



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHL
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
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Audience with “La Scuola” Publishing House, Brescia

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience a delegation from “La Scuola” Publishing House, Brescia, to whom he delivered the following address:

Address of the Holy Father

Your Excellencies,

Dear brothers, sisters, good morning and welcome!

On 28 June 1965, Saint Paul VI, receiving the representatives of *La Scuola Editrice*, to whose foundation his father had contributed, concluded his speech as follows: “We honour your consummate pedagogical science; we encourage your activity in the service of the school [...]; we give recognition to your modern sensibility of scholastic problems; we give praise to the fruits, which you have already so largely achieved; and we give vows for the strong intentions that drive your activity, not only for the preservation of the efficiency achieved, but also the boldness of new developments and new conquests”. Up to here, Saint Paul VI.

Observing today the condition of your company, which has boldly acquired two other Catholic-inspired publishing houses, SEI and *Capitello*, in order to have a greater impact on schools, one might say that you are fulfilling the vows of your great fellow-citizen. The reading he gave then of the situation, acknowledging the development and vitality of your group, is still relevant today, thanks be to God.

You are not afraid to face risks in difficult moments, due to competition from the major publishing houses and the current cultural transformation, marked by the displacement of religious research and widespread indifference. Besides, the founders of “*La Scuola*” were courageous when, in order to guarantee support from the journal *Scuola Italiana Moderna* and to realize a pedagogic presence of Catholic inspiration in Italian schools, they joined together the intelligence of priests and impassioned laypeople for the education of the new generations.

Passion for education and the formation of formators are the pillars in which your activities are based. Texts books for students of every order and level, journals aimed at teachers, the pedagogical works, training courses for teachers, collaborations with the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart: all this speaks of the awareness that training children and young people in the values of the Gospel means making an essential contribution to a society of responsible people, capable of building bonds of fraternity with all. Being Catholic, as I have tried to show especially in the Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, means knowing how to see and also take on the good that the Holy Spirit spreads everywhere, without fear of losing one's own identity. Vatican II taught us this, for example in the Constitution on the Church, where it affirms: "Since the kingdom of God is not of this world (cf. *Jn* 18:36), the Church or people of God in establishing that kingdom takes nothing away from the temporal welfare of any people. On the contrary it fosters and takes to itself, insofar as they are good, the ability, riches and customs in which the genius of each people expresses itself [and]... purifies, strengthens, elevates and ennobles them" (*Lumen gentium*, 13).

Hence an open attitude, also a dialogue-based attitude towards everyone: in fact, school is first and foremost a place where one learns to open one's mind and heart to the world. "Education does not consist of filling the head with ideas, but ... in accompanying and encouraging students on the path of human growth and spiritual growth, showing them how friendship with the Risen Jesus expands the heart and makes life more humane". Educating is helping to think well, to feel well, and to do good. The three languages: the language of the heart – feeling well – the language of the head – thinking well – and the language of the hands – doing good. But all of them in harmony: to do what one feels and thinks; to feel what one thinks and does; to think what one feels and does. These three languages, united, all of them. "This vision is fully relevant today, when we feel the need for an "educational pact" capable of uniting families, schools and society as a whole" (Catechesis, 28 June 2023). And this is the key, isn't it? The unity of schools with families. I think that this has diminished recently... But I remember, in our time, there was great unity and there was also collaboration. Once I swore at the teacher – I was nine years old. The teacher, a lady I was very fond of – I visited her until she died – called my mother. They spoke, and then they called me. My mother said to me, "Apologize to the teacher". I apologized. And I returned to the classroom happy that it had been so easy, but it was not the case. The second act of the opera was when I arrived home, and they gave me the second act. There was unity, wasn't there? Today it is very often upturned, isn't it? The parents go to complain because the teacher did this or that to the child... that is terrible. But looking back at these memories is good for us.

The activities you are carrying out, preparing text books to help students to think, to expand the mind and the heart to the various forms of knowledge, to open the spirit to the history that has engendered us, to understand also the social value of religion, attest to the fact that you are proceeding in the direction taken by the founding members. The challenges they faced with courage and determination are to a large extent similar to those you are currently encountering. Epoch change, far from being a cause for lament and fear, is a new opportunity: the future belongs to the new generations. Think of the beginning of our Latinity, of our European culture. The defeat of Troy. What did he do? Did he complain? No. He took the child, took the father by the hand, and they went forward. This is something of the attitude, that "*sublato montem, sublato patre montem petivi*". It is the way of going forward, always an opportunity in bad moments and good moments. The future belongs to the new generations, and they will be able to build it if the teachers you train know how to transmit confidence and boldness to them, if the texts you prepare will succeed in developing a thirst for knowledge and wisdom.

Brothers and sisters, the Bible teaches us that in moments of crisis, the voice of the prophets knew how to point to horizons of hope. The founder members of "*La Scuola*" adopted this teaching as their own. I hope that you will continue to do likewise, aware that fraternal humanity is learned in the classroom, thanks to effective texts, skilled and impassioned teachers, and technical tools suited to the students' condition. With God's help, may you live up to your history!

I bless you and your work from my heart. And please, I ask you to pray for me. Thank you!
