

LUX EDMUNDI: JUNE, 2014

We have advised people each year to make of the summer vacation a time of “re-creation”; of renewal in body, mind and soul; of peace and quiet, internal and external, in which we may be ever more open to the grace of God and to the power of the Holy Spirit to renew each one of us in the service of youth for the sake of the Gospel; and to renew, through us, “the face of the earth”, the condition and the conduct of education, in general, of Catholic education, in particular, in its service of evangelisation to the ever-to-be-discovered New-found-land of young people everywhere.

We have, from time to time, recommended reading, spiritual reading especially, as a constituent of the process of “re-creation”. Duly rested and re-invigorated, physically, mentally, spiritually, we might at some point this summer read *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion*, issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education in April, 2014 and available at www.vatican.va.

This document issued as an *instrumentum laboris*, a working document, to help people prepare for the Global Convention on Education scheduled to be held in Rome 18-21 November, 2015, to mark the 50th anniversary of *Gravissimum Educationis*, the Document on Education issued by Vatican II in 1965, and the 25th anniversary of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the Apostolic Constitution on Catholic universities’ identity and mission, issued by Saint John Paul II in 1990. It has been put together in the light of prior and preliminary consultations and is presented to stimulate rather than to stem discussion. Like its predecessor on the forth-coming Extraordinary General Meeting of the Synod of Bishops on Marriage and the Family, *Education Today and Tomorrow* invites people to submit their responses to a number of questions listed under these four headings “Identity and Mission”, “Subjects” (which relates to people, rather than to academic disciplines or areas of study), “Formation” and “Challenges and Outlook”.

Given that those responsible for, involved in, and/or supportive of, Catholic education in Ireland are currently seeking to address each and all of the topics thus listed, it would seem reasonable to hope that, individually and collectively, locally, regionally and nationally, we will, in the coming months, consider the contents of *Education Today and Tomorrow* and avail of the opportunity to make our contribution to this global reflection on education amongst the People of God.

Experience with the consultation process relating to the document on Marriage and the Family was, it seems, mixed. In some parts of the world, including some Irish dioceses, it was felt that every effort was made to facilitate the process, to encourage people to meet to address the topics they were invited to address; to record and report their responses which, in turn, were included in the subsequent submissions to Rome. This was a very “bottom-up” approach. Elsewhere, however, again including some Irish dioceses, the approach appears to have been much more “top-down”.

It may be wondered whether, right now, an exclusively “top-down” approach is really adequate for the protection and promotion of Catholic education and Catholic schools in the Republic of Ireland. We are blessed in our various national representative bodies. By membership, by subscription and, above all, by participation, we on the ground must do all that in us lies to serve and support them. Together, though, we must ensure that all available wisdom is canvassed, all available talent engaged, all available support mobilised, that, as a result, when our representatives speak truth unto power on our behalf, it will be well understood that they have at their back tens of thousands of committed citizens, clerical, religious and, above all, lay, to whom the Catholic school really matters.