

# An Act of Hope

## An Anthropological and Pedagogical Enquiry

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### Abstract

Welcoming the challenge thrown open by late Pope Francis, through the Global Compact on Education, this paper discusses that education can and must generate hope. Efforts are made to rethink the meaning and purpose of education in the light of hope in order to build a future based on solidarity, fraternity and commitment to the common good. Education an Act of Hope is considered from an Anthropological and Pedagogical Perspective with an Interdisciplinary Approach. The child is at the heart of education. The topic is explored combining anthropology and pedagogy with specific reference to Liminality – Victor Turner and to Preventive System, the Educational Pedagogy of Don Bosco. "Education is a matter of the heart," opines Don Bosco. It highlights the importance of emotional connection and empathy in education. He believed that teaching should be approached with love and understanding, fostering a positive and supportive environment where students feel valued and respected. A ray of hope was always visible in Don Bosco. Focus on "Hope" is a valuable and timely one. It is explored within an educational context, looking at how education can foster hope in individuals and communities. Hope is a community virtue, one that is nurtured through mutual example and through the strength of fraternal communion within the educating community.

**Keywords:** liminality, education, hope, preventive system of education, educating community. Solidarity, fraternity, common good.

### Résumé

Saluant le défi lancé par le défunt pape François à travers le Pacte mondial pour l'éducation, cet article soutient que l'éducation peut et doit être source d'espoir. Des efforts sont déployés pour repenser le sens et l'objectif de l'éducation *à la lumière de l'espoir* afin de construire un avenir fondé sur la solidarité, la fraternité et l'engagement envers le bien commun. L'éducation *comme acte d'espoir* est envisagée **d'un point de vue anthropologique et pédagogique avec une approche interdisciplinaire**. L'enfant est au cœur de l'éducation. Le sujet est exploré en combinant l'anthropologie et la pédagogie, avec une référence spécifique à la liminalité (Victor Turner) et au « système préventif », la pédagogie éducative de Don Bosco. « L'éducation est une question de cœur », estime Don Bosco. Il souligne l'importance du lien émotionnel et de l'empathie dans l'éducation. Il pensait que l'enseignement devait être abordé avec amour et compréhension, en favorisant un environnement positif et encourageant où les élèves se sentent valorisés et respectés. Une lueur d'espoir était toujours visible chez Don Bosco. L'accent mis sur « l'espoir » est précieux et opportun. Il est exploré dans un contexte éducatif, en examinant comment l'éducation peut favoriser l'espoir chez les individus et les communautés. L'espoir est une vertu

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communautaire, qui se nourrit de l'exemple mutuel et de la force de la communion fraternelle au sein de la communauté éducative.

**Mots clés :** liminalité, éducation, espoir, système éducatif préventif, communauté éducative. Solidarité, fraternité, bien commun.

### Resumen

Acogiendo el reto lanzado por el difunto Papa Francisco a través del Pacto Mundial sobre la Educación, este artículo analiza que la educación puede y debe generar esperanza. Se hace un esfuerzo por repensar el significado y el propósito de la educación a la luz de la esperanza con el fin de construir un futuro basado en la solidaridad, la fraternidad y el compromiso con el bien común. La educación como acto de esperanza se considera desde una perspectiva antropológica y pedagógica con un enfoque interdisciplinario. El niño es el centro de la educación. El tema se explora combinando la antropología y la pedagogía con referencia específica a la liminalidad (Victor Turner) y al «sistema preventivo», la pedagogía educativa de Don Bosco. «La educación es una cuestión del corazón», opina Don Bosco. Se destaca la importancia de la conexión emocional y la empatía en la educación. Él creía que la enseñanza debía abordarse con amor y comprensión, fomentando un entorno positivo y de apoyo en el que los alumnos se sintieran valorados y respetados. Don Bosco siempre mostraba un rayo de esperanza. Centrarse en la «esperanza» es algo valioso y oportuno. Se explora en un contexto educativo, analizando cómo la educación puede fomentar la esperanza en las personas y las comunidades. La esperanza es una virtud comunitaria, que se nutre del ejemplo mutuo y de la fuerza de la comunión fraterna dentro de la comunidad educativa.

**Palabras clave:** liminalidad, educación, esperanza, sistema preventivo de educación, comunidad educativa. Solidaridad, fraternidad, bien común.

## Humanity today is on the margin

In an ever-pluralistic world, liminality and marginality are guiding principles for the Church's pastoral praxis. There are close knit connections between questions of education, inter-religious dialogue, experience of migrants and hope. Humanity today is on the margin, education opens wide a possibility to embrace the margin and offers tools to bridge it. In this process hope has a key role to play to help individuals to shape their being and operating. It is hoped that this article could illuminate the future work of the Church in the field of education, migration, globalization and religious pluralism.

"Religions have much to gain from conversation with each other" opines Chester Gillis. This is true mainly when we are discussing hope, justice, service, and relationships in the family, belongingness to a community, value of life, sense of the sacred, contemplation, silence and bond with nature. This article breaks new ground in providing an innovative context for a pedagogy of education based on hope and for the formation of educators.

"The Christians, in fact possesses an experience of life, which recognizes as normative for every research: the story of Jesus of Nazareth, narrated by the faith of his disciples, in the Church. For this, in every research on the quality of life, we let ourselves be inspired by this project."<sup>2</sup>

The Church has a tradition of being in the margins. The New Testament is rich in marginality. Jesus is a marginal figure and precisely so capable of embracing the whole human

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<sup>2</sup> Riccardo TONELLI, *Qualità della vita*, in <http://www.cnos.org/cspg/npg2003/03-04-70.html>, PP. 1-11, P.4.

family. A return to Apostle Paul is providential especially today when there is an increase of areopagi<sup>3</sup> (RM No. 40; TMA No. 57). Hence the meeting with Paul the narrator: limen, betwixt and between is not by chance. He and his communities are in the margin that facilitates them to wrestle with the drama of shaping their lives. The Gospel of Christ and the cultural context of the communities of Thessalonica, Corinth etc. are in dialogue. Paul becomes almost a travelling companion suggesting, inspiring and challenging. He lived in the liminal space offering courage and indicating the source of hope.

Margin is consciously assumed as a creative core and education is considered as the linking bridge. The connecting skein between all these topics is provided by the concepts of ministry and education. The dialogue with two members from Hope and Life Association opened up a new horizon for further study and reflection. The widows are empowered to become ambassadors of hope.

Hope: Liminal space for education is elaborated in this article through a believer's reading of experience in the Catholic Educational perspective. "Liminality is the mother of invention."<sup>4</sup> The significance that Turner offers to experience basing on the *Erleben* of Dilthey, opens the door to revisit certain faith and hope experiences of people to identify essential traits that are inevitable to build up liminality in the topic in consideration. This in no way wants to close the door to the surprises of the Spirit, undeniably the thrust is towards total openness so as to understand even the minute details of the "touches of the Spirit"<sup>5</sup> and to make them part of one's contemplation and educational elaboration.

## **Education the meeting ground**

Education can become the meeting – ground of complementary methods-historical, sociological, phenomenological, philosophical, psychological, and dialogical. Education has to enter into a dynamic dialogue with other related subjects too. In this way, it can enrich its reflections. Only as methods and approaches meet, we can hope to understand and appreciate education in all its complexity.

Educators ought to remain attentive to the latest developments in the social and behavioral sciences. They have to look for the sources of social creativeness. They can't miss out on the 'I – Thou' relationship existing paradigmatically between God and the human being. The sacredness of daily life renders the above-mentioned relationship intelligible. When educators are able to bring into their reflection an interdisciplinary approach and explore experience in the light of the story of Jesus of Nazareth they can certainly look for quality of life and quality in educational reflection with specific reference to hope.

## **An innovative global culture of education**

Late Pope Francis offered a hope-filled Vatican initiative: Global Compact on Education (GCE). It called for a universal educational transformation engrained in fraternity, justice, and care for the planet. The goal is clear and precise: "To foster a new global culture of education and fraternity through a collective commitment to educating mature individuals capable of overcoming division and caring for the planet." The Key Principle appears to be specific, and

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<sup>3</sup> John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (TMA) 10 November 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Victor TURNER, *Symbols and Social Experience in Religious Ritual* in *Studio Missionaria* 23 (1974) PP. 1-21, P. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Jacques DUPUIS, *The Church, The Reign of God, and the 'Others'* in *FABC Papers* 67, 1993, PP.1-30, P. 22.

practical: “Education is an act of hope, promoting universal solidarity and a more welcoming society by transforming individuals and communities.” With time bound objectives and with focus on individuals and communities, educators can train young people to promote universal solidarity and a more welcoming society.<sup>6</sup>

An African proverb says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Education brings people along as it strives to achieve its goals. It is necessary to clarify **what is Hope, what is Liminality and what is at the core of Don Bosco's Educational Pedagogy.**

## 1. Clarification of Terms

### Hope

What is hope? It is something that is not available in the supermarkets or renowned shopping centres. It is that spark deep within us that keeps us alive. Every human being is called to hope. Living in hope is a must for education. In the spirit of hoping for something we live our lives. Hope from a human perspective is an ingredient of love. St. Paul's eloquent hymn to the community of Corinth makes it evident that: love “hopes all things” (1 Cor 13:7). Late Pope Benedict's words throw better light: “Redemption is offered to us in the sense that we have been given hope, trustworthy hope, by virtue of which we can face our present: the present, even if it is arduous, can be lived and accepted if it leads towards a goal, if we can be sure of this goal, and if this goal is great enough to justify the effort of the journey” (Benedict XVI, *SPE SALVI No. 1*). The foundation for Christian hope is deep trust in God, the God of Jesus Christ who never deserts his people and is always present and active. This hope has characteristics that are typical: it is lasting, it goes beyond the here and now, and it is based not on human promises but on God's promise. The hope that moves us and makes every tiny human hope fruitful is intrinsically linked with the profound values of truth, goodness, justice, solidarity, peace, love etc. Every human being is passionately in search of the above mentioned values.

Another thought-provoking question is: who is the one who moves men and women to hold firm in spite of all disappointments? It is God who loved us unconditionally and continues to do so “to the end,” until all “is accomplished” (Jn 13:1 and 19:30). The lives of those who have been moved by love manifest that it is love that helps them to understand the true meaning of life and hope. It is trust in God and in his loving promises that makes us live in the certainty that no matter what today's challenges are, the future is fully guaranteed. Hence living in hope means walking with God or having God with us.

Educational processes and educators help to trace out meaningful proposals that help youngsters to embrace the present and all it holds with that living hope, precisely because this kind of knowledge of the future nurtured though lived faith transforms the way we live. Nothing is impossible with God. His love embraces everything; the deserts of life, the broken relationships, and the challenging demands of life. The hope that moves us prompts us to hold firm to the lively gift of our faith<sup>7</sup>. Hope and love spurs us on to open wide our hearts to God and to trust him and to trust each other.

Where do we find the purpose and meaning of our lives? In the encounter with Christ and in the God of Jesus Christ. A life sustained by love, faith, hope and meeting with Christ helps us

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.google.com/search?q=Catholic+education+players+and+the+Global+Education+Pact&rlz=>.

<sup>7</sup> Teresa Joseph, *The gift of a lively faith, Year of Faith Special*, in *The New Leader*, January 16-31, 2013, P.29.

to make discerned choices for life. When faith is transformed into hope, it often makes people restless, impatient as affirmed by J. Moltmann.

Ever since Professor Dr. Michael Fuss introduced me to Victor Turner, I realized that 'Liminality' can still be applied to many more of our studies and reflections.<sup>8</sup> This article is another attempt to look at Hope: Liminal Context for Education.

### **Liminality**

Anthropologist Victor Turner<sup>9</sup> developed the notion of liminality. The technical word that is used to indicate threshold is "liminality." The word limen is the Latin word for "threshold." Literally, a threshold is a doorway that divides two spaces; symbolically, a threshold divides time into "before" and "after." In Turner's own words: "*The limen, or threshold, a term I borrowed from Van Gennep's<sup>10</sup> second of three stages in rites of passage, is a no-man's land betwixt and between the structural past and the structural future as anticipated by the society's normative control of biological development.*"<sup>11</sup> Turner not only often quoted Arnold van Gennep for his epoch –making book, *Les Rites de Passage* but also acknowledged that "He should be honoured for leaving anthropology a clue to a deeper understanding of the human condition".<sup>12</sup> What is this clue? "The clue is 'liminality' which has many implications when it is directly related to crucial phases of human experience."<sup>13</sup>

Anthropologist, Arnold Van Gennep, in his study of traditional cultures around the world is the person who first coined the term, "rites of passage." Through his study he noticed that there is a clear pattern by which traditional societies in our world have always marked the significant and major milestones of human life. In his study of and collecting of "rites of passage" dealing with birth and death, puberty and marriage, he saw that all these rituals had in common a pattern of three distinct phases. Separation, margin or (limen) and aggregation.<sup>14</sup>

The First phase is characterised by a leaving and letting go of what is past;

The Second phase is a liminal time, a time suspended between past and future;

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<sup>8</sup> Teresa Joseph fma, *Family of Truth: Liminal Context for Interreligious Dialogue: an Anthropological and Pedagogical Enquiry*, ISPCK Delhi, 2009; *A Liminal Pedagogy: To Understand the Art of Living and Dying in an Interreligious Perspective*, <https://standrewscollege.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Cardinal-Paul-Poupard-2014-A-liminal-pedagogy.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Victor TURNER was born in Scotland in 1920 and died in Charlottesville, Virginia on December 18, 1983. He was William R. Kenan, Jr., professor of Anthropology and Religion at the University of Virginia. He did fieldwork in Zambia, Uganda, Mexico, Ireland, Italy, France, Japan, Brazil, and Israel and was the author of many books, including the well-known *Ritual Process*.

<sup>10</sup> Arnold VAN GENNEP, French folklorist and ethnographer, Turner affirms that "by identifying liminality Van Gennep discovered a major innovative, transformative dimension of the social. He paved the way for future studies of all processes of spatiotemporal social or individual change [...] Van Gennep made his discovery in relatively conservative societies, but its implications are truly revolutionary." (Victor TURNER, Edith TURNER, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture, Anthropological perspectives*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1978, P. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Victor W. TURNER and Edward M. BRUNER, *The Anthropology of Experience*, University of Illinois Press, USA, 1986, P. 42.

<sup>12</sup> Victor TURNER, 'Religion in Current Cultural Anthropology. What is Religion? An Enquiry for Christian Theology' in *Concilium* 136 (1980), P. 68-71, P. 69.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., P. 69.

<sup>14</sup> For more details on what really takes place during these distinct phases see Victor TURNER, *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage* in Victor Turner *Forest of Symbols, Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1970, P. 94.

The Third phase is a new beginning: life moves on but definitely according to new terms and with new rules.

Ethan Frome,<sup>15</sup> *The Incursive Nomadism of Victor W. Turner: Reinterpretations of Ritual, Drama and Performance*,<sup>16</sup> writes:

“1963 was the year when Victor Turner accepted an offer in the United States but was held up with visa trouble on the English Channel. It was a state of suspense and a time of flux-a period when Turner recognized the importance of liminality, transition, and marginality in the ritual process. ‘Betwixt and Between’, his seminal essay took shape during that time which marks his move to the United States and contributes to blurring the rigid boundaries between British and American Anthropology. Crossing the Atlantic Ocean was his first nomadic move reiterated by several later openings and shifts, returns and reinterpretations.”<sup>17</sup>

Turner focused on liminality or the character of being or dwelling for extended periods of time in a spatial, social and spiritual threshold, as pilgrims often do. Liminality is source of potentiality and possibilities. He sustains that the liminal phase that the ritual process contains within it offers a stage for the unique structure of experience characterized by a rich variety of experiences within the unique experience. The co-existence of so many elements, though different and distinct in their togetherness gives birth to the liminal phase which becomes the stage for unique structures of experience.

“All these ‘third-phase’ or ‘first-phase’ (in the life –crisis instance) ritual processes contain within themselves a liminal phase, which provides a stage (and I use this term advisedly) for unique structures of experience (Dilthey’s *Erlebnis*) in milieus detached from mundane life and characterized by the presence of ambiguous ideas, monstrous images, sacred symbols, ordeals, humiliations, esoteric and paradoxical instructions, the emergence of symbolic types represented by maskers and clowns, gender reversals, anonymity, and many other phenomena and processes which I have elsewhere described as ‘liminal’.”<sup>18</sup>

In fact, Turner describes liminal time as fruitful chaos, a storehouse of possibilities, a striving after new forms and structures. He calls it a gestation process. The Oxford dictionary gives “carrying in womb between conception and birth” as the meaning for gestation. “A liminal time is a fluid time, not unlike the point of birthing when the woman feels contractions and experiences her pelvic bones softening and shifting so that the baby can be born.”<sup>19</sup> In this sense liminality is that rich and fertile period in which the process of growth and birth is shaped for a wealth of modes appropriate to post liminal existence as Turner affirms.

“A limen is, of course, literally a ‘threshold’. A pilgrimage centre, from the standpoint of the believing actor, also represents a threshold, a place and moment ‘in and out of time’, and such our actor - as the evidence of many pilgrims of many religions attests - hopes to have their direct experience of the sacred, invisible or supernatural order, either in the material aspect of

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<sup>15</sup> Ethan FROME sustains that Turner often revisited and revised some of the same concepts in various texts throughout his career. Situating the concepts of social drama, ritual and cultural performance in the context of changing biographical and anthropological contexts, he concludes that “biography helped me glance beyond the texts and reveal the personal, political, institutional, and theoretical circumstances that informed Turner’s nomadic moves in life and writing”, in [http://classes.yale.edu/anth500a/projects/project\\_sites/00\\_Kalocsai/tessay.htm](http://classes.yale.edu/anth500a/projects/project_sites/00_Kalocsai/tessay.htm), P.12.

<sup>16</sup> Ethan FROME, *The Incursive Nomadism of Victor W. Turner*

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, P. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Victor W. TURNER and Edward M. BRUNER, *The Anthropology of Experience*, P. 42.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel D. CHAMBERS, *Deep Waters* in <http://www.fccb.org/sermons/s98/sr980208.html>

miraculous healing or in the immaterial aspect of inward transformation of spirit or personality."<sup>20</sup>

Turner's creative handling of the concept of liminality has made it possible to understand this phenomena reaching far beyond the activities of those undergoing rites of passage. This is the point that leads to our focus on liminality in this article. Liminality offered Turner the "connecting skein" to his study of world religions and many other topics.

### Betwixt and Between: the Liminal Period

Turner fixed his attention on the 'sociocultural properties of the liminal period.' According to him: "We must regard the period of margin or 'liminality' as an interstructural situation"<sup>21</sup> Rites of passage are found in all societies but in Turner's view they tend to reach their maximal expression in small-scale, relatively stable and cyclical societies because in such societies change is tightly linked with biological and meteorological rhythms and recurrences than by technological innovations. No doubt Rites of passage "indicate and constitute transitions between states."<sup>22</sup> Turner affirms that the term "state" can be applied and referred to "any type of stable or recurrent condition that is culturally recognised [...] a state of transition"<sup>23</sup> For him transition is a: "process, a becoming, and in the case of rites de passage even a transformation."<sup>24</sup> He concentrated on rites of passage that are inclined to have well-developed liminal periods: "On the whole, initiation rites, whether into social maturity or into cult membership, best exemplify transition, since they have well marked and protracted marginal or liminal phases".<sup>25</sup> Turner focuses attention more on the positive aspects of liminality than on its structural invisibility. He highlights that there exists a certain "set of relations that compose a 'social structure' between neophytes and their instructors and in connecting neophytes with one another."<sup>26</sup> Complete obedience is the distinguishing mark in the relationship of neophytes to their elders for elders are in charge of the common good and represent the whole community. What about relationship of neophyte to neophyte?

"If complete obedience characterises the relationship of neophyte to elder, complete equality usually characterises the relationship of neophyte to neophyte, where the rites are collective. [...] the liminal group is a community or community of comrades and not a structure of hierarchically arrayed positions."<sup>27</sup> Turner reads the entire set of relationships and mode of being of the neophytes in the liminal period as something very determining. In fact for him:

**The "limen, or threshold", as a stage of reflection** "The passivity of neophytes to their instructors, their malleability, which is increased by submission to ordeal, their reduction to a uniform condition, are signs of the process whereby they are grounded down to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to cope with their new station in life."<sup>28</sup> To

<sup>20</sup> Victor TURNER, *Drama, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Ithaca, 1974, PP.196-197.

<sup>21</sup> Victor TURNER, *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage* in Victor Turner *Forest of Symbols, Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1970, P. 93.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., P. 93.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., P. 94.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., P. 94. TURNER uses the analogy of water in the process of being heated to boiling point, or of a pupa changing from grub to both to explain transition as a process.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., P. 95.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., P. 99.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., P. 100.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., P. 101.

strengthen his affirmation, he recalls how Dr. Richards, in her superb study of Bemba girls' puberty rites Chisungu, has told us that Bemba speak of "growing a girl" when they mean initiating her.

To explain this concept, Turner refers to other authors. Quoting Jakob Boehme, the German mystic whose obscure writings gave Hegel his celebrated 'triad' liked to say that 'In yea and nay all things consist', and Turner affirms: "Liminality may perhaps be regarded as the nay to all positive structural assertions, but as in some sense the source of them all, and more than that, as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise."<sup>29</sup> To spell out how the "communication of the source" is the heart of the liminal matter, our author makes reference to Jane Harrison who has shown that "in the Greek Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries this communication of the sacred has three main components."<sup>30</sup> Turner is of the opinion that by and large this threefold classification holds good for initiation rites all over the world. The sacred may be communicated as:

*"Exhibitions, what is shown;*

*Actions, what is done;*

*Instructions, what is said."*<sup>31</sup>

Turner takes up three aspects in considering the communication of the sacred. The first concerns their "frequent disproportion, the second their monstrousness, and the third their mystery".<sup>32</sup> After a detailed explanation of each of these elements with particular reference to some of the Ndembu tradition, he makes an affirmation: "Liminality may be partly described as a stage of reflection." Reflection is a vital point in education.

The structural aspect of liminality with the example of neophytes: "In discussing the structural aspect of liminality, I mentioned how neophytes are withdrawn from their structured positions and consequently from the values, norms, sentiments, and techniques associated with those positions. They are also divested of their previous habits of thought, feeling, and action. During the liminal period, neophytes are alternately forced and encouraged to think about their society, their cosmos and the powers that generate and sustain them. Liminality may be partly described as a stage of reflection. In it those ideas, sentiments and facts that had been hitherto for the neophytes bound up in configurations and accepted unthinkingly are, as it were, resolved into their constituents. These constituents are isolated and made into objects of reflection for the neophytes by such process as componental exaggeration and dissociation by varying concomitants."<sup>33</sup>

### **The communitarian dimension of rites and beliefs**

Turner has evidenced the communitarian dimension of rites and beliefs. The rites and beliefs are for him "intrinsically connected with the social process of the entire community" and the "religion therefore is not an abstraction of life, it is the motor of social life"<sup>34</sup> In fact Turner knew how to collocate the social sacredness within the individual experience and in this way

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., P. 97.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., P. 102.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., P. 102.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., P. 103.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., P. 105.

<sup>34</sup> Victor TURNER, *Ritual, Tribal and Catholic*, in *Worship* 50 (1976) P. 508.

has helped to make a bridge between the distance that existed among the study of the religions based on theology and social sciences.<sup>35</sup>

A brief synthesis on liminality and communitas seen through Turner's vision calls us to focus attention on the following: Liminality can be seen as a stage of reflection. The neophytes experience a maturing process "whereby they are ground down to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to cope with their new station in life."<sup>36</sup> Liminality provides certain freedom to "juggle with the factors of existence. As in the works of Rabelais, there is a promiscuous intermingling and juxtaposing of the categories of event, experience, and knowledge with a pedagogic intention."<sup>37</sup>

Communitas tensions toward universalism and openness, it is a spring of pure possibility. "It may be regarded by the guardians of structure as dangerous and may be hedged around with taboos, and associated with ideas of purity and pollution. For it is richly charged with affects, mainly pleasurable. It has something magical about it. Those who experience communitas have a feeling of endless power."<sup>38</sup>

Elders have a significant role to play. Turner's studies prove that elders of the community have complete authority over initiands precisely because they are seen as those "in charge, so to speak, of the common good and represent in their persons the total community".<sup>39</sup> The community has a very specific role in facilitating the communication of values and this is done in multiple ways. "Neophytes in many 'rites de passage' have to submit to an authority that is nothing less than that of the total community. This community is the repository of the whole gamut of the culture's values, norms, attitudes, sentiments and relationships. Its representatives in the specific rites – and these may vary from ritual to ritual-represent the generic authority of tradition."<sup>40</sup>

Turner's predilection for experience is built on the live-through *Erleben* of Dilthey. Attention to the anthropological and existential dimension prompted us to take note of a few experiences. Can Turner's four major anthropological concepts: liminality, communitas, pilgrimage and marginality offer a theoretical basis to identify the liminal space in hope, better still in training students to become hope-filled persons through education? The metaphor of liminality provided an opportunity to revisit education as an experience; an act of hope.

### Don Bosco's Educational Pedagogy

Education is a cultural response. The educational context of Don Bosco, the educator is made up of deep and complex political, social and cultural changes: revolutionary movements, wars

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Lawrence E. SULLIVAN, *Victor Turner*, 1920-1983 in *History of Religions* 24 (1984) 2, PP. 160-163, P.163. "Turner knew when he borrowed the term from Martin Buber that communitas is typified by the kind of I-Thou relationship existing paradigmatically between God and creature. Turner affirmed that it is the sacrality of social life that renders it intelligible. He razed the wall between text based or theologically based religious studies and the social sciences by resituating social sacrality within individual experience. For Turner the religious persons who pass in and out of all 'arenas' and 'theaters' are the strands from which communal life is woven. He took his dictum from William Blake's Jerusalem: 'General Forms have their vitality in particulars and every particular is a man'."

<sup>36</sup> TURNER, *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period*, 101.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., P. 106.

<sup>38</sup> Victor TURNER, Edith TURNER, *Image and Pilgrimage*, Appendix A, P. 251.

<sup>39</sup> TURNER, *The Forest of Symbols*, P. 100.

<sup>40</sup> ID., *The Ritual Process*, PP. 102-103.

and migration of people. The consequences were marked on all aspects<sup>41</sup> of life and at the national and local level - Italy, Turin. His openness to the signs of times gave life to the pedagogy of the Preventive System with reason, religion and loving kindness as its key elements. This opens the door to education and hope with a splendid panorama on hope in action. Can Education to Hope be the right stuff for education today? This is an open ended and unanswered question.

“The preventive system is the peculiar trait of Don Bosco’s brilliance” (*Juvenum Patris* No. 8). For him education was a matter of the heart. Don Bosco obtained this education of heart through loving kindness. One of the most beautiful descriptions on loving kindness is found in the writings of Pietro Stella: for Don Bosco, loving kindness was daughter of what is just and what is superhuman: what is superhuman what is transcendent, of fullness of God that was in him, overflowed. It was love of God that was poured on to others. It carried the seal of a supernatural life that was spilling over. It was fullness of God in don Bosco that was poured on to the outside. It was so full that it used to run over. His own life was not sufficient to absorb the totality of this love. As he was absorbing it, it was communicated, others were made participatory in it.<sup>42</sup>

Education in the Salesian tradition will feel at home in a context of this kind and education to Family of hope can be motivated only in a similar context. The tentative to read the “Family of hope” in the light of the Preventive System can be understood only when the term “preventive” is considered in the horizon of the art of educating in positive (Cf. *Juvenum Patris* No. 8) characteristic of Don Bosco. He was able to take into consideration the various aspects of the person’s life. So much so John Paul II affirmed that “his educational ideal is characterised by moderation and realism.” *Juvenum Patris* Nos. 11 and 12 throw light on the immense capacity of the educative art of Don Bosco to move beyond the European Christian World to the five continents and to non-Christian contexts. In fact St. John Paul II has already highlighted: “Don Bosco was a zealous priest who always referred back to its revealed foundation everything that he received, lived and gave to others. This aspect of religious transcendence, the cornerstone of Don Bosco’s pedagogical method, is not only applicable to every culture but can also be profitably adapted even to non-Christian religions” (*Juvenum Patris* No. 11). The long standing educational experience of the Salesian family in the contexts of other religions bear witness to this fact.

### **In the style of the preventive system – Don Bosco’s way**

Pietro Braido has expressed it clearly: the educative system of Don Bosco is unquestionably based on a ‘preventive mentality’ that is translated into pastoral action, a practical educative experience, constantly integrated by reflection and by true experimentation. Amazingly, the preventive system first existed as a personal way of relating and not as a method of education. It was based on the charism and ability of Don Bosco. It was his way of “being with” the young. The preventive system was an educative instinct of Don Bosco who was consecrated to the good of poor young boys. The beauty and the spirit of the preventive system are seen in the oratory of Valdocco. Only after the first decade, did the oratory become a school, and, then come the need of a regulation to be handed over to his collaborators to guide the students. Regarding the formative journey of Don Bosco. Braido writes:

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Cesare BISSOLI, *Il Papa interpreta il sistema educativo di Don Bosco*, ELLEDICI, Leumann (Torino), 2000, PP. 39-41

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Citato da Lillo MONTANTI, in *Omelie e discorsi. Centenario della morte di Santa Maria D. Mazzarello 1881-1981*, Roma 1983, PP.11-20, P. 16.

“In the vital and reflected pedagogical synthesis of Don Bosco we can easily verify the confluence of dissimilar cultural experiences [...] The nucleus of the educative vocation of Don Bosco was constituted and is realised with the growth and maturing of his catholic and priestly formation. To this basic ‘culture’ will be added and interconnected contacts with figures of ‘catholicity’, saints of charity, theologians, social workers, learning from books and experience, that perfect and enrich the traits of a personality already extraordinarily gifted with affective, intellectual qualities and qualities of will.”<sup>43</sup>

### **Reason, religion and loving-kindness in a balanced measure**

Even though Don Bosco has written very little on the preventive system, from the abundance of material available today in the Salesian Family, we are in a position to reaffirm that at the heart of this style of living there is reason, religion and loving kindness. This style of education, applied to the multicultural and pluri-religious context in the five continents has proved that for the educator it calls for a constant mystical practice. Don Bosco was well aware of this, and said that his educative approach would be easy for the young people but toilsome for the adults responsible. The groups he created were extraordinarily focused on the importance of gentleness, optimism and reasonableness from everyone. Above all he stressed the importance of a friendly rather than a police-like presence.

With his expressions: “Here in your midst I feel completely at home; for me living means being here with you”; “I have dedicated my whole life to you”; “That you are young is enough to make me love you very much” and that most touching one: “I have promised God that I would give myself to my last breath for my poor boys”, Don Bosco made the boys feel that they were loved. He even told his collaborators: “It is not enough to love, but it is necessary to make oneself loved”. *Juvenum Patris* n°8 gives a beautiful synthesis of the educative art of Don Bosco and of the key words reason, religion and loving kindness that sustain the educative spirituality. The actuality<sup>44</sup> of this system of education is highlighted by Francesco Motto.

Don Bosco excelled among Christina educators, he was an educator opened to the signs of times and embraced a variety of activities: director of oratories, prison chaplain, catechist, author and founder of congregations for education, apologist and creator of a network of educational institutes in Italy, Europe and overseas.<sup>45</sup> St. John Paul II, quoting one of the expressions of Don Bosco, highlights the preciousness of the human heart:

“Your Saint used to say that ‘education is a matter of the heart’ and that one must ‘open a way for God into a boy’s heart not only in Church but also in the classroom and workshop.’ It is precisely in the human heart that the Spirit of truth is made present as consoler and transformer. He unceasingly enters the history of the world through the heart of man” (*Juvenum Patris* n°20).

Don Bosco used to remind his collaborators: “There is in every boy, even in the most callous, a chord that will respond to good: the first duty of the educator is to seek that spot, that responsive chord and take advantage of it.” Right from the early years of the Oratory, each year, he managed to place more than hundred boys with good masters from whom they could learn a trade; many returned, transformed, to their families from where they had escaped, quite a few were dedicated to serve honest families, several of them were welcomed by national and

<sup>43</sup> Pietro Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere*, P. 138.

<sup>44</sup> F. MOTTO, *Un sistema educativa sempre attuale*, ELLEDICI, Leumann (Torino), 2000, 1PP. 9-79.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Jacques SCHEPENS, *Human nature in the educational outlook of St. John Bosco*, in *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 15 (1989) 2, PP. 263-287, P. 264.

military sectors, some followed civil occupations, others took up teaching. Some among the group even took up the challenge to serve the Church.<sup>46</sup>

## 2. Hope: Liminal Context for Education

Education is regarded as an important instrument for stimulating the integration of minorities and promoting their social opportunities. We can't any more respond to local needs and specific contexts by readymade imported answers. "Today it is not nearly enough to be a saint, but we must have the saintliness demanded by the present moment, a new saintliness, itself also without precedent" – Simone Weil

The socio-cultural realities challenge people to get to know other peoples and cultures. The urgent need to search for better jobs, the strong desire to come up in life, search for higher and specialized education are all factors that favour inter-cultural exchanges. The growing phenomenon of migration and the rapid growth of globalization indeed hasten the process of such dialogues.

Migration challenges us to pour new wine into new wineskins. This calls for mystics in the supermarkets and city squares. Certainly a goal too high to reach, allowing ourselves to be led by the Spirit of Christ, we listen to voices from the grassroots and step into the dance of life. Migration calls us to set hearts on fire, to be open to learn and above all to pay attention to the cry of the people. By a constant process of transformation, we have to learn the art of making room in our hearts. "*Man no more has a home.*"<sup>47</sup> This affirmation of Buber is becoming a growing reality also in the world of migration. The global nature of migration today is what it gives it a particular importance. Many people choose or are forced to migrate, they are travelling to various countries. Amazing to note how international migrants come from all over the world and travel to all parts of the world.

The central and urgent question for education in the modern world focuses on the Church and her identity in the culture of modernity. Any theological reflection that wants to address the day today situations of human being called to enter in a dialogue of love with God in Jesus has to take seriously to heart the human drama of migration and the thousand and one consequences this ever growing phenomenon has on individuals, families and communities. St. John Paul II had offered the new horizon on which we need to look at the phenomenon of Migration: "Among the great changes taking place in the contemporary world, migration has produced a new phenomenon: non-Christians are becoming very numerous in traditionally Christian countries, creating fresh opportunities for contacts and cultural exchanges, and calling the church to hospitality, dialogue, assistance and, in a word, fraternity"<sup>48</sup>(RM No. 37).

Already various initiatives are at work in this direction. It is joint collaboration and networking that helps to discover new areas of collaborative intervention. In a way, in the midst of challenges, migrants are ambassadors of hope. Migration has transformed small and remote communities into pluralist and intercultural realities. Can we not call it a sign of the Church manifesting her openness to whatever is the work of the Spirit in peoples and nations?

"There is a twofold way these ethnic boundaries function: as a demarcation line between 'us' and 'them' inside and outside the familiar and the different; and also as an

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. Pietro BRAIDO., e al.(a cura), *Don Bosco educatore. Scritti e testimonianze*, Roma, LAS 1997, PP. 149-150.

<sup>47</sup> M. Buber *Eclissi di Dio*, Milano, comunità, 1983, P. 35.

<sup>48</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990).

enclosure in which forms a basis of trust and solidarity, and a forum of communal expression which can transform strangers into members of the group.”<sup>49</sup>

How apt are the words of Confucius: Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace. Education is capable to nurture confidence, confidence breeds hope and hope radiates peace. The report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education presents: Education in a post-COVID world Nine ideas for public action. The main thrust is to build on ‘core principles and known strengths’ as we witness first-time disruption to economies, societies and education systems. The commission highlights that in the renewal and reimagining of education human interaction and wellbeing must be given priority with a commitment to global solidarity that does not accept the various levels of inequality that have been permitted to emerge in the contemporary world.

In the church of Pope Leo the XIV, now is the time for churches and institutions to reconsider their pastoral, ecclesiastical and prophetic role in responding to the challenges of the time. It is the responsibility of educators to stand in solidarity with victims of trafficking, forced migration and of any other kind.

“Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people (but)... a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and to each individual, because we are all really responsible for all” (Pope John Paul II *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, December, 1987, No. 38).

There is an article that highlights the fine work accomplished by women that made a difference during COVID-19 pandemic. It takes into consideration the concept of women, fraternity and social friendship in general and enhances the same with the teaching of late Pope Francis with particular reference to his Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti*. What every reader can look for is to learn the art of dreaming together as one great big human family: sisters and brothers nurturing fraternity and social friendship. The rich treasures of *Fratelli tutti* can become a sustainable project. On fraternity and social friendship all humanity can count on in this heart-rending time in history.<sup>50</sup>

### The ministry of hope

Within the educational institutions, mindful efforts are needed to create the ministry of hope, within the Church and the human community that can respond to the modern situations and individual needs drawing abundantly from the professional competence and personal holiness of the people. Any reflection on education for common good today, in the context of hope needs to be contemplated as part of a new way of being brothers and sisters in humble dialogue and sincere openness: pilgrims on a synodal journey towards hope.

Research that focuses on the experiences of people who spend large amounts of time in cultures other than their own has proved that there is a great amount of similarities in people’s experiences despite the wide range of roles they had and the many different countries in which they lived.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Anastasia Christou, *Greek-American return migration: constructions of identity and reconstruction of place*, in *Studi Emigrazione*, anno XXXIX, Giugno 2002- n° 145, P. 211.

<sup>50</sup> Teresa Joseph, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379890619\\_WOMEN\\_FRATERNITY\\_AND\\_SOCIAL\\_FRIENDSHIP](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379890619_WOMEN_FRATERNITY_AND_SOCIAL_FRIENDSHIP)

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Brislin, R.W., *Cross-cultural encounters: Face-to-face interaction*, Elmsford, NY, Pergamon, 1981.

## In a Church that grows, by attraction

Ours is a Church that grows by attraction as late Pope emeritus Benedict XVI has well expressed: "It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but by attraction" (Benedict XVI). Good deeds motivated by hope have tremendous power to attract. Valid messages of forgiveness uttered even at trying moments like that of the Parents of Sr. Rani Maria and recently by Sr. Gladys Staines strongly attract those who are willing to listen. Hope Good deeds, convincing messages and good example attract others to the Church. Love for the life of each person has to be persistent in the educational set ups. Is it not the right time to introduce modules of Peace<sup>52</sup> and hope in our class rooms?

### Don Bosco a man of hope

St. John Bosco (1815 - 1888), popularly known as Don Bosco affirmed: "Education is a matter of the heart." He was a man of hope who saw in all and especially in every young person tremendous possibility for growth and expansion. In the midst of COVID-19: an infectious disease caused by a virus previously unknown to human beings, The Strenna<sup>53</sup> 2021 of the then Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco: Ángel Fernández Artíme focused on: Moved by Hope See, I am making all things New (Rev 21:5). Speaking of Don Bosco, the Rector Major affirmed: "When we look at the experience of Don Bosco's life, we become aware that hope is a plant with deep roots that began long ago; roots that become stronger through difficult seasons and ways that require much sacrifice. This was the case from John's earliest years at the Becchi, having lost his father, and with Mamma Margaret who had to face up to times of famine and all the problems of life together at home" (Strenna, 2021, Point 4.)

At every turn of his life, right from early childhood, whenever John was able to see a ray of hope, it was immediately snatched away. It is sufficient to think of the death of Fr. Calosso that dashed the hope that there might be a future for him. How can we ever forget how John became a migrant at the age of twelve years due to family circumstances? The tough situations and the fine example of his dear mother helped him to open wide his eyes to a broader horizon and made him adept of looking upwards and ahead. A few decisive moments where John felt the pinch of hope being taken away are: the moment of his choice of vocation and years later when he had to get his mother to the Oratory to be a mother to his boys. How can we erase from our memory that crucial moment: Don Bosco turning his gaze to the Crucifix, to resuscitate the heart of his tired mother regenerating in her that hope that would convince her to remain loyal until her death to the mission among the boys she shared with her son from the beginnings of the Oratory at Valdocco?

Every source of information available on Don Bosco and everything he accomplished unquestionably would testify that his deeply rooted hope accompanied him throughout his life colouring it all with effectiveness and fruitfulness from when he was in Turin until his last breath. Don Bosco nurtured his hope with intense love for Jesus and his unlimited trust in Mary. His undertakings went much beyond in humanly impossible ones. It is more than sufficient to

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. Teresa Joseph fma, Training Young College Students to be Ambassadors of Peace and Harmony, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343136287\\_Training\\_Young\\_College\\_Students\\_to\\_be\\_Ambassadors\\_of\\_Peace\\_and\\_Harmony](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343136287_Training_Young_College_Students_to_be_Ambassadors_of_Peace_and_Harmony)

<sup>53</sup> The Strenna 2021, titled "Moved by hope: 'See, I am making all things new' (Rev 21:5)", is the annual message from the Rector Major of the Salesians, aimed at inspiring the Salesian Family. [https://www.sdb.org/en/Rector\\_Major/Strenna/Strenna\\_2021/Strenna\\_2021\\_\\_commentary](https://www.sdb.org/en/Rector_Major/Strenna/Strenna_2021/Strenna_2021__commentary)

think of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians and the beginning of the missions in South America.

Convinced that there was always a point accessible to good in every heart, in Fr. Cafasso's school Don Bosco learned how to journey together with the most desperate, in the prisons and in the poorest parts of Turin at that time. Don Bosco encountered in the poorest peripheries of Turin arduous sowers of hope: Cafasso, Cottolengo, and Muriel. In the context of Synodality and Pilgrims of Hope that we are familiar with today, we can affirm that Hope is formed and formed together.

### **An outburst of hope at the oratory of Valdocco**

In 1884, the end of July, when Cholera breaks out in Turin, there was a much needed outburst of hope. Hope is a community virtue, one that is nurtured through mutual example and through the beauty and strength of fraternal communion. During the cholera, at the Oratory of Valdocco, everyone manifested readiness to offer their lives to save the lives of others. Tough times like this showcase another feature of hope as Don Bosco and his boys lived it. The trust in the Providence opening paths of hope for very many even when it seemed there were no more ways out.

### **The principle of common good and hope**

Educational institutions certainly can take up the role of an advocate for the marginalised communities to make them hope-filled persons. Here the challenge is to discover new approaches to education. The rich principle of solidarity and openness to the human family should make educators to put on their thinking caps, well aware that reaching out to other today demands that we move deliberately and decisively from mere assistance to allowing persons to stand on their feet. Giving them and their cultures space to speak.

Most educational institutions are centres of integral human formation, with well-equipped set up for professional qualifications. Already in different parts of the world, there are religious communities that set aside personnel and equipment at the service of migrants. The information needs of migrants can be grouped under two broad categories: immediate information needs and information about the receiving country. The communication policy concerning migrant workers highlight: "The participants are convinced that clearly and consciously defined communication policies form an effective method to realize and improve the promotion of the rights of migrant workers."<sup>54</sup> Programs that respond to the needs of the migrants. "Migrant workers should not be seen only as receivers of information or objects of cultural adaptation but also as subjects of communication and cultural creation."<sup>55</sup>

New signs of times, calls for the building up of a new ***Family portrait*** of who we are as persons, believers and travelling companions. A family portrait that is capable of expressing global processes, local identities, and above all that inseparable interconnectedness; all that

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<sup>54</sup> Taisto Hujamen (ed), *The role of information in the realization of the human rights of migrant workers*, (Lausanne, 23-27 October 1988, Switzerland, P. 205.

<sup>55</sup> Taisto Hujamen (ed), *The role of information in the realization of the human rights of migrant workers*, (Lausanne, 23-27 October 1988, Switzerland, P. 183.

humanity<sup>56</sup> holds dear: all that unites, a strong bond of solidarity, compassion and concern for truth.

“The principle of the common good, to which every aspect of social life must be related if it is to attain its fullest meaning, stems from the dignity, unity and equality of all people. According to its primary and broadly accepted sense, the common good indicates “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily” (*Comp*, No. 164).

### **An early Initiation into Hope**

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act but a habit” opines Aristotle. Hope has to become a habit both in the educators and the students; hope and the source of hope. I was amazed to read that “Since 1993, Denmark has required every child aged 6-16 to take a weekly empathy class.” The impact is extraordinary; “in ‘class time’, children spend one protected hour each week focused on feelings, friendships and understanding. They share real life struggles without judgment, offer solutions and support, sometimes bake cakes while talking (empathy+hygge = magic). Studies from Duke and Penn State display that children who show empathy early are more likely to graduate and secure full-time jobs by 25, because while grades open doors, social skill keep them open.”<sup>57</sup>

### **With the glance fixed on Jesus Christ**

Training young students to fix their glance on Jesus Christ: Is it not true that like Apostle Paul, the great daring missionary, we can initiate our students to fix their glance on Jesus Christ and consider everything else as useless? “*Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ*” (Phil 3:8). In daily life, you came across to us as a person well trained in the school of discernment. You were an artist in testing *all things and holding fast to what is true* (Cf. 1Ths 5:19-21).

You are in the process of becoming a man/woman of God. Wrapped in prayer, with eyes filled with hope and enthusiasm in your heart. Viewing hope from an anthropological and educational perspective, we engaged in fresh dialogue, through interviews and other data, we applied the liminality metaphor to education an act of hope with careful attention to those dynamics at work in daily interaction and relationship between believers of various religions. “Liminality is the mother of invention.”<sup>58</sup>

Hope is the liminal context for education and formation of personnel. This proposal which envelops anthropological, pedagogical and theological concepts can become a new paradigm for Education to hope for the “future vision of education will be hope.” It is concern for hope in the spirit of respect for human beings and the spirit at work in openness to respectful dialogue among educators and students that motivates a new way of envisioning education. The guidelines for such a reading is extracted from the Magisterium of the Church, the pedagogy of Don Bosco father and teacher of youth and in attentive listening to all the material that has

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<sup>56</sup> The second symposium in Nara – Japan to discuss on “the problem of religious education in the family, and their formation to interreligious dialogue, themes which are certainly impelling to all traditions in the European society and that of the Oriental». See Michael Fuss, *Educazione, Famiglia, Religione: tra ‘Chiesa domestica’ e famiglia delle religioni*, in *La Gregoriana*, Anno VIII, numero diciassettese – febbraio 2003, PP. 30-31.

<sup>57</sup> Catherine Adenle, What if every child learned kindness as deliberately as they learn maths? In LinkedIn

<sup>58</sup> Victor TURNER, *Symbols and Social Experience in Religious Ritual* in *Studio Missionalia* 23 (1974), P. 10.

formed part of this research. Indeed the proposal of the 'an act of Hope' can respond to the pastoral concern of the Church as it vibrates with the pastoral sensibility and solicitude she has for the entire Human family.

We describe hope from the perspective of our assumption: 'An Act of Hope: the liminal context for education,' an Anthropological and Pedagogical Enquiry. It is well-defined and offers a promising avenue for exploring the intersection of these fields, with the potential for insightful research and discussion. Hope is a community virtue, one that is nurtured through mutual example and through the strength of fraternal communion within the educating community, drawing on the Church's expertise on 'humanity' and her eagerness to make the Truth of Jesus Christ known in humble dialogue. The logic of the incarnation, Emmanuel God with us, leads us to reconceive spirituality in terms of openness to other religions and peoples. The openness or refusal that marks human responses to Christ is anchored in experiences common to all human persons.

Our reflections, thought brief, opens the road to understand liminality in the perspective of close relationship with other sources of human learning. It is the glance of an educator that allows the communitarian dimension to stand out in the experience of God, an experience that is very intimate and personal. The pedagogical process of this meeting that is the dialogue between these two partners is interpreted and expressed through multiplicity and plurality of cultures of the human family. A key to verify the authenticity of the religious experience is found in the attitude of anthropological openness expressed through an attitude of acceptance from the part of the person which in the final analysis is a gratuitous gift and free response expressed with creativity in the transparency of the anthropological subject.

An impressive field to be explored in this direction is the pedagogical one in which educators in quality of believers of various religions would commit themselves to find ways to allow the face of the divine to shine in the texts and in the classrooms. It is in this vision, in fact that an act of hope as educational attitude has to be understood, articulated and pursued. The critical, prophetic, mystical, contemplative instances are never lacking in the religions; they are waiting for that contemplative glance of the educator, pastor.

### 3. Hope in Action

#### Encircled by a large number of witnesses of Hope

We are surrounded by a multitude of witnesses of hope in the family, school, society, nation and the world. We live in the midst of giants of faith and hope who lived a life of love and understood what it means to have *hope* with the rich significance this word has. Those who journey in hope are well aware that they are walking in the company of others, and are aware that they need people to accompany and guide them on this pilgrim journey. Late Pope Benedict XVI expressed this so exquisitely: "The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach him we also need lights close by—people who shine with his light and so guide us along our way. Who more than Mary could be a star of hope for us?" (*Spe Salvi* 49).

## Allowing Hope to find you and me

It is tough moments, challenging situations<sup>59</sup> and unexpected moments that permit us to find hope. Listen to the Philippines former senator Leila de Lima, who was jailed for nearly seven years under former president Rodrigo Duterte, to know how hope found her: “But a strange thing happened in that lonely cell. Hope found me. Before, I was not prayerful. But prayer became a ritual of resistance. Every prayer was a declaration: I am still alive. And I will not give up,” De Lima said. “It was a quiet rebellion of the soul.”<sup>60</sup> According to her, true hope can be found in different forms: sometimes a whisper, sometimes a prayer, sometimes, it’s a simple rejection of lies, even when alone. To embody hope in action is her challenging invitation to the Ateneo graduates, for hope is conviction of the brave and it is unbreakable.

## The Hope and Life Association

It is hope in action: The Hope and Life Association is an association for widows in Mumbai, India, started by Bishop Bosco Penha in 1982. Corrine Rodrigues Founder President of the Hope & Life Association Celebrates the Silver jubilee of her entry into heaven on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025. Rosalinda D’Souza from Holy Trinity Church Powai, Vice President of Hope and Life Association, Archdiocese of Mumbai, says: The Lord is my Hope and Strength. She is always reaching out to the widows, 24 hours on the helpline in her own way. It is indeed in the school of life that one learns to keep hope alive.

The liminal and liminoid period is lived with mindfulness by the widows. Instead of crying for their husbands, they are trained to stand on their feet. Hope and Life Association, empowers women. for example says Rosalinda “I was one of the ordinary widows sitting on the last row. Because of the guidance and training received and with dedication, determination, hard work and with God’s grace, after 18 years with this Association, now. I am the vice president.

The association offers various kinds of supports: Emotional Support, Social Interaction, Financial Assistance, Spiritual Guidance, Outreach, Advocacy etc. Hope and Life an Association for Widows, published a special magazine to mark the significant milestone of the 40th Anniversary. Joyce D’Cunha, President, Hope and Life Mumbai writes: “Together through these 40 Years: A Love Story Written in Shared Memories.” What D’Cunha highlights is: “Today we celebrate 4 decades of memories, challenges, and unmatched contributions through unwavering dedication and commitment. The colour of growth with new members continuously joining our association demonstrates clearly that while we many not all have a shared history, we have common hopes and ambitions for a better future working together to build resilience and respond to numerous challenges. The Hope & Life Association is like the wiring of a house. The energy & zest of the members is the current that runs through the wires” (*40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Magazine*, P. 4).

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<sup>59</sup> There is a video from the AoG library that explores how young people can shape local change through a global lens. Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Class 1 Chapter 3 - Huge Challenges Facing the World Today, Especially Young People, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8zfm5UJsq0&t=2s>

<sup>60</sup> [https://cruxnow.com/church-in-asia/2025/06/philippines-top-jesuit-school-awards-doctorate-to-once-jailed-duterte-critic?utm\\_source](https://cruxnow.com/church-in-asia/2025/06/philippines-top-jesuit-school-awards-doctorate-to-once-jailed-duterte-critic?utm_source)

## Pilgrims of Hope

Pope Francis is acclaimed as “Pilgrim of Hope who does not disappoint”: (Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, Archpriest of Saint Peter’s Basilica and Vicar General for Vatican City, 21 April, as he introduced the Rosary in memory of Pope Francis, who returned to the Father’s embrace at 7:35 a.m. this morning in his apartment at Casa Santa Marta).<sup>61</sup>

Where can we find hope given the widespread and general structures that suppress our efforts to find peace and justice in our world? It is heaven-sent that late Pope Francis declared 2025 the Jubilee Year with its all-embracing theme of “hope.” This theme is mirrored in the opening words of the Bull of Indiction, titled: “*Spes non confundit. Hope does not disappoint.*” Pope Francis, in his introduction to the Bull, says, “Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future will bring.” hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us (Romans 5:5). What is Synodality all about? Is it not “Pilgrims of hope,” walking and journeying together striving to build up with joy a world where everyone enjoys peace, justice and hope.

### A legacy of hope

Pope Francis, *Hope, an Autobiography*<sup>62</sup> is the first ever memoir by a living pope, a collection of interviews, compiled by Carlo Musso, The book presents a series of interviews conducted by journalist Carlo Musso over several years. It covers his life and his perspectives on contemporary issues such as war, migration, and social justice, women’s roles in society, the environmental crisis etc. It is a legacy of hope as in it there is a narrative of his life with his reflections on spiritual and moral themes. The book carries political and social reflections, giving a sharp-edged Christian humanism.

Pope Francis speaks of just what a normal guy he is. “I’m a citizen at heart,” he says – someone who loves football, adores cutting-edge cinema, wasn’t a swot at school, and has suffered “melancholy spells” periodically since his 10th birthday. In his introduction, Francis states that “an autobiography is not our private story, but rather the baggage we carry with us.” The meaning becomes clearer as the book progresses and he addresses the criticisms and controversy – the baggage as he would have it – that has dogged his papacy.

### A hope-filled glance at our sons and daughters

In discussions about migrants or victims of any kind, the focus often rests on the parents; their challenges, sacrifices and willpower to start again. Yet, there is another story that unfolds quietly in classrooms, playgrounds, and after-school programs across the globe: the story of the children of migrants or victims of calamities. Some children are born in the country that welcomed their parents, yet their sense of belonging is often anything but simple. They live between two worlds, carrying the culture, language, and traditions of their parents while navigating the social and linguistic realities of their birthplace. For many, this dichotomy is both a gift and a heavy burden.

<sup>61</sup> [https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-04/cardinal-gambetti-pope-francis-pilgrim-of-hope.html?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=NewsletterVN-EN](https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-04/cardinal-gambetti-pope-francis-pilgrim-of-hope.html?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NewsletterVN-EN)

<sup>62</sup> Jorge Mario Bergoglio, *Pope Francis, Hope the Autobiography*, Translated from Italian by Richard Dixon, Random House, New York, 2025.

From an early age, they face the unique challenge of learning the dominant language of their country, while speaking their parents' native language at home. In the classroom, they often work twice as hard to catch up. Yet, when they return home, their parents may not be able to help with homework due to language barriers, lack of time, or unfamiliarity with the education system. This gap can leave children feeling isolated, misunderstood, and unsupported in their academic journey. They are going through a liminal stage. Can hope play a meaningful role to find educators who can help such children to face the challenges and cross over to greener pastures?

In many places, educational institutions have come forward to respond to such challenges through after-school programs, academic support, language support, personality development sessions, soft-skill training etc. All these are aimed at helping and accompanying children to develop skills and gain self-confidence, sowing seeds of goodness, kindness, love and hope. How heart-warming are the words of Pope Leo XIV: "Now is the time to follow words with deeds. By working with love and perseverance, we can sow many seeds of justice and thus contribute to the growth of peace and the renewal of hope."<sup>63</sup> This calls for a strategy that embraces as an attitude of the heart, the willpower to give life to words through deeds. The principle as the Pope proposes lies in working with love and perseverance, but for what? The answer is intensely clear: to sow many seeds of justice and thus contribute to the growth of peace and the renewal of hope. Justice, peace and hope are so closely knit that they support and sustain each other on life's journey.

### **Accompanying adults and youngsters**

The sons and daughters of migrants reveal to us that integration means accompanying adults to find their place and daring to nurture a generation of youngsters that can grow, contribute and build communities. The task at hand is to acknowledge their challenges and offer them a 'home of hope.' Don Bosco trusted in creating not just schools, but a "home," where the youngsters felt welcomed, loved and cared for. In the process of learning and growth, educators are supporting individual and groups of children and shaping a future where genuine relationships replace cultural divides. In reality, what is happening is letting margins to meet and enter into dynamic dialogue. The very experience of struggle becomes a source of strength. As they become aware of who they are and how they are challenged to live torn between cultures, they learn the art of becoming bridge-builders, connecting languages, traditions, and ways of seeing the world. They exemplify the possibility of cultural harmony, making use of their bicultural experience to promote understanding in increasingly varied societies.

### **I have a boy with me: Take care of him prepare a bed for him**

One evening, at Via San Massimo Don Bosco had a rare encounter with a boy who was crying, a teenager leaning against an elm. Quickly Don Bosco walked up to him and found out why the boy was crying. "The boy was sobbing; when that subsided he replied: 'Everyone's let me down. My dad died before I could see him. Mom, whom I loved very much died yesterday and they buried her.' In the course of the conversation, the boy narrated what he was going through and to Don Bosco's question where did you sleep last night? the youngster poured out his heart: "At home, but now the landlord has taken away the few pieces of furniture we had.

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63 Pope Leo XIV, Message for the 10th World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation 2025, 1 September 2025.

Mother had not paid the rent. Just as the coffin left the house, they shut the door. I have no one..."<sup>64</sup>

To Don Bosco's question: "Will you come with me"? I'll do all I can to help you? The boy's response was: Oh yes, I'll come, but will you accept me? "Of course, I want the two of us to be friends always." Don Bosco took the boy's hands in his, comforted him and cheered him home where Mamma Margaret was waiting. "Mom". Don Bosco said as he entered, "I have with me a second boy. God sent him here; take care of him and prepare a bed for him." The next day Don Bosco took care to find him a suitable place to work. The boy did well and made a career for himself and secured a respectable position in life. Accompaniment leads one to walk that extra mile to feel the young at ease and even to find jobs for them.

### **Journeying in the liminal space between life and death**

The terrible coronavirus has placed us in the liminal space between life and death. Certainly, there is fear, anxiety — precisely for this, we needed an extra dose of courage and hope. As a disciple and friend of Jesus, I am convinced that nothing is impossible with God. Above the terrible coronavirus there is a God, and we constantly request God to heal us and bless us. The deadly COVID-19 virus has affected strongly India and the entire human family. It has brought with it a kind of fearful and awkward situation. A friend of mine, a college professor, an expert in psychology, whispered over the phone: "I can't share with you what I went through as COVID-19 hit me ... Just when I wanted someone to hold my hands and assure me that 'I am there for you,' all I could see was my dear ones lovingly taking physical distance from me ..." Right from the start, deep within me, I could feel that the world and those around us needed a lot of courage, hope and encouraging words to battle with COVID-19. Just to mention a few ways in which people responded: A small group of us educators and journalists pooled our resources and brought out some soul-lifting articles<sup>65</sup> drawing from life experience.

Fr. Joseph Aymanathil SDB, who had been feeding slum kids during the pandemic, succumbed to the virus. The 73-year-old priest had pioneered quality free education for underprivileged children for 30 years. He organized the relief work to feed slum children from Day 1 of the lockdown. His team continued his work at railway stations, even during his funeral.

Sr. Moksha Antonappa, a Salesian Sister of Don Bosco in Mumbai, carried out online delivery of goods. Her group was constantly in touch with people in real need and with shopkeepers. Who can ever forget that little street boy among them, who worked as a COVID-19 warrior and reached out in service? Sr. Moksha had Sahayini covid 19-warriors.<sup>66</sup> What brought in that ray of hope in the midst of it all was the awareness that the entire human family was with us; that your solidarity and thoughtfulness continue to convince us that we are not alone.

[Late, Pope Francis' message](#) reached us like a soothing balm as he prayed for pandemic-stricken India: In a message dated May 6 to Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Bombay, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, the pope wrote "to convey my heartfelt solidarity and spiritual closeness to all the Indian people, together with the assurance of my prayers that

<sup>64</sup> Carlo De Ambrogio, *Educating Like Don Bosco*, translated by Ian Doulton, Kristu Jyoti Publications, Bengaluru, India, PP. 186-87.

<sup>65</sup> [Teresa Joseph](#), COLUMN, *The people of India battle COVID-19* Jul 21, 2021,

<https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/coronavirus/column/people-india-battle-covid-19>

<sup>66</sup> Teresa Joseph, *You are painting the world around*, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/friendship-teresa-joseph/?trackingId=zZFtXr%2FZG6gv15NCyHNDeQ%3D%3D>

God will grant healing and consolation to everyone affected by this grave pandemic. ... With deep appreciation, I invoke upon all of them God's gifts of perseverance, strength, and peace."

### **Liminality in daily life**

Daily life is the school of liminality. Being a friend of hope to a companion in need: Mrs. Lucy Sam, narrated how moved by compassion for one of her Class IV friends, she was able to bring a ray of hope. This particular girl was not able to have the midday meal served in School, because it made her sick. Lucy, brought the situation to her mother's notice. Immediately her mother replied: from tomorrow on while I pack your lunch box, I will get ready one for your friend too. Until, they both completed her Class X studies, Lucy would carry the lunch box for her friend and place it on the table along with all other lunch boxes. Her friend, after lunch would place back the box and then Lucy would bring it home. No one in the class or school knew about it. When Lucy's daughter Anju Maria was in class VIII, one of her friends was unable to bring lunch as his mother was very sick. The example set by my own mother said Lucy prompted me to do the same. With a spirit of joy, she concluded: I made sure that I prepared two lunch boxes until they completed their Class X exams.

In the liminal space of daily life, parents and educators have to find time to speak to the young first of all about the Lord who enlivens our hope and who does not allow us to become discouraged or to give up (cf. 1 Pet 3:15. In the educational scenario, it is great to see how lives can be changed and futures improved. Being bearers of hope, educators can help to relaunch with hope to move beyond the weight of the present to the novelty of the future.

### **Hope and dialogue of life**

In a pluralistic World, there is a lot of spontaneous and intentional dialogues that are taking place. Hope can become a widespread forum for a meaningful dialogue of life among believers of various religions. A purposeful and decisive move to work with hope and to promote it at all levels going beyond every prejudice is a must. Training our personnel to be facilitators of hope groups, equipping them with skills and techniques for peace and conflict resolution is possible and is a necessity today. Teachers and students can work this out together. Today, there is greater need to respect our religious identities and at the same time come together and work together as much as possible for common good.

### **Liminality an act of hope**

This brief study of the anthropological concepts of Victor Turner offered the possibility to reflect on a possible liminal space in education an act of hope. Understanding experience from Turner's perspective is the threshold from which our gaze stretches to the wider horizon of communication among educators and students. The 'live through' (Erleben) when transferred to educators and students offers a quality touch as it permits one to reflect on experience in the liminal space of hope. Encounter-experience-narration, there is a chain of communication that moves on to community building and rituals. Life becomes the best narration and family undoubtedly is the cradle in which experiences are treasured and narrated from one generation to another. Educational Institution play a vital role to offer a quality touch in informing and forming.

The liminal space in education is a sacred space in the human family where the in-betweenness becomes connectedness, leaving time and space in deep respect to the Spirit to communicate the sacred truths. 'Communitas' and the margin in educational dialogue are there to assure both freshness and creativity. Margin considered as a new creative core for those

engaged in dialogue in education, means the ability to take note of the action of the Spirit in teachers and students, and to have the courage to rethink and develop one's own identity allowing the "touches of the Spirit" to speak.

Taking into consideration Hope and Life Association, and 'Communitas' understood in Tuner's sense, it is evident that there is healthy sharing among the members which in turn has to be sustained and strengthened in normative structured families, communities with their life and work. There is a crucial hope-filled turning point in the lives of the widows after the loss of their husbands. "Turner described the social bond that arose from communities as a 'strong sentiment of human kindness' Practising community means cultivating the conditions which can make an experience of human kindness real. When we practice community we invest our lives and our hope in a mutual effort to insure that we, and the generations to come, will know that we can all get along."<sup>67</sup>

Turner explored "Liminality" in a number of ways and in different socio-cultural settings. He envisions liminality as a process. "Liminality itself is a process."<sup>68</sup> Life is a process. Seeing hope from the perspective of personal experience, and the fruit of a dialogical relationship with God and others, one becomes aware of the dynamics in action in this process of relationship and communication. Turner's understanding of the human process is a longstanding experience that has accompanied him throughout his life and work. In the day today living of the members of Hope and Life Association, there is that ray of hope that adds color to their being and operating.

### **Liminal space of hope in Don Bosco educator**

There is a liminal space of hope that welled up in Don Bosco as he met with various trials and challenges. Worthy of mention is the education he received from his mother Margaret (Mamma Margarita, 1788-1856) with profound human and Christian insight. The providence of God endowed him with gifts, which, from his early years, made him the generous and reliable friend of his companions. As a young priest in Turin: a city then in a phase of rapid development, he came into contact with young people in prison and with other dramatic human situations. He was alert to the situation of the youth. Learning from the experience of two influences on his formation St. Philip Neri and St. Charles Borromeo. He choose St. Francis de Sales as principal protector and model for his work, the saint zealous in many directions, because of the great human kindness he showed especially in dealing with others. Don Bosco's relationship with these exceptional figures, men of God and men deeply rooted in their particular context, prompted him to envision the idea of the *Oratory*, a name particularly dear to him in its connotations. The Oratory was to characterize all his work, and he would shape it in line with his original idea and adapt it to the environment, to his boys and to their needs.

Through his priestly ministry he gained profound knowledge of the young and was aware of how the grace of God acts in them. He was also in touch with cultural currents and people of his time. This helped him to understand and apply the insights of pedagogy. And to crown it all there was his own lengthy experience with young people.

"Don Bosco had informal and fragmental contacts with cultural currents and people of his time and he committed himself very much to accumulate his own experience, so much so he used to keep 'the book of experience'. And finally, his long stay (40 years) with direct and daily contact with every type of youngsters that, evidently expanded his knowledge and refined his

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., P. 2.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., P. 69.

experience.”<sup>69</sup> The very background of his boys prompted him to establish a personal rapport with them. The humble and poor beginnings, the urgency to respond to the needs of his boys immediately threw open a network of relationships. Relationship is one of the fundamental means of transmitting content<sup>70</sup>.

“Don Bosco saw the environment not simply as a physical space that was safe and resourced, but also as a network of relationships marked by consistent kindness. That network involved young people as well as adults, parents as well as educators, volunteers and ex-members who were now in a wider community in the city. All of those connections would have played their part in the process of welcoming those troubled youths and helping them deal with the trauma of war and loss.”<sup>71</sup>

### **In the liminal space with the young offering clear norms**

The close collaborators of the Oratory at its early stages were all youngsters under 20 years of age, coming from various work and educational fields; certainly they were in need of clear norms that would equip them to approach boys who were younger than them, who had lived on the very margins of their families and, partly, not yet adapted to the Oratory surrounding. The structural reality of the Oratory was indeed very complex, and the pedagogical action and the specific educative interventions needed to be attended to with urgency. It was precisely good will that prompted most of the youngsters who were called on to play the role of educators. It is not surprising that Prellezo describes the educative reality of those days in a very realistic way:

“Learners (all) in the art of education, who had never studied theoretically, dedicated to a hard apprenticeship in the field, they found themselves in the midst of a more varied mass of *addressees* that can be imagined: artisans in training, students, seminarians, novices, students of philosophy and of theology, students of the evening school, workers outside the festive Oratory, girls to be invited to Communion at Easter, crowds of people that throng together for the great religious feasts, in particular during Christmas, St. Francis of Sales, Mary Help of Christians. The greatest stress was on morality and to religion.”<sup>72</sup>

In the liminal space of life among his young people, Don Bosco constantly went ahead as the Lord inspired him and the circumstance demanded of him. He knew how to give birth to a genial educative synthesis “the preventive system in the education of the young.”<sup>73</sup> The code of regulation created for the good of the above mentioned varied group assumes the name of preventive system.

As Fontana puts it: “Born therefore of the united action between Don Bosco and his collaborators on the basis of experience, guided and moderated by the charism of the Saint these collaborators together working right on the field, could be considered educators. They gathered

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<sup>69</sup> J. VECCHI, *I guardiani dei sogni con il dito sul mouse. Educatori nell'era informatica*, ELLEDICI, Leumann (Torino) 1999, P. 169.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. U. FONTANA, *Relazione, segreto di Ogni educazione*, Leumann (Torino) ELLEDICI, 2000, P.7.

<sup>71</sup> D. O'MALLEY, *Good Shepherding in Don Bosco Today*, (Summer 2001), <http://www.salesians.org.uk/donboscotoday/>

<sup>72</sup> J. PRELLEZO, *Valdocco nell'Ottocento tra ideale e reale, Documenti e testimonianze*, LAS, Roma, 1992, PP. 7-8.

<sup>73</sup> E. CERIA, (a cura di) *Memorie Biografiche XVIII*, Torino, Società Editrice Internazionale, 1937, P. 127.

and almost ‘described’ the ideas of D. Bosco, which they have written about even though in a limited way the ideas of Don Bosco.”<sup>74</sup>

## Practical Proposals

### *Option for peace and hope – a priority choice*

For surely, I know the plans I have for you [...] to give you a future full of hope.” - Jeremiah 29:11. Discernment is one of the best processes to lead young people to understand the plans God has for them and to lead them to a future full of hope. In the context of hope: liminal context for education, there is a possibility to reflect upon the Identity, Role and Mission of a Catholic Teacher. Calling for schools and universities committed to catechesis and evangelization, late Pope Francis made his first significant statements as Pope regarding Catholic education in *Evangelii Gaudium*, his apostolic exhortation. “We need to provide an education which teaches critical thinking and encourages the development of mature moral values (64).

For further study and exploration, here are few suggestions. There was an amazing result when for an entire year, Auxilium Convent, High School, Lonavla took up the Study and implementation of ‘Holiness is for you and me.’ Every program and every initiative for that year focused on the theme chosen. From the sacred texts of various religions to the lives of ordinary man and woman, the staff and students found ways and means to ensure that ‘Holiness is for you and me’ was made part of one’s life program. The enthusiasm and the eagerness to implement it became so contagious that everyone was mindful of it.

A group of 7 young College Students from Zambia had an amazing time studying the document<sup>75</sup>. It offered them possibility to understand how one can be holy.<sup>76</sup>

Another significant initiative could be the re-reading of *Amoris Laetitia* of Pope Francis from an Educational and Family Perspective. On Friday 8 April 2015 the second Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)*, a ground breaking document has been published. It is Pope Francis’ Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family. The post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* is the culmination of a synodal process called for by Pope Francis in 2013. This document contains 261 pages and is divided into nine chapters.

God in His marvellous design chose Don Bosco to be the Father and Teacher of a multitude of youngsters. In his interactions with them, within no time, he realized that what his youngsters needed was a ‘family.’ He went out of his way to get his own mother to be a mother to his boys. In our educational environments, it has to come natural to make every one breath an atmosphere of the family. Yes, how often students have experienced that care and concern of their educators, who did everything possible just like in a family to help them to nurture their talents and to develop new skills to equip them for their mission in the world. It is fitting to approach the great treasure “*Amoris Laetitia*” of Pope Francis from an Educational and family Perspective. For educators and parents, it is a truly inspiring guide as they accompany young people to prepare for marriage and to nurture their families. In this treasured document we can find a rich reflection on the mission of the family and on how the Church can illumine couples to embrace God’s vision for marriage. There are special tips on

<sup>74</sup> FONTANA, *Relazione, segreto*, P.P. 15-16.

<sup>75</sup> Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete Et Exsultate, The Call to Holiness in Today’s World*, 2018.

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.indiancatholicmatters.org/i-got-an-answer-to-my-question-how-can-i-be-holy/>

how to bring healing for families that are struggling. This text is also the pope's reminder that the church should avoid simply judging people and imposing rules on them without considering their struggles.

### *Elaborating on key teachings of late Pope Francis<sup>77</sup>*

The rich legacy Pope Francis gifted the Church and the World has to continue to generate life and hope in abundance through committed educators. He was the first pope to face the Covid -19 pandemic. How can we ever forget him hobbling alone in the rain in an empty St. Peter's Square during the Statio Orbis on 27 March 2020? The entire human family was truly suffering, even then he spoke of hope and fraternity.

Pope Francis has spoken on Ecological Education and Spirituality in Chapter Six of his Encyclical Letter **LAUDATO SI'** On Care For Our Common Home. The main themes are:

- I. Towards a New Lifestyle (203-208).
- II. Educating For the Covenant between Humanity and the Environment (209 – 215).
- III. Ecological Conversion (216-221).
- IV. Joy and Peace (222-227).

Pope Francis highlighted the importance of Catholic education on various occasions. On June 7 when he received several students from Jesuit-run schools in Italy and Albania in the Paul VI Audience Hall. In his address, Pope Francis wrote about how education should be more than just a place to expand intellect – that it should also be a place to learn compassion and magnanimity. He stressed that school should be a place to develop the whole child – mind, body, and spirit – and that teachers should try unique ways to reach students. [...] “Don’t be discouraged by the difficulties that the educational challenge presents! Educating isn’t a profession but an attitude, a way of being. In order to educate you must go out of yourselves and be amidst the young, accompanying them in the stages of their growth, standing beside them.”<sup>78</sup> Pope Francis asked them to give their students hope and optimism by teaching them “to see the beauty and goodness of creation and of humanity, which always retains the Creator’s imprint. But above all, witness with your lives what you are communicating.

### *A renewed daring with hope*

In the given context of increase of wars, economic and environmental crisis, migration, globalization and religious pluralism what type of education is needed? Education in the broad sense can be considered as cultural transmission. Teaching separates “knowing” from “action”. Schooling separates the value of knowledge from the authority of the person who transmits it.

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<sup>77</sup> Pope Francis, the first Jesuit Pope, the first Pope from Latin America, the first one to choose the name Francis, the first to be elected with his predecessor late Pope Benedict XVI still alive, the first to live outside the Apostolic Palace, from Iraq to Corsica, you visited lands never reached before by a pope, the first to sign a Declaration on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together in Abu Dhabi, in February 2019, with Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, the first Pope to establish a Council of Cardinals to oversee the Church, you were the first Pope who allotted roles of responsibility to women and lay people in the Curia, the first to initiate a Synod prepared by a worldwide consultation with the people of God, the first one to abolish the pontifical secrecy for sexual abuse cases, the first to officially eradicate the death penalty from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the first pope to face the Covid -19 pandemic.

<sup>78</sup> <http://volusiacatholicschools.org/?p=361>

This said learning is vital as it prepares children to face new situations and learn to address them with realism and hope.

Today, we are challenged to widen the vision in order to recognize the more authentic needs and the urgencies of a society and of a generation that is in constant and rapid change. For this, we need a renewed daring that is the result of the freedom which illuminates our work when we make our own the expression of late Pope Francis who said: “There is no greater freedom than allowing yourself to be led by the Spirit, refusing to calculate and control everything, and allowing Him to illuminate, guide, and direct us, moving us where He wants. He knows well what is needed in every age and at every moment” (*Evangelli Gaudium*, No. 280).

With Mary to enlarge our hearts to hope

May Mary, Mother, Teacher and Help, help educators to be with the young people a home that evangelizes and to enlarge your hearts to hope. To continue to live the one educational passion that prompted Don Bosco and other educators. To be truly prophetic in our choices, in the freedom to allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit, in verifying the evident signs of hope on the journey toward growing in an unconditional acceptance of young people especially the poorest.

The splendid Gospel text: Jesus with the two disciples of Emmaus cannot only accompany the educators but continues to challenge them to a life of transformation and to strive to belong totally to the person of Jesus to carry out the mission He entrusts to us to extend His presence and to be the Good News with and for young people.

### *Spread the perfume of hope*

The laboratory of life continues to offer testimony; and grace, building on nature-open-to-and-thirsty -for -grace. It is this that causes ‘local stories’ to burst to life through their interconnecting with the Great Story of what God did for us in Jesus. In the liminal space of hope, it is important to be aware of where signs of life are concretely present and to realize how far these are able to bring us. The dynamic movement has to be from small to great, from local to global. A careful study of the “local” and the “global” can offer a wider frame to understand what the local provides and the global is not able to offer.

“In his studies of minority cultures and ethnic enclaves, educational theorist James A. Banks has hypothesized that ethnic communities provide three things that are often lacking in majority or dominant cultures. They are: a sense of belonging or identity, a source of moral authority for guidance in life, and a framework of meaning to explain life's events.<sup>79</sup> The larger society (or putative global culture) may hold out options for these three but generally cannot deliver a configuration of them that will be satisfying. To the extent that larger cultural units cannot do this, local cultures persist.”<sup>80</sup>

The creative movement of human life comes when both total detachment and total attachment are simultaneously experienced. “It is the moment when total negation (total detachment) and total affirmation (total attachment) are brought together. When negation and affirmation or negative and positive are united, they produce creative energies that transform

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<sup>79</sup> James A. BANKS, ‘Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals’, in James A. BANKS and James LYNCH, eds., *Multicultural Education in Western Societies*, New York, Praeger Books, 1985, PP. 2-28.

<sup>80</sup> Robert J. SCHREITER, *Christian Theology between the Global and the Local*, in *Theological Education*, (Spring 1993), PP. 113-126, P. 116.

the world because the very locus of marginality is creative. God became the margin of marginality in Jesus Christ in order to transform the world.”<sup>81</sup>

From a hope-filled perspective, it is the faith experience, the encounter with Jesus that is at the heart of relationship. It is an experience that has gone through a fruitful period of study, reflection, and meditation and is able to find suitable concepts for a meaningful communication. The lived experience of faith and hope, the process of growth and the communication prepares the ground for stronger relationships.

## Conclusion

This article from an Anthropological, Pedagogical and interdisciplinary perspective highlighted: an act of hope. Etymologically and in the real sense, ‘education’ means “to draw out, to lead out.” It also means to “extract from” – ex-ducere (from the Latin that means to lead out of).” In the liminal space of Education, Don Bosco the master educator did draw out what a youngster had in his soul without him even knowing it! He drew out of his boys the man. Cardinal Giovanni Montini, now Saint Paul VI said to the students of the Salesian Institute of St. Ambrose at Milan on 31 January 1961: “Don Bosco drew out of the youngster the man and the Christian, human and divine, the man of earth and the man of heaven, the complete man.”<sup>82</sup>

Education is a conscious journey into hope. It offers a marvellous opportunity for educators to carry out their task with deep human touch and evangelical freshness. The task is that of an ongoing discernment, of constant dialogue with the human family and Jesus Christ. A mystical tension to listen to the voice of the students and to the prompting of the Spirit of God and untiring effort to spell out through careful analysis and synthesis in a legible manner that to have hope means to be aware that God is walking with humanity for it is His style of loving each human person.

Educators today are challenged not only by the diverse Christian interpretations of the Christian Gospels but also of the plurality of experiences. The task of discerning God’s saving economy in the here and now of our history requires that we are tuned to read the signs of times in which we find ourselves. From this springs forth the urgency to encourage more collaborative and interdisciplinary reflections on hope and its fundamental implications for human life.

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