

*Message of His Holiness Pope Francis
for the Launch of the Educational Alliance*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In my Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, I invited everyone to cooperate in caring for our common home and to confront together the challenges that we face. Now, a few years later, I renew my invitation to dialogue on how we are shaping the future of our planet and the need to employ the talents of all, since all change requires an educational process aimed at developing a new universal solidarity and a more welcoming society.

To this end, I wish to endorse a global event, to take place on 14 May 2020 on the theme *Reinventing the Global Educational Alliance*. This meeting will rekindle our dedication for and with young people, renewing our passion for a more open and inclusive education, including patient listening, constructive dialogue and better mutual understanding. Never before has there been such need to unite our efforts in a broad *educational alliance*, to form mature individuals capable of overcoming division and antagonism, and to restore the fabric of relationships for the sake of a more fraternal humanity.

Today's world is constantly changing and faces a variety of crises. We are experiencing an era of change: a transformation that is not only cultural but also anthropological, creating a new semantics while indiscriminately discarding traditional paradigms. Education clashes with what has been called a process of "*rapidification*" that traps our existence in a whirlwind of high-speed technology and computerization, continually altering our points of reference. As a result, our very identity loses its solidity and our psychological structure dissolves in the face of constant change that "contrasts with the naturally slow pace of biological evolution" (*Laudato Si'*, 18).

Every change calls for an educational process that involves everyone. There is thus a need to create an "educational village", in which all people, according to their respective roles, share the task of forming a network of open, human relationships. According to an African proverb, "it takes a whole village to educate a child". We have to create such a village before we can educate. In the first place, the ground must be cleared of discrimination and fraternity must be allowed to flourish, as I stated in the Document that I signed with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar on 4 February this year in Abu Dhabi.

In this kind of village it is easier to find global agreement about an education that integrates and respects all aspects of the person, uniting studies and everyday life, teachers, students and their families, and civil society in its intellectual, scientific, artistic, athletic, political, business and charitable dimensions. An alliance, in other words, between the earth's inhabitants and our "common home", which we are bound

to care for and respect. An alliance that generates peace, justice and hospitality among all peoples of the human family, as well as dialogue between religions.

To reach these global objectives, our shared journey as an “educating village” must take important steps forward. First, we must have *the courage to place the human person at the centre*. To do so, we must agree to promote formal and informal educational processes that cannot ignore the fact that the whole world is deeply interconnected, and that we need to find other ways, based on a sound anthropology, of envisioning economics, politics, growth and progress. In the development of an integral ecology, a central place must be given to the value proper to each creature in its relationship to the people and realities surrounding it, as well as a lifestyle that rejects the throw-away culture.

Another step is to find *the courage to capitalize on our best energies*, creatively and responsibly. To be proactive and confident in opening education to a long-term vision unfettered by the status quo. This will result in men and women who are open, responsible, prepared to listen, dialogue and reflect with others, and capable of weaving relationships with families, between generations, and with civil society, and thus to create a new humanism.

A further step is *the courage to train individuals who are ready to offer themselves in service* to the community. Service is a pillar of the culture of encounter: “It means bending over those in need and stretching out a hand to them, without calculation, without fear, but with tenderness and understanding, just as Jesus knelt to wash the Apostles’ feet. Serving means working beside the neediest of people, establishing with them first and foremost human relationships of closeness and bonds of solidarity”.¹ In serving others, we experience that there is more joy in giving than in receiving (cf. *Acts* 20:35). In this regard, all institutions must be open to examining the aims and methods that determine how they carry out their educational mission.

For this reason, I look forward to meeting in Rome all of you who, in various ways and on every level, work in the field of education and of research. I encourage you to work together to promote, through a shared *educational alliance*, those forward-looking initiatives that can give direction to history and change it for the better. I join you in appealing to authoritative public figures in our world who are concerned for the future of our young people, and I trust that they will respond to my invitation. I also call upon you, dear young people, to take part in the meeting and to sense your real responsibility for the building of a better world. Our meeting will take place on 14 May 2020 in the Paul VI Audience Hall in the Vatican. A number of seminars on related topics will take place in various locations and help us prepare for this event.

¹ Address during a visit to the “Astalli Centre”, the Jesuit Refugee Service in Rome, on 10 September 2013.

Let us seek solutions together, boldly undertake processes of change and look to the future with hope. I invite everyone to work for this alliance and to be committed, individually and within our communities, to nurturing the dream of a humanism rooted in solidarity and responsive both to humanity's aspirations and to God's plan.

I look forward to seeing you. Until then, I send you my greetings and my blessing.

From the Vatican, 12 September 2019