



GCE recurring theme in speeches in Mexico by the Prefect of the DCE Cardinal José Tolentino De Mendonça
THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION: A RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS



In September 2024, Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, visited the Mexican cities of Puebla, Ciudad de México, Guadalajara and Monterrey, where he gave several lectures in which he dealt with the theme of the Global Compact on Education. We publish here the one held in the MTY Diocesan Seminary.

**EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THESE TIMES
OF CHANGE**

GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION
Most Reverend Eminence José Tolentino
Cardinal de Mendonça
Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and
Education

27 September 2024, Diocesan Seminary, MTY

Most Reverend Excellencies; distinguished academic and civil authorities; esteemed educators; esteemed representatives of various religious, social, educational and cultural institutions and associations; dear friends.

It gives me great joy to be able to address you on this very special occasion, in the context of my visit to this great Mexican nation, and in the transcendental context in which we live, and which Pope Francis himself has described "not as an era of change, but as a change of epoch". I would like to express my

gratitude to all those who have made my presence here with you today possible, as well as my appreciation for all your efforts in the field of culture and education. Efforts of which this meeting is proof.

What is culture?

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, with which he began his pontificate and showed us what would be the pillars on which his magisterium and pastoral leadership would develop, Pope Francis offers us a unique definition of what culture is. The Pope says: 'it is the way of life of a given society, the way its members relate to each other, to other creatures and to God'. Years later, in the Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, the Pontiff will clarify that "the word 'culture' indicates something that has penetrated into the people, into their innermost convictions and into their way of life". This last clarification by the Holy Father is very interesting, especially for one of the words he uses: the word 'something'. Culture is 'something' that has penetrated people, their convictions, their way of life. Almost ethereal and insubstantial, this 'something' takes us out of the tangible world and places us in the realm of the immaterial, the transcendent and, why not say it, the spiritual. This 'something' gives man and society a plus without which they can neither express themselves nor relate. In the words of the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et*

Spes, this 'something' is 'everything by which man refines and develops his innumerable spiritual and bodily qualities; it makes social life more human, both in the family and in civil society as a whole, through the progress of customs and institutions'. Finally, this 'something', we might add, communicates and preserves the great spiritual experiences and aspirations of man, which will be of benefit to many, and even to the entire human race (cf. *Ibid.*).

However, in trying to define what culture is, according to Pope Francis' thinking, one thing is clear: culture is that 'something' in man that is open, welcoming, alive, friendly, dynamic, transcendent.

What about education?

What can we say about education? In Pope Francis' latest apostolic exhortation, *Laudate Deum*, on the climate crisis, there is a beautiful paragraph that, in my opinion, should be reflected upon, discussed and made our own by all of us and our institutions. I quote the Pope: we must "remember that there can be no lasting change without a cultural change, without a maturation in the way of life and in the convictions of societies, and there can be no cultural change without a change in people".

According to these words of the Holy Father, culture clearly leads us by the hand to education. This is because, in order for culture to preserve good and healthy lifestyles and integral forms of social relations - as we have just defined them - it is necessary that, just as the environment is changing, people are also changing, without disregarding or renouncing fundamental values. Changes that, as we know, are human and spiritual. The latter task, dear friends, is achieved through formal and informal education. If people do not receive adequate education, truthful information, and appropriate and ongoing training, culture will gradually lose that good and wholesome 'something' that animates it, heading irremediably towards decadence or the formation of a closed, exclusionary, despotic and self-referential culture.

For this reason, in the Apostolic Exhortation we mentioned earlier, *Evangelii gaudium*, which, as we have said, is like a key to his pontificate and his priorities, Pope Francis makes a strong appeal to promote a culture of encounter and dialogue, which allows divisions to be overcome and bridges to be built between people and peoples, and he dedicates very specific words to talk about the formation and care of young people, exhorting first of all a renewal of youth pastoral ministry that is increasingly oriented towards meeting young people: listening to them, understanding their needs and concerns, accompanying them in their process of growth and maturation and learning to speak to them in a language they understand (cf. EG n. 105). EG n.105). And, in this sense, it emphasises the importance of integral education, which implies not only the transmission of knowledge, but also and above all formation in values and education in the faith, so that everyone - especially young people - being persons of integrity, can be even more committed to the Church and society, and be able to respond to the challenges of today's world. The bishops of the Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Episcopate, held in Aparecida, had already expressed this concept in similar words. I quote the bishops: "Education humanises and personalises

human beings when it enables them to fully develop their thought and freedom, making them bear fruit in habits of understanding and in initiatives of communion with the totality of the real order. In this way, human beings humanise their world, produce culture, transform society and build history".

Education and culture in these times of change

As I said at the beginning, Pope Francis maintains that we are not in an 'age of change' but in a 'change of epoch' and, among the many ways of describing it, the Holy Father went so far as to define our age using two ideas or concepts. On the one hand, ours is - says the Pope - the 'Age of Rapidity', that is, an age characterised by an increasing acceleration of the rhythms of life and work, with scientific and technological innovations and social changes at a dizzying pace. On the other hand, the Pontiff also affirms that our time is the "Age of Discard", because we can sadly observe how the marginalisation or exclusion of individuals and social groups considered "non-productive", or who do not meet the standards of the consumer market, occurs every day and in every part of the planet.



Faced with this reality and in order to face this "change of epoch", the Pope invites us to dare to change even ourselves, not to remain in the past, not to continue along the same established paths, but rather, with courage and determination, to "risk" thinking big, to think differently, charting new paths that will lead us to a personal renewal that will have an impact on culture and society. I then quote some words of Pope Francis himself, which, although he said them in reference to pastoral work and evangelisation, can very well be applied to the field of teaching and education. I quote the Pope: "Abandon the comfortable criterion of 'it has always been done this way'. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelisation in their communities. A stance on goals without an adequate community search for the means to achieve them is destined to become mere fantasy'. And because these words of the Pope can also be applied to education. Therefore, paraphrasing them, I say to you today: abandon the comfort of always doing the same thing! Be creative, bold and, why not say it, risky, when thinking and planning the goals, structures and methods of teaching and education! And when you have to follow guidelines and make decisions, look carefully and listen to your environment, especially the young people, because a stance that looks only at itself, whatever it may be, is doomed to become a mere utopia!

Responding to the crisis: the Global Compact on Education

In response to the various crises humanity is facing, Pope Francis invited everyone to join forces for the good of the younger generations, especially by "renewing the passion for a more open and inclusive education, capable of patient listening, constructive dialogue and mutual understanding". Today more than ever, in fact, says the Pope, "it is necessary to unite efforts for a broad educational alliance that forms mature people, capable of overcoming fragmentations and contrasts and of rebuilding the fabric of relationships for a more fraternal humanity". This call for the unification of efforts and strategies takes concrete form in what the Pontiff called: the **Global Compact on Education**.



With the **Global Compact on Education** project, the Holy Father invites those working in the field of education and culture to unite their efforts to educate everyone, especially the younger generations, to universal brotherhood. To achieve his goal, the Pope designed the Covenant around seven commitments. Seven paths that will lead us to the much needed renewal. The first five refer to the human being: first, to put the person at the centre of every educational process; second, to give priority to the younger generations, listening to them and taking care of them; third, to pay special attention to women, encouraging their full participation in education; fourth, not to forget the fundamental educational role of the family; fifth, to be open to welcoming the other, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised. The sixth path concerns politics and economics and represents the commitment to transform them, putting them at the service of man and the entire human family, with a new idea of sustainable development for all. Finally, the seventh commitment concerns the care of our common home. Taking care of our planet, protecting its resources, adopting more sober lifestyles and committing to renewable, clean and environmentally friendly energies. The **Global Compact on Education** is therefore an explicit appeal to all humanity, regardless of creed, race or status, to engage in education as the surest and most appropriate way to respond to the challenges of our time. With this project, the Pope invites us to transform our point of view and our conception of education, inviting us to rethink and revise curricula, programmes and educational projects in the light of this new perspective. The Pope's call is a call to live a

conversion, not only in a spiritual and religious sense - which of course is always important and necessary - but, above all, a conversion in the sense of the etymological origin of the word: "the action and effect of doing something different".

As a **Global Compact**, the Holy Father's wish is that we all learn to "unite in chorus". as he has repeated on several occasions and in front of different audiences, and that we succeed in weaving synergies of help and collaboration between the different levels of authority and responsibility, with a single objective: to humanise education in order to build a civilisation that truly responds to the demands of the dignity of every human person and that consequently produces a better world. In fact, in his message to a delegation from Loyola University in Chicago last May, he reiterated this concept: 'We need men and women who are ready to put their skills at the service of others, to work for a future in which each person can develop his or her capacities and live with dignity and respect, and the world can find peace'.

To express the community dimension of education and the urgency of working together 'in chorus', Pope Francis continually quotes the following African proverb: 'To educate a child, it takes a whole village'. He then reminds that the task of accompanying each child is not the sole responsibility of the father and mother, but of all members of the community. Everyone, therefore, has a duty to support education, which is always a joint and gradual process.

For the Pope, in this historical moment characterised by rapid changes and increasingly complex challenges, the role of academic institutions is crucial and he makes a strong appeal to all of them, because their task is not only "to form brilliant minds, but also to cultivate generous hearts and consciences attentive to the dignity of each person". For this reason, the Holy Father points out that education involves "three levels": the head, the heart and the hands, so that each person is capable of "thinking what he feels and does, feeling what he does and thinks, and doing what he thinks and feels". In his message to the Loyola University delegation, the Pope said: "Education, in addition to the transmission of knowledge, is a commitment and a method to form persons capable of embodying the values of reconciliation and justice in all aspects of their lives. Mind, heart and hands cannot grow well separately, and only together can they confront the reality and demands of the times. I wish you to form "industrious dreamers" and above all to be such!".

In short, with the **Global Compact on Education**, Pope Francis is proposing an alliance of solidarity and generosity that leads all of us, especially Catholics, to commit ourselves to the formation of concrete persons, seen and valued in their inestimable dignity, and remembering that education - which is an inalienable right of every human being - is also "one of the most effective ways to humanise the world and history".

For the Church, education is an intrinsic duty

Just yesterday, September twenty-sixth, marked two years since the Holy Father appointed me Prefect of the *Dicastery for Culture and Education*, and in that time I have been able to see, first hand, the Church's extraordinary and important worldwide presence in the field of education, to the point of being the first

provider on the planet in university education, with some 1,700 (one thousand seven hundred) Catholic universities, and the third in school education, with some 220,000 (two hundred and twenty thousand) Catholic schools. In both cases, the Church is first, because of its capillary presence in every corner of the earth and the diversity of social and human contexts in which it finds itself, which allows it to have a global vision of education and, of course, to provide an extraordinary service worldwide.



The Apostolic Constitution 'Ex corde Ecclesiae', considered the 'Magna Charta' of Catholic universities, reminds us that the Catholic University springs from the heart of the Church and goes back historically to the very origin of the university as an institution. It is not, therefore, a matter of a social action to satisfy a need, but of a typically ecclesial action, arising from the very heart of the Church, which coincides with its nature and mission. The same applies to Catholic schools, as the Instruction 'Identity of Catholic Schools: Towards a Culture of Dialogue' reminds us. Here it states that "the educational action carried out through schools is not a philanthropic work of the Church to support a social need, but an essential part of her identity and mission" (§ 10). Without forgetting, of course, the essential argument presented by the Second Vatican Council which, in the Declaration Gravissimum Educationis, declares that "the duty of education belongs to the Church not only because she must be recognised as a human society capable of educating, but above all because she has the duty of proclaiming to all men the way of salvation, of communicating to believers the life of Christ and of assisting them with constant attention so that they may reach the fullness of this life. The Church, as Mother, is obliged to give her children an education that fills their lives with the spirit of Christ and, at the same time, helps all peoples to promote the full perfection of the human person". In fact, as Gravissimum Educationis itself reminds us at the beginning of the document: 'All men and women of every race, condition and age, as sharers in the dignity of the person, have the inalienable right to education'.

In the light of the above, and with all that follows, we must reiterate the conclusion that, for the human being, education is a right. For the Church, on the other hand, education is a duty.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by reiterating that the **Global Compact on Education** is nothing more than Pope Francis' urgent invitation to renew our passion for education, to educate the younger generations to

universal fraternity. This is the commitment that the Holy Father asks of us: the presence and commitment of everyone, but especially of the Church, in education for the construction of a more human, more fraternal world. Educating for fraternity means teaching how to establish alliances, create networks, form a chorus, build bridges. On the contrary, we have a duty to unite all social and religious actors around a common cause such as the good of humanity, through culture and education. In these eleven years of his pontificate, the Pope has demonstrated this not only with words, but also with deeds. Let us do the same! In this perspective, all educational institutions must question themselves on the purposes and methods with which they carry out their educational mission. And as the Pontiff himself said at the end of his message when he launched the **Educational Pact**: 'Let us look for solutions together, let us initiate processes of transformation without fear, and let us look to the future with hope. Let each one of us be a protagonist in this covenant, making a personal and community commitment to cultivate together the dream of a humanism in solidarity, which responds to the hopes of man and the plan of God.

So, dear brothers and sisters, in our universities, schools, institutes, training centres and parishes, let worship become culture, doctrine become thought, truth be lived and become a common and passionate experience, so that the conversion that the Holy Father is calling us to undertake through the **Educational Pact** is not only a metanoia, but also and above all a metacardia.

I conclude by quoting the message the Holy Father addressed to the young people gathered at the Portuguese Catholic University in the context of the last World Youth Day. He told them: "Friends, let me tell you: seek and risk. At this moment in history, the challenges are enormous, the groans are painful - we are living a third world war in pieces - but let us embrace the risk of thinking that we are not in agony, but in travail; not at the end, but at the beginning of a great show. And it takes courage to think that. Thank you. ■

SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWS IN BRIEF

- On 3 and 4 September 2024, the GCE Secretariat presented the themes of the challenges of Catholic education and the GCE in Genoa, in 3 meetings with primary and secondary school teachers and headmasters of the Sisters of the Immaculate of Genoa schools.

- On 26-9-2024, His Excellency visited the GCE Secretariat. Mgr Jean-Charles Wisnick SMM, Auxiliary Bishop of Haiti and head of the National Education Commission. He received material for the purpose of implementing the Education Covenant in the country of Haiti.

- On 27-9-2024, the GCE Secretariat presented the Educational Pact at the San Lorenzo Centre in Rome at the Congress of Directors of the French Schools of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul. ■

MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION AND IN DIALOGUE WITH CULTURE



Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, presided over three intense days of conferences and celebrations during his visit to the archdiocese of São Paulo. On Sunday 18 August, in the capital of São Paulo, he presided over Mass in the cathedral, on the occasion of the patronal feast. The next day, a solemn Eucharist of thanksgiving for the 75th anniversary of the Faculty of Theology of Our Lady of the Assumption was held at the PUC-SP (Pontifical University of São Paulo) to mark ten years since the foundation of the Faculty of Canon Law of St Paul the Apostle in the archdiocese of São Paulo. The cardinal then gave a speech in which he praised the two ecclesiastical teaching institutions for the Church and society.

"I want to thank you for the work you do, for the commitment and passion with which you live this very important mission in the life of the Church. And I must say," de Mendonça added, "that these two ecclesiastical faculties, not only here in the metropolitan archdiocese of São Paulo and in the Greater Metropolis area, but also through affiliations and expansion projects, are spreading so well, there is so much collaboration with the mission of the particular churches here in Brazil. The prefect recalled what Pope Francis says about



theology, which must contribute to the current debate of "rethinking thinking", showing itself as a true critical knowledge. "In this change of culture, in this change of time, theology is indispensable to find new paradigms of rationality, new ways of organising knowledge. In the transformation of the times we are living through," he emphasised, 'the first challenge for the faculties of theology is to be

aware of their role'. The cardinal argued that theology and canon law have a place in the biography of knowledge, in the history of research and critical thinking: 'I am deeply convinced that there is no full cultural empowerment, no vital evangelisation, without a living and active theology'.

At the end of the event, Cardinal Tolentino de Mendonça was presented with the Medal of the Apostle of St. Paul, presented by Cardinal Odilo Pedro Scherer, Metropolitan Archbishop, in recognition of the important academic contribution the Portuguese theologian has made to the Church of St. Paul with his visit and the lecture he gave.

Praising the educational work of Catholic schools On the afternoon of Monday 19, the prefect attended a meeting in the auditorium of the Santa Marcelina College in Perdizes with representatives of Catholic educational institutions, organised by the Episcopal Vicariate for Education and Universities and the National Association of Catholic Education in Brazil (Anec). The Portuguese cardinal praised the work done by Catholic schools in Brazil and encouraged the institutions to remain steadfast, despite the many



challenges. "Believe in the good that you are, because education and the educational proposal that each of you represents is good," he urged. "Live this project as a mission of the Church, it is not just a micro-project of ours. Try to realise it, to give truth. At the end of a hard day's work or at a time when you feel like throwing in the towel, remember that the school director, the teacher, the school telephone operator, the being of the school, is not us. The school does not depend on us. Have the ability to prayerfully entrust the project of the Catholic school to the one who is in fact its 'owner' the Lord".

On Tuesday 20, the cardinal presided over Mass in the Immaculate Heart of Mary parish, attached to the Monte Alegre campus of PUC-SP, in the presence of the rectorate and academic staff of the university and other Catholic higher education institutions. This was followed by a meeting with representatives from the world of culture and education at the Tuca Theatre. "I was very touched by the quality of the work being done here and, as Pope Francis says, a university and the realities of

the university world are like workshops, building sites of hope. And if there is one feeling I take away from this visit to St Paul's it is a great gratitude for the profound work being done here, but also a great hope, because from here one can look to the future," he said.

In an interview with the newspaper O SÃO PAULO, the cardinal emphasised that the Church's educational mission is a fundamental expression of its very being, its mission. "For the Church, education is not just education, it is not just the development of technical knowledge or a multiplicity of knowledge. Education must lead to a synthesis, to a vision of what the human being is, of what his reality is," he said.



"Catholic education must not only deal with the penultimate questions, but also with the ultimate ones, those that illuminate the being and must constitute a way of life. What is culture? Culture is the expression of being," he added. The prefect also emphasised that the great challenges facing Catholic education are fidelity to its identity and networking. "Today we have to face the great questions of this changing culture, of this new era of history, and it is very important for Catholic schools to be together, to walk in association, to find new solutions to the challenges posed by this culture of metamorphosis." Finally, he emphasised that the Church in Brazil has an extraordinary mission in the field of education. "I witness the commitment, the service that the Church carries out, often in those places where no one else arrives. The Church builds a qualified, credible, truly open, truly transversal presence," he said. And, recalling Pope Francis' exhortation at last year's World Youth Day in Lisbon, the cardinal concluded, "The Church here in Brazil, in the field of education, gives an extraordinary testimony because it is at the service of everyone, everyone."

Taken from VaticanNews 22-8-2024:
<https://www.vaticannews.va/it/vaticano/news/2024-08/tolentino-de-mendonca-in-brasile.html>



Nb. The English translation of this edition of the GCE Journal has been done automatically. Please refer to the original Italian edition for any inaccuracies.

The speech of the Prefect of the DCE to the ANEC in Brazil
THE GCE: A PEDAGOGY OF ENCOUNTER FOR THE RENEWAL OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION



In his address to the Associação Nacional de Educação Católica do Brasil (ANEC), the Cardinal Prefect highlights three central aspects: pedagogy and dialogue, method and research, and pastoral action, as responses to contemporary social and cultural transformations. He emphasised the key role of Catholic education in facing today's challenges, thanking ANEC for its innovative contribution and inviting educational institutions to broaden their gaze beyond internal problems, towards a changing society.

A central theme is the crisis in relations between the generations, no longer conflictual but deep and subtle, which touches on issues of authority and freedom, generating confusion in roles and identities. This crisis affects young people and adults alike and, aggravated by the pandemic, requires a rethinking of educational models.

The speech also addresses the challenge of digitisation and transhumanism, phenomena that raise questions about the limits of the human being. The Prefect warns against a reductionist view of man, which seeks to overcome vulnerability through technology, risking the dehumanisation of education. Catholic education must respond by placing the human person in his or her integrity at the centre.



The **Global Compact on Education** promoted by Pope Francis is a key point in the discourse. This pact calls for the development of an inclusive and dialogic education, capable of valuing cultural differences and responding to the challenges of pluralism and secularisation. The Covenant inspires a pedagogy of encounter that aims not only at the transmission of knowledge, but also at building meaningful and communitarian relationships, promoting intercultural dialogue and an integral ecology, as suggested in the encyclical *Laudato si'*.

The Prefect concluded by praising ANEC for its commitment to promoting these values, considering them essential for the renewal of Catholic education and the strengthening of church communities.

THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL MAGISTERIUM OF POPE FRANCIS: CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION

The Pontifical Xaverian University received a pleasant and illustrious visit on 15 and 16 August. He was Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education of Pope Francis' Cultural and Educational Magisterium. The cardinal was the keynote speaker at the International Seminar on the Cultural and Educational Magisterium of Pope Francis: Concepts and Practices of the **Global Compact on Education**, which was attended by some 200 people dedicated to the education of students in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Honduras, Mexico, El Salvador, Venezuela, Portugal, the Vatican and Puerto Rico, and Colombian cities such as Medellín, Manizales and Bogotá. During his visit to the Javeriana, the Cardinal had the opportunity to meet and speak with the members of the University's Board of Directors, the Vice-Rectors of the Headquarters and Sectional Headquarters in Cali, the Deans of the Headquarters and the Rectors of the Universities participating in the International Seminar. In addition to visiting the Mario Valenzuela Library, S.J., the Xaverian Historical Archives Juan Manuel Pacheco, S.J. and the Faculty of Humanities, and the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy where, thanks to the Cardinal's interest in poetry and literature, professors and students presented him with a poetry recital, the research of one of the literature workshops, and social and artistic projects such as the Museo del Andén: a platform that studies the relations of daily exchange in the areas of public space adjacent to the University, to take on the stories, experiences and knowledge of informal vendors as part of the city's heritage, promoting them through artistic practices and encouraging attitudes of hospitality. Cardinal de Mendonça in the Library of Theology with its director, Father Fabio Ramírez, S.J. In an interview with Radio Javeriana Estéreo, the magazine Hoy en la Javeriana and Jesuitas Colombia, in the University radio studios, Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça referred to the meaning of the expression used by Pope Francis on the mission of universities to train poets and social choreographers: 'men and women, to be happy, need knowledge, techniques to find solutions to the problems of this world, but we do not only need knowledge, we also need wisdom about the meaning of life (...) Training social choreographers and poets means seeing life as a place of encounter (..) we are called upon to replace the culture of hostility with that of hospitality (..) Today the world needs new ways and new looks: slow, attentive, more sensitive. This is why the university must be a laboratory. The university serves to expand students' dreams (...) and to globalise hope'. Regarding the work done by the universities in their commitment to the **Global Compact on Education**, where the Javeriana University is a leader in the axis of technology and integral ecology, Cardinal de Mendonça emphasised the following about our University: "As head of the Dicastery, I must say that if there is a continent where the **Global Compact on Education** has been



The Rector of the University, Fr. Luis Fernando Múnera, with Cardinal de Mendonça after presenting him with the Javerian Order and diploma.

embraced with strength, creativity and commitment, it is Latin America. The Javeriana, in this particular case, as a leading university, is playing a wonderful role (...) The **Global Compact on Education** is a school of social poets and the Javeriana is helping a lot; my visit to the university proved this to me and showed me new possibilities (...) [quoting Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the Cardinal said] "the essential is invisible to the eyes" and the Javeriana gave me the opportunity to listen to the feelings, the poetry, the music that is made here, the theatre, the projects. Now I see the Javeriana in a psychogeographical way, that is, I see it from the inside, through the dreams that are made here (...) I bring with me various things to meditate on and examples that can serve as a stimulus for other geographies'.

To recognise the academic, ecclesiastical and cultural career of Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, as well as his valuable contributions to education and culture that have benefited humanity and strengthened the links between education and Christian values, the University's Board of Trustees awarded him the Order of the Javeriana University in the rank of Grand Cross.

The ceremony of admission to this honoured Javeriana community took place on 15 August in the San Ignacio Hall of the University. On that occasion, the Cardinal expressed words of gratitude that, as is his custom, left a profound message of reflection on the recognition of and the time devoted to the relationships we have and create: "I ask you to think of those people who have made you what you are, what we are (...) Today, when we experience not having time, we must give ourselves the gift of gratitude (...) We know perfectly well that there is a quality of relationship that can only be achieved with time. The time given to us by our loved ones has marked us, has allowed us to grow (...) Thank you. This tribute is not just for me, it is for many'.

taken from:
<https://www.javeriana.edu.co/hoy-en-la-javeriana/w/hoy-en-la-javeriana-cardenal-jose-tolentino-de-mendon%C3%A7a-javeriana> ■

The Catholic University of Argentina confers the prestigious title on the Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education

HONORARY DOCTORATE TO CARDINAL DE MENDONÇA



The Catholic University of Argentina (UCA) has conferred an honorary doctorate on Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education, for his important ecclesiastical and academic career, his priestly and human pastoral work, and his significant contributions in the fields of science, the arts, culture and education. The ceremony took place on 22 August 2024 in the San Agustín auditorium of the Puerto Madero Campus, in the presence of university authorities, lecturers and students. [...] The Rector of the UCA then retraced the career of the Vatican Prefect, emphasising that the honorary doctorate is the highest honour conferred by the University. "It is a recognition of the traces that have been left in society, not of the steps that have been taken," Schiavone said. After emphasising the many facets of the "cardinal poet", including his "up-to-date vision of Catholic education, especially university education", he concluded that "this title that we confer on the cardinal today must be interpreted by our entire community as a source of inspiration. [...] The laudation was entrusted to Galli: 'I stress, first of all, that he is a Christian whose greatest dignity, like ours, is that of being a son of God and a brother to all,' he reflected. After highlighting the pastoral and academic tasks of the Vatican prefect, he shared that he is also "a man who loves books, bookshops and libraries", a biblical scholar and an "essayist, theologian or mystic". "The cardinal reminds us that tears are a way of praying, and at the same time he gives us his smile," he said and concluded "as prefect, he knows from the inside the university life that unites us, and he has presided over and accompanied the mission of Catholic universities. Your service, José, fills us with hope'. De Mendonça then addressed the audience and answered questions from UCA students. "This moment of listening and growing with your questions is a moment that moves me greatly. Listening to you is a great privilege for me," he said to the question from theology student José Romero, and added: "We live in a time that is not only a time of many changes, but also a change of time and a change of epoch. My word to the new generations is a word of hope. It is like a birth, a new world is being born'. Secondly, Manuel Romero, a literature student, asked him about his vocation as a poet in relation to his theological and pastoral work. "Poetry is the language of God, because God speaks to us indirectly, and poetry and literature also speak to us indirectly with metaphors, parables and symbols," the cardinal replied. "This month, Pope Francis wrote a very beautiful letter, in which he talks about the importance of literature in his formation

and in the formation of all people, and he quotes (Jorge Luis) Borges. Literature is a school for listening, for looking, for our sensitivity because it opens us up to many other worlds. When we read, the horizon of our world widens,' he said, and stated: 'The two vocations, the poetic and the priestly, are basically the same thing'. Felicitas Piccoli, a student of International Relations, analysed the challenges of education in a globalised and divided world. "Education is a common cause, it cannot only be the schools that are responsible for education, but the whole of society is needed. **This is why the Holy Father invited all leaders to embark on this journey together.** We need families, great social institutions and a lot of dialogue to be able to accomplish this task'. ■

Colloquium at the Universidad Cristóbal Colón de México

GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION AND UNIVERSITIES



On 7 June 2024, the colloquium **Global Compact on Education and the University** was held in the Auditorium 'P. Manuel Arcusa Castellá, Sch. Manuel Arcusa Castellá, Sch.' of the Universidad Cristóbal Colón. The meeting, at the initiative of its rector, Fr. Francisco Javier Alonso Arroyo, is part of the project promoted by Pope Francis that seeks to build links between the different institutions of the community to educate the new generations. As an introduction, Fr Javier Alonso himself presented the meaning and scope of the **Global Compact on Education**. He cited as a precedent Pope Benedict XVI, who at the time highlighted an educational emergency that he defined as the difficulty of transmitting to the new generations fundamental values of existence, correct behaviour and criteria on which to build one's life. Regarding the **Global Compact on Education**, Fr Alonso referred to three documents written by Pope Francis, which summarise his approach to the issue as a representative of the Catholic Church. In these documents he gives us a whole curricular approach to what this new education could be and it correlates very well with what UNESCO tells us. He recalled Pope Francis' invitation in 2020 to families, communities, schools, universities, institutions, religions, rulers; to the men and women of culture, science, sport, artists, media and all humanity to commit themselves to seven commitments. "The **Global Compact on Education**," he emphasised, "is an opportunity to improve our education systems, including universities, and to respond to the challenges, but if we do not unite we will do nothing."

taken from:

<https://oducal.com/coloquio-pacto-educativo-global-y-universidad-en-la-universidad-cristobal-colon-de-mexico/> ■

UNITED FOR THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION



The university is also a place of evangelisation, especially for young people, and we walk together with them, in the light of the Church's synodal path. Although some of them are indifferent, in general they are very enthusiastic because synodality is an opportunity to speak, to express what we feel, our needs, but also the ideals to which we aspire. Many young people want to engage in this synodal journey of the Church. We are in an area of very simple people, of farmers, and many of our young people come from parish groups. We have made some changes to the curriculum so that the theme of synodality becomes a reality and, above all, can continue in the parishes".

These are the words of Father Oswaldo Martínez Mendoza, academic vice-rector of the Fundación Universitaria Juan de Castellanos of the archdiocese of Tunja, in Colombia, and a member of the International Theological Commission, who is keen to emphasise the university's commitment in line with the **Global Compact on Education** desired by the Pontiff: " **Global Compact on Education** calls us to a commitment in the education of young people to build the new generations. And we are concretising this with outgoing projects of an outgoing Church, of a university that goes beyond its walls, as Pope Francis says".

Father Martínez Mendoza's words reflect the spirit with which Latin American Catholic universities are experiencing the synodal process, a spirit of enthusiasm and commitment witnessed by the leaders, lecturers and students of the continent's universities. "Today," says Jorge Iván García Morando, coordinator of social and religious projects at the Universidad del Valle de Atemajac (Univa) in Zapopan, Mexico, "we find ourselves at a special moment in the history of education, which calls us to build and promote a culture based on dialogue, listening, sharing and walking together among ourselves and with our societies, in view of a genuinely human development, to seek answers to inequalities, to facilitate spaces for intergenerational encounters, to develop tools for interdisciplinarity, to promote family unity and respect, and to ensure that our students enter the world of work and social life with an integral formation, so that they can forge a culture of encounter and care. Education as communion, participation and mission implies a process of transmission of culture that can form

students in their vocation of service, because, as Pope Francis says, education is always an act of hope".

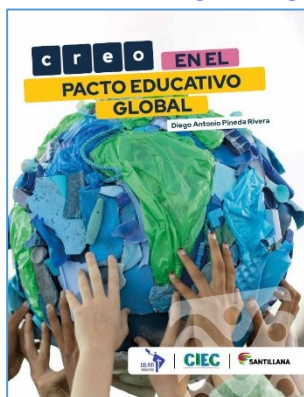
From the synod path, adds María Lucía Puppó, director of the Literature Department at the Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina Santa María de los Buenos Aires, 'the need to transmit the faith emerged. This implies taking into account above all the experiential and affective dimension of young university students, emphasising the importance of prayer, self-knowledge and personal commitment. Since Buenos Aires is a large city with a frenetic and often hostile pace, the witness that lay people, priests and religious can give is effective when it is accompanied by attentive listening and a real interest in others, as signs of the lived Gospel. Faith, sensitivity and respect for all persons and situations, solidarity with the most vulnerable and care for life, human ties and the environment are fundamental attitudes for the Church of the 21st century'. The synodal path notes Laura Osorio, a law student and student representative at the Universidad Católica Luis Amigó in Medellín, Colombia "was an enriching experience that gave us the opportunity to meet other young people committed to social transformation. The synodal path is a unique opportunity for the university to become more inclusive and participatory and to be close to young people, adults, the peripheries and the community at large".

The role of Catholic universities as part of the outgoing Church towards the peripheries was also emphasised by Joaquín Bernal, coordinator of humanities at the Universidad Anáhuac Oaxaca in Oaxaca, Mexico: "In today's society, affected to a large extent in its customs by the particular dynamics of social networks and their algorithms designed to show content adapted to the desires and interests of each individual, radicalism on ideological and/or political issues has increased, leading to social polarisation at a global level. In such a context, Pope Francis' call to be a Church that reconciles and heals wounds, that listens, that rows deeper in its missionary drive, towards the existential peripheries, is very pertinent".

The Holy Father, concludes Christian Ferrer, Rector's Councillor at the Universidad La Gran Colombia in Bogotá and delegate for relations with the network of Catholic universities on the continent, 'invited us to team up with him and walk together in dialogue with and welcoming others. Forming future professionals in listening, generosity and discernment to strengthen in young people social responsibility, care for the common home, improving the quality of life, helping the disadvantaged and defending human dignity is a fundamental contribution that is incumbent on the university, in response to the invitation to the **Global Compact on Education** formulated by the Pope.

This is the spirit that inspires the social vocation of our university, in line with the Synod's reflections on synodality, which immerses it in the challenges of the **Global Compact on Education**'. ■

A new Latin American pedagogical material I BELIEVE IN THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION



From the CIEC website

Pedagogical resources created by CELAM, CIEC and SANTILLANA. These resources aim to implement the **Global Compact on Education** in the classroom and in daily life, as a support to the learning process, with age-segmented activities to be developed at each school stage and teaching materials that invite interaction and the

recovery of daily life as an educational space, developing skills of observation, reflection and contemplation.

There is free access to content and various resources such as narratives, group interviews, inspirational stories, ethical dilemmas, logic puzzles, observation and contemplation exercises, value cards and challenges, for working with children aged 5 to 8, 9 to 12 and 13 to 16. These resources tell different ways of approaching biblical texts, as well as the commitments we make to care for our common home and for peace among people and peoples. In addition, you will find teacher guides, student guides and appendices. Soon you will find complementary materials such as podcasts, infographics and tips, which will enable you to share the content with your educational community and put into practice the values and life principles that the material promotes, from a holistic perspective.

To access this pedagogical material click here:

<https://ciec.edu.co/creo-en-el-pacto-educativo-global-recursos-pedagogicos/>

PRAYER FOR THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION



Today the Catholic School of America wants to thank you, Lord, for sending us to be witnesses of your life and love.

We want to adhere to the **Global Compact**

on Education. and together with other people and groups of goodwill, enhance and value care, peace, justice, goodness, beauty, acceptance of the other and fraternity. Our educational endeavour must always listen to the cry of the new generations. Every step we take should promote educational itineraries in the style of Jesus, which always shun serious social injustices, violations of rights, deep poverty and the culture of waste.

Send us the strength of your Spirit to continue fostering spaces where people want to learn to engage for our common home. Spur us to dream of a more human and supportive world. Send us to always show new horizons where hospitality, intergenerational solidarity and the value of transcendence found a new culture where no one feels excluded.

GCE at Genfest in Aparecida, Sao Paulo, Brazil "JUNTOS PARA CUIDAR"



A great opportunity for encounters between young people and between cultures took place in Aparecida, Brazil, from 12-24 July 2024: the meeting was for thousands of young people from all over the world, moved by an idea that informs their lives and the actions they take: to build a united world. Young people animated by a profound spiritual dimension that gives meaning to their actions. It was promoted by the *Youth for a United World* of the Focolare Movement in collaboration with young people and adults from civil and religious society organisations.

In Phase 1, which took place from 12 to 18 July, in Brazil and several Latin American countries, about a thousand young people undertook an intense volunteer experience, in small groups, immersing themselves in the local culture, starting with the last ones.

Phase 2 took place from 19 to 21 July, in Aparecida (Brazil), and was a time for meeting, witnessing, and exchanging ideas, experiences and projects among young people from five continents, of different cultures and religions, committed to building a United World: 6000 present at Aparecida and thousands more connected via streaming.



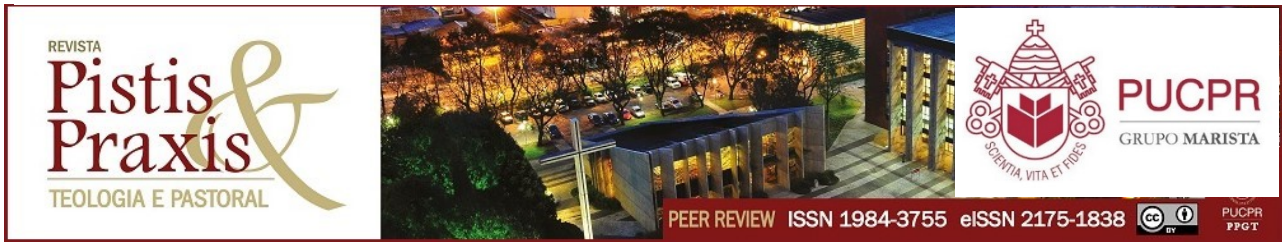
In Phase 3, from 21 to 24 July, they experienced *Pathways Communities*. In these communities, young people met and found a concrete way to engage in shared fraternity initiatives, through 'glocal' projects (local projects with a global perspective) so that each young person, returning to their own country, can engage locally in the field they are passionate about, together with young people and adults engaged in various professions around the world. At this stage, the **Global Compact on Education** was presented in a space for young people who are passionate about education and research to get involved. Communities have been created where young people can continue to dialogue on topics concerning the future of education: artificial intelligence, transformational pedagogies as agents of change, leadership in cross-cultural contexts, and others through spaces for sharing, reflection and action.

Carina Rossa ■

BRIEF NEWS

- On 4-7-2024 the UN Ambassador Hon. Francesco Vincenti met with the Cardinal Prefect at the DCE to present proposals for the *Global Compact on Education*, to be implemented in the Catatumbo region in northern Santander, Colombia.

DOSSIER ON THE GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL PACT



The publication of this dossier (*Revista Pistis & Praxis* v. 16 no. 2 - 2024), along with numerous other actions developed by the Pro-Rectorate for *Mission, Identity and Extension* and the *Bureau of the Educational Covenant*, ratifies the commitment of the PUC-PR, (one of the eleven institutions chosen as a reference by the Department of Culture and Education for the **Global Compact on Education**), to human dignity and rights, being a beacon of hope and a space for transformation, especially for the most vulnerable young people, the core of Marist education.

At the heart of the **Global Compact on Education** is the recognition that education is a fundamental human right and a powerful tool for promoting peace, social justice and sustainable development. Today, more than ever, education is seen as the foundation on which to build a prosperous and equitable future for all members of society. Furthermore, the **Global Compact on Education** recognises the importance of a student-centred approach to education that promotes not only the acquisition of academic knowledge, but also the development of social-emotional skills and abilities, critical thinking, creativity and resilience. Education must enable individuals to become active and aware citizens capable of facing the complex challenges of the 21st century. In order for the **Global Compact on Education** to be effectively implemented, the involvement of all sectors of society, from governments and international organisations to local communities and individuals, families, schools, religions/churches, and universities, is crucial. Only through broad, coordinated and cooperative collaboration will it be possible to overcome the complex challenges that still stand in the way of the full realisation of education's potential as an engine of social transformation and human progress.

[...]The articles that make up the dossier in this issue of *Pistis & Praxis* contribute to the reflection, discussion and deepening of the **Global Compact on Education**.

The article that opens the dossier is by Fr. Ezio Lorenzo Bono, of the Secretariat of the **Global Compact on Education** at the Dicastery for Culture and Education of the Holy See. His important reflection on "*The Global Compact on Education and the Challenges of Artificial Intelligence and Integral Ecology in Education*" shows how the educational challenge is moving in the direction of educating to a culture of digital wisdom, engaging minds and hearts in the process, where important and innovative pedagogical trends, which are currently profoundly influencing the way education is delivered and perceived, lead to the need to rethink and reinvent education in our time.

João Elton Jesus, in his article: "*Solidarity learning and service as the realisation of the mission of Catholic universities in the Global Compact on Education*", investigates how the methodology of solidarity learning and service can contribute to the realisation of the mission of Catholic universities, in line with Pope Francis' guidelines in the **Global Compact on Education**, contributing to the transformation of students, the university and society as a whole. Afterwards, José Aguiar Nobre and Donizete José Xavier write the article "*Global Compact on Education: an engaging challenge that requires multiple actors*", reflecting on the fact that in order to make a pact it is essential that all the actors involved are in agreement, because only in this way will the **Global Compact on Education** reach ever stronger directions, as the tone of the proposal suggests: to educate we need the involvement of the whole village. The fourth article by Fernandes et al., deals with "*The Global Compact on Education and reflection on principles for inclusive practice*", in which they reflect on the relationship between Francis' educational pact, the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church and the anthropological reflection of Edgar Morin, showing that in each of these frameworks there are guiding principles that can enlighten and expand the inclusive practices present in Catholic educational institutions and help promote the protagonism of social and educational actors. This is followed by the article on the "*Global Compact on Education and the connections with the Social Teaching of the Church*", in which the authors Jaci Souza Candioto, Eva Gislane Barbosa and Ariél Philippi Machado highlight the social aspect of education as highlighted in the seven commitments of the **Global Compact on Education**, with the aim of collaborating in the contextualised and critical formation of agents of evangelisation towards a positive attitude towards the care and promotion of human life and the entire planet.

The last article in the dossier, by Tiago e Fraga Gomes and others, entitled "*Church Tradition and Ecclesial Renewal at the Time of Francis' Pontificate*", analyses the hypothesis that Francis' pontificate is characterised by a movement of ecclesial renewal, as a reception of the broad process of aggiornamento initiated by the Second Vatican Council, in which fidelity to Tradition requires updating in the face of new contexts and challenges, with the aim of promoting an authentic life of the Gospel. [...]

Ernesto Lazaro Sienna
Marcio Luis Fernandes
Waldir Souza

Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná, Brasil ■

THE 'FLOW STATE' OF MIHALY CSIKSZENTMIHALYI

In August of this year (4-8-2024) Pope Francis launched a letter on the role of literature in the formation of future priests, pastoral agents and every Christian, where he says that "for a believer who sincerely wants to enter into dialogue with the culture of his time, or simply with the life of concrete people, literature becomes indispensable" (n.8). And he continues: "Here is the point: the task of believers, and of priests in particular, is precisely to 'touch' the heart of contemporary human beings so that they may be moved and open before the proclamation of the Lord Jesus, and in this commitment the contribution that literature and poetry can offer is of unparalleled value" (n.21). And he concludes by urging 'a great spiritual openness to listen to the Voice through many voices' (n.41). I often turn to literature not only for commentaries on the Gospel, but also in my pedagogical research that I have been conducting in recent months, on the foundations of the **Global Compact on Education** and the 'Pedagogy of the Deep' that questions and wants to educate in the search for the meaning of life. The question of why we live has fascinated and tormented humanity since ancient times, and different disciplines offer us unique perspectives on this profound question. Above all, we find great food for thought in the literary works of all times. A chorus of insights emerges from the many readings that urge us to find the meaning of life in different and profound ways. Whether it is through reflection, morality, self-realisation, creativity, service to others or scientific discovery, each of us is called to explore, create and embrace our own path of seeking to find the meaning of life.

Among the various authors, I would like to focus on the work of Albert Camus, who paradoxically finds the meaning of life in the acceptance of its non-sense. This shines through in his essay *'The Myth of Sisyphus'*, where he uses the mythological figure of Sisyphus, condemned to eternally push a boulder up a mountain only to see it roll down again, as a metaphor for the human condition. For Camus, Sisyphus represents the absurdity of life understood as an incessant and meaningless struggle. Despite this, our French author concludes that we must imagine a 'happy Sisyphus', who finds the meaning of his destiny precisely in accepting his condition and living fully in the present moment. The awareness of his situation, says our author, and the choice to face it with courage and without illusions confer dignity and meaning to his existence. In this way, for Camus, Sisyphus becomes a symbol of human endurance and the ability to find happiness and meaning even in a meaningless universe. Personally, I find Camus' proposal of the 'happy Sisyphus' rather macabre. How can someone who finds meaning in non-sense be happy? Rather, I see in him a "tragically unhappy Sisyphus." He could truly be happier if, faced with the absurdity of his condition, he did not accept it as a given, but rebelled against it in the conviction that the purpose of his life is far more than uselessly pushing a stone to the top of the mountain only to see it plummet to the other side each time. Artists, through their works, should inspire us to rebel against the meaninglessness of life, rather than to adapt to it as if it were inevitable.



Sisyphus, like every man, is not condemned to passively accept an absurd fate, but can choose to change it. Let us imagine a Sisyphus who decides to rebel against this absurd fate and blunts the tip of the mountain. In this way, the boulder would probably no longer roll down the other side. In doing so, man would no longer be a slave to his fate, but its master. In this symbolic act of rebellion and transformation, we find the true

meaning of life: not the passive acceptance of the absurd, but believing in what gives shape and meaning to our existence. We had already seen with Victor Frankl that among the survivors of the Holocaust were above all those who had found meaning in the tragedy of the inhuman condition in which they found themselves in the concentration camps. A strong state of concentration on the goals we want to achieve is necessary.

Newspapers recently reported that during the European Championship 2024 qualifying match on 4 July, Cristiano Ronaldo demonstrated an extraordinary ability to control not only his body but also his mind. Before kicking the decisive penalty against Slovenia, a strap on his wrist recorded an astonishing drop in his heart rate, which dropped from 170 to 100 in a few moments. Ronaldo was completely immersed in a 'flow state', a condition in which the athlete is so absorbed in the task that he perceives nothing of what is happening around him. The idea of 'flow' or 'dragging current' (*flow*) was theorised in 1975 by the psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (read: mihài cik-sent-mihàgli) in his book *'Flow: Psychology of Optimal Experience'*, to mean a state of total immersion and involvement in an activity, to the point of losing awareness of time, hunger, fatigue, and experiencing a feeling of joy and satisfaction. *Flow* is 'a state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience is so pleasurable that people will continue to do it even at great cost, just for the sake of doing it'. But how to achieve this state of flow? First of all, by having clear goals and focusing on the present. It is essential to become aware of entering a state of positivity where everything 'flows' or 'flutters' (*flow*) intensely and calmly, and to learn to take control in order to evoke this state at will. The main conditions that enable us to enter the flow are calmness, happiness and energy. We need to be positive people with a lot of enthusiasm. This state of *flow*, or optimal experience, in the sporting sphere is also known as 'competitive trance', and in the spiritual sphere as 'ecstasy' (from the Greek ἔκστασις, out of state, or 'coming out of oneself'), which is the rapture of the soul that rises to contemplation of the divine and enters into immediate communion with God. Various Eastern religions had already recognised this experience for many centuries. Csikszentmihalyi concludes by saying that we can divide people into two large 'teams': that of the 'preoccupied' people, i.e. those who get busy, diving into the river and letting themselves flow, and that of the 'bored' people who, instead, remain stagnant on the bank.

And us, to which team do we belong?

P. Ezio Lorenzo Bono, CSF
of the Secretariat for the **Global Compact on Education** ■