



## LA SALESIANA DEI SACRI CUORI: *più sorella per essere più generativa*

*"So they went on to another village" Luke 9,56  
Educating the citizen, Christian, and believer*

***Dear Sisters, Principals, Educational Coordinators, Teachers, and all Collaborators,***

It is with joy that I extend my greetings and heartfelt wishes to you at the beginning of the new 2024-2025 school year. The start of a new school year carries many expectations and challenges, as school is not just a right and duty but a place of life and generosity, containing something immeasurable that unfolds mysteriously in daily life as surprise and wonder—a mystery that belongs to the human realm, which even the much-discussed artificial intelligence cannot replace or fully understand.

***My welcome is especially for*** the little ones who are entering school for the first time or experiencing the transition between different educational cycles. I am confident that you will find an environment rich in human, moral, and religious values, as outlined in the ***Pedagogical Pastoral project of our Congregation***, which I believe you are all familiar with: *"Our schools, to be a place where the announcement of the Gospel resonates, must implement a pedagogy of walking together through constant accompaniment that encourages and supports, with the goal of creating favorable conditions to help children, adolescents, young people, and parents to be reached, touched, and guided by God. To live the Gospel and bear witness to Jesus Christ."* (Pedagogical-Pastoral project p. 12).



In this year of the great Jubilee ***"Pilgrims of Hope,"*** to build a better world that reflects the face of Jesus, the Catholic school must even more resonate with the echo of the Gospel, the Word of life, to be illuminated by it in today's ever-evolving educational and social dynamics. A deep understanding and comprehension of complex interactions is crucial for cultivating harmonious relationships and creating an environment conducive to each student's development. Indeed, within each class group, a complex web of relationships is created, weaving bonds that connect students in a network of interactions, involving their families as well.

Teachers shape the values, culture, faith, and beliefs passed on to children by their parents, while being influenced by their own growth and unique experiences. For this reason, St. Filippo emphasized: *"It is necessary that various apostolic activities be well organized and that educational and formative means suitable for the age be sought, so that young people are*





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*stimulated to participate and benefit. In general, moments of prayer, religious reflection, group life, and recreation should alternate” (Directory art. 121).*

Let us remember that each teacher's educational approach can either enable or hinder each student from highlighting their own skills, qualities, and motivations, and from expressing themselves through sharing knowledge. Indeed, the bonds woven within a class-group can mutually provide moral and motivational support. Therefore, it is essential to ***nurture a sense of duty, respect, openness, and sharing***. Knowledge is a value, critical thinking is a value, learning skills and abilities is a value, but so is a sense of duty, openness to others, sharing, and care for those who are weaker or disadvantaged: all these are values that characterize the school experience and the legacy of a school that prepares individuals for life.

The education we provide, dear colleagues, becomes essential, almost vital, as proposed by the great 17th-century Moravian educator John Amos Comenius who wanted education for all and wrote: ***“make a school of life.”*** The aim of this was ***“to ensure that all of life is good.”*** We must never fall into the temptation of thinking that what we learned during our studies is sufficient and unchangeable for our entire professional life. A true educator must maintain an interested and curious attitude, passing this as a fundamental message to his students.

To do this, we are guided by the teaching of St. Filippo Smaldone, a great educator of the deaf, who with his lively intelligence and enlightened by faith in God proposes an educational style that each teacher should adopt: ***“The Educator in their educational work should be kind, gentle, serene; cultivate these virtues along with inexhaustible patience and charity. They guard the human treasure entrusted to them and remember that the Founding Father referred to it as a ‘precious and holy deposit’”*** (Directory art. 139).

We must train ourselves to understand different contexts, different societies, and different learning styles. Our students have and use computers, smartphones: all these are complex, informal learning contexts that we must take into account and measure ourselves against. The awareness of a rapidly changing world should push us ***to walk together***: it is crucial to take the time to cultivate common activities, educate ourselves, plan, design together, whether through conversations or simply spending time together, sharing and complicity are valuable tools for strengthening bonds of trust and dialogue among us as a teaching body.

Dear colleagues, I urge you to continue in this direction, to not consider “wasted time” that dedicated to colleagues to share work, knowledge, and enrich one another, with





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an attitude of openness and wonder before the truth and novelty that allows us to renew ourselves. The multidisciplinary approach has concrete implications for students as well. The education offered in these classrooms aims to be holistic. The variety and differences observed between different school levels, or within them, among various subjects, should not represent isolated, self-contained compartments. Behind this variety, there must be a desire for deeper understanding—a desire that leads to unity, to discovering the deep connections within our Catholic School, our Smaldonian School, and our family.

To you, students—both young and old—I say: *“Make use of the talents within you! These are the Lord’s talents* who loved you before even your birth, each one in their own uniqueness, from all eternity. Carry with you and within you positivity and curiosity to always invigorate your search for truth everywhere, a desire for happiness, guided by a good amount of love, faith in Jesus, and soul finesse. Therefore, do not think that a subject loses importance simply because you do not like it. Never view different subjects as “obstacles”; instead, see them as rich stops along your formative journey, throughout all three basic educational cycles. Such knowledge should be integrated into your spiritual journey throughout your life.

We all know that “the years spent in those colorful classrooms, full of smiles, tears, explanations of all kinds, efforts, jokes, and even reprimands” are a time that prepares our future. Always remember, though, that your tomorrow depends on the choices and the way you live in the present, today. Thus, I encourage you to cultivate a strong and beautiful love for knowledge, capable of making human existence a joyful gift of yourself to God and others, to society as a whole, in imitation of our great model, Jesus.

Before I conclude, I remind you *to study and work* on the *Congregation’s Pedagogical - Pastoral project for the 2024-2027 triennium*. All our schools and institutes, in addition to being places of culture and education, must become *places of evangelization* and family for our students and parents.

Along with the entire General Council, I conclude by thanking you for who you are and what you will do, wishing you a happy school year, full of serenity and satisfaction for everyone.

Paraguay - Pilar, August 15, 2024



Nyiramanzi Sister Odette,  
School Counselor

