

## 2014 CIOFS Program for Ongoing Formation

### Theme IV: Saint Louis and Education



*“Before going to bed, he would have all his children come before him and reminded them of the actions of good kings and good emperors. And he told them to take example from such people. He would also tell them of the actions of nasty princes who, because of their luxurious tastes, abductions and avarice, had lost their kingdoms” (According to Jean de Joinville, Life of Saint Louis).*

#### **HISTORICAL ENLIGHTENMENT: SAINT LOUIS OR THE CONCERN FOR AN INTEGRAL EDUCATION**

In the thirteenth century, there was no compartmentalization among the various sciences, and theologians were also mathematicians, physicians and philosophers.

Sometime before his death, Saint Louis wrote a letter to his eldest son Philip (refer to the end of this file). He considers education from a point of view both human – he wants to make a man of Philip – and political – he equally wants to make a king of him.

To form a man, for Saint Louis, is to form a Christian. To teach the love of God and Christ is, in his eyes, the first principle of education; and the ultimate goal for education is to allow a person to accomplish his vocation, to draw the person towards the Christian ideal. As for the royal function, it must imperatively be exercised with justice, and aim toward establishing peace.

#### **PASTORAL ENLIGHTENMENT: TO EDUCATE IS TO MAKE ANOTHER GROW**

At 800 years of distance, the educational model is different. However there is in the life of Louis IX a constant that remains fully current: Saint Louis is a man who always had to choose life, regardless of the suffering (the death of many of his children) and the difficulties encountered. It must be the same for us. In spite of its fragilities, its risks, its uncertainties, life is good and the Lord sends us this call: “Choose life” (Dt 30, 19; cf. GC 25)

Our life is given to us by God: of all eternity, we are called by vocation to be children of God. When we look at it in this perspective, education can only be an integral education, supported by moral as well as spiritual values.

To accompany the spiritual development of children, it is good to attach ourselves to what Christ says and to put ourselves in His school. As He took the time to journey with disciples of Emmaus and to enter with them in the Word, we must also offer our children a way, a way to



initiation, that allows Jesus' words and actions to find an echo in their lives and opens them to prayer in the Church... in not forgetting that the first teacher, is the Holy Spirit. We are only their elders in faith. (GC 25)



### **FROM SAINT LOUIS TO TODAY...**

*A time to share: here a few questions, to help us exchange our thoughts or impressions.*

#### **To be of the world**

Saint Louis wanted to offer his children “an integral education, “both human and Christian. What about us? Are we, outside of our family life, in our professional realm or in our various commitments, inhabited with the desire to help one another to grow humanly and spiritually? How can we contribute to this growth?

#### **Transmission**

In his testament letter, Saint Louis defines the key values that he hopes to transmit to his children. And what values do we place as our priorities?

How can we reconcile the freedom of each child who is entrusted to us and our ambition for him or her?

We are sometimes saddened to notice that those we have accompanied in their growth have not always continued to walk in faith. How can we continue nevertheless our mission as spiritual awakeners?

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#### **Spiritual Life**

In the education that we give, is there a place for a life of prayer? Adults, do we pray with our children?

Is the education that we give passed on only by word or also by example? Is there consistency between the two?

How can we imitate the pedagogy that Jesus displays with the pilgrims from Emmaus (this story is given further on)?



Proposal to give a personal follow up to the time of sharing:

Try to write a letter that tells your children what you fundamentally believe; what you believe is good and indispensable for their human and Christian blossoming, so that beyond all the difficulties that they will encounter in life, their lives will be successful...

## LIVING THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

### Universal Right to Education



“All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education that is in keeping with their ultimate goal, their ability, their sex, and the culture and tradition of their country, and also in harmony with their fraternal association with other peoples in the fostering of true unity and peace on earth. For a true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and of the good of societies of which, as

man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share.

Therefore, children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments to that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy. Let them be given also, as they advance in years, a positive and prudent sexual education. Moreover, they should be so trained to take their part in social life that properly instructed in the necessary and opportune skills they can become actively involved in various community organizations, open to discourse with others and willing to do their best to promote the common good.

This sacred synod likewise declares that children and young people have a right to be motivated to appraise moral values with a right conscience, to embrace them with a personal adherence, together with a deeper knowledge and love of God. Consequently, it earnestly entreats all those who hold a position of public authority or who are in charge of education to see to it that youth is never deprived of this sacred right. It further exhorts the sons of the Church to give their attention with generosity to the entire field of education, having especially in mind the need of extending very soon the benefits of a suitable education and training to everyone in all parts of the world”. (*Declaration on Christian Education, “Gravissimum Educationis”, § 1*)

## LIVING THE GOSPEL (Lk 24: 13-35)

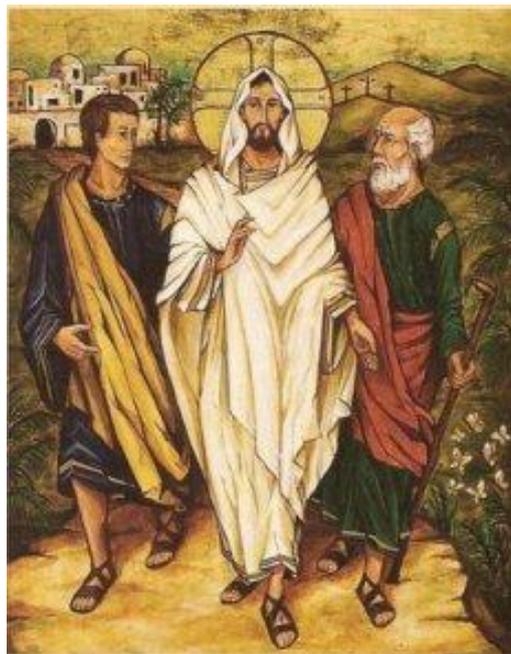
### The Companions of Emmaus

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And he said to them, “What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleophas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened.

Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.” And he said to them. “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.



So they drew near to the village to which they were going, He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight.

They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the Eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said. “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

#### FROM A SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT TO HIS SON BY ST. LOUIS



*A just king rules the earth*

My dearest son, my first instruction is that you should love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your strength. Without this there is no salvation. Keep yourself, my son, from everything that you know displeases God, that is to say, from every mortal sin. You should permit yourself to be tormented by every kind of martyrdom before you would allow yourself to commit a mortal sin.

If the Lord has permitted you to have some trial, bear it willingly and with gratitude, considering that it has happened for your good and that perhaps you well deserved it. If the Lord bestows upon you any kind of prosperity, thank him humbly and see that you become no worse for it, either through vain pride or anything else, because you ought not to oppose God or offend him in the matter of his gifts.

Listen to the divine office with pleasure and devotion. As long as you are in church, be careful not to let your eyes wander and not to speak empty words, but pray to the Lord devoutly, either aloud or with the interior prayer of the heart.

Be kindhearted to the poor, the unfortunate and the afflicted. Give them as much help and consolation as you can. Thank God for all the benefits he has bestowed upon you, that you may be worthy to receive greater. Be just to your subjects, swaying neither to right nor left, but holding the line of justice. Always side with the poor rather than with the rich, until you are certain of the truth. See that all your subjects live in justice and peace, but especially those who have ecclesiastical rank and who belong to religious orders.

Be devout and obedient to our mother the Church of Rome and the Supreme Pontiff as your spiritual father. Work to remove all sin from your land, particularly blasphemies and heresies.

In conclusion, dearest son, I give you every blessing that a loving father can give a son. May the three Persons of the Holy Trinity and all the saints protect you from every evil. And may the Lord give you the grace to do his will so that he may be served and honored through you, that in the next life we may together come to see him, love him and praise him unceasingly. Amen. (*Acta Sanctorum Augusti* 5 [1868], 546)

