOCIAL CONTEXT

1.1. What are the most obvious social imbalances in our civil society?

1.2. What values drive the society in which we live?

1.3. What values does our society seem to ignore?

2. POLITICAL CONTEXT

2.1. What is the involvement of politics in the world of education in our society?

2.2. Is there an interest in public education? And for private Catholic education? What is the situation of each of them?

2.3. What are the most striking differences between the one and the other?

3. ECCLESIASTICAL CONTEXT

3.1. What is the religious context of the milieu in which our educational activity is developed?

3.2. Is the local Church truly interested and involved in the problems of education?

3.3. What kind of help might the local Church bring to education?

3.4. Analyzing realistically the education which we are practicing, what would be lacking and thereby preventing us from saying that we are evangelizing?

4. PEDAGOGICAL CONTEXT

4.1. Do we have the time, the desire and the possibilities for being trained in pedagogy? What is our current level?

4.2. If we analyze our style of educating, how would it be classified?

4.3. In what sense can we say that we are educating globally and for the future?

5. CONTEXT OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES

5.1. How could we describe our knowledge of the new technologies and their educational implications?

5.2. What's missing <u>in</u> applying them in our classrooms?

5.3. What advantages and disadvantages do we see in using the new technologies?

6. MARIANIST CONTEXT

6.1. How can we describe current Marianist education as we actually practice it and what are its strong and weak points?

6.2. Do we know the Marianist history and tradition and let them influence us? What could we do to improve this aspect?

6.3. In educating, do we take into account the key elements of the Society of Mary, such as its mixed composition, its worldwide extension, its Marian character,…?

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The Marianist religious have been creating educational works since our beginnings nearly two centuries ago. Today, we continue to dedicate the best of our human and material resources to education across the globe. The changing circumstances of our world and the growing presence of Marianist works in new cultures pose questions regarding how to respond creatively to new situations and how to transmit our educational knowledge and heritage to the new educators who join in our works.

Connected to our history and with a foothold in the present, we will be able to face the future with confidence if we can act with fidelity and creativity. Heir of the past, full of life today and open to the future, Marianist education continues to represent, as it has since its beginnings, a **heritage** and a project of the **future**.

The collection *Marianist Education: Heritage and Future* was born out of these convictions. It is intended as a tool for formation and reflection for all people and groups involved in Marianist education, as well as a source of inspiration for local educational projects. The collection comprises a number of titles that aim to take an in-depth look at and expand upon the contents of other existing documents on the characteristics of Marianist education.

MARIANIST EDUCATION
HERITAGE AND FUTURE

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