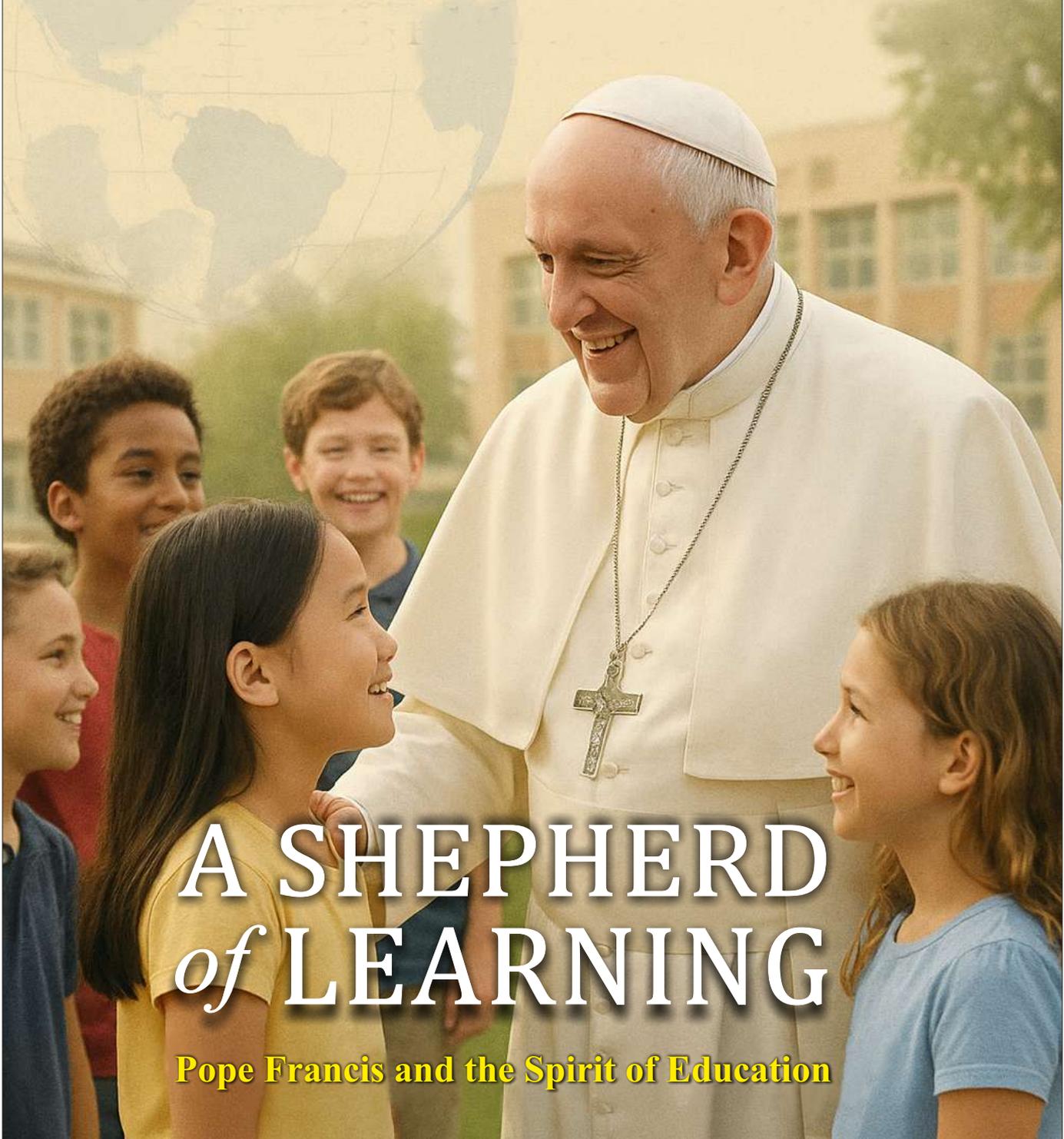


Edu FOCUS

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ARCHDIOCESAN BOARD
OF EDUCATION, MUMBAI

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A photograph of Pope Francis, dressed in white papal attire with a zucchetto and a pectoral cross, smiling warmly. He is surrounded by a group of diverse children of various ethnicities, who are also smiling and looking towards him. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with a large globe graphic overlaid on the left side.

A SHEPHERD *of* LEARNING

Pope Francis and the Spirit of Education

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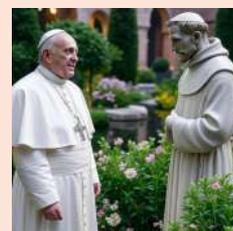
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Editorial



Dr. (Fr.) Magi Murzello

Wow-lleluia!

It is indeed a joyful moment to reconnect with all of you after my “forced sabbatical”. I am thrilled to present this special issue of EduFOCUS, dedicated to the inspirational journey of Pope Francis.

Reflecting on my own journey, I encountered some tough challenges – powerful men teamed up against me to dismantle everything I had painstakingly built, casting shadows over my credibility and even spreading unfounded rumours about my departure from the priesthood. Yet, I have learned that standing up for what is right, even when faced with adversity, can indeed be transformative. The Hindi film, 'Maharaj', based on true events, reignited my spirit and conviction to persevere.

This June was my fourth transfer since the year 2021. Next year will be my fifth whirl on this 'merry-go-round' of transfers. Interestingly, the frequent transfers haven't dampened my spirit because my eyes have seen God's **divine stubbornness**. (**Bandra** → Santa Cruz → **Bandra** → Kurla → **Bandra**). If God is for us, who can be against us. (Romans 8:31) With a heart full of hope, I echo Simeon's prayer: “Now, O Lord, you can dismiss/ transfer your servant in peace. May the powerful men rest in peace (and may anonymous letter writers find salvation).”

The miracle of being reinstated as Principal and Rector and the miracle of completing my doctorate woke me up from my spiritual anaesthesia. However, my euphoria was short-lived. I realised I had walked into a fowler's snare prepared by the same powerful men. As noted in Isaiah 57:21, some individuals never seem to rest. The powerful men have lumped with individuals in the School who haven't always had the best intentions – those whose actions led me to prepare files for legal action back in 2021. Ironically, it was a concerned teacher who encouraged me to turn to Psalm 91 for daily protection (against false narratives that may be planted in the media), and I am holding on to that wisdom.



(From left to right) Fr. Nelson Carvalho SDB, Fr. Mcenroe Lopes SDB, Dr. (Fr.) Magi Murzello, Fr. Anthony Pinto SDB, Fr. Brian Moras SDB, Fr. Charles Anthony SDB

Meanwhile, the mental harassment continues subtly, with both my posts stripped of their true authority. In School, from Priest Principal, I have been reduced to a Lay Principal. In College, the posts of 'Administrator' and College Principal have been upgraded. These are now above the Rector's post in the unofficial 'organogram'. Nevertheless, I remain anchored in hope and faith. I find comfort in Psalm 91:3: **Surely, He will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.**

My “forced sabbatical” turned out to be a hidden blessing! The Salesian community at Don Bosco Centre for Learning, Kurla, welcomed me with great joy. I was fortunate to have Fr. Nelson Carvalho SDB as my 'spiritual counsellor'. He had been my Principal when I joined Don Bosco (Lonavala) in Std. VIII and had inspired me a great deal.

Fr. Anthony (Tony) Pinto SDB, the Rector, believed in my fight for justice and stood by me with unwavering courage. I admired his profound love for the environment, and the campus reflected his zeal. At breakfast, we even created a culinary delight called the 'Rectorwala Omelette', topped with microgreens that he himself grew.

Fr. McEnroe Lopes SDB went the extra mile to ensure my stay was comfortable. My guests will always remember the hospitality shown through the delicious food he sourced from the area. Nothing but the best!

Fr. Charles Anthony SDB's musical brilliance, combined with his intellectual humility, constantly inspired me. He generously shared insights backed by thorough research, enriching our conversations.

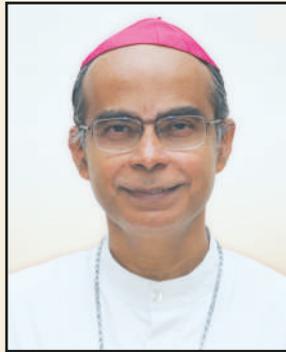
I am in awe of Fr. Brian Moras SDB whose genuine connection with people transcends age and background – something I deeply admired.

Laughter filled the refectory as we shared lived experiences; interrupted sometimes by a rush to the large windows to watch the descent of the Airbus A380. A flight tracking app had turned all of us into ‘plane enthusiasts’.

My door bore no nameplate – only the room number. I was affectionately known as 'Chaar Number Father'. This did not matter as I was loved and appreciated. During my exile, my circle of friends drastically decreased in size. What I lost in quantity was made up by the quality of the few who stood by me and increased the value of my circle.

From each of the priests in the community, I learned invaluable lessons. They owed me nothing yet they made an incredible impact on my life. May the spirit of generosity and love within the Salesian community continue to thrive! TanQ once again.





President's Message

Pope Francis' Emphasis on Education

Pope Francis guided the Church for the past twelve years with courage and compassion and he made an impact on several key areas. One of these is education, which has been very close to his heart even before he became the Pope. As Pope, he launched an initiative called the Global Compact on Education which he began in 2019 with the purpose of creating a platform for dialogue about the future of our planet and the need for an educational process towards universal solidarity and a more welcoming society. In the year 2020, a 'Vademecum' was prepared to provide, in a nutshell, all the significant elements of the Global Compact on Education.¹ The Pope's vision was to form mature individuals capable of overcoming division and hatred. Such persons would seek to restore the fabric of relationships and strive for a more fraternal humanity. Reflecting on the seven main points of this venture will help us in our efforts in the field of education.

1. To make human persons the centre

We are invited to make human persons the centre of every educational programme. The uniqueness of each one and their capacity for relationship with others is emphasized as a response to the throwaway culture which values persons only in terms of their utility. Every educational action needs this firm foundation of a vision that respects the identity of a person and considers the person as a whole with all the dimensions of his or her life, including the spiritual. Pope Francis was convinced that this would help prevent fragmentation in the face of rapid change all around.

Educators are called to give equal opportunities to the members of their institutions, without discrimination. They are also invited to care for each member of the institution, with special attention to the most fragile.

2. To listen to the voices of children and young people

In order to build together a future of justice, peace and respect for the dignity of every person, we

¹ <https://www.educationglobalcompact.org/resources/Risorse/vademecum-english.pdf> Accessed on July 12, 2025

need to listen to the voices of children and young people. Pope Francis suggested three steps: (i) listen, (ii) pass on, and (iii) build together. The etymology of the word 'education' reminds us that it is a process of 'drawing out' or 'bringing to light'. This implies recognizing the goodness and hidden potential of the student and encouraging their development. Educators are to listen to children's questions, needs, wounds and help them to discover their talents, and to strive for ideals. The second step is of experienced persons passing on and sharing the way of life, principles and values that are precious to them. Thirdly, the process involves building together with emphasis on the value of relationships and the community.

Students' representatives are to be encouraged to participate in the activities of planning and implementing programmes in the institution. Any disrespect or exploitation of minors is not acceptable.

3. To advance the cause of women

The call is to encourage the full participation of girls and women in education. Pope Francis urged that special attention be paid to young girls and women, who are often not in the mainstream of education and society. We still have a long way to go to ensure that women possess the same dignity and identical rights as men. Women who face situations of mistreatment and violence are even more disadvantaged.

Those who have a role in education need to encourage policies in favour of participation of women and girls in education. It is necessary to condemn any form of discrimination and violence against women.

4. To empower the family

To consider the family as the first and essential place of education is what this Compact proposes. Referring to the family as the primary and principal educator and the fundamental unit of society, the Pope called all to contribute to making the family fulfil its task as the source of generative and constitutive relationships for the human person. The Church considers the family as the first school of the social virtues that every society needs, and so children should be taught from their early years to love God, and to love their neighbour.

To implement this, we are to involve families in the educational activities of the school through the presence of the representatives of parents in various bodies. Parents are to be encouraged to take steps to further their own training and learning.

5. To welcome

Having focussed on the person and having specified three categories of persons (children, women and families), Pope Francis then proposed a fundamental attitude – to accept and be open to the most vulnerable and marginalized. In our world today, many forms of social, economic, and cultural imbalances are noticeable. A society that welcomes the most vulnerable and cares for the excluded is a healthy society. The compact on education aims at welcoming the last, creating a culture of inclusion, drawing attention to those on the peripheries, and healing the deepest wounds of the person and society.

This implies promoting awareness programmes in an intercultural and interreligious perspective. Welcoming students from other districts or regions of the country and starting cooperation programmes with them will help build a more fraternal and welcoming world.

6. To find new ways of understanding economy and politics

Another necessary step is to seek new ways of understanding the economy, politics, growth, and progress through which the human person, all human beings, and creation are cared for. Pope Francis strongly believed that education must form men and women to be leaders striving for the common good – that is, the good of each person taken in his or her totality and the good of all human beings. This implies spreading a culture of encounter, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone and accepting diversity.

We are to encourage study and research on economics, politics, growth, and progress in our institutions with innovative and inclusive ideas. The values of participation, democracy, politics, justice, equality, fraternity, and peace are to be promoted.

7. To safeguard our common home

The final step is to protect the planet, our common home, from the exploitation of its resources, adopting a more sober lifestyle and being committed to using renewable energy sources.

The last commitment indicated by Pope Francis clearly refers to the encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, which highlights the magnitude of the current crisis. It is not only an 'environmental' crisis but also an economic, financial, political, and social one. Pope Francis strongly recommended the need to dialogue about the way in which we are building the common home and the future of the planet. We need to involve the efforts of all, because every change needs an educational journey to develop a new universal solidarity and a more welcoming society.

Educators are called upon to encourage environmentally friendly activities in their organizations. We need to develop a care for the common home, lead the heart to behold the wonders of creation, facilitate the conversion to renewable energies and create green spaces in our educational centres.

Pope Francis has walked the talk and we thank God for his wisdom and leadership. We pray for the Lord's blessings on Pope Leo to carry out what the Lord inspires him to do for the good of the Church and for the true development of society.

On a personal note, I sincerely appreciate the efforts of all our Managers, Principals, Teachers and collaborators in the apostolate of education. Through your decisions, activities and your own example, you carry forward the vision of the Church – to enable students to grow in their knowledge of and commitment to God, to help them discover their talents and use them for the good of others, to prepare students for their role in society, to provide opportunities to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, to uphold the gospel values of equality, justice, compassion and unity, and to care for mother earth. In the midst of many challenges, you continue to maintain the Catholic ethos of our schools. May God bless you abundantly!

✠ John Rodrigues
Archbishop of Bombay



Secretary's Message

Shaping Future-Ready Citizens Through Purposeful Learning and Community Engagement

In today's complex and fast-changing world, the purpose of education must extend beyond academic achievement. It must prepare young people to navigate uncertainty with confidence, respond to challenges with discernment, and engage with society from a place of empathy and ethical responsibility.

More than ever, we need to nurture learners who are not only knowledgeable but also deeply aware of themselves, of others, and of the world they inhabit. This means not only equipping them with critical thinking, communication, and digital skills but also fostering within them a strong moral compass and a desire to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

True learning begins when students see the relevance of what they are taught. When they step out of the classroom and into the world, when they participate in service, collaborate on real-life projects, or reflect on social issues, they begin to understand the impact they can make. These experiences do not dilute academic focus; they enhance it.

As Benjamin Franklin wisely said, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." Involvement is the bridge between theory and transformation. It is through meaningful engagement that students internalise values, develop leadership, and become active participants in shaping a better world.

Our collective responsibility as educators is to create environments where such purposeful learning is not the exception, but the norm. Schools must become spaces where character is cultivated alongside competence, and where success is defined not only by personal achievement but by the ability to uplift others.

The students we guide today will be the decision-makers of tomorrow. Let us ensure that their education enables them to meet the future not just with readiness but with resolve, reflection, and a sense of responsibility.

Fr. Thomson Kinny
Secretary, ABE

Implementing Pope Francis' Dialogue and Encounter Pedagogy: A Practical Guide for Today's Teachers

Vanessa D'Cruz

Pope Francis' vision of education as a pathway to peace through dialogue and encounter offers transformative possibilities for contemporary classrooms. As teachers navigate an increasingly polarized world, his pedagogical approach provides both, inspiration and practical guidance for creating learning environments that foster understanding, empathy, and genuine human connection. The challenge lies not in understanding the theoretical framework, but in translating these ideals into concrete classroom practices that work in today's educational contexts.

Understanding the Teacher's Role as Bridge-Builder

Pope Francis envisioned teachers as facilitators of encounter rather than mere transmitters of information. As he emphasized to educators: “You cannot educate without walking together with the people you are educating.” This fundamental shift requires teachers to reimagine their role from authoritative knowledge-holders to compassionate guides who create spaces for authentic dialogue and mutual discovery.

In practical terms, this means teachers must develop what Pope Francis calls “the pedagogy of accompaniment”. Rather than standing at the front of the classroom delivering lectures, teachers position themselves as fellow travellers in the learning journey. This approach requires vulnerability, humility, and a willingness to learn from students

while maintaining appropriate boundaries and educational objectives.

The teacher becomes a bridge-builder, connecting students not only to academic content but to each other and to the wider world. Pope Francis specifically challenged teachers to help students develop “tenderness” and care for others, countering the “widespread fallacies” that promote being “competitive, aggressive and tough toward others”. This represents a fundamental shift from educational models that emphasize individual achievement and competition toward collaborative learning and mutual support.

The physical and psychological environment of the classroom plays a crucial role in facilitating dialogue and encounter. Teachers can implement several practical strategies to create spaces conducive to authentic interaction. I would like to outline some to aid teachers with this ideology.



Physical Space Configuration: Arrange desks

in circles or small groups rather than traditional rows facing forward. This simple change signals that learning will be collaborative rather than hierarchical. Create **“dialogue corners”** with comfortable seating where students can

engage in deeper conversations. Consider having a **“peace corner”** where conflicts can be addressed through dialogue rather than punishment.

Establishing Psychological Safety: Begin each semester by co-creating classroom agreements that emphasize respect, curiosity, and vulnerability. Introduce concepts like **“brave spaces”** where students feel safe to express authentic opinions while also being challenged to grow. Model vulnerability by sharing your own learning journey and admitting when you don't know something.

Rhythm and Ritual: Incorporate regular practices that foster connection, such as daily check-ins where students share both academic and personal reflections. Create **“wisdom circles”** where students can share insights from their cultural backgrounds or personal experiences. Use contemplative practices like brief moments of silence or reflection to create space for deeper thinking.

Practical Strategies for Implementing Dialogue-Based Learning

The Socratic Circle Method

Transform traditional discussions into authentic dialogue through structured Socratic circles. Rather than asking questions with

predetermined answers, pose open-ended questions that invite multiple perspectives. For example, instead of asking “What caused World War I?”, ask “How do we understand the complex web of relationships that led to global conflict, and what parallels do we see today?”

Rotate the role of dialogue facilitator among students, giving them ownership of the learning process. Teach students to ask follow-up questions like “Can you help me understand why you think that?” or “What experiences have shaped your perspective on this issue?” This approach honours Pope Francis' emphasis on listening and mutual learning.

Cross-Cultural Dialogue Projects

Create partnerships with classrooms in different countries or cultural contexts through technology. Students can engage in structured dialogues about shared challenges like climate change, social justice, or community building. These exchanges embody Pope Francis' vision of education that transcends geographical boundaries and promotes global fraternity.

For example, a high school history class might partner with students in another country to explore how the same historical events are remembered and interpreted differently. This creates opportunities for students to encounter different perspectives while developing critical thinking skills about the construction of historical narratives.

Story-Sharing Circles

Regularly incorporate storytelling into academic content. When studying immigration, invite students to share their own or their families' migration stories. When exploring literature, encourage students to connect themes to their personal experiences. This practice honours the dignity of each student's experience while building empathy and understanding across difference.



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Create *“privilege walks”* or *“story circles”* where students can share experiences of challenge and resilience. These activities must be carefully facilitated to ensure psychological safety and prevent trauma re-exposure, but they can be powerful tools for building empathy and understanding.

Addressing Contemporary Challenges Through Dialogue

Digital Citizenship and Online Encounter

Teach students to extend principles of dialogue and encounter into digital spaces. Create online discussion forums with clear guidelines for respectful engagement. Model how to disagree respectfully in digital formats and how to seek understanding rather than victory in online debates.

Implement *“digital sabbaths”* during classroom time, creating tech-free zones for face-to-face dialogue. This helps students develop skills for in-person interaction while also teaching them to use technology intentionally rather than habitually.

Conflict Resolution Through Dialogue

When conflicts arise in the classroom, use them as opportunities for learning rather than simply imposing consequences. Implement restorative justice practices that bring conflicting parties together to understand each other's perspectives and find mutually acceptable solutions.

Create *“peace-making circles”* where students can address interpersonal conflicts through structured dialogue. This approach embodies Pope Francis's emphasis on mercy and reconciliation while teaching practical skills for conflict resolution.

Subject-Specific Applications

We can incorporate these ideologies through our teaching of subjects on a daily basis.

History and Social Studies

Transform history education from memorization of facts to dialogue about meaning and contemporary relevance. Use questions like “Have you encountered this before?” or “How does this impact the world around us?” to connect academic content to real-life experiences.

Create *“historical dialogue circles”* where students role-play different historical figures, not to glorify or condemn, but to understand the complexity of human decision-making in different contexts. This approach fosters



empathy while maintaining critical thinking about historical injustices.

Literature and Language Arts

Use literature as a gateway to dialogue about universal human experiences. Create *“book clubs”* that bring together students from different backgrounds to discuss how the same text resonates differently with their experiences. Encourage students to share their own stories and creative works as legitimate texts for classroom discussion.

Implement *“author dialogues”* where students imagine conversations between authors from different time periods or cultural backgrounds,

exploring how different perspectives might interact with each other.

Science and Mathematics

Even in seemingly objective subjects, create opportunities for dialogue about the social implications of scientific discoveries or mathematical concepts. Discuss how scientific knowledge is constructed through collaboration and debate within scientific communities.

Create “*ethics circles*” where students explore the moral implications of scientific advances or discuss how mathematical concepts relate to issues of justice and equity in society.

Building Bridges with Families and Communities

Extend dialogue and encounter beyond the classroom by creating opportunities for families and community members to engage in educational dialogue. Host “*community wisdom circles*” where elders share their experiences and insights with students. Create service-learning projects that bring students into authentic encounter with different communities.

Implement “*family dialogue workshops*” where parents and students engage in structured conversations about challenging topics, with teachers facilitating rather than lecturing. This approach honours the diversity of family perspectives while building understanding across difference.

Assessment and Evaluation in Dialogue-Based Learning

Traditional assessment methods may not capture the learning that occurs through dialogue and encounter. Develop alternative assessment strategies that honour the collaborative nature of this approach:

Portfolio Assessment: Students maintain reflective portfolios documenting their growth in empathy, understanding, and dialogue skills.

Include self-reflection, peer feedback, and documentation of changed perspectives.

Peer Evaluation: Students assess each other's contributions to dialogue and collaborative learning, developing skills in constructive feedback and mutual accountability.

Community Impact Projects: Students demonstrate their learning through projects that address real community needs, showing how dialogue and encounter translate into action for social change.

Measuring Impact and Growth

The fruits of dialogue and encounter pedagogy may not be immediately visible through traditional metrics, but teachers can observe and document:

Increased Empathy: Students demonstrate greater ability to understand and articulate different perspectives, even when they disagree.

Enhanced Critical Thinking: Students ask more sophisticated questions and demonstrate comfort with complexity and ambiguity.

Improved Relationships: Classroom conflicts decrease while collaboration and mutual support increase.

Civic Engagement: Students show greater interest in and capacity for addressing social issues through dialogue and collaborative action.

Conclusion: The Ripple Effect of Transformative Education

Implementing Pope Francis's vision of dialogue and encounter in contemporary classrooms



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requires 3 C's – Courage, Creativity, and Commitment. It demands that teachers examine their own biases, develop new skills, and reimagine their role in student learning.

However, the potential impact extends far beyond individual classrooms.



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and addressing complex social challenges through collaboration rather than conflict. They develop the emotional intelligence, critical thinking skills, and moral imagination necessary for building a more peaceful and just world.

The urgency of this work cannot be overstated. In a world marked by increasing polarization, environmental crisis, and social inequality, we need educational approaches that prepare students not just to succeed individually but to contribute to collective flourishing.

Pope Francis' vision of dialogue and encounter provides a roadmap for this essential work,

offering both inspiration and practical guidance for teachers committed to education as a pathway to peace. His gift to educators extends beyond methodology to include a renewed sense of purpose and dignity in the teaching profession. By framing education as a pathway to peace and teachers as architects of human encounter, Pope Francis has elevated the work of education from mere knowledge transmission to genuine ministry—a calling to serve human flourishing and global harmony.

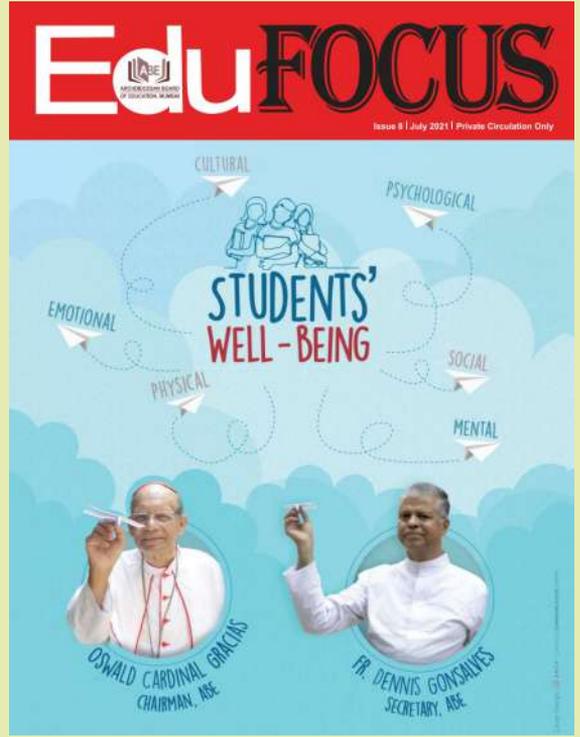
As teachers, let us embrace this vision and participate in the broader mission of creating educational institutions that serve as **“laboratories of peace”**, demonstrating that authentic human connection across difference is not only possible but essential for our shared future.

For this practical wisdom, for this hopeful vision, and for this unwavering commitment to education as a force for peace, I am deeply grateful to Pope Francis. His legacy in education will be measured not in theoretical contributions but in the countless classrooms transformed, the millions of students who learn to see others as brothers and sisters, and the more peaceful world that emerges when dialogue and encounter become the foundations of human formation.

Vanessa D'Cruz has been associated with education for more than 20 years and finds teaching to be a very enriching experience. She is currently Principal, St. Anne International School, Orlem. She is happy to be a member of the EduFOCUS Editorial Team as it gives her a preview into the latest trends in the field of education, the lives of teachers and students and allows her to interact with different intellectuals and educationists who work to meet the challenges of an ever-advancing knowledge-based society and a dynamically changing environment.



With Gratitude to His Eminence



Cardinal Emeritus Oswald Gracias



Pope Francis: His Legacy is Our Challenge

Nirmala Carvalho



On Easter Monday, 21 April 2025, Pope Francis passed away at the age of 88, leaving a legacy which includes Global Compact on Education emphasizing holistic, humanistic, and inclusive education.

Rev. Dr. Magi Murzello, as Editor, has dedicated this issue of EduFOCUS to focus – with gratitude to God – on Pope Francis' Global Compact on Education. We honour Pope Francis' legacy and appeal to Catholic educators and stakeholders to



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take initiatives required to create a new world order. Pope Francis' call for a Global Compact on Education is indeed groundbreaking, reflecting a widespread desire for educational transformation and fostering a more fraternal world. His vision emphasizes education that prepares future generations for a different world; one centred on the student, encouraging, listening, and caring for the vulnerable. He championed a Global Compact on Education,

calling for a transformation of education systems to prioritize solidarity, encounter, and respect.

Francis' invitation to build this compact is unprecedented in its scope, aiming to unite various stakeholders – families, communities, institutions, and individuals – in a shared commitment to educational renewal.

The Global Compact captures many of the topics Pope Francis explains in *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*, which EduFOCUS published in earlier issues. As editor, Rev. Dr. Magi has been “conscientizing” and “disseminating” to the readers the gifts and tools needed to transform themselves and society.

Throughout his pontificate, Pope Francis insisted on the importance of education, on the fact that it must reach everyone, that it is necessary to educate in a holistic way to improve relationships with oneself, with others and with nature. In September 2019, he launched the invitation to build a Global Compact on Education.

Catholic education in India faces several challenges, including balancing faith-based education with government regulations, social hostilities, financial constraints and maintaining the integrity of the mission in a changing social and cultural landscape. In this scenario, the Pope from Latin America gifted the world a new vision. Promoting the values of care for others, peace, justice, goodness, beauty, acceptance and fraternity in order to build hope, solidarity and harmony were guidelines to addressing issues like environmental concerns, human rights, interfaith dialogue, marginalization, inequality, and poverty within our institutions. Francis appealed to every sector of society across the globe to subscribe to and support the Global Compact on Education.

Catholic schools in India face a complex set of challenges; maintaining their religious identity

amidst increasing diversity within their student population. Global Compact on Education encourages a deeper understanding and respect for different faiths and cultures within the educational context.

Pope Francis was a living message for Catholic educators of today. He understood well that the most effective way of teaching was leading by example; such as visiting prisoners, and reaching out to those on the peripheries and the marginalized. He also encouraged reconciliation between different religious groups. His love for the poor was open, for the world to see. Francis was acutely aware that education plays a crucial role in lifting people out of poverty and called for the Global Compact on Education to address the challenges and promote a more inclusive and holistic approach to learning.

Global Compact on Education calls us to introspect – poverty is regrettably rampant in India, not just in rural villages, but in our posh metropolis. We see the malnourished and the impoverished begging at traffic signals, corners of junctions and outside places of worship. Poverty significantly impacts a child's access to education. Despite the Right to Education Act, there is a high

dropout rate and, ultimately, illiteracy. This continues the vicious cycle of poverty.

Pope Francis highlights the importance of ensuring access to quality education for all, including marginalized and vulnerable populations. Global Compact on Education recognizes education as a fundamental human right and a powerful tool for poverty reduction and social progress.

“Education bears within itself a seed of hope”, Pope Francis said – “the hope of peace and justice; the hope of beauty and goodness; the hope of social harmony”. This dream of Pope Francis (in Fratelli Tutti) has been disseminated through the mission of EduFOCUS. “Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.”

Pope Francis reminds us that education requires patience... similar to the patience that Jesus had with his disciples because to “educate is to wait, to persevere, and to persevere with love.”

Pope Francis' enduring legacy is a challenge as it is an invitation to accompany young people so that they discover service to others. Pope Francis reminds us that true greatness is found in humility, in a heart that embraces the whole world – tutti, tutti – as brothers and sisters and in the relentless pursuit of love of the common good, creating a hope-filled future.



EduFOCUS - July 2022 issue



EduFOCUS - March 2024 issue

Nirmala Carvalho has been a Crux correspondent since 2004, and, in 2006, won the Communications Award from the Catholic Bishops Conference of India for “exceptional sensitivity to the Church and minority-related issues”. She holds a bachelor's degree in Philosophy, and a master's degree in Sociology, both from the University of Mumbai.



St. Andrew's College Rector earns Doctorate Degree

Fr. Magi Murzello of the Archdiocese of Bombay has successfully defended his doctoral thesis and has earned the title of Doctor of Philosophy in Humanities (in English) from the University of Mumbai.

His thesis, titled English Language Acquisition through ICT Tools among First Generation Learners in Select Missionary Schools in Mumbai Metropolitan Region, represents a significant contribution to the field of education and the manner in which English is taught in missionary schools to first generation learners who are fluent in a regional language i.e. Marathi, Tamil, Gujarati, etc. The open defence viva-voce took place on June 3, 2025 and was met with high praise from Dr. Shivaji Sargar (Chairman of the Committee), Dr. Mehrunnisa Pathan (External Examiner), Prin. Dr. Kishan Pawar (Research Supervisor) as well as other attendees.

Dr. (Fr.) Magi Murzello is currently the Rector, St. Andrew's College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Bandra; Principal, St. Andrew's High School, Bandra; and Editor, EduFOCUS, the magazine of the Archdiocesan Board of Education (ABE).

We congratulate Dr. (Fr.) Magi Murzello on this outstanding academic achievement and wish him continued success in his future endeavours.

(Source: The Examiner, June 14 – 20, 2025)



Thank you for your participation and support throughout my research

- Apostolic Carmel High School and Junior College, Bandra
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- St. Aloysius High School, Bandra
- St. Aloysius High School, Gorai
- St. Anthony's High School, Vakola
- St. Joseph's High School, Wadala
- St. Mary's High School and Junior College, Kalina
- St. Teresa Convent High School, Santacruz
- St. Thomas Academy, Goregaon
- Victoria High School, Mahim



With deep gratitude,
Dr. (Fr.) Magi Murzello

From Buenos Aires to the World: Scholas Occurrentes in Action

Anjali Heredia Gracias

What began as neighbourhood schools in Buenos Aires in 2001 to promote peace and education under the leadership of then–Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio (later Pope Francis) has grown into a global network.

Exponential Growth

Scholas Occurrentes, established as a Pontifical Right Foundation on 13 August 2013, was elevated to an International Educational Movement during a meeting with youth at Rome's Pontifical Urban University on 19 May 2022. “Taking into account that Scholas today continues to expand its beneficial action and to structure itself as a community of communities and an educational movement of international character, it requires a new juridical form in keeping with this new reality,” said the decree, released by the Vatican.

In 2022, Scholas participated in the G20 Summit in Bali, where it presented its educational model to global leaders, and thus expanded its reach. The organization now partners with nearly 450,000 schools and educational institutions worldwide.

University of Meaning

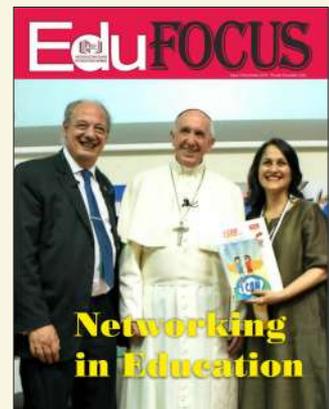
On 15 August 2023, Pope Francis instituted the University of Meaning as a “civil educational entity based in the Vatican City State” to be run by Scholas Occurrentes. The Holy Father affirmed that “to educate is to seek the meaning of things. It is to teach how to look for the meaning of things”. The University is envisioned as a welcoming and creative place where all are invited to feel welcome and participate.

Human Rights Prize

On 19 December 2023, Scholas Occurrentes was awarded the University of Seville's 'Juan Antonio Carrillo Salcedo' human rights prize. Awarded every two years, it recognises individuals or

institutions that have distinguished themselves in the defence of human rights, whether in the political, social or educational sphere.

José María del Corral, President of the Foundation, said that “Scholas defends the idea that a meaningful life is a human right that cannot be violated, and we work on many issues to achieve this. We tackle challenges such as suicide prevention in many parts of the world and, during the pandemic, worked with the mental health of young people and adolescents in more than 30 countries, while also combatting problems such as gangs in Panama, the Camorra in Naples and child abuse in Portugal, Mexico and Spain.”



The First Five-Year Plan

Scholas Occurrentes held its first assembly on 20 March 2025 wherein the Assembly voted for and approved a five-year plan, to guide Scholas' development and expansion over the next five years, ensuring the continuity of its vision and the consolidation of its projects across five continents. It also confirmed the continued leadership of Directors José María del Corral and Enrique Palmeyro – a timely step, as the world lost Pope Francis on 21 April 2025.

Laudato Si: A Letter to Each One of You – Teaching and Living the Call to Care for Our Common Home

Elaine Fernandes

"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." – Henry Adams
"At the end, we will find ourselves face to face with the infinite beauty of God." (cf. 1 Cor 13:12)

On 18 June 2025, we marked ten years since the Vatican officially released Pope Francis' landmark encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Latin for “Praise Be to You”, subtitled “On Care for Our Common Home”.

This encyclical is not only addressed to Catholics or Christians, but to *every human being on the planet*. Divided into six chapters, it provides a profound analysis of human life and its three intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour, and with the Earth.

In the opening pages, Pope Francis reminds us: “We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”

The letter invites every person to examine their relationship with the world. Do we treat Nature as a resource to exploit or as a shared inheritance to protect and cherish? Pope Francis addresses the escalating climate crisis and its devastating consequences. He critiques consumerism, irresponsible development, environmental degradation and global warming, and urges “swift and unified global action”.

The Ecological Crisis

The *United Nations Development Programme* defines the climate crisis as: “The serious problems that are being caused, or are likely to be caused, by changes in the planet's climate, including weather extremes and hazards, ocean

acidification and sea-level rise, loss of biodiversity, food and water insecurity, health risks, economic disruption, displacement, and even violent conflict.”

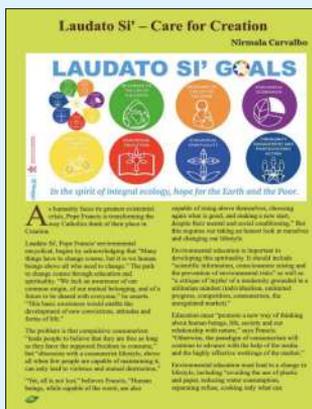
In 2024, the global average temperature reached 1.6°C above pre-industrial levels – the hottest year on record, and the first to surpass the **critical 1.5°C threshold** that the IPCC

(Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) has long been concerned about. The burning of fossil fuels – coal, oil and natural gas – continues to release greenhouse gases that trap heat and warm the atmosphere.

As of July 2025, Europe is experiencing a record-breaking heatwave, forcing France and Switzerland to shut down nuclear reactors due to high river water temperatures. Meanwhile, torrential rain and severe flooding in Texas is claiming lives and displacing communities.

Closer home, India faces increasingly extreme weather – heatwaves, floods and droughts – along with rising air and water pollution. These impacts threaten lives, livelihoods, and the economy, disproportionately affecting the poorest and most vulnerable. Those who rely on natural resources, such as small-scale farmers and fishermen, are most at risk.

To confront this crisis meaningfully, we must also reflect on the deeper values that shape our relationship with the Earth – values deeply embedded in many faith traditions.



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Sacredness of Creation in Various Faiths

Across many religions, creation is considered sacred – a divine act reflecting power, wisdom, and purpose. Though narratives differ, a common thread unites them: *reverence for the natural world and humanity's responsibility within it.*

Christianity

The Genesis story in the Bible describes a God who creates the heavens, earth, plants, animals and humans, and declares all of creation “good”. Humanity is entrusted with stewardship of the Earth, grounding the Christian belief in the sacredness of creation and the duty to care for it.

Hinduism

Hindu cosmology sees creation as a cycle of birth, destruction, and rebirth. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva symbolize this cycle, representing creation, preservation, and transformation. The concept of Dharma emphasizes living in harmony with Nature and respecting cosmic balance.

Jainism

In Jainism, the universe is considered eternal – without beginning or end – and not created by a divine being. Jainism does not believe in a creator God or any divine being who created or controls the universe. Jainism places a high value on all living beings, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life, and the importance of minimizing harm to all forms of life. Jains believe that individuals are responsible for their actions and their karmic consequences.

Buddhism

Unlike many other religions, Buddhism does not posit a creator God or a singular moment of creation. The universe is seen as cyclical, with periods of creation and destruction occurring naturally, without the intervention of gods. Buddhism emphasizes the sacredness of

interconnectedness and the importance of understanding the causes and conditions that give rise to all things.

Sikhism

Sikhs believe that God is the creator of everything and also the sustainer of the universe. He is not separate from creation but is intimately involved in its ongoing existence. The belief in God's presence in all of creation leads to a deep respect for all life, both human and non-human. Sikhs are encouraged to recognize the divine spark within themselves and others, fostering a sense of interconnectedness and compassion.

Islam

While the Qur'an doesn't have a single creation narrative, it frequently references God's creation as a sign of divine power and wisdom. Humanity is seen as stewards of the Earth, tasked with protecting it and reflecting on the natural world to better understand God.

What We Are Called to Do – The Role Educators Can Play

If creation is a divine gift, then harming the Earth – through pollution, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity – is a tragedy. Animals instinctively live in harmony with their environment, taking only what they need. Yet we humans often forget that we are part of Nature, not separate from it. We have fractured our relationship with the Earth.

In an age of alarming environmental decline, educating children about the interconnectedness and innate intelligence of all life is more vital than ever. Teachers have the unique ability to instill a sense of reverence and responsibility in young minds.

Early experiences of awe and wonder can influence how children perceive their place in the world.

To make these concepts more engaging, teachers can also organize group activities, such as:

- **The Cosmic Walk**, adapted for different age groups, to help students visualize the story of the universe and their place in it.
- **Screening “The Letter – A Message for Our Earth”**, a powerful documentary on *Laudato Si’* available on YouTube.
- Incorporating **nature documentaries** such as BBC's Planet Earth and films from YouTube's Free Documentary – Nature channel as part of the school curricula, featuring acclaimed filmmakers like David Attenborough, can inspire awe and appreciation for the natural world. These educational resources should also be considered for inclusion in the school library collection.
- Organizing **beach clean-ups** and other hands-on environmental activities appropriate for different age groups.
- Organize **field trips to nature reserves** like Sanjay Gandhi National Park, to Sewri Jetty



Elaine Fernandes is a biologist and self-taught artist currently living in Mumbai.



to witness the flamingo migration or to Malabar Hill Nature Trail.

A Moral Imperative

The climate crisis is not a distant threat but a present reality that brings disease, displacement and death. Droughts and floods disrupt food supplies, undermine economic stability and endanger human health.

At a macro level, the inhabitants of low-lying islands in the Indian Ocean, or even the residents of a city like Mumbai, are in danger of being swamped and displaced by rising sea levels.

At a micro level, think of gas cylinder delivery workers who push heavy loads under the blistering sun and who are at risk of injury, exhaustion and heatstroke. Where is our humanity, if we allow such suffering to go unnoticed?

The future of our children and all life hangs in the balance. **If we fail to protect our common home, nothing else we strive for will matter.**

Pope Francis writes: “Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each

creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all.”

Until that day comes, we walk forward hand in hand, as guardians of Creation and stewards of a future still within our reach.

Responding to Earth's Wounds and Humanity's Needs

Donna Barretto

“Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” – St. Francis of Assisi



The global lockdown of April 2020, a paradoxical period of human stillness and natural rejuvenation, became a turning point for me. Like many, I found myself with ample time, exploring digital avenues. It was then that I stumbled upon “**The Letter**”, a powerful documentary on **Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si'**... which calls for urgent global action to care for the environment and the poor. The film weaves together voices from around the world who are already experiencing the impacts of the ecological crisis.

The documentary winds around a group of five individuals from different continents – representing indigenous people, the poor, the youth, and wildlife – who are invited to the Vatican to speak with Pope Francis. The blessed ones are:

- A young climate activist from India

- An indigenous leader from the Amazon rainforest, Brazil
- A climate refugee from Senegal valley
- A pair of marine biologists from Hawaii.

Each individual shares firsthand life stories of how environmental degradation has affected their communities. Through their conversations with Pope Francis, the film emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life and our moral duty to protect our common home. It highlights themes of climate justice, ecological conversion, the powerless and the power of grassroots voices to inspire change.

Change. I questioned why I hadn't encountered this message earlier, only to realise that perhaps I had been too engrossed in my own world. Yet, a conviction grew: if divine inspiration had touched me, a path to action would surely emerge, even





vulnerable. Our efforts encompassed providing crucial medical aid, facilitating free doctor consultations, and, during the darkest days of the pandemic, locating vital hospital beds and assisting with the supply of oxygen cylinders and essential medicines for COVID-19 patients.

This vital work was followed by “Vaccinate the Poor”, a monumental undertaking that saw thousands receive free vaccinations, made possible by the generosity of numerous donors. As the immediate crisis of the pandemic subsided, so too did this project. However, the spirit of service continued.

within the confines of my home.

Journeying with 'The Cry of the Poor'

My call to action soon found its direction through **Health Outreach**, a programme spearheaded by Auxiliary Bishop Allwyn D'Silva. I eagerly joined as a volunteer, and it was through this initiative that I truly began to answer “the cry of the poor”. Doctors and volunteers collaborated tirelessly, extending a lifeline to the less fortunate, the needy, and the



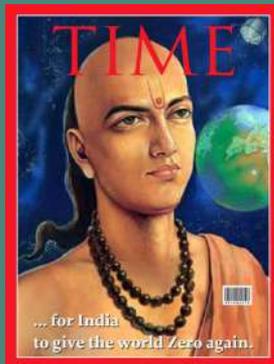
A new chapter began in 2024 with '**The Catholic Medical Outreach, Mumbai**', now under the guidance of Auxiliary Bishop Dominic Savio Fernandes and Fr. Avin Franklin. This programme has expanded its reach across Mumbai, continuing to provide invaluable medical aid, organizing comprehensive medical camps, offering doctor assistance, and distributing medicines generously sponsored by Wallace Pharmaceuticals. The sight of grateful smiles on the faces of beneficiaries is a constant source of immense joy and validation, a testament to the enduring impact of collective compassion.

Cry of the Earth

A Personal Journey Towards a Greener Planet: From Awareness to Action

My journey into environmental stewardship began with a profound moment of realisation, coinciding with my discovery of the Eco Ambassador Course by the Archdiocese of Mumbai. The course, aptly resonates deeply, sparking a desire to contribute, however modestly, to saving our planet. I promptly registered, eager to learn how to translate this newfound awareness into tangible action.

The Eco Ambassador Course proved to be an illuminating experience, masterfully weaving together the spiritual, technical, and practical dimensions of the ecological crisis facing our world. Its overarching aim – to cultivate ambassadors of transformative change who would champion the Church's ecological mission within the Archdiocese of Bombay – truly inspired me. Through the programme, I gained invaluable insights into how individuals like myself could actively engage in conservation and renewal efforts. This led me to join the church cell under the 'Care for Creation' initiative, taking my first concrete steps.



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Zeroing Out Carbon: Igniting Change in Schools and Communities

Just as this desire intensified, an invitation arrived from **Dr. Fr. Magi Murzello** to join the **Zero Out Carbon (ZOC)** team. I seized the opportunity without hesitation. ZOC champions the critical message of “Quit Carbon Emission” – a collective global imperative. It emphasizes that



each of us must become acutely aware of our carbon footprint.

ZOC's vision places schools at the very heart of this zero-carbon transformation. Schools are seen as powerful catalysts, capable of sparking and galvanizing community-wide change. They are uniquely positioned to harness the inherent optimism and resilience of young minds, keeping them focused on the Earth's health with every decision. It's truly inspiring to witness the “amaz(ero)ing” things unfolding through the ZOC campaign!

A Wave of Green Initiatives Under “Cry of the Earth”

Under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Fr. Magi Murzello, the ZOC team has orchestrated a remarkable series of programmes, sessions, and webinars for both youth and adults, all unified under the poignant theme of “Cry of the Earth”.





These initiatives highlight the intrinsic link between environmental degradation and its disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities.

Some of the impactful programmes include:

- **Echoing Eco-Catechesis:** A vital session for catechists from across India, empowering them to educate Sunday school children on embracing simple, holy lives through sustainable practices.
- **Youth Empowerment:** Enlightening sessions for the youth of Kurla and Central Suburbs Deaneries, guiding them towards sustainable living, reducing their carbon footprint, and becoming active Eco ambassadors.
- **Parish Youth Animators' Session:** Focused on addressing the “Cry of the Earth”, equipping animators to lead their communities in ecological action.
- **Widespread Outreach:** Engagements with catechists in Ahmedabad and Nadiad in Gujarat extended the campaign's reach to new regions.
- **Connecting with Nature:** A unique session for CTC participants that fostered a

deeper love for oneself, family, and the Earth through connection with nature.

- **School-level Impact:** Workshops for Eco-ambassadors of the Western Province of Apostolic Carmel schools held in Pune and several workshops held across schools in Mumbai and the rest of Maharashtra demonstrate the campaign's success in cultivating young environmental leaders.

The ZOC team also hosted a powerful online conclave on World Earth Day titled “Foodprint: Is saving the planet on your menu?” This thought-provoking event underscored the critical role of our food choices in the health of the planet.

Through these diverse and impactful programmes, the ZOC team is not just raising awareness but actively fostering a generation of conscious individuals dedicated to safeguarding our shared home.

May 2025: Laudato Si Animator's Programme: Caring for Our Common Home

Yet, an inner calling urged me to do more. I joined the Laudato Si Animator's Programme which trains individuals to become powerful



advocates for creation care, deeply rooted in Catholic social teaching.

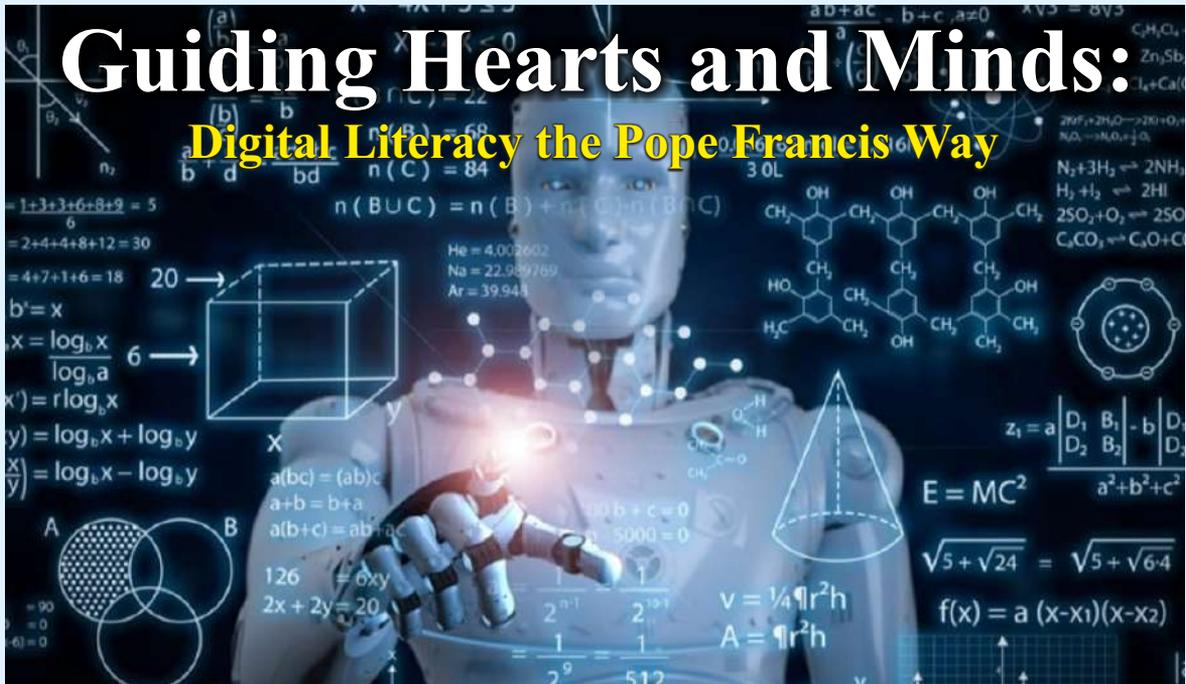
The programme unpacks the causes and unjust consequences of climate change, highlighting its impact on both the Earth and the poor. Animators then discover their personal connection to this global crisis, inspired by others and linked to a worldwide movement.

Fostering a deep sense of personal calling, connecting faith with the moral duty to address the climate crisis it has empowered me to carry on in the footsteps of Pope Francis by actively responding to “The Cry of the Earth” and “The Cry of the Poor”.



Donna Barretto teaches English and Social Sciences at St. Joseph's Convent High School, Bandra. She has a keen interest in Geography which led her to completing her master's degree in the subject during the lockdown. She is an Eco Ambassador certified by the Archdiocesan Office for Environment Mumbai. Donna recently received a Certificate of Recognition from the Laudato Si' Movement for her work as a Laudato Si' animator and for bringing Laudato Si' to life in her community.





Guiding Hearts and Minds:

Digital Literacy the Pope Francis Way

Luna D'Souza

In an increasingly wired world, where algorithms often shape perceptions and screens mediate relationships, Pope Francis, a global voice for peace and human dignity, offers profound guidance on digital literacy, urging us to use technology as a tool for connection, truth, and evangelisation. His teachings, rooted in the Gospel's call to love, challenges educators, students, and communities to approach the digital world with wisdom and faith. This article explores Pope Francis' vision for digital literacy and its implications for fostering a culture of encounter in our classrooms and beyond.

Digital Literacy Is Not Just a Skill – It is a Moral Responsibility

In his message for the World Day of Social Communications (especially in 2018 and 2020), Pope Francis rightly asserted, *“fake news often goes viral, spreading so fast that it is hard to stop, not because of the sense of sharing that inspires the social media, but because it appeals*

to the insatiable greed so easily aroused in human beings”. He challenges all to counter this saying, *“yet preventing and identifying the way disinformation works also calls for a profound and careful process of discernment. We need to unmask what could be called the “snake-tactics” used by those who disguise themselves in order to strike at any time and place”*.

Pope Francis reminds us that digital literacy is not simply about knowing how to use a device or platform. It is about discerning truth from falsehood, engaging with empathy, and resisting the culture of division that can thrive online. He warned about the spread of fake news and manipulation online. He emphasized the need for *“education for truth”*, which helps people develop a critical sense and the ability to question and verify information. That's a powerful cue for educators to shift focus from how students use technology to why and to what end.

Recently, while teaching a science class (grade 9) about the toxicity of lipsticks and deodorants; a group of students, based on an online claim, vouched for the ingredients and efficacy of a certain brand (often exaggerated by manufacturers and influencers). Not only had these students viewed but also reposted the viral video on Instagram encouraging fellow students to use the products. This spurred me to use the Wi-Fi network and the smartboard facilities of the class to navigate the students to fact-checking websites, help them research medical sources and realize that the claims were misleading. Basically, as educators, we are at the front lines of shaping how young people engage with digital tools – not just as users, but as ethical and responsible citizens. We need to teach students how to fact-check information using reliable sources and encourage scepticism toward sensational headlines or viral content. This will also help to keep in check what was previously known as “idle gossip” but, in today's world, is the more terrifying “online character assassination” as it has the potential to go viral within minutes.

Human Connection over Illusion

“The digital environment is also one of loneliness, manipulation, exploitation and violence, even to the extreme case of the 'dark web’” – Christus Vivit, 88

As I pen this article, my thoughts go towards the much discussed and debated Netflix crime series – “Adolescence” which has been praised for sparking important conversations about the impact of online content on young people. It delves on themes such as teenage rage, online toxicity, cyberbullying, peer pressure, impact of social media and the search for identity. The series was definitely an eye opener to many of us educators especially the slang terms and cryptic abbreviations used by teens today

As educators, we need to create classroom discussions about the emotional impact of social media, cyberbullying, and the difference between online friendships and real relationships. We need to help students understand the impact of their words, posts, and clicks.

A Call to Dialogue, Not Division

“Social networks can facilitate relationships and promote the good of society, but they can also lead to further polarization.” – Message for World Communications Day, 2019

For Pope Francis, digital literacy is a pathway to peace. In his 2024 International Literacy Day message, delivered via Cardinal Parolin, he stressed that literacy, including digital literacy, fosters “*sustainable and peaceful societies*” by promoting dialogue and cultural openness. By teaching students to use technology to bridge differences – through multilingual platforms or cross-cultural exchanges – educators can help build a world where the “*lexicon of peace*” prevails over the “*language of war and discord*”.

During a recent online English debate competition, on the topic of “Is artificial intelligence dehumanizing mankind?”, a student participant vehemently disagreed with participants from the opposition and became personal in his refuting statements, causing a hostile environment. Guided by the prompt intervention of the moderator, he then refuted respectfully, acknowledging the opposition's viewpoint instead of insulting them. Trolling or reposting offensive content was avoided.

Form the Whole Person – Ethics and Balance

“Young people need to be accompanied on the journey of learning how to live well in the digital world.” – Christus Vivit, 2019

In his 2023 International Literacy Day message, Pope Francis highlighted how the digital revolution, while expanding access to information, can perpetuate “*divisiveness and hatred found on 'digital highways'*”. He cautions against “brain rot” from excessive social media use, which narrows perspectives and stifles critical thinking. Digital literacy, he argues, requires education that forms the “head, hands, and heart”, fostering not just technical skills but wisdom and compassion.

He encourages adults, including teachers and parents, to accompany young people in this journey – not to control them, but to guide them with wisdom and love. With a gentle nudge from parents and educators, teenagers could be guided to practice “digital fasting” ... wherein they choose to put their phones away during family dinner or while helping a sibling with homework. They could be encouraged to use screen-time tracking apps to manage online habits, thus maintaining a balance between their online and offline lives.

Pope Francis often points to Blessed Carlo Acutis, soon to be canonised, as a model for young people in the digital age. Acutis used his tech skills to create a website cataloguing Eucharistic miracles, demonstrating how digital tools can serve faith. Francis praises Carlo's joyful witness, showing that holiness is possible in a tech-driven world. For students,



Carlo's example provides a tangible way to blend faith and technology, utilising digital platforms to creatively share the Gospel.

Pope Francis' vision inspires educators to address the digital divide by advocating for access to technology for underserved students, reflecting Francis' concern for the marginalized. He invites educators to shape students who are not just tech-savvy but spiritually grounded, using technology to build a world of peace, truth, and connection. As we teach digital literacy, let us echo Pope Francis' call to make the digital world a space of encounter, where every click, post, and share reflects the love of Christ.

Luna D'Souza has been an inspiring educator for over 34 years and currently teaches at St. Anne High School and Junior College, Malad. A pioneer in integrating technology in education to enhance the teaching learning experience, she used tools like the OHP (projector) long before smart boards became common. Known for her rich experience, innovative strategies, and lifelong learning mindset, she remains a resource person for both academic and co-curricular initiatives. Beyond school, she actively promotes environmental initiatives in her community as a certified eco-ambassador.



Pope Francis: A Living Channel of Peace

Nalini Sorensen

Every time I hear the hymn *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace*, I'm moved to tears. There is so much packed into the lyrics of this particular hymn; so much wisdom and food for thought neatly tucked away in such an easy, singable tune. It was only years later, that I learnt that the hymn was based on a prayer, attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, the saint of peace, humility and service.

So, from the get-go, I felt a deep connect to Pope Francis. I mean, he chose his papal name to honour St. Francis of Assisi, and there's this matter of my favourite hymn based on the prayer to St. Francis of Assisi. I felt an immediate bond of sorts. How could I not?

He did not disappoint.

I'm going to take you through the lyrics of the first two verses of the hymn *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace*, and several instances in the life of Pope Francis, so you can get a clearer understanding of what I mean. The hymn beautifully mirrors the spirit and actions of Pope Francis.



♪ *Make me a channel of your peace...*

Pope Francis's whole papacy was in fact based on peace, simplicity, and reconciliation. He showed this in several ways, but especially in the most real sense, with his desire to end war and conflict in the world.

♪ *Where there is hatred, let me bring your love...*

Right from his early days, Pope Francis was a huge advocate of building bridges in a divided world. For example, he signed the Document on Human Fraternity, promoting peace between Christianity and Islam. He abhorred hate and strife, and promoted love in every interaction.

♪ *Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord...*

Pope Francis often preached about mercy, forgiveness, and reconciliation. He frequently focused on inequality and marginalization. He regularly met with victims of violence and offered consolation, compassion, healing, and apology.

♪ *And where there's doubt, true faith in you...*

Pope Francis used simple and relatable language in all his homilies and speeches. He was a humble man whose faith and pure essence came through in all his communication. He played a pivotal role in shaping the global perception of the Catholic Church in our modern world, and restoring faith in the institution.

♪ *Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope...*

Pope Francis often visited prisons, refugee camps, and home of migrants offering hope through his presence with them. He made time to listen to their problems and pray with them, lighting that little spark of hope to help them find their way through the despair in each of them. He offered unending support to indigenous people and migrants, and stood for economic justice for all.

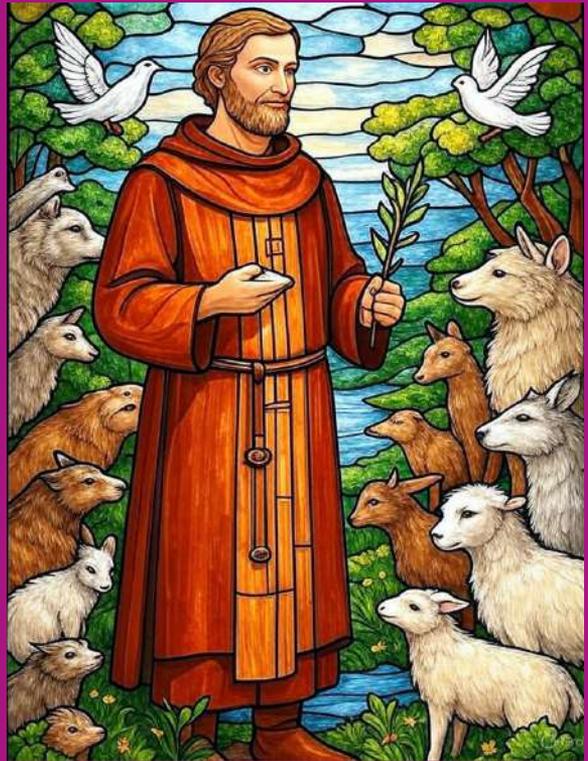
♪ *Where there is darkness, only light...*

Pope Francis' cautious, but refreshingly progressive stances, on LGBTQ+ individuals – with his ever famous “Who am I to judge?” – was a true embodiment of bringing light into the darkness of people's lives. He also shone the light on global crises like climate change, with passion and urged everyone to care for our common home.

♪ *And where there's sadness, ever joy.*

Pope Francis was best known for his humour, his warmth, his simple lifestyle, and his human touch. He'd call out to strangers, seek out the underdog in the crowd, joke with the crowds, gently interact with children, and embrace the unwell. He was a man deeply rooted in joy, and he spread that joy at every interaction.

Pope Francis did not just sing the hymn that I loved, he lived it. In a world that often seems bleak and filled with hatred, Pope Francis was a living channel of peace, radiating love, warmth and compassion for all.



Nalini Sorensen is an award-winning author of children's books. She has contributed to anthologies, children's magazines and has written readers for schools in India. She is a TEDx speaker and has presented at literary events across India. She's on Instagram (@nalinisorensen) and on Facebook (@NaliniSorensenAuthor).





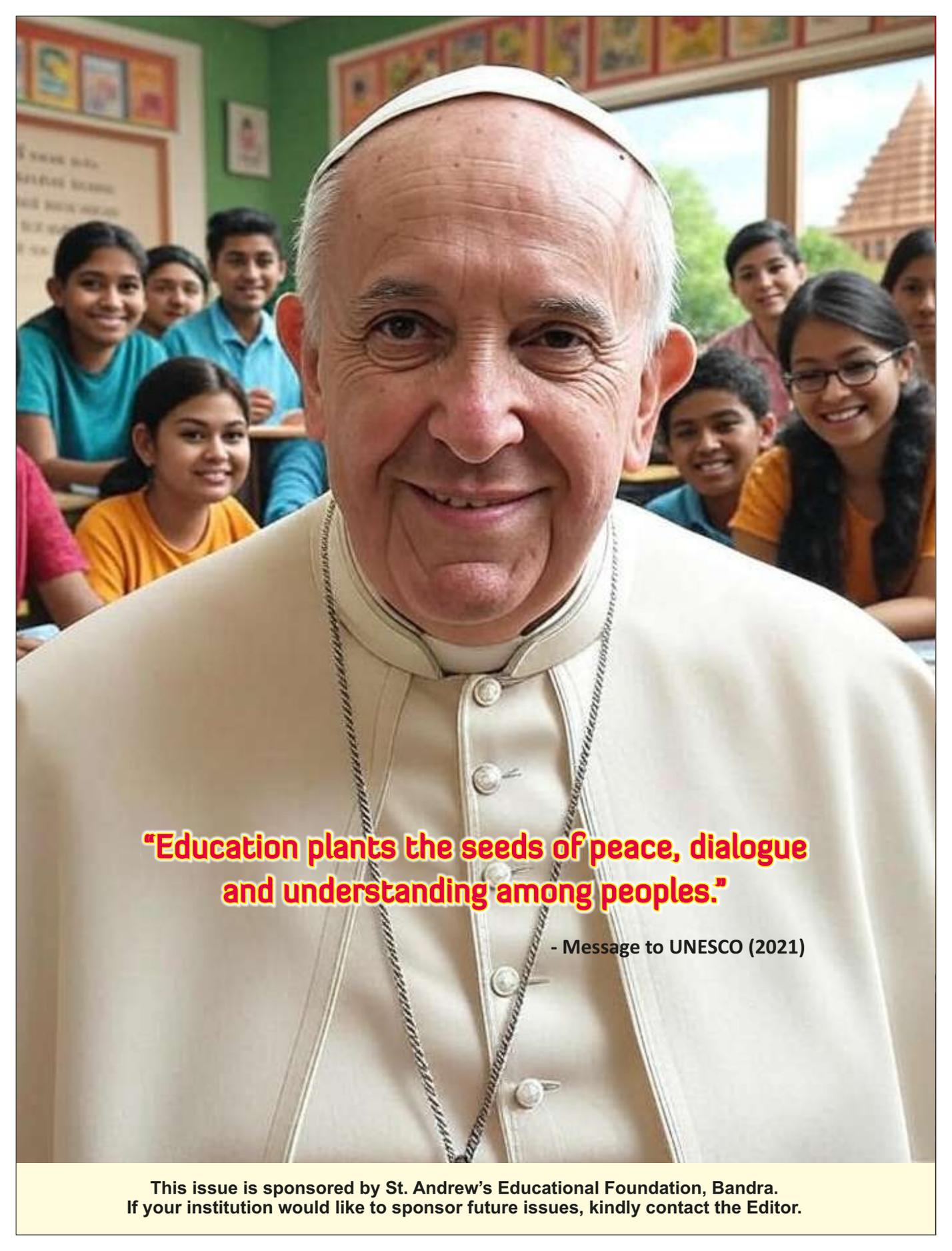
How well do we know Pope Francis?

- ★ Francis was a Pope of firsts – besides being the first Jesuit Pope, he was the first pope from the New World, the first non-European pope since the eighth century, and the first to replace a living pope in more than 600 years.
- ★ Despite living in the Vatican, Pope Francis continued to root for the San Lorenzo de Almagro team from Buenos Aires. He kept up to date thanks to a Swiss guard who informed him of the team's news every week as he did not watch TV.
- ★ His favorite dish was Bagna Cauda, a typical Piedmont dish prepared with anchovies, oil and garlic and used as a sauce for vegetables.
- ★ Pope Francis' favorite movie was *La Strada* by Federico Fellini, winner of the Oscar for best foreign film in 1957.
- ★ Pope Francis did not watch television from 15 July 1990 onwards when he promised Our Lady of Mount Carmel that he would no longer do so. He made this promise because he “felt that God was asking me to do it”.
- ★ On several occasions, Pope Francis has praised a good sense of humour and stressed that sadness is not a Christian disposition. He regularly prayed this prayer from St. Thomas More. “Lord, give me a sense of humour. Grant me the grace to understand a joke, to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others.”
- ★ Francis was gifted a specially-made Lamborghini Huracan sporting the papal colours – white with yellow detailing. Auctioned by Sotheby's, the USD 950,000 that was raised went to four charities – 'Aid to the Church in Need', 'John XXIII Community', 'Gicam', and 'Friends of Central Africa'.
- ★ Francis was the first pope since Adrian VI in the sixteenth century to not visit his home country after becoming pope. Adrian VI was born in the Netherlands and was elected pope in 1522. He died a year later without ever leaving Rome during his tenure.
- ★ Some of Pope Francis' favourite authors were Marcel Proust, C.S. Lewis, Fyodor Dostoevsky, T.S. Eliot, St. Ignatius Loyola and the Argentine Jorge Luis Borges.
- ★ In 2010, Rabbi Abraham Skorka, rector of *Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano* in Buenos Aires, and Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, archbishop of Buenos Aires, published a book of dialogues between them offering Jewish and Catholic perspectives on important topics including God, religion and politics. The book, entitled *On Heaven and Earth*, and the relationship between the two men serve as an example of how interreligious dialogue can happen with love and respect.

AI in Education



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to be published in the next issue.
Please send in your articles by 31 October 2025
to andieacademic@gmail.com**

A close-up photograph of Pope Francis, wearing his white zucchetto and cassock, smiling warmly. He is positioned in the foreground, with a group of diverse school children in the background, some wearing blue and orange uniforms. The setting appears to be a classroom or school environment with educational posters on the wall.

**“Education plants the seeds of peace, dialogue
and understanding among peoples.”**

- Message to UNESCO (2021)

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