

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Yr B

“THE IMPORTANCE OF A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION”

Much of our Lord’s public ministry involved teaching others and inviting them to participate in the divine life. It is Christ’s teachings and life that have transformed human history!

As we prepare for the beginning of another academic year, I wish to say a few words about education in general and Christian education in particular. The formation of Christian souls is our joint responsibility.

What is education?

If you were to look at a definition of education, you might find something like this: ‘education is the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university.’ This is how we tend to think of education... it is a formal manner of instructing people.

But, have you ever considered that most of a child’s education is given at home? The parents are the primary and principle educators of their children! Education comes from the Latin, *educare*, meaning ‘to raise a child.’ Education is not the responsibility of the state. It is the responsibility of parents! Cardinal Raymond Burke recently referred to the home as the ‘Domestic Church’. And it is there that Christian education is to be fostered.

Here are a few quotes about education:

‘Education is the movement from darkness to light.’ -- *Allan Bloom, 1930-1992, philosopher, classicist, and academician*

‘Education is the leading of human souls to what is best, and making what is best out of them.’ -- *John Ruskin, 1819-1900, English writer, art critic, philanthropist*

‘The most influential of all educational factors is the conversation in a child’s home.’ – *William Temple, 1881-1944, English bishop, teacher*

‘Education is learning what you didn’t even know you didn’t know.’
-- *Daniel J. Boorstin, 1914-2004, historian, professor, attorney*

‘What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to the soul.’ --
Joseph Addison, 1672-1719, English essayist, poet, playwright, politician

‘Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.’ --
William Butler Yeats, 1865-1939, Irish poet

‘Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.’ -- *Gilbert K. Chesterton, 1874-1936, English writer, theologian, poet, philosopher*

Here in the USA, we might tend to take education for granted, as it is offered to all. And, yet, how healthy is the educational system in this country?

Years ago I read a book written by Mr. Patrick Buchanan entitled: ‘THE DEATH OF THE WEST.’ⁱ

In one section of his book, Mr. Buchanan makes a very sobering statement about our nation's education system. Speaking about the influence of Marxist thought in our schools as well as the influence of the 'Frankfurt School' on our children, Mr. Buchanan suggests that education is more about psychological conditioning of our children than it is about philosophical argumentation and the proper formation of the human person.

Marxist Thought in our Schools

According to the Frankfurt School (Institute for Marxism, Frankfurt University), 'America's children [sh]ould be conditioned at school to reject their parents' social and moral beliefs as racist, sexist, and homophobic, and conditioned to embrace a new morality.'⁽³⁾

The Frankfurt School 'openly stated that whether children learned facts of skills at school was less important than that they graduate conditioned to display the correct attitudes.'

The success of the Frankfurt School's efforts to infiltrate this nation's schools with Marxist thought is shown by Allan Bloom's comment, that: "American high school graduates are among the most sensitive illiterates in the world," with some of the lowest test scores on earth in comparative exams, but the highest scores for sensitivity to issues like the environment.'⁽⁴⁾

The dissemination of Marxist ideologies upon society has infiltrated into radio, music, newspapers and magazines and, of course, the internet. Everyone in society is subjected to Marxist thought.

The Church's view of Education

A Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, was made by Paul VI following the Second Vatican Council.ⁱⁱ Here we see the parents' role in the education of their children:

“Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators. ... Parents are the ones who must create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well-rounded personal and social education of children is fostered. Hence the family is the first school of the social virtues that every society needs. It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and office of the sacrament of matrimony, that children should be taught from their early years to have a knowledge of God according to the faith received in Baptism, to worship Him, and to love their neighbor.

Here, too, they find their first experience of a wholesome human society and of the Church. Finally, it is through the family that they are gradually led to a companionship with their fellowmen and with the people of God. Let parents, then, recognize the inestimable

importance a truly Christian family has for the life and progress of God's own people.”

The Declaration goes on to show that our education can only be complete if we remain docile to the teachings of the Church.

“Finally, in a special way, the duty of educating belongs to the Church, not merely because she must be recognized as a human society capable of educating, but especially because she has the responsibility of announcing the way of salvation to all men, of communicating the life of Christ to those who believe, and, in her unfailing solicitude, of assisting men to be able to come to the fullness of this life.

The Church is bound as a mother to give to these children of hers an education by which their whole life can be imbued with the spirit of Christ and at the same time do all she can to promote for all peoples the complete perfection of the human person, the good of earthly society and the building of a world that is more human.”

ⁱ Patrick J. Buchanan, *THE DEATH OF THE WEST: How dying populations and immigrant invasions imperil our country and civilization*. 2002. N.Y.: Thomas Dunne Books.

ⁱⁱ DECLARATION ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, *GRAVISSIMUM EDUCATIONIS*, proclaimed by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, on October 28, 1965, n. 3.