



S S P X

preserving
Catholic Tradition



A Different Sort of Missionary

Dear Friends,

In his 1929 encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*, Pope Pius XI instructed the Church that “the work of Christian education...aims at securing the Supreme Good, that is, God, for the souls of those who are being educated, and the maximum of well-being possible here below for human society.” I likely needn’t tell you that in the 88 years since those words were written, the noble work of Christian education has faltered, particularly in the United States where countless communities have witnessed the mass closure of Catholic schools. And many of the Catholic schools that do remain no longer offer a curriculum intended to help orient students toward their final end, preferring instead to adopt modern educational “standards” which fail to address the



unique character of the human soul. So, in the sense that Pope Pius XI said it, Christian education means *traditional* Catholic education.

As I discussed in my previous letter on education last September, it is this tragic situation which compelled the U.S. District of the Society of Saint Pius X to establish 27 primary and secondary schools in an effort to carry on the traditional educational mission of the Catholic Church. Sadly, it is no longer the case that missionary work is directed exclusively to lands where the Gospel has never been proclaimed. In this time of profound crisis, where the Faith is in decline in the West, even the United States is now missionary territory.

In order to grow and maintain this aspect of the Society's apostolate, we need educators who are vested with a love for Tradition and who possess the intellectual, moral, and spiritual gifts required to properly shape the hearts and minds of our Catholic children. While many of the Society's priests serve as teachers in our schools, their primary work is at the altar, offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and in the confessional, dispensing God's mercy. They cannot carry out the work of Christian education alone.

It should come as no surprise that finding teachers imbued with these particular gifts is no easy task; retaining them is even harder. Because the Society's schools operate independently from the strings attached to public funding and offer reduced tuition rates which allow large families access to a traditional Catholic education, they cannot rely on tuition revenue alone; the charity of the faithful is indispensable for meeting their costs, including teacher salaries. Our educators serve a diverse array of communities, urban and rural; large and small — each presenting unique economic, social, and cultural challenges. In order to maintain true Catholic standards and ensure that our students receive a comparable education regardless of their geographic locale, we must look beyond what particular schools can afford when calibrating compensation to the skills and educational backgrounds of our teachers.

Not long ago I was talking with one of our dedicated educators, a married father of six in his mid-30s who teaches at a Society school located in an urban environment which has suffered through decades of economic decline. After graduating from St. Mary's College in Kansas, he embarked on what has become a 12-year teaching career for the Society, instructing his students in European History, American History,

and Latin. His commitment to the work of Christian education, however, has come at great personal sacrifice.

For instance, because of his school's modest financial means, it has been impossible to provide him the salary necessary to support a family of eight. Over the years, he has had to seek out public assistance, including food stamps and Medicaid, in order to care for his wife and children. While he is grateful for these safety nets, being forced to rely upon them is no doubt damaging to any family man's pride. Also, given political uncertainties and shifting standards of eligibility for such programs, there is no guarantee that they will be available to him in the future.

Understandably, this Catholic father and outstanding teacher lives under a constant cloud of uncertainty. As he intimated to me, he often finds himself lying awake at night wondering how he will make ends meet. Due to his limited financial means, his home is located in an impoverished area of the city—one blighted by abandoned buildings, closed churches, and a high rate of crime—leaving him worried what the future will hold. As much as he would like to relocate his family to an area where his children can play outdoors safely and have a yard at their home, it is extremely difficult to do so on his current salary.

Upon hearing his story, I asked this man what inspires him to return to the classroom—to his missionary work—year after year despite the hardships he faces. After pausing to reflect, he replied simply, "Because I believe in the traditional mission of Catholic education." From there, he expressed his deep love for his students, the nobility of the teaching profession, and the honor of working in the sort of authentic Catholic environment that the Society provides in its schools. Though I could sense his anxiety throughout our discussion of his family's hardships, I knew by his words that this was a truly Catholic man with a deep love for God and family, the very sort any parent can feel confident entrusting the education of their children to.

This man, my friend, is not alone. While not all our schools struggle to the same extent to pay their teachers, too many of our educators face similar predicaments and must make great sacrifices to perform their missionary work. As I listen to their stories and convey the Society's gratitude for their service, I am left with the conviction that we can do better by them. For whether or not you have school-aged children or have access to a Society school, all of us



know the immeasurable value of a Christian education in forming the Catholic soul. The students of the Society's schools are our future priests, religious, and professionals. Whether they work with their hands or their minds, the students shaped by our teachers will be the backbone of traditional Catholicism for decades to come. God willing, they will be the ones to carry forth the motto of our patron, Pope St. Pius X: "To restore all things in Christ."

In this time after the Easter season and the glorious feast of the Ascension, where Our Lord commanded His Church to go forth and save the souls of the human race, I ask you to prayerfully consider aiding the educational apostolate of the Society of Saint Pius X. By giving to the mission of Christian education, you will not only lend much-needed assistance to our current staff of teachers, such as the man I told you about ear-

lier, but also help ensure that the Society can expand its educational work by hiring new talent.

Please make a gift today — \$50, \$75, \$150 — whatever you can do to help. No amount is insignificant. If everyone who receives this letter sends a gift, even \$20, we can better compensate our teachers and secure a brighter future for the education of our children throughout the U.S. District.



Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Jürgen Wegner
United States District Superior



Donate now to (re)build the Church for a promising future.