

- *Celebration* of hope as the very origin of his commitment, as the basis for his willingness to die, as the dynamism of his tentative assurance already begun in Jesus Christ, for which the Spirit is the guarantee; hope that is also a challenge to go beyond self, to be always on the move, without compromise, challenging in himself, in his community, and in his students anything that opposes the action of the Spirit working to bring everyone to the freedom of the family of God.
- *Celebration*, then, of our own story, seen as a Paschal way of life, with its heights and its depths, as the recreating, enlightening, redeeming, freeing action of God; an action that is visible and effective in us to the degree that we are filled with the Spirit of God for others; it is a challenge to live our way of life as a continual incarnation in the flesh-and-blood world of our students, dying to oneself, a *kenosis* even to the end of our life, so that the young may have life to the full and come to the glory that is their destiny; it is a challenge to assume continually the mission of the Son of Man, of the Good Shepherd, with his power, not of authority but of service, capturing the very rhythm of the hymn to Christ in the Epistle to the Philippians, to live today the Paschal way of life, growing always in the Spirit of Christ.

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## First Meditation

*That God in his Providence has established the Christian Schools*

### 193.1 First Point

God is so good that having created us, he wills that all of us come to the knowledge of the truth.<sup>1</sup> This truth is God and what God has desired to reveal to us through Jesus Christ, through the holy Apostles, and through his Church. This is why God wills all people to be instructed, so that their minds may be enlightened by the light of faith.

We cannot be instructed in the mysteries of our holy religion unless *we have the good fortune to hear about them*, and we cannot have this advantage unless someone preaches the word of God. For how can people believe in someone, the Apostle says, about whom they have not heard anyone speak, and how can they hear him spoken about if no one proclaims him to them?<sup>2</sup>

This is what God does by diffusing the fragrance of his teaching throughout the whole world by human ministers.<sup>3</sup> Just as he *commanded light to shine out of darkness, so he kindles a light in the hearts* of those destined to announce his word to children, so that they may be able to enlighten those children by unveiling for them the glory of God.<sup>4</sup>

Because God in his mercy has given you such a ministry, do not falsify his word, but gain glory before him by unveiling his truth<sup>5</sup> to those whom you are charged to instruct. Let this be your whole effort in the instructions you give them, looking upon yourselves as the ministers of God and the dispensers of his mysteries.<sup>6</sup>

### 193.2 Second Point

One of the main duties of fathers and mothers is to bring up their children in a Christian manner and to teach them their religion. But most parents are not sufficiently enlightened in these matters. Some are taken up with their daily concerns and the care of their family; others, under the constant anxiety of earning the necessities of life for themselves and their children, cannot take the time to teach their children their duties as Christians.

It is characteristic of the providence of God and of his vigilance over human conduct to substitute for fathers and mothers people who have enough knowledge and zeal to bring children to the knowledge of God and of his mysteries. *According to the grace of Jesus Christ that God has given to them, they are like good architects*, who give all possible care and attention to lay the foundation<sup>7</sup> of religion and Christian piety in the hearts of these children, a great number of whom would otherwise be abandoned.

You, then, whom God has called to this ministry, *work according to the grace that has been given to you to instruct by teaching and to exhort by encouraging* those who are entrusted to your care, guiding them with attention and vigilance<sup>8</sup> in order to fulfill toward them the principal duty of fathers and mothers toward their children.

### 193.3 Third Point

God wills not only that all come to the knowledge of truth but also that all be saved.<sup>9</sup> He cannot truly desire this without providing the means for it and, therefore, without giving children the teachers who will assist them in the fulfillment of his plan. This, says Saint Paul, is *the field that God cultivates, the building that he is raising*, and you are the ones whom he has chosen *to help in this work by announcing* to these children the Gospel of his Son<sup>10</sup> and the truths that are contained in it.

This is why you must honor your ministry and keep trying to save some of these children.<sup>11</sup> Because God, according to the expression of the same Apostle, *has made you his ministers in order to reconcile them to him and has entrusted to you for this purpose the word of reconciliation* for them, exhort them *as if God were exhorting them through you*, for you have been destined to cultivate these young plants<sup>12</sup> by announcing to them the truths of the Gospel<sup>13</sup> and to procure for them the means of salvation appropriate to their development.

Do not teach them these truths *with scholarly words, lest the cross of Christ*, source of our sanctification, become void of meaning<sup>14</sup> and all you say to them would produce no results in their minds or hearts. Because these children are simple and for the most part poorly brought up, those who help them save themselves must do this in so simple a manner that every word will be clear and easy for them to understand.

Be faithful to this practice, then, so that you can contribute, as far as you are able and as God requires of you, to the salvation of those whom he has entrusted to you.

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1. 1 Tim 2:4

2. Rom 10:14-17

3. 2 Cor 2:14

4. 2 Cor 4:6

5. 2 Cor 4:1-2

6. 1 Cor 4:1

7. 1 Cor 3:10

8. Rom 12:6-8

9. 1 Tim 2:4

10. 1 Cor 3:9

11. Rom 11:13-14

12. Ps 128:3, 144:12

13. 2 Cor 5:18-20

14. 1 Cor 1:17

## Second Meditation

*The means that those responsible for the education of children must use to procure their salvation*

### 194.1 First Point

Consider that it is a practice only too common for working people and the poor to allow their children to live on their own, roaming all over like vagabonds, as long as they are unable to put them to some work. These parents have no concern to send their children to school, because their poverty does not allow them to pay teachers, or else, obliged as they are to look for work outside the home, they have to abandon their children to fend for themselves.