

# INSTRUCTION and EDUCATION

## Contributions by Calasanz, Milani and Freire

José Luis Corzo, SchP Salamanca 10.25.2018



*In October 2018, a Piarist Meeting of Non-Formal Education was held in Salamanca where the Piarist José Luis Corzo shared in the presentation "Instruction and Education" the main contributions of Calasanz, Milani, and Freire.*

*Corzo recalled the founding of Casa-escuela Santiago 1 in September 1971. "It is true that the almost total collapse of Piarist vocations, at least in Spain and Italy, which I know best, was not yet palpable, as it is now, but lay volunteers were already emerging, true authors in Santiago 1 and in the Agrarian School. Thank you."*

*It is a reflection worthy of being read and very valuable for the ongoing formation of Piarist educators.*

I want, from the first moment, to take advantage of and share with you this Piarist invitation with something very important for the Pious Schools, and as we thought 47 years ago here in Salamanca (when founding the Santiago 1 House-school in September 1971). It is true that the almost total collapse of Piarist vocations was not yet palpable, as it is now, at least in Spain and Italy, which I know better, but lay volunteers were already emerging, true authors in Santiago 1 and in the Agrarian School. Thanks. There have been other causes in the collapse of vocations, but what I am going to tell you touched and touches the genuine charism of the Order, today so dissipated and dissolved in other lateral and superficial remedies.

### *Instructing was then the main objective*

Talking about non-formal education (NFE) means that we are not referring to the school, which would be the formal one, but to other educational structures. But what is specific to the school is to instruct (teach and learn) and that was, without a doubt, the objective of Calasanz when he opened his free (= pious) schools. There is no need to drag him to also be a first-rate educator unless we confuse both phenomena. He didn't even convince me at all that that charism was now updated as evangelizing by educating. So, if the NFE does not intend to instruct, what does it intend then?

Calasanz saw that ignorance caused an enormous social and human inequality, already unacceptable in that increasingly urban modern society. He wanted to correct the social injustice of so many discarded children and that cost him misunderstanding, rejection and disappointment. Tomasso Campanella, a wise Dominican philosopher of his time (1631)<sup>1</sup>, had to defend him: teaching the poor is not going to produce the catastrophe foreseen by that Roman consul, Menenius Agrippa (500 BC), who wanted to convince the commoners – the arms of the social body – that they keep their strike against the patricians – an idle stomach – would destroy an organ that is also essential for the health of the entire body.

It is curious that, more than three centuries after Calasanz, another priest-teacher, Lorenzo Milani (1923-1967), also defended his radical pastoral option for the school of the poor, but without falling into the "catastrophe foreseen in the infamous apology of Menenius Agrippa":

*"Are the rich allowed in our free soup deliveries? Classism in this sense is not a novelty for the Church... It is not about making each worker*

*an engineer and from each engineer a worker, but only to ensure that being an engineer does not*

*automatically also imply being more of a man”2.*

Paulo Freire, with his adult literacy, also fought inequality and social injustice in a Brazil that discriminated against the illiterate even at the polls.

Are you going to stay on the sidelines of these three teaching giants with new NFE educational structures? Are you interested in an education without school?

### **And today instruction is still a social weapon**

This is what a beautiful almost conciliar<sup>3</sup> document of the Congregation for Catholic Education teaches, entitled *The Catholic School* (1977). It is essential to know it: it serves as a compass and radar in this Piarist issue. Please don't miss a comma:

*The Catholic School “in some nations, as a consequence of the legal and economic situation... runs the risk of giving a counter-attestation, because it is forced to finance itself by accepting mainly the children of well-off families. This situation deeply worries those responsible for the Catholic School, because the Church offers its educational service in the first place to 'those who are deprived of fortune, who are deprived of the help and affection of the family, or that they are far from the gift of faith' (Vatican II, GE 9). Because, given that education [instruction] is an effective means of social and economic promotion for the individual, if the Catholic School were to impart it exclusively or preferably to elements of an already privileged social class, it would contribute to strengthening it in a position of advantage over the another, thus fostering an unjust social order” (58).*

With these words, it is impossible to hide who the three main recipients of Catholic schools are. He takes it from No. 9 of the Council Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* (GE), which only **Fr. Pedro Aguado** cited with emphasis during the famous Vatican congress of 2015 to celebrate 50 years of GE. The Latin was even more explicit about those three:

*“Qui bonis temporalibus sunt pauperes vel familiae adiutorio et affectu privantur vel a dono fidei sunt alieni”.*

But this 1977 document, twelve years after the Council, adds the very serious reason why Church schools should not teach the rich "neither exclusively nor preferentially": it would be "to strengthen them in an unjust social order... against the other class". In other words, it would be taking sides in favor of the rich in the class struggle, as Cardinal G. Garrone warns with a white glove<sup>4</sup>. An unacceptable classism, nothing less. Perhaps that is why it is a cursed paragraph from the Educational Magisterium, which no one ever cites. And there we go!

Evidently, such # 58 refers to the school and, therefore, to instruction, which is its specific task. It does not refer, for example, to the education of the faith, an ecclesial task of the first order with rich and poor, but whose place is not the school, but catechesis.

Or is it that faith and ministry serve as an alibi to maintain the schools of the rich? It would be very serious if the so-called collegial ministry served for yet another discrimination: some, good-believing students are consumers of ministry, and others, are not. **Saint Calasanz** did not do so.

I repeat the question: if teaching/learning is the specific prerogative of the school and is a social weapon, does the NFE intend to avoid it and dedicate itself only to education, without instruction? Who would get the better part? Very different from each other, they should not face each other. Let's see them slowly.

### **But education is something else**

Instruction and education, two such popular and versatile words are not usually distinguished precisely. I do not always stick to technicalities, nor do I force you – at all – to improve your everyday language. But we must clearly distinguish the two human realities to which they allude, so as not to call education anything and, above all, so as not to confuse it with teaching in our daily work and believe that we educate others by instilling, recommending, insisting, etc., without involving ourselves.

Let us immediately recall the enigmatic axiom of **Paulo Freire** – for me, without a doubt the greatest pedagogue of the 20th century – who warns: “no one educates no one, just as no one educates himself: people are educated by the community, mediatized by the world”<sup>5</sup> .

That is to say, the educational activity does not pass from one to another, it is not transitive, as teaching or instructing is. The verbs – and the structures – of teaching are not those of education: teachers and professors teach, but the educator does not educate. If he fulfills his role well, he can only stimulate and help...

A great deal of pedagogical literature combines educating with taming, which **Antoin and Saint Exupéry** only deliciously used in *The Little Prince*<sup>6</sup>. However, when Lorenzo Milani wanted to explain his task with his boys, he used 4 intransitive verbs:

*“Come potevo spiegare a loro così pii e così puliti che io i miei figli li amo che ho perso la testa per loro, che non vivo che per farli crescere, per farli aprire, per farli sbocciare, per farli fruttare?”*<sup>7</sup> [make them grow, open, sprout and bear fruit].

The confusion between teaching and educating is denounced by many authors. The most frequent excess is to instrumentalize teaching to model the learner: what the potter decides is taught and hidden from him. By the way, the primordial potter was Yahweh himself and he made Adam for freedom (Gen 2,7). Suffice it to quote from my collection of authors alarmed at calling what is no more than immoral cloning education.

“The very bottom of civilization – taking this word in all the pejorative value that is sometimes necessary – consists precisely in being able to educate men; that is, to intervene in the abysses of the human being where the springs of action are. Education is little less artificial than grafting and makes man give fruits different from the original ones (...)” Antonio Tovar, *Vida de Sócrates* (Alianza, Madrid 1999) 203.

- “Saramago spoke about the current situation of education. In his opinion, the word “instruction” has been erroneously replaced by “education”. “The school can instruct its students, but it cannot educate them because it neither has the means nor is its purpose” (El País 10.26.2005).
- “The [French] Republic is honored not to confuse the instruction of spirits with the seduction of souls (...) Nothing authorizes a lay professor to believe himself superior, alien to these fanaticisms and superstitions, perched on some moral Aventine ...” Régis Debray, “Qu'est-ce qu'un fait religieux?": *Études* 3973 (2002)169-180.
- “Teaching seriously is putting your hands on what is most vital to a human being. It is seeking access to the living flesh, to the most intimate part of the integrity of a child or an adult. A Master invades, breaks in, and can rampage to cleanse and rebuild. ... Bad teaching is, almost literally, murderous and, metaphorically, a sin (...) It instills in the sensitivity of the child or adult the most corrosive of acids, boredom, the methane gas of ennui” George Steiner, *Lessons from the teachers* (Siruela, Madrid 2003) 26.
- “The nuns opened a school for the girls of the tribes. But since they did not come voluntarily, they were brought with the help of the Civil Guard. Some of these girls, after a time on the mission, had lost all contact with their family world and could not return to the life from which they had been rescued. What happened to them then? They were entrusted to the representatives of civilization who passed through Santa María de Nieva -engineers, soldiers, merchants-, who wore them as servants. The dramatic thing was that the missionaries not only did not realize the consequences of the entire operation but also, to carry it out, they gave evidence of true heroism” Mario Vargas-Llosa, “In the country of a thousand faces”: *El País dominical* 26.2 .1984.

In fact, while we try to educate children and young people at school, we educate ourselves – them and us – in this immense collective of consumption. And then, what does authentic education consist of? We urgently need to immediately clarify the concepts and the sound words that want to represent them. They should not be taken for granted. A recently graduated economist said that economics was the science necessary to enrich companies or individuals. - No, excuse me. The mission of the economy is not to enrich anyone, but to fairly distribute limited resources. He had made an entire university career on a false idea! And I myself, a Piarist, had to discover very late that compulsory school is compensatory and that teachers are paid for the last of the class, not to get the best ahead. A constant error in Pedagogy.

How to distinguish well instruction (school) and education (human)? If they are confused, fear of public

schools grows and confessional schools are required, which does not happen in Catholic Italy, for example. Now, better than going through the History of education, or citing authors who distinguish them, or etymologies and underlying images...

## A simple phenomenology of education

Without a doubt, they are two independent processes and education lasts longer than learning: a lifetime. One fact clearly differentiates them: there are very mature illiterate people and, scholars, very little realized as humans. We know them all.

Teaching and its effect on learning also last a long time from early childhood. Many things are taught and learned – even without teachers – that are very important or not so important. Didactics deals with them. The Spanish law of 1990 (LOGSE) summarized them in three large blocks: knowledge (facts, concepts, and principles); procedures (which are abilities or skills and techniques of all kinds); and, finally, norms, social values, and attitudes (even moral ones). There is much to learn! to develop one's own abilities and skills, as they say now (because they serve to compete). Calasanz remains the giant of teaching in the modern age: he established it in infancy and offered it free to the poor. He created the public school and we cannot camouflage it.

But education is different: it refers to personal growth or general maturation throughout life. It is an existential and continuous response to the many challenges and calls that come to us from abroad. It is something dynamic, harmonious, and integral to the whole person, which does not happen apart from others, but with them. That is what the cultures of each people are: responses elaborated over centuries to natural and historical ethnic challenges.

Would we know how to describe our own growth? Our lives depend on it, even without dedicating ourselves to these trades.

Both phenomena occur in different experiences: education in the congenital responsibility of the human being, the Listener of the word (K. Rahner); and learning in attention, exercise, and habits. Teaching is highly variable and rich in methods (didactics) and prefers childhood; instead, personal growth varies greatly from one person to another. Why don't pedagogues talk more about such educational triggered experiences as Baden Powell's Scouting? Was it because he was out of school?

At the center of personal development are relationships. Good and bad and different from each other. We all become (educated) in our ties with the immense reality. Paulo Freire divided them into three large areas: relations with others, with the other (human environments such as Nature and the creations that we call cultures and history) and, finally, with the Other (the Mystery of our own lives that many of us call God). And he sums it up like this:

*Existing is a dynamic concept, it implies an eternal dialogue of man with man, of man with the world, of the man with his Creator. It is this dialogue of man about the world and with the world itself, about his challenges and problems that make him historic.<sup>9</sup>*

The educational importance of relationships is also pointed out by **Pope Francis** in the school, and he insists on the relationship of love to students:

*The school is really made of a valid and qualified instruction, but also of human relations, which on our part are relations of welcome, of benevolence. Without reducing everything to the sole transmission of technical sciences, but aiming to build an educational relationship with each student, who should feel welcomed and loved for who they are, with all their limitations and potentials (...) Love their students more intensely more difficult, weaker, more disadvantaged... loving more students who do not want to study, those who find themselves in conditions of deprivation, the disabled and foreigners, who today are a great challenge for the school.<sup>10</sup>*

No one imposes relationships on us, nor are they a spontaneous phenomenon. Each one is offered their own story full of chance and unforeseen events. Some are accepted and others are rejected, but all form the personal fabric itself. Over the years, I see it more and more clearly in the lives of my own students

of that House-school: many of their stories totally surpassed me. It was they – and not me – who wove their own lives: with their family – broken or not –, with their intimate inclinations and interests, with their opportunities and their physical and economic limits, etc. I could only offer them a new supportive relationship and admire their courage in such difficult situations. They gave me a hundred laps. **Don Milani** wrote: “I have only taught them to express themselves and they have taught me to live”. So, the first essential condition to step on the educational ground is to know well that network of relationships where each of our "students" is sustained. The second is that our relationship with them be love. Bluntly.

Relationships increase our experiences; they are extensions of the soul that prolong the person and make them grow. A friend rediscovered after many years is still himself, but he is very changed: his new relationships have transformed him. Like me. And it is that we educate, we educate ourselves. That is why our magazine is called *Educar(NOS)*.

And **Freire**, in anonymous agreement with **Lorenzo Milani**, adds the importance of the word in all possible relationships with the mysterious reality. You must name it and, if not, it remains opaque. The bad thing about false teachers is that they give us the reality already mentioned. And the Brazilian says:

*To exist, humanly, is to pronounce the world, it is to transform it. The pronounced world, in turn, returns problematized to the pronouncers, demanding a new pronouncement from them. Men are not made in silence, but in words, in work, in action, in reflection.*<sup>11</sup>

For this reason, we educate ourselves together – “in communion”, says **Freire** –, but “mediatized by the world”, which very few underline. To mediatize is a treacherous verb – Portuguese and Spanish – that does not exist in Italian and has another meaning in French<sup>12</sup>. It is unclear for Freire's translators and unfortunately, they mislead many readers<sup>13</sup>.

Today the media leads us to the media and confuses us even more. The Royal Spanish Academy establishes it as follows: to mediate is to “intervene by hindering or preventing the freedom of action of a person or institution in the exercise of their activities or functions”. So, the world conditions and complicates our growth; that is, our relationship with them, with it, and with Him. All of the reality challenges us, because it is not as obvious as the false banking educators believe and say, who know it all.

## When teaching and education kiss

I would not like the NFE to despise school instruction to dedicate itself only to education. In the Casa-escuela Santiago 1 we never did it. It would be a huge waste if, in the NFE structures that you, I suppose, create for the poor, you did not attempt teaching of any kind. I know a wonderful *doposcuola* on the outskirts of Madrid, created by the great Piarist Rosa Blanco (rip), where a volunteer told me that, due to his children's rejection of school, he preferred that they only play in the *doposcuola*, without homework. On the other hand, the Mexican homework school in which Fr. Segalés worked, and the popular schools of Sant'Egidio – today called “of peace” – do both.

I already know that the crisis of the current school is very deep. “It smells like money,” Pope Francis told us in 2015 as he closed the GE congress. It is true, the current school is completely oriented to labor and economic demand and is evaluated by international organizations in this regard, such as the OECD with the PISA program. But it still contains unique possibilities that NFE should not ignore it not only corrects unfair human and social inequality; also, and in convergence with education, it can open schoolchildren to new personal relationships. Francis, on May 10, 2014, before the entire Italian school – Catholic or not – gathered in Saint Peter's Square, compared the school to a window open to the world:

*I love school because it is synonymous with openness to reality. At least that's how it should be!... Going to school means opening your mind and heart to reality, in the richness of its aspects, its dimensions. And this is beautiful!... [and he added, quoting a pope for the first time:] This was also taught by a great Italian educator, who was a priest: Don Lorenzo Milani*<sup>14</sup>.

Has the current Youth Synod counted on the school? I am anxious to see him. But I am sure that this quality of the school also fascinated **Calasanz** himself, and not only social justice. It is the educational aspect of his writings, sometimes in the form of "good morals" or "Christian piety" that mattered so much to him. A clear distinction between teaching and educating hardly stands out explicitly in don **Milani and in Freire**. For example, Freire calls banking education what he describes as depository teaching in the student. His liberating education is something else. He is also passionate about teaching, even referring to the adult school. An ironic paragraph by Don Milani shows very well that he distinguished them clearly:

*There was a Greek teacher who was highly hated. But his students learned Greek well. I don't even see how the two can be related, when it is so obvious that the mission of the Greek teacher is to teach Greek and not to be loved.<sup>15</sup>*

*Or this one: If [Gianni's father] could do it himself, he wouldn't send Gianni to school. It is up to you to replace him in everything: instruction and education. They are two sides of the same problem."<sup>16</sup>*

The Pope and our three giants warn: this is how school should be! A critical window open to the world. They know that many, instead of showing their students to the world, hide it from them. They distract them with their programs and suspense and hide reality from them. Let's find the match:

### The key to merge

1. For a long time I have considered that the greatest educational (and didactic, at the same time) genius of Lorenzo Milani in Barbiana has been to seek the confluence of learning with the difficult personal development of rural students who are so marginalized.
2. If it is true that no one educates anyone, much less based on teaching and learning, we have also seen that knowledge of the world acts as a call to our relationship with it. He asks us for an answer. This is Barbiana's open secret: knowing reality and trying to call her – in the group – by her real name, her call is heard! The slogan of that tiny school was I Care: I care, it goes with me.
3. New techniques of their own were needed, by the way, full of learning: reading the press, intentional trips, guests who allowed themselves to be asked, writing and personal reflection, collective writing and constant debate among all, time full etc In everything he tried to provoke the response and the relationship of the students with so many people and current affairs. Provoke, rather than ask and satisfy their demands! [What do you like? it is a question of the trade and the brothel]. Better to break into their interests and problems (and we have already said that, sometimes, they surpass us...) and facilitate their expansion into new relationships. I cannot find a former student of Santiago Uno who does not remember and appreciate reading the newspaper, the trips, the interrogations of the guests... etc. The rest of the learning was more instrumental<sup>17</sup>.
4. Letter to a teacher, 50 years ago, he proposed these techniques to any school and, above all, to those of Teaching, so that education would kiss teaching and break its spell. It has been translated into more than 60 languages and has aroused enthusiasm everywhere, especially in impoverished countries. But the official school does not assume them and it worsens<sup>18</sup>.
5. Our proposal here, 47 years ago (1971), was to apply the Charter to a teacher in a new structure of **Extra-School Education** (EEE): a House-school, cooperative of the poor for the poor. It was essential that educators – I have yet to find a less anti-Freirian name! – We were all volunteers, and we did not live at the expense of the boys, but of our work outside the House, while they learned their manual trades, in general, in public schools in the city.

Until recently I did not dare to narrate this double Salamancon foundation, and I have done it in Italian in the dramatic form of the Catholic school<sup>19</sup>.