

service

Sue Lubowitz

THE JOY OF EDUCATION

“Education is an act of love that illuminates the way for us to recover the sense of fraternity, so that we do not ignore the most vulnerable. The educator is a witness who does not give his mental knowledge, but his convictions, his commitment to life. One who knows how to handle the three languages well: that of the head, that of the heart and that of the hands, harmonized.”

Pope Francis (24 February 2024 to Spanish Catholic educators)

As our children head back to the classroom after the Christmas break we should remember the Pope’s Prayer Intention for January 2025: the right to an education. Pope Francis has spoken often regarding the value of Catholic schools and the importance they play in the mission of proclaiming what he so often calls “the joy of the Gospel.” By using this phrase, he reminds us that such a proclamation is more than the dissemination of information but a kind of contagion, which others may catch from our enthusiasm and dedication the transformative power of Jesus and his message!

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Pope Francis has spoken about education in a number of ways.

Education as an act of hope

Pope Francis has spoken of education as an act of hope. Pope Francis has said that education is an act of hope that can lead to a better society. He has also encouraged educators to be “*artisans of peace*” and to value their faith and identity. For more follow this link:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2024-02/pope-education-is-an-act-of-hope-for-a-better-society.html#:~:text=Catholic%20education%20must%20open%20the,be%20%E2%80%9Dartisans%20of%20peace.%E2%80%9D>

The importance of Parents

Pope Francis has affirmed that parents are the primary educators of their children. He has also said that every parent has the right to choose the best educational option for their child. In Chapter 7 of *Amoris Laetitia*, entitled, “*Towards A Better Education of Children*” Pope Francis discusses the importance of education and affirms parents as the primary educators of their children.

The role of Catholic Schools

The Church offers Catholic Schools as a primary means of accompanying families in this important task of educating. This shared responsibility means in a very real sense that the Catholic school is called to become “an extension of the home”.

(Archbishop Michael Miller, Vancouver Archdiocese)

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The Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops released Amoris Laetitia (conveniently by chapter!) on their website with corresponding reflections and questions to help guide meaningful discussion. Councils may access these resources by using this link:

<https://www.cccb.ca/faith-moral-issues/family-and-life/celebrating-the-amoris-laetitia-family-year/explore-and-reflect-on-amoris-laetitia/>

On July 26, 2024 (Feast of St. Anne and St. Joachim) the Episcopal Commission for Evangelization and Catechesis of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, released a pastoral letter on the role of parents:

<https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Called-to-Witness-EN-2024-09-09-FINAL.pdf>

The Global Educational Pact

Pope Francis has collaborated with UNESCO on the Global Educational Pact, a project that aims to change the world by changing education. The sixteen page document was on released July 5 th , 2024 and can be found at

<https://www.educatemagis.org/wpcontent/uploads/2024/07/TOGETHER-en-sans-1720026935.pdf>

