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Audience with the Order of Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools (Piarists)

At 12.10 yesterday, in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience members of the Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools (Piarists).

The following is the Pope's address to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Good morning, and many thanks, Father General, for your words.

You can imagine that, after sending you this document, I did not want to give a speech... So I asked the Father whether I should speak in Spanish or in Italian, and he told me that "Almost everyone understands Spanish".

Thank you for coming, and thank you for bringing the family ... Las Montales, who kept them in the El Salvador College, and I know them well – the family. This is good, a religious congregation has a family that surrounds it, people who work, laypeople, everyone. The family is a sign of fruitfulness and humanity. Thank you for coming.

I put three things, three words in the message, which I return to now to say a few words. *Educate, announce, and transform*. Let's look at the first: to *educate*. Educating is very serious at the moment. It is a big challenge, because the educational pact in general is broken. The educational pact – and now, I am very influenced by my country, but I see that everywhere it looks more or less the same, school, family and young people – it is broken. So, we must reconstruct that educational pact in the way that it must be rebuilt, this is crucial. And to educate, reconstructing the educational pact, which includes the family, necessarily, nowadays in education the family cannot be absent, the family as it is. But there really are families that are destroyed, families that ...well, in a child you can recompose many things, many things. Then it is a question of rehabilitating the educational pact, and the teachers – in many countries they are poorly paid, in many countries – it is also a question of helping in the recognition of the teacher who gives his or her life. There are teachers who work double shifts to have a

decent salary. That teacher who, when he or she goes home, must take the time to prepare lessons, to think, and all that. The dialogue between family and teacher, the family, the school and the child, this triple dialogue. The child too must be active in education. Good, this is for the reconstruction of the educational pact, and you have a very serious mission in this.

Secondly: *a complete education*. To move on from the inheritance left to us by the Enlightenment, that to educate is to fill the head with concepts, and that the more you know here [points to the head], the better the education is. To educate is to help the person mature using three languages: the language of ideas, the language of the heart, and the language of the hands, and there must be harmony between the three; that is, that our students feel what they think, and do what they think and feel. This harmony of the person, educating the person. I believe that if we do not educate them in this way, we lose out. Some educators express this in a different way but it is the same thing: to educate in content, habits and values. It is the same, an education of this type. And I would add that – and this is crucial nowadays – the youth must be educated in movement. A calm youth does not exist today, and if we do not put them in motion ourselves, a thousand other things will set them in motion, mainly digital systems that run the risk of making the young lose their roots, in this civilization with its liquid and gaseous speeds – and this is the third point I want to consider.

Young people today are without roots, they do not have roots, because they do not have the time to take root; I am sorry, I mean they have them but they do not take them on, they do not have the time to do so, they do not let them grow, they do not let them consolidate, because they live continually in this “liquidity” of culture, don’t they? Setting down roots. Young people without roots are what we are seeing now. And what do we do? We must graft roots onto them! I always see that it is very important – it comes to my mind and inspired, and I say so simply, praying and so on, by the prophet Joel when he says, “The elderly will dream and the young will prophesy”. Today the young need to talk to the elderly: it is the only way they can find their roots. Talking with parents, yes, this is fundamental, but above all, today, the need is to meet the elderly, as parents are also part of this liquid society; they need to meet the elderly. Please try to encourage dialogue between grandparents and grandchildren. “No, but the kids...”. No. I have had plenty of experiences, and others who tell me: put the kids in motion. Say to them, “What do you think? Let’s go and play the guitar in that nursing home”. Well, maybe, maybe not.. they go and then they don’t want to leave, because there is that phenomenon of the elderly who say, “No, that song, do you know it?”. And they start talking to each other, and the kids are delighted, the elderly start to wake up and they realize they can still dream. Please, I give you this mission: try to encourage, while there is still time, before we move on, the dialogue between young and old. Look for the thousand ways, the thousand ways of doing so, but always in movement, because it does not work if young people are not restless. This is another criterion that must be taken into consideration, in education and in everything else: calm young people exist in encyclopaedias; in reality, if you want a young person to receive something from you, you have to keep him in motion.

Good, along with educating there is also announcing and transforming, but with what I say I will keep to educating. This is why I remained seated, why I didn’t read out a speech; I wanted to be more spontaneous.

Many thanks, and again I invite you to pray a Hail Mary to the Virgin, and also to ask the protection of Saint Faustino. I liked how the father of the newborn child, the Chilean, asked for the miracle: “Do something, *peladito!*”
