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Message of the Holy Father to the Prepositor General of the Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools (Piarists), on the occasion of the online seminar on the Global Education Pact (12-14 November 2020)

The following is the message sent by the Holy Father to the Prepositor General of the Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools (Piarists), the Reverend Fr. Pedro Aguado Cuesta, on the occasion of the seminar regarding the Global Education Pact, organised by the Order, which will take place online from 12 to 14 November:

Message of the Holy Father

To the Most Reverend

Father Pedro Aguado Cuesta

Prepositor General of the Order of Poor Clerics Regular

of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools

Reverend Father:

I thank you for your invitation to the event promoted by the Union of Superiors General and the International Union of Superiors General on the challenge of rebuilding the global compact on education which, due to the pandemic, will be held online from 12 to 14 November next. I greet the leaders of the various Institutes of Consecrated Life who will participate, and all those who make this seminar possible.

Consecrated life has always been at the forefront of the educational task. An example of this is your founder, Saint Joseph of Calasanz, who built the first school for children, but also the religious who educated him in

Estadilla and much earlier the medieval monasteries that preserved and spread classical culture. From this strong root, different charisms have emerged in all periods of history, which, by the gift of God, have been able to adapt to the needs and challenges of each time and place. Today the Church is calling you to renew that purpose from within your own identity, and I thank you for taking on this witness with such commitment and enthusiasm.

As you know, there are seven essential commitments in the Global Education Pact that is being promoted. Seven commitments I would like to summarise in three lines of real action: *focus*, *welcome* and *involve*.

To focus on what is important, is to put the person at the centre, in "their value and dignity ... in order to foster their distinctiveness, beauty and uniqueness, and their capacity for relationship with others and with the world around them". By valuing the person, education becomes a means for our children and young people to grow and mature, acquiring the skills and resources necessary to build a future of justice and peace together. It is essential that we do not lose sight of this objective, that it is not dissipated in means, projects and structures. We work for people: they are the ones who form societies, and they are the ones who form a single humanity, called by God to be His chosen People.

In order to achieve this, it is necessary to *welcome* them. This means listening to others, to those we serve, children and young people. It means that parents, pupils and authorities - the main agents of education - listen to other voices, which are not simply those of our educational circle. This will prevent them from becoming self-absorbed, and will make them open up to the cry that comes from every person and from creation. We need to encourage our children and young people to learn to relate, to work in groups, to have an empathetic attitude that rejects the throwaway culture. Likewise, it is important that they learn to safeguard our common home, protecting it from the exploitation of its resources, adopting more sober lifestyles and seeking to make full use of renewable energies that are respectful of the human and natural environment, while respecting the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity and the circular economy.

The last line of action is decisive: to *involve*. The attitude of listening, defined in all these commitments, cannot be understood as merely hearing and forgetting, but has to be a platform that allows everyone to be actively involved in this educational task, each one from his or her own specific situation and responsibility. To be involved and implicated means working to give children and young people the possibility of viewing with a critical eye this world that we leave them as a legacy, capable of understanding problems in the areas of economy, politics, growth and progress, and of proposing solutions that are truly at the service of man and the whole human family from the perspective of an integral ecology.

Dear brothers: I accompany with my prayers the efforts of all the Institutes represented at this event, and of all consecrated and lay persons who work in the field of education, asking the Lord that, as always, consecrated life be an essential part of the global compact on education, even at this historical moment. I commend you to the Lord, and I ask that God bless you and the Holy Virgin keep you.

And please do not forget to pray for me.

Faternally,

FRANCIS

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 15 October 2020
