



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO GREAT BRITAIN

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE STAFF AND THE STUDENTS OF SAINT ANDREW'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Tuesday, 1 June 1982

My brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

1. It is a great joy to me to have this opportunity to greet you here on this beautiful campus of Saint Andrew's College of Education, at Bearsden, Glasgow. I wish also to express my cordial esteem to the distinguished representatives of the *civil and educational authorities* of Scotland here present with the *staff and students* of the college, their parents, clergy and religious, and associates from the schools, universities, colleges of further education, and other institutions of educational science.

Saint Andrew's College, as I understand, has quite recently been formed from two splendid traditions of teacher-training: Notre Dame College of Education here at Bearsden and Dowanhill, Glasgow, and Craiglockhart College of Education in Edinburgh. As a national college now, it enjoys the *same patron* as Scotland itself, the Apostle Saint Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, with whom the momentous invitation was received from the Lord almost two thousand years ago: "Come, follow me and I will make you become fishers of men" (*Marc. 1, 17*).

Today, the Successor of Saint Peter finds himself in the gracious company of the spiritual sons and daughters of Andrew, here in your beautiful Scotland. And although I too am a "man from a far country", I am not unaware of the *rich heritage of Scotland* and of this great *City of Glasgow* and the surrounding region of Strathclyde. Glasgow, the city of Saint Kentigern or Mungo (the *good man*) whom history regards as its first bishop, dates from as early as the sixth century. A city whose famous mediaeval University has emblazoned on its arms the words of Christ himself -

“*Via, Veritas, Vita*” - of him who is truly “the way, the truth and the life” (Jo. 14, 16).

This most pleasant venue causes us to reflect on the importance long given in Scotland to the promotion of sound education, and to consider the *implications* of this for the present and immediate future.

2. To mention only a few of the *achievements of the past*, one thinks of the contribution of Saint Margaret in the eleventh century, that gifted queen and patroness of Scotland; the founding of the Universities of Saint Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen (King’s College) in the fifteenth century; the choir of “sang schull” and the grammar schools of the same period; and the subsequent parish schools throughout the land, where the “Dominie” or master gave every encouragement to the “lad o’ pairts”. Not only did Scotland’s sons and daughters eventually bring education to the distant countries of the Commonwealth, but so also have not a few leaders of developing countries been trained in your ancient Universities, including Edinburgh, and your more recent foundations like Strathclyde, Stirling and Glasgow. One notes in particular the longstanding concern of the established Church of Scotland for suitable educational provision at all levels, and we rejoice in its Committees’ increasing collaboration with the Catholic Church, not least in the field of Religious Education.

Worthy of special mention, I feel, are the statutory provisions of *the Education (Scotland) Act of 1918*, whereby Catholic schools are a constituent part of the State system, with essential guarantees covering Religious Education and the appointment of teachers. In this context, I wish to pay tribute to the Religious and lay-teachers whose dedication paved the way for this system, not forgetting the vision of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities who brought it about, as also their patient discretion in implementing it.

While Catholic teachers and their confreres can take just pride in past achievements, I am sure their realism is no less than that of Thomas Reid and the Scottish “Common Sense” School of philosophy; for common sense alone would exclude any temptation to complacency, not least in view of rapid developments in the social and economic order.

Obviously any *sound educational philosophy* would have to take all this into account.

3. It would seem to be the case that in modern times the success of a particular educational programme or system has been measured, to a large extent, by the recognized qualification it provided with a view to some career prospect. This would appear to be felt most in the Secondary sector of education, where direction for future prospects is crucial. Hence the emphasis, until now, on a *Certificate-orientated curriculum*, with the Certificate seen as the virtual guarantee of career expectations.

Such an outlook has tended to encourage an “outward” trend in education - not itself a bad thing,

but a certain balance or perspective has been missing: the perspective of *the whole person*, his inner self as well as his outer prospects.

But nowadays, as we have been made only too aware, the possession of a certificate does not bring automatic employment. Indeed, this harsh reality has brought about not only *deep frustration* among young people, many of whom have worked so hard, but also a *sense of malaise* in the educational system itself. Hence the question: what has gone wrong? What has specialization achieved in our day - in real terms, in terms of life? Wherein lies the remedy?

4. Perhaps we could reflect on the *philosophy behind education*: education as the completing of the person. To be educated is to be more fitted *for life*; to have a greater capacity for appreciating what life is, what it has to offer, and what the person has to offer in return to the wider society of man. Thus, if we would apply our modern educational skills and resources to this philosophy, we might succeed in offering something of lasting value to our pupils and students, an antidote to often immediate prospects of frustration and boredom, not to mention the uncertainty of the long-term future.

I am given to understand that educationists and educational authorities in Scotland have already come to terms with this problem and are giving due emphasis to education as development of the whole person; not only intellectual ability, but also emotional, physical and social development. These integral aspects are, I believe, an ever recurring theme in various *official Reports*. So what I have to say this morning is by way of *moral support* and encouragement for the continuing work of implementing these recommendations at every level in the school sector, both Primary and Secondary. I appreciate too that this task of educational development is itself hindered by serious economic factors that impinge very much on staffing provision and material resources. But one cannot but recognize, and welcome, the encouraging factors evidenced by the educational developments themselves.

First and foremost must surely be the increasing *involvement of parents*, especially in the Primary and Secondary sectors, and also, if to a lesser extent, in the Tertiary sector. In some ways, this has been realized through the structures of Parent/Teacher Associations or similar bodies; the concept of community schools; the opening of school library and leisure facilities to parents; and through this, the wonderful opportunity for Adult or Continuing Education - towards the full development of the person and his or her God-given potential.

It is only right that parents should be more involved in educational structures. For are not parents, in the sight of God, the *primary educators* of their children? Such a basic principle was underscored by the Second Vatican Council, in particular in the Declaration on Christian Education: "Since it is the parents who have given life to their children, it is they who have the serious obligation of educating their offspring. Hence parents must be recognized as the first and foremost educators of their children" (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 3).

The promotion of this “integrated, personal and social” education is also, we need hardly mention, the necessary and complementary *role of the school*. And here, in the day-to-day progress towards objectives, are to be found real elements of encouragement too.

In realizing that consideration for the “whole person” involves his spiritual dimension, one notes that the Scottish education authorities, apart from already approving courses and qualifications for specialist teachers in *Religious Education*, are giving serious attention to other provisions like national examinations and the services of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate. And it is especially heartening to learn that the Education Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Education Commission have undertaken a united approach regarding important aspects of this deliberation.

5. The issues focused on above, especially the development of the whole person, the spiritual dimension of education, and the involvement of parents, have always been central to the ethos of *the Catholic school*. This has been particularly true of the Primary school, with the close bond between the family, school, parish and local community. Nor has this been absent in the more complex situation of the Secondary sector, where the Diocese often provides Chaplains, above all for the school as a community of faith centred on the Eucharist and also, where possible, to serve as a pastoral link with the local parishes. However, always mindful of the constant need for improvement, the Catholic school ought to make full use of suitable new opportunities available, for no other reason than to fulfil its own identity and role. And we do well at this point to recollect what precisely is the *identity and purpose* of the Catholic school.

Such a reminder is conveniently provided in the document of that title, “*The Catholic School*”, published by the Holy See’s Sacred Congregation for Christian Education in March 1977: “The Catholic school”, it declares, “is committed . . . to the development of the whole man, since in Christ, the Perfect Man, all human values find their fulfilment and unity. Herein lies the specifically Catholic character of the school. Its duty to cultivate human values in their own legitimate right in accordance with its particular mission to serve all men has its origin in the figure of Christ . . . Its task is fundamentally a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life” (*The Catholic School*, 35-37).

Implicit throughout these terms of reference for the Catholic school is the imperative of *Christian commitment* on the part of its *teachers*. The Catholic school “must be a community whose aim is the transmission of values for living. Its work is seen as promoting a faith-relationship with Christ in whom all values find fulfilment. But faith is principally assimilated through contact with people whose daily life bears witness to it” (*Ibid.* 53).

In reflecting on the value of Catholic schools and the importance of Catholic teachers and educators, it is necessary to stress the central point of Catholic education itself. *Catholic education is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ* in the lives of others.

Those who have been baptized must be trained to live the newness of Christian life in justice and in the holiness of truth. The cause of Catholic education is the cause of Jesus Christ and of his Gospel at the service of man.

Nor must we ignore the integrity of the *catechetical message* as taught: "The person who becomes a disciple of Christ has the right to receive 'the word of faith' (*Rom.* 10, 8) not in mutilated, falsified or diminished form but whole and entire . . . Thus no true catechist can lawfully, on his own initiative, make a selection of what he considers important in the deposit of faith as opposed to what he considers unimportant, so as to teach the one and reject the other . . . The method and language used must truly be means for communicating the whole and not just part of 'the words of eternal life' (*Io.* 6, 68; cfr. *Act.* 5, 20; 7, 38) and the 'ways of life (*Ps.* 16, 11, cit. in *Act.* 2, 28)' (IOANNIS PAULI PP. II *Catechesi Tradendae*, 30-31)".

6. Whereas most of my address has centred on the crucial area of the school, with obvious implications for teacher-training, I would hope that those here present from the Universities would recognize, with this former university professor, the *relevance of the school for the university*: not merely as a recruiting-ground for students, but as an essential part of the continuing process of education.

As for *the university itself*, I would simply like to mention some points I have had occasion to make on this topic, to the General Conference of UNESCO, to various university groups in Rome, and in Bologna only last April. I feel that the last mentioned is particularly appropriate, since I am told that it was the *University of Bologna* which provided the ancient Scottish universities with significant elements of their splendid tradition.

From its very origins and by reason of its institution, *the purpose of the university* is the acquiring of a *scientific* knowledge of the truth, of the whole truth. Thus it constitutes one of the fundamental means which man has devised to meet his need for knowledge. But, as the Second Vatican Council observed, "Today it is more difficult than it once was to synthesize the various disciplines of knowledge and the arts. While, indeed, the volume and the diversity of the elements which make up culture increase, at the same time the capacity of individual men to perceive them and to blend them organically decreases, so that the image of universal man becomes even more faint" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 61). Any interpretation of knowledge and culture, therefore, which ignores or even belittles the spiritual element of man, his aspirations to the fullness of being, his thirst for truth and the absolute, the questions that he asks himself before the enigmas of sorrow and death, cannot be said to satisfy his deepest and most authentic needs. And since it is the university that *young people* experience the *high point* of their formation education, they should be able to find answers not only about the legitimacy and finality of science but also about higher moral and spiritual values - answers that will restore their confidence in the potential of knowledge gained and the exercise of reason, for their own good and for that of society.

7. By way of summing-up, I would like to repeat what I wrote last November in the Apostolic Exhortation on the Family in the Modern World: “It becomes necessary, therefore, on the part of all, to recover an awareness of the primacy of moral values, which are the *values of the human person* as such. The great task that has to be faced today for the renewal of society is that of recapturing the ultimate meaning of life and its fundamental values” (IOANNIS PAULI PP. II *Familiaris Consortio*, 8).

And as Christians we believe that the ultimate meaning of life and its fundamental values are indeed revealed in Jesus Christ. It is he - Jesus Christ, true God and true man - who says to us: “You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am” (*Io.* 13, 13-14).

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