



International Solidarity Reflection

Education

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Introduction

"Education is empowerment. It is the key to establishing and reinforcing democracy, to development which is both sustainable and humane and to peace founded upon mutual respect and social justice. Indeed, in a world in which creativity and knowledge play an ever greater role, the right to education is nothing less than the right to participate in the life of the modern world." ([The Amman Affirmation](#), Education for All: Achieving the Goal, 1996)

Call to Prayer

"Education is the number one priority issue that we have to deal with now. We can never fully understand the realities of our time and the great challenges that we are confronted with without a proper education. An education that prepares us for the tasks and for the needs of a continuously changing world. A world that makes it necessary to be open-minded towards change and to constantly adapt to new circumstances." ([Universal Education](#), Global Alliance for Peace and Prosperity)

Experience

"One of the silent killers attacking the developing world is the lack of quality basic education for large numbers of the poorest children in the world's poorest countries—particularly girls. Yet unlike many of the world's most grievous ailments, this is a disease with a known cure. We know what tools are needed and what models are proven to work. We also know that the cost of that cure ... is minuscule compared with the enormous benefits such education would bring for health, economics, women's empowerment, and basic human dignity." (Gene B. Sperling, "The Case for Universal Basic Education for the World's Poorest Boys and Girls")

In the last decade there have been gains in the expansion of primary schooling. This has led to the expectation of continuing growth in the number and proportion of literate adults. However, 72 million primary school age children and another 71 million adolescents are still not in school, and the world is not on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. (Education for All *Global Monitoring Report 2010*)

Education systems in many of the world's poorest countries are experiencing the aftershock of the global economic downturn. The 2010 Education for All *Global Monitoring Report* warns that this crisis could create a lost generation of children whose life chances will have been irreparably damaged by a failure to protect their right to education.

Reflection

"A just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the transcendent dignity of the human person. The person represents the ultimate of society, by which it is ordered to the person. 'Hence, the social order and its development must invariably work to

the benefit of the human person, since the order of things is to be subordinate to the order of persons, and not the other way around.’ Respect for human dignity can in no way be separated from obedience to this principle. It is necessary to ‘consider every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity.’ Every political, economic, social, scientific and cultural program must be inspired by the awareness of the primacy of each human being over society.” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, No. 132)

“Urged by the love of Christ, we choose to express our mission through ministry directed towards education. For us, education means enabling persons to reach the fullness of their potential as individuals created in God’s image and assisting them to direct their gifts towards building the earth. Like Mother Theresa, we educate with the conviction that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons. Thus, our ministry demands a Christian vision of what the human person is called to be and what the world is destined to become.” (*You Are Sent*, C. 22)

Words of Blessed Mary Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger from *Trust and Dare*:

- “When I teach others what I must instruct them in, I will have to first learn and practice myself.” (September 18; MT 29)
- “A well-educated teacher can more easily accept persons where they are and help them than one who is inadequately educated; good will does not supply for lack of competence.” (September 19; MT 259)
- “Let us work and serve in love and fidelity and with good intention, not to please people, but the Lord! He will stand by us with his all-powerful grace.” (September 14; MT 2941)

Action

Education is a fundamental human right ... yet it still remains a goal that is difficult to achieve. “Difficult, but not impossible.” (UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon on the launch of the EFA *Global Monitoring Report 2010*)

- Considering the educational situation in our world, what can you do as an individual to enhance the achievement of this goal?
- Share as a community: what can you do to aid in promoting the achievement of the goal?

Closing Prayer

The first step of education is to have one's eyes opened and be turned from darkness to light, God's light. Loving God, our world is in need of your light; grant us your wisdom and knowledge so that we may work together towards bringing our world into your light and oneness through education. May we discover the different ways in which we can achieve our goal in bringing education to all your people. Amen