

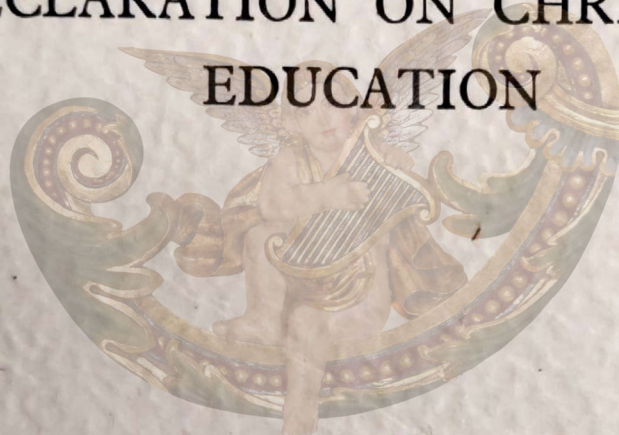


CHRISTIAN
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SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

THE CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

DECLARATION ON CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION



CHRISTIAN
MUSICOLOGICAL
SOCIETY OF INDIA

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The Church and Christian Education

THE Christian education of the young has always been one of the Church's important and cherished tasks. It suffices to recall the encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri* of Pius XI (December 31, 1929) and the many pronouncements of Pius XII on problems of education. Little wonder the Second Vatican Council, intent on the renewal of the Church's life and apostolate, reconsidered the question of Catholic schools and Catholic education in the context of the modern world.

Among the schemas drafted by the preparatory commission for studies and universities, one dealt with Christian education and the Church's right and duty in this regard (cf. C.M. 1962, 292). In the interval between the first and second sessions, this was revised, as one of the 17 schemas to which the original 70 had been reduced, and made more conformed to the purposes and spirit of the Council (cf. C.M. 1963, 310). It did not come up for discussion at the second session, and became one of the 'small schemas' reduced to some propositions, first seventeen and then eleven (C.M. 1964, 271). Its title was changed from 'On Catholic schools' to 'On Christian education' (C.M. 1965, 49), because many children are not educated in Catholic schools, and the school is not the only means of education (cf. *Doc. cath.* 1964, 23). These propositions were debated at the third session, on November 17 to 19, 1964, and accepted as a basic text to be developed and completed on the basis of the amendments, by 1,457 votes against 19 (2 votes null). The modi totalled 671 (cf. *Doc. cath.* 1965, 242). The revised text was submitted to the vote of the Council at the fourth session on October 13, 14, 1965. The final vote was an approval by 1,912 against 183. In the public session before the promulgation the Declaration was approved by 2,290 votes against 35.

The conciliar text places at the basis of its directives the affirmation of man's natural right to an adapted and adequate education. It treats not only of schools but of education in general, and not only of Catholic schools but of the moral and religious education in all schools. Nor does it only deal with Catholic universities but also advocates Catholic centres at non-Catholic universities. It is well aware of the religious pluralism existing in most countries today. Faculties of sacred sciences are invited to seek dialogue with other Christians and non-Christians, and coordination and collaboration with other Catholic faculties and other universities.

The Declaration, in the spirit of the Council and of the open Church, is positive and pastoral in outlook, rather than restrictive or on the defensive.



Declaration on Christian Education

A^N unofficial translation of the Declaration *Gravissimum educationis* momentum of the Second Vatican Council, which was promulgated in the public session of October 28, 1965, after having been approved by 2,235 votes against 35.

Introduction

The sacred Ecumenical Council has considered with due attention the extreme importance of education in man's life and its ever growing influence on the social progress of this our age.¹ The education of youth, as also some sort of continual instruction of adults have become both easier and more urgent in the conditions of our time. Men today are more fully aware of their own dignity and duty; they wish to take an ever more active part in social and especially in economic and political life.² The wonderful development of technology and of scientific research and the new means of social communication allow men to enjoy more leisure time; men now are offered the chance for easier access to their spiritual and cultural inheritance and for mutual fulfilment by closer ties between groups and even between peoples.

As a consequence, we see everywhere efforts being made to promote more and more the task of education. Declarations and public documents state the basic rights of men, particularly of children and parents, with regard to education.³ As the numbers of pupils grow rapidly, schools are being multiplied and enlarged, and new educational institutions erected. New experiments help to improve the methods of education and instruction. Great efforts are being made to provide education for all, though in fact large numbers of children and young people are still deprived

1. Among the many documents showing the importance of education, cf. BENEDICT XV, apost. letter *Communes litteras*, April 10, 1919 (*AAS* 1919, 172); PIUS XI, encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*, Dec. 31, 1929 (*AAS* 1930, 49-86); PIUS XII, alloc. to the young of the I.C.A., April 20, 1951 (*Discorsi e Radiomessagi* 8, 53-57); alloc. to French parents, Sept. 18, 1951 (*Discorsi . . .* 13, 241-45); JOHN XXIII, message for the 30th anniversary of *Divini Illius Magistri*, Dec. 30, 1959 (*AAS* 1960, 57-59); PAUL VI, alloc. to members of the FIDAE (federation of institutes dependent on ecclesiastical authority) Dec. 30, 1963 (*Encicliche e Discorsi di S.S. Paolo VI*, Rome 1964, 601-3).— See also "Acta et Documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II apparando", series 1, *Antepreparatoria*, vol. 3, 363f, 370f, 373f.,

2. Cf. JOHN XXIII, enc. *Mater et Magistra*, May 15, 1961 (*AAS* 1961, 413, 415-17); enc. *Pacem in terris*, April 11, 1963 (*AAS* 1963, 278f).

3. Universal declaration of the rights of man approved by the general Assembly of the United Nations, Dec. 10, 1948, and Declaration of the rights of the child, Nov. 20, 1959. Additional formulary to the convention for safeguarding the rights of man and the basic freedoms, Paris, March 20, 1952. On this universal declaration of the rights of man, cf. JOHN XXIII, enc. *Pacem in terris* (*AAS* 1963, 295f).



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