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### **Spiritan Pedagogy: A Handbook**

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# *Spiritan Pedagogy*

A H A N D B O O K

Center for Spiritan Studies



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## ABBREVIATIONS

Bagamoyo	XX General Chapter Bagamoyo 2012 Clivo di Cinna, Rome, 2013
Itaici	The General Chapter 1992. Itaici, Brazil Clivo di Cinna, Rome, 1992
Maynooth	General Chapter 1998. Maynooth, Ireland “Lunch out into the Deep” Clivo di Cinna, Rome
N.D.	Notes et Documents Relatifs à la Vie et à L’Ouvre du Vénérable François-Marie-Paul Libermann. 13 vols + 2 Appendices. Paris. 1929-1956.
Spiritana Horizons	A Journal of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Duquesne University Pittsburgh. 2006-
SRL	Spiritana Rule of Life, 1987
Laudato Si	Pope Francis Encyclical Letter Laudato Si, on Care for our Common Home Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015

## INTRODUCTION

This *Handbook* on recent directions in Spiritan Education first presents documents of the Congregation, then reflections by the U.S. Province and the Province of Ireland. You may notice both the evolution of ideas (later documents build on, advance, and/or comment on what preceded) and the common trends running through all. For a bibliography of Spiritan education, consult the online Spiritan Collection.

A meeting of twelve Spiritans, representatives of Spiritan formal and alternative educational works around the globe, and five members of the General Council took place at the generalate in Rome, 3–9 July 2011. Its mandate was to take stock of the mission of education in the Congregation and to prepare a position on education for the 2012 General Chapter. It issued the document, “Reflections on Educational Commitments in the Congregation of the Holy Spirit,” edited by George Boran, C.S.Sp. and John Assey, C.S.Sp., and published in *Spiritan Life*, no. 23 (September 2013) 14-22: *Spiritans in Education*. The group measured Spiritan educational works worldwide with the criterion of the Spiritan charism, namely, the evangelization of the poor, as laid out in *the Spiritan Rule of Life*, 4. Part of this document was published in *Spiritan Horizons* 9 (Fall 2014) 66-72.

The XX General Chapter met in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, in July 2012. As customary for chapters, hours of debate and reels of position papers are succinctly summarized in a few directives. In the Introduction to the section on mission, the Chapter made an important statement:

1.4 As we come together in Bagamoyo - a place highly symbolic of the enslavement of black people for centuries, but symbolic too of the part played by the first Spiritan missionaries who came to bring the Gospel to Eastern Africa - we restate forcefully our mission to bear witness to the Gospel of justice, of peace and of reconciliation in what we say and in what we do. We renew once more our focus on education as a way to the integral liberation of individuals and peoples to whom we are sent.

Among the decisions on Mission as Education, the Chapter pledged to provide appropriate training, and to transmit the Spiritan vision and ethos, to all involved in our educational establishments.

The Bagamoyo Chapter called on the general council to elaborate a *Guide for Spiritan Education* for the whole Congregation. The general council prepared that document and presented it to the Enlarged General Council meeting in Rome in July 2016. Spiritan education is not only formal, it also incorporates informal education in various contexts and ministries, all in the service of the uplifting of the poor and marginalized. The nine articulations of Spiritan values in educational works are particularly important. The administrative parts of this document have not been included; those interested can consult the online Spiritan Collection.

The Spiritan Province of the United States was among the first in recent times to evolve directions on Spiritan education in the United States. Its “The Heartbeat of Spiritan Education in the United States” was prepared for, and adopted by, the 2009 Provincial Chapter. It was published in *Spiritan Horizons* 8 (Fall 2013) 101–114.

The Spiritan Province of Ireland has been a pioneer in Spiritan education ever since the foundation of Blackrock College in 1860. The Irish *Education Ethos* has inspired the teachers and staff of the five Spiritan colleges to take responsibility for Spiritan vision and ethos in education in Ireland.

Openness to the Spirit sometimes means that ethos and values receive differing expressions and emphasis depending on context. Spiritan pedagogy manifests itself in diverse ways, a unity in diversity.

*James Chukwuma Okoye, C.S.Sp.  
Director, Center for Spiritan Studies*

## 1. REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENTS IN THE CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Rome Meeting. July 3–9, 2011.

### INTRODUCTION

A meeting of twelve Spiritans, representatives of Spiritan formal and alternative educational works around the globe and five members of the general council took place on 3 – 9 July 2011, at the generalate in Rome. The meeting was called by the general council to reflect on the mission of our Congregation with regard to education to help Spiritan educators to work more effectively and to prepare a contribution for the General Chapter in 2012. We do not seek to set out a strict and unbending coordination of our works of education, in the sense of a Spiritan Service of Education, but rather a consensus on the spirituality that should be common to all aspects of Spiritan education.

This is the second conference of Spiritan educators worldwide to be convened by the general council after that of 1991 at Duquesne. The Maynooth Chapter that followed the Duquesne Symposium called on Spiritans to develop the educational mission, “to make young people aware of the problems of poverty and unjust structures in their society and the world at large.” The Chapter encouraged Spiritans to work with lay people in a collaborative ministry. The training of confreres as educators was seen as important (Maynooth 2. 13-16). The objective of our meeting is quite rightly to go beyond what Maynooth had to say, or, at least, to propose concrete means to ensure that our involvement in education will correspond faithfully to our Spiritan charism. Twenty years after these conclusions there has been considerable growth in the importance of education within the Spiritan mission. The variety of Spiritan involvement in education that emerged from the reports was encouraging.

In his introductory talk to the meeting, the Councilor for Education stated: “You have been called together to engage in a reflection on an important aspect of the mission of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit in the world. Although the specific mission of our Congregation is not to work in educational enterprises, a large number of our members are engaged in education and continue to work in that area as a means of fulfilling this mission.”

### Objectives of our Work Session

This period of reflection was organized to help the Congregation to define its educational policy, to speak in a special way to our involvements at primary, secondary, and third level.

We need to define better the *philosophy* (the “*ethos*”) of our Congregation for our educational works. The aim was to examine four issues:

- To analyze the present situation of Spiritan involvement in education.
- Why and in what circumstances ought we as Spiritans to become involved in establishing educational works or participate in them? What is the motivation which drives us to do this?
- What results do we expect when we become involved in educational work? What are the means to attain these results (style of life, teaching staff...)?
- What directives and/or advice do we wish to give to Spiritans with regard to educational works?

### Methodology of the Meeting

The meeting was conducted in the form of shared experiences where the participants were both listeners and experts. Participants presented individual reports on the situation of Spiritan educational works in different geographical areas of the world. The reports followed a sequence of topics that had been circulated previously. After the reports a methodology of group work and plenary sessions was adopted to study the different issues relating to our works. A redaction commission made up of George Boran and John Assey helped to organize and systematize the principal ideas that emerged during the five day meeting. The following sequence of steps guided the group work and plenary sessions:

- From what we have heard, what are the most *fundamental issues* for education?
- What are the *criteria or motivations* that should guide us in our involvement or our disengagement?
- What *convictions and guidelines* do we want to present to the General Chapter concerning the educational works in the Congregation?
- *Elaboration of the text* to be presented to the General Chapter.

The statement in one of the reports that, “education can be one of the most powerful weapons against poverty, ignorance and disease by helping people to improve their lives,” struck a chord among the participants. For this reason all Spiritans who have Catholic schools within the boundaries of their parishes are encouraged to be supportive of these works.

### The Spiritan Charism and Educational Works

Claude Poullart des Places established his work out of concern for the poorest, “for humble and laborious ministries where the Church does not have workers” (biographical note on Claude Francois Poullart des Places) and was involved in seminary education. Libermann is not generally regarded as an instigator of educational work. However, he was quick to notice that one could not work for the emancipation of the poor without working for their education (N.D, VIII, p. 248, N.D, IX, p. 44). Over the years, many schools have been established by Spiritans. Many other alternative educational works were founded and are still in existence as we try to respond with the necessary creativity to the needs of the peoples among whom we work. Spiritan engagements in education remain very numerous. We wish to fulfil the mission of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and to be faithful to our charism. This invites us to take a look at what the Spiritan Rule of Life has to say on the subject. Our mission in the Church is described in Article 4: “The evangelization of the poor (cf. Luke 4, 18) is our purpose (cf. N. D. XIII, 170).” To become involved on behalf of the poorest is to wish to empower and enable them to play the role in society which is theirs according to the will of God (cf. SRL 14). One of the privileged means of achieving this end is through works of education, as Libermann very clearly understood.

A paragraph from the report on the Duquesne Symposium in 1991 summarizes our experience and gives us a sense of continuity and evolution:

“The scope and variety of Spiritan involvement in education came as a surprise to many. Of particular significance was the acceptance and even the stress on the importance of non-formal education. Gratifying, too, was the spirit in which educators resolved to implement the orientation of SRL in the educational apostolates, especially provisions regarding to justice and the poor.”

### Our Convictions with Regard to Spiritan Educational Works

We reaffirm educational works as an important priority in the Congregation. Spiritans need to discuss and define a *vision* and an *ethos* for our educational works. In any organization, vision and ethos are central to its identity, because they give it inspiration and direction. Vision and ethos are two sides of the same coin and are fundamental for the Spiritan identity of

our works. A *vision* refers to the purpose of the organization, to where we want to get in the future, what direction we are going. Vision will include some of the following elements: integral development, empowerment, people being subjects of their own destiny, liberation from poverty, educating for citizenship, quality and excellence, passing on a value system in the midst of a crisis of values in a world where there is an erosion of human dignity and where people can be driven by a culture of materialism and greed (pop stars, possessions, gadgets...).

The *ethos* is the philosophy, the spirituality, our way of doing things, the climate in which we work, the atmosphere, the culture. Ethos refers to how the vision is lived out in daily practice. Important elements are: the spirit of “*cor unum et anima una*” (one heart and one mind), being there for oneself, for others, and for the world; genuinely Catholic in an open and non-fundamentalist way that is refreshing.

This vision and ethos need to be expressed in the mission statement of each of our educational works.

Our commitment in education cannot be reduced to our presence only in formal structures such as schools. Spiritans are involved in education in many contexts and different situations. Our educational works seek to answer the *most urgent needs of people*, keeping in mind the option for the poor and the difficulty in getting workers as expressed in SRL 4. Although schools need to be financially viable, the establishment of schools to raise money will be avoided as it undermines the Spiritan charism. Other alternatives should be sought.

Our educational works should be driven by two options:

- A clear option for the most vulnerable and the materially poor (SRL 4).
- An option to contribute to the building and presentation of a liberating vision of *faith and the Church which is relevant* to people strongly influenced by modern and postmodern cultures. A more secularist attitude advances rapidly also in large cities in developing countries.

Our educational works should be concerned with:

- The *personal, academic and integral development* of its pupils.
- *Forming people as citizens to build a better society*. This latter aspect involves creating awareness of the deeper structural causes of social ills

so that people cannot be naively manipulated by unscrupulous leaders. It also involves education for justice and peace and integrity of creation issues and the need to strengthen *civil society*.

- *The development of a faith that gives dynamism for transforming ourselves and society* in the light of the values of the Reign of God.

We need to get acquainted with and respect the wide diversity of educational works in the Congregation and not impose a unified model on all. We seek to evaluate and renew our educational works on a continuous basis by looking at strengths, weaknesses, challenges, opportunities, and the need for adaptation where that arises. Sometimes the work evolves and we find that we have gone away from the original motivation and abandoned our charism. We should leave when we become irrelevant with regard to our charism. Another option is to find new motivation and a new focus that is in line with our charism.

We see our work with lay people, in a spirit of collaborative ministry, as a priority. Lay people participate in mission because of a direct call from Jesus Christ through baptism, not primarily because of a mandate from the priest or bishop or because there is a scarcity of Spiritan priests. Through baptism there is a fundamental equality of the different members of the Mystical Body. We differ only in the different ministries or services that we undertake. A key issue is that of succession. When a work is in line with the charism and taken on by the Congregation, we need to plan for continuity. If not, when the “founder” goes the work ceases to exist. Continuity and replacement need to be dealt with in all Spiritan works.

The educational community – staff, teachers, facilitators, parents - are invited to *transmit the Spiritan vision and ethos* by their word and example. For this purpose Spiritans need to organize leadership training programs, talks and events that will create this awareness and spirit among all those involved. The selection and hiring of suitable people is a key issue here.

The most powerful factor in attracting vocations — religious and lay — to continue the work we do is the contact with Spiritans who live out their vocation in a coherent and joyous manner and are at the service of others. Contact with a community that lives the vision and ethos of the Spiritan charism is another important factor.

We need to form educators, by preparing specialized people, such as teachers and managers, for our formal educational works. But we also need to prepare competent people in the use of the non-formal approach that



starts with peoples' lives and uses the inductive methodology. As in many situations we don't have a captive audience so we need facilitators capable of motivating people to participate in an on-going process where they have ownership and that leads to commitment. This non-formal educational approach is effective in both formal education and alternative educational works.

Today, everybody with less than 25 years of age was born in the new digital age of e-mail, Facebook, Yahoo Groups, Skype, YouTube, Homepage, Blogs, Google, Flickr (photos), mobile phones, e.t.c. Young people are connected to each other on a continuous basis through these new media. In different virtual groups they discuss personal and social issues and pass on texts and photos that can have the effect of creating awareness and commitment. In our educational work we can use these new media as an important ally. It is important to keep the focus that all *our works exist to evangelize* while welcoming and respecting other traditions and faiths.

#### Guidelines, Initial Observations

New works are, frequently, the result of initiatives by individuals. These works may remain as individual projects or are taken on by the circumscription. Sometimes only the individual is interested in them and knows what is going on. The ideal is that educational projects be owned by all.

We need some guidelines for our educational works. What are the criteria for establishing works of the Congregation? It is important not to kill initiative, but at the same time the Congregation may be held responsible in certain circumstances if there are no guidelines. There may be financial, accounting, legal, and work-related questions that involve labor laws that need to be taken into account. What is the duty of the circumscription? Should we have a policy for the establishment of new educational works, of the registration of property? Should the General Chapter draw up new guidelines? How do you guarantee solidity without killing initiative?

The context and the challenges can be very different in developed countries and developing countries and for that reason it may be best to establish general guidelines on the level of the Congregation and allow each circumscription to establish its own policies. So we need guidelines on the following issues:

- The establishment of *new educational works* and mission statements for each educational work.

- *The training of personnel* for formal educational works such as schools and universities and also for alternative educational works that use a more inductive method of formation.
- *The exchange of personnel.* Sometimes there is a lack of personnel for a particular educational work but there are qualified personnel in other parts of the Congregation.
- Funding and financial management and control.
- *Contracts with dioceses* when we are asked to take over schools.

## 2. MISSION AS EDUCATION

Bagamoyo General Chapter, 2012

### MISSION IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

#### Introduction

1.3 As we acknowledge the real and potential benefits of present day globalisation, we are aware that it has unfortunately contributed to the emergence of new forms of poverty. Among these “new poor” are young people in difficulty, migrants, people who are discriminated against and oppressed, and those marginalised by the phenomenon of globalisation. This is why our mission to evangelise the poor, following the example of Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann, our ancestors, remains relevant: “The evangelisation of the ‘poor’ is our purpose” (SRL 4).

1.4 As we come together in Bagamoyo - a place highly symbolic of the enslavement of black people for centuries, but symbolic too of the part played by the first Spiritan missionaries who came to bring the Gospel to Eastern Africa - we restate forcefully our mission to bear witness to the Gospel of justice, of peace and of reconciliation in what we say and in what we do. We renew once more our focus on education as a way to the integral liberation of individuals and peoples to whom we are sent.

### MISSION AS EDUCATION

- 1.28 The General Council shall elaborate a *Guide for Spiritan Education* for the whole Congregation.
- 1.29 Each circumscription that has educational works will train members for that mission.
- 1.30 The General Council will work with all circumscriptions that have educational works to create a network. It will encourage the exchange of personnel among those who are qualified in the field of education.
- 1.31 Each circumscription or Union of Circumscriptions will pay special attention to legal matters, making a clear distinction between the works and possessions of the Congregation and those that belong to others.
- 1.32 Through our personal witness and the provision of appropriate training, we will transmit the Spiritan vision and ethos to all those involved in our educational establishments (management, employees, teachers, parents, and students).

### 3. GUIDE FOR SPIRITAN EDUCATION

Enlarged General Council, 2016

#### INTRODUCTION

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans), founded in 1703 by Claude Poullart des Places (1679-1709) and later on renewed by Francis Libermann (1802-1852), is a worldwide Catholic religious institution of religious brothers and priests. The Founders' spirit has manifested itself through successive generations of Spiritans, who in different times, contexts, and in varied forms have been involved in educational works<sup>1</sup> as part of an overall strategy of evangelisation. Across the world Spiritans are involved in a broad spectrum of social and educational works<sup>1</sup> both formal and informal (Maynooth 2.12). Formal education includes institutions at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, whereas informal education works attend to the social, pastoral, and community development needs of adults, youth, adolescents, and children. The inspiration for the Spiritan presence in all these educational endeavors can be found in our tradition and the values we hold, which have been passed on in the Congregation through the living heritage of the Founders.

The 2012 General Chapter in Bagamoyo emphasized education as a constitutive element of our Spiritan mission and mandated the General Council to “elaborate a *Guide for Spiritan Education* for the whole Congregation” (1.28). This guide aims at articulating fundamental elements of the Spiritan education ministry in fidelity to the intuition of the Founders and our rich experience in pastoral, social and educational works. As a guide it also seeks to provide guidelines and criteria for the formulation of education policies relevant to each circumscription. We recognize that the elaboration of any education policy document must be adapted to the local reality, taking into account the diverse cultural, ecclesial, social, governmental and legal requirements of each country as well as the particular reality of the Spiritan circumscription.

We gratefully recognize and thank the many Spiritans and lay colleagues who have written and shared from their wealth of experience and knowledge of Spiritan education over many years. We also wish to recognize and commend the work already done in some circumscriptions in producing

<sup>1</sup>For the sake of clarity, the phrase *educational works* is used throughout this document in the broad sense to signify Spiritan involvement in seminaries, schools, colleges and universities as well as pastoral, social, human and development programmes with an education component, whether or not the Congregation is the owner of the project.



Rev. Fr. Adrian van Kaam, C.S.Sp. in a Duquesne University classroom during early 1970s.

policy and other documents so as to help shape the future of Spiritana involvement in education in their locality. In an effort to build a common vision, this guide draws upon these resources and has brought together many of the reflections and ideas shared by Spiritans involved in educational works.

## I. MISSION AS EDUCATION: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1.1 Spiritana involvement in education began when Claude Poullart des Places established a community for poor students who themselves would become “*humble and laborious ministers*” among the poorest and most abandoned classes of his time in France. Although Francis Libermann is not known as an instigator of educational works, nevertheless, at the time when slavery in many parts of the world was coming to an end, he intuitively recognized the fundamental role of education in the emancipation of the poor and its importance for the integral development of future citizens. Without doubt, he understood the work of evangelisation in a holistic sense and wanted his missionaries to work for the development of persons in all aspects of life: education “*not only from the point of view of moral training but also from the point of view of intellectual and physical formation, that is to say, in teaching, agriculture and trades*” (N.D. VIII, 248). These convictions led him to express in his correspondence with M. Aragon that “*if we abandon the schools we will destroy the future of the missions*” (N.D. IX, 44 and 50-51). It is under Libermann’s inspirational vision that the Congregation began to grow and develop its educational, missionary and pastoral ministries in many countries in Europe, Africa and elsewhere.

1.2 The Spiritana Rule of Life (SRL) lays out the foundations of the Spiritana charism and mission in the Church. SRL 4 says “*The evangelization of the “poor” (cf. Lk 4:18) is our purpose (cf. N.D. XIII, 170). Therefore we go especially to peoples, groups and individuals who have not yet heard the message of the Gospel or who have scarcely heard it, to those whose needs are the greatest, and to the oppressed. We also willingly accept tasks for which the Church has difficulty in finding workers.*” SRL 18 refers to educational works as being among principal activities of the Spiritana mission: “*fostering Christian communities and the education and training of a committed and responsible laity; vocations’ ministry; training for ministries and for the missionary and the religious life; engaging in social and educational work in line with our Spiritana calling; awakening an understanding of the universal mission of justice, and of kinship between people.*” Furthermore SRL 18.1 reminds us that one of the “*important tasks of our times [is] youth apostolate, because the present situation of young people is crying out more than ever for social and educational works.*”

1.3 Recent General Chapters of the Congregation noted a renewed impetus and growing involvement of the Congregation in education works, especially among younger circumscriptions. The 1992 Itaiçi Chapter singled out education as a tool of liberation which “*opens the door to a decent human life, while giving a glimpse of the Lord’s special love for the disadvantaged*” (Itaiçi 14). The 1998 Maynooth Chapter reaffirmed the Spiritana commitment to the poor, naming education as an integral part of our mission of evangelisation (Maynooth 2.13 - 2.16). More recently the 2012 Bagamoyo Chapter not only identified education as an essential aspect of Spiritana mission today, but also called for more coordination in education works in the whole Congregation (1.28 and 1.30).

1.4 In conclusion we can say that the Founders themselves, SRL, and successive chapters present educational works as a clear expression of our missionary vocation within a diversity of apostolic commitments. Furthermore, Spiritana involvement in a variety of educational works has long been considered an important tool for holistic evangelisation, empowerment, and human development in many parts of the world. Today, in the context of a globalized world, our involvement in education requires of Spiritans and our collaborators a listening heart and an attentiveness to where the Spirit is calling us “*to respond creatively to the needs of evangelisation of our times*” (SRL 2).

## II. SPIRITANA VALUES IN EDUCATIONAL WORKS

The person of Jesus Christ is at the centre of all Spiritana education works and therefore Gospel values must permeate the entire educational experience. Any institution or organisation is identified by the values for which it stands. Likewise the Congregation has faith-based values which also embody the living heritage of the Founders. These inherited values, in essence, make Spiritana education Spiritana. Therefore any Spiritana education initiative, whether formal or informal, is expected to inculcate the following values which manifest Spiritana identity and to transmit them from one generation to the next.

### 2.1 Preferential Option for the Poor

Since the stated purpose of the Congregation in SRL 4 is the “*evangelisation of the “poor” (Lk 4:18)*”, each educational work through its mission, vision and ethos statements, will seek to make this fundamental element of the Spiritana charism a lived reality that gives inspiration and direction. For God loves all people, but his first love is the forgotten, the oppressed and the poor. Consequently Spiritana educational works are called to see the reality of the world from the perspective of the poor, forgotten and oppressed,

because that is God's perspective. This preferential option for the poor is equally expressed in our personal lifestyle and in our way of living as an educational community (Maynooth 2.12 Education; Bagamoyo 1.6; 2.5 and 2.6).

### 2.2 Faith Development

Spiritana educational works actively encourage the recognition of God's presence in the world and seek to develop a personal faith in the person of Jesus Christ that is dynamic and life-giving. We invite all stakeholders to share in our Spiritana spirituality and like Jesus, we seek to be *"led by the Spirit"* (Luke 4:1) in our relationships, choices, behaviours and decisions in building the Reign of God in the here and now.

### 2.3 A Community of Respectful Relationships

We foster a family spirit of belonging, care for others, mutual support and a sense of community where the quality of relationships matters. Our educational works are places where the paths of many cross in significant ways and where human experience has the potential to be enriched through respectful relationships and mutual learning, which in turn become the foundation for building community and relationships beyond our education centres. In our educational communities, where administrators, educators, staff, students, parents, family members, and supportive friends continually interact, we value diversity and gender differences as a gift from God and recognize the importance of transparency, the collaboration of all and accountability in building mutual trust.

### 2.4 Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

We make ourselves *"the advocates, the supporters and the defenders of the weak and the little ones against all who oppress them"* (SRL14). Furthermore, Bagamoyo clearly identified *"education as a way to the integral liberation of individuals and peoples"* (1.4) and the work of "JPIC" as central to Spiritana identity (2.5). As Pope Francis says, *"the world's problems cannot be analysed or explained in isolation.... Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society"* (Laudato Si, 61 & 91). Consequently, an important task of Spiritana educational works is the integration of the social dimensions into learning programmes that involve creating awareness of the deeper structural causes of oppression, poverty and the destruction of creation.

### 2.5 Holistic and Person-Centred Education

Spiritana education seeks to provide the fullest possible growth experience by prioritising the integration of the spiritual, human, intellectual, physical,

social, and cultural potential of each individual student. Students are assisted in their human growth through a pedagogy and practice based on reflection and action that enables them to experience a deeper way of thinking and living, thus preparing youth to discover their vocation in life as conscientious citizens.

### 2.6 Academic Excellence

Spiritana educational works are committed to academic excellence in teaching and instruction both in and out of the classroom. Students are helped to gain knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes that are relevant to their life experience. We seek to motivate with insights and encourage individuals to strive for excellence at the level of each one's potential, thus providing an all-round educational experience that helps persons find their way in life.

### 2.7 Inclusion and Dialogue with Other Faith Traditions

Spiritana educational works are welcoming and inclusive of all, regardless of any form of disability, ethnic, social or religious backgrounds. In dialogue with people of different Christian traditions and faiths, our educational works seek to be instruments of reconciliation, respect and mutual trust where there are divisions or disunity along cultural, social, religious or tribal lines.

### 2.8 A Spirit of Service and of Sharing

In the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, offering service and sharing of any kind with Jesus and the community of his followers are central to the Christian way of life. Luke's Gospel shows how Jesus Christ attended to everyone, both rich and poor, and how he received financial patronage to assist him in his ministry (Lk 8:1-3).

Consequently at the heart of our educational works is a spirit of service and sharing with those we work with and serve. Therefore, the gifts, resources, and talents of the educational community are offered in service, so as to develop the unique potential of each individual and to serve our neighbour not as a charity but in justice. For *'when someone is given a great deal, a great deal will be demanded of that person'* (Lk 12:48) and *'if anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all'* (Mk 9:35).

### 2.9 Evaluation, Renewal & Initiative

SRL 25 calls upon Spiritans to be *"attentive to the signs of the times"* and to *"re-examine periodically the reasons that underlie our present commitment and our present apostolate."* Such a re-examination or evaluation of commitments and apostolates, done in collaboration with our partners, may lead us to leave a particular educational project that no longer

contributes to the ideals and overall purpose of the Congregation or to its renewal by making adaptations and by finding a new focus or motivation or, alternatively, by establishing a completely new educational initiative.

### III. SPIRITANS IN INFORMAL EDUCATION WORKS

3.1 Over the years many informal educational works have been founded and continue in a creative response to the needs of people and especially to the youth among whom we work. These works are numerous and varied in their response to local needs and situations. Unfortunately, poverty and social exclusion continue in many parts of the world and governments are not always able to respond to the educational needs of marginalised people or engage in social programmes that tend to have little to do with training and the development of such groups. Consequently, many informal educational works run by Spiritans are small in nature and are aimed at having a high impact on a specific and identifiable group within a community or parish or on a regional level. However, some informal works also have a national or even international outreach. Concrete examples are to be found in the areas of basic literacy, employment programmes for refugees and migrants, skill training for youth leaders, specific programmes addressing the needs of girls and women, as well as shantytown dwellers, formation in technology, catechetical and pastoral leadership training programmes, self-awareness and human development courses, suicide prevention and recovery programmes for victims of torture, self-help and small business programmes, etc. Many of these works seek to help integrate marginalised groups into society or have a focus on engaging people in a process of social and political awareness for the transformation of society as well as seeking to impart a sense of citizenship.

3.2 Informal educational works require Spiritans to engage in a discernment process that starts from people's lived reality. A good example of this is the now internationally recognized work of *SERVOL*<sup>2</sup> which began by a Spiritan asking the simple question: "How can I help you?" Characteristically, such works tend not to have a "captive audience," as compared to a formal school setting. They generally need a high capacity for creativity and adaptation by those who run them and they tend to adopt an inductive method of responding to specific and concrete needs, for example, the *see, judge, act* method. When asked why Spiritans are involved in informal works, typically the response will include some of the following words or phrases: empowerment, enabling, facilitating, building capacity, helping individuals to take responsibility for their own lives, promoting human dignity, building a better community, etc.

<sup>2</sup> See *Spiritan Horizons*, "Attentive Listening and Respectful Intervention, The *SERVOL* Story," Fall 2013, pp.84-89. *SERVOL* was founded by Fr. Gerry Pantin, C.S.Sp. along with Wesley Hall, a well-known cricketer, in the wake of the so-called Black Power Riots in 1970 in Trinidad and Tobago.

3.3 Many informal works are organised in collaboration with other partners. This requires of Spiritans a particular skill set, not exclusive to informal educational works, that include the following: ability to work in a team; understanding and respect for the cultural context; capacity to source funds, project conception and management; motivating volunteers and participants to give of their time and energy so as to achieve a particular outcome.

### IV. SPIRITANS IN FORMAL EDUCATION WORKS

4.1 Historically Spiritans were among the pioneers in building primary, secondary, and technical schools in many countries. To this list, founding and participation in teacher training colleges and numerous junior and senior seminaries for clergy and religious formation can also be added. Most of the formal Spiritan educational works were founded either through a process of collective discernment or by individual members highly committed to the development of young people. This Spiritan legacy continues to be active and alive in formal educational works owned by the Congregation throughout the world, many of which are long-standing and reputed for their academic excellence.

4.2 Spiritans also have a long history that continues, of involvement in a wide variety of formal educational works in collaboration with others<sup>3</sup> in small parish-based kindergartens and primary schools and pastoral centres. Collaborating as teachers and chaplains, as fundraisers, as administrators of local parish schools, as board members, and team members of school/university youth-ministry programmes, etc., many Spiritans give a witnessing presence in an educational environment.

4.3 A particularly positive expression of the Spiritan charism is the founding and support of schools for those with special needs or disabilities, who otherwise would not have access to an educational environment. One example among others is that of St. John's School for the Deaf<sup>4</sup> in The Gambia.

4.4 Educational works, like any other, evolve over time and can therefore find themselves in a situation whereby they no longer serve their original

<sup>3</sup> A good example of this is the Auteuil Foundation which was founded in 1866 to care for orphans and entrusted by the Archdiocese of Paris to the Spiritans in 1923 and to Blessed Daniel Brottier. More than 700 Spiritans have ministered in the Auteuil Foundation and continue today as chaplains, board members and as trustees. Currently Auteuil is run by lay people and assists over 13,000 young people in some 200 houses.

<sup>4</sup> St. John's School for the Deaf has its origins in 1978 when a Spiritan student, Patrick Nolan, on overseas pastoral experience, began working with hard of hearing children in an empty storage room in a mission compound. Today the school caters for some 220 students with a teaching staff of 35 persons and is part of the educational outreach of the Diocese of Banjul.

founding purpose. In such a scenario there is a need for a reexamination of our presence and how such a work is at the service of “*the evangelisation of the poor*” (SRL 4). In responding to the continually changing circumstances of the poor, contemporary needs and Spiritan values must all be taken into account in an ongoing discernment (cf. 2.9).

Long established Spiritan educational institutions that today find themselves serving social groups that do not easily fit into the everyday understanding of the *poor* face particular questions in relation to the Spiritan charism. Challenging as this may be, evaluation and ongoing discernment is necessary so that Spiritan values are expressed in forms that are different from the original foundation yet continuous with the mission of the Congregation today. In certain situations it may be necessary to accept that a particular institution has fulfilled its mission and no longer requires the investment of Spiritan resources.

## 4. THE HEARTBEAT OF SPIRITAN EDUCATION IN THE US

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit does not define its role exclusively as service to either education or social action. While some religious congregations define their role in terms of service to a particular group in society, e.g. the sick, the elderly, the young, etc., and make a valuable contribution by doing so, the Spiritans, like some other religious congregations, have preferred to define their role more broadly in terms of spiritual and human need. This inclusive role of the Congregation was expressed by Francis Libermann in these words:

“Evangelizing the poor is our primary end. But the missions are the more specific aim we have chosen, above all, those who are poorest and most abandoned... We would also like to work for the salvation of souls in France, above all the poor, while not abandoning those who are not so poor” (*Notes et Documents*, XIII, p. 170).

### I. A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: OUR FOUNDERS AND THE EDUCATION APOSTOLATE

#### a) Claude Poullart des Places

Claude Poullart was born the only son of a noble family in Rennes, Brittany, in 1679. As a young man, aged twenty-two, he arrived in Paris to study for the priesthood. He had given up a promising career as a lawyer to study for the priesthood. He had a profound concern for the poor which found expression first in helping the young chimney-sweeps of Paris. In 1703, while still a student, he founded a seminary for disadvantaged theological students and, at the same time, the Holy Ghost Congregation. Claude was ordained a priest in 1707, and died only two years later at the age of thirty years.

After Claude's death, the Congregation he had founded continued to flourish and to maintain his tradition of high academic standards, a simple lifestyle and a religious commitment to difficult ministries. Later, preparation of seminarians for the priesthood was widened to include foreign missionary service. “One may wonder why Fr. Bertout (the Superior General after the French Revolution) so readily decided to limit the Congregation to the training of missionaries. The answer is that the Concordat with Napoleon provided for diocesan seminaries with all the needed scholarships for poor students and thereby removed the main reason for the existence of the Holy Ghost Seminary.” (Koren, *Essays on the Spiritan Charism*, p. 127). As the situation of

the Church in France and the demands of the apostolate overseas grew and were modified, the Congregation adapted accordingly.

By the end of the eighteenth century some 1,200 priests had been educated at the seminary on rue Lhomond. It was temporarily suppressed at the time of the French Revolution. After the revolution it reopened and has continued to provide a home for members of the Congregation and others studying at universities in the Latin Quarter of Paris.

b) Francis Libermann

Francis Libermann was born in 1802 in Saverne, Alsace, the son of a Jewish rabbi, and was given the name Jacob. He became a Catholic in 1826, taking the name Francis. Soon after, he felt called to become a priest. However, a short time before he was due to be ordained he was stricken with epilepsy and his ordination was postponed indefinitely. Having spent thirteen years in various institutes of theological education, he became interested in a project to establish a society for the pastoral care and education of freed slaves. Francis was ordained a priest in 1841 and the same year opened the novitiate of the new society, the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary.

In 1848 an unusual event took place when, following negotiations between the two Congregations and the Holy See, all the members of the new congregation joined the Holy Ghost Congregation founded by des Places, and Libermann became its Superior General. This union brought an infusion of new members who revitalized the older congregation. Under Libermann's leadership the Congregation continued to grow and to develop its educational, missionary and pastoral work in many countries outside France and her colonies. Francis Libermann died on February 2, 1852, leaving behind a reputation for holiness.

Henry Koren, C.S.Sp. points out how easily Libermann changed his attitude with respect to scholarship and education in the light of what he saw as the needs of the missionary church during the ten years he said he needed for laying the foundations of the Congregation. In his *Essays on the Spiritana Charism*, Koren quotes Libermann:

[If ] the Spiritana Rule of Life is to be interpreted as meaning that everyone must go to the missions... If our rule says we may not have several houses in Europe "it is important that the constitutions of the Congregation be changed" (*Notes et Documents IX*, p. 293).

"In 1850 (Libermann) published a brochure about the Congregation. In its first paragraph he spoke about Fr. Poullart des Places as founder of the

Congregation, and in its final paragraph he made an appeal for candidates having a special vocation to teach, adding that this would be their almost exclusive task" (Koren, p. 136).

"In his famous 1846 Memorandum to Propaganda Fide he viewed it as 'wholly the duty of the missionary to work ... also at the intellectual, agricultural and technical knowledge' (*N.D.* VIII, 248). When his priests objected that the 'missionary is not a school-master,' he countered: 'I understand that it would cost the missionaries very much [to act as teacher]. Nevertheless, it is urgent to undertake the step.' 'To abandon the schools is to destroy the future of the missions'" (*N.D.* IX, pp. 50 and 44).

"The widening of Libermann's horizons should not surprise us. As always, he wished to be guided by what the Holy Spirit indicated in the concrete situations of life. When he realized that the Congregation would "probably" be obliged to undertake the education of boys in junior seminaries, he also knew that this practically meant accepting colleges" (*N. D.* XIII, p. 35). Libermann's fully formed convictions at the end of his life concerning education continue to animate the Congregation's educational philosophy.

## II. SPIRITANA MARKS OF EDUCATION

### a) Openness to the Spirit

In keeping with the dedication of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, both des Places and Libermann regarded openness to the Spirit as the guiding principle of their lives and of the Congregation. This represented a departure from the traditional emphasis on blind obedience rather than on fidelity to the Spirit. Two examples of their openness to the Spirit are adaptability to change and respect for each person's uniqueness. First, they showed a deep respect for the light of the Holy Spirit manifested in the changing circumstances of life. In education, this means responding to the most pressing educational needs of the people of their times. Second, they respected each one's personal vocation as a manifestation of the Spirit's guidance. In an educational context, this meant respect of each individual's personality and talents.

Libermann's respect for the Spirit at work in peoples and cultures led him to adopt an innovative approach to cross cultural education. In sharp contrast to the "assimilation" policy of both Church and State in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies of the time, he advocated respect for local cultures in both educational and missionary activities. "(The missionaries) must pay



particular attention to which customs and habits are characteristic of the peoples and the land. They must carefully avoid disturbing these customs (unless they are against God's law) and modifying them in a European fashion. They will simply try to make (the people) more perfect in their own way of life and in accord with their own custom." This attitude ruled not merely his own life but also imposed on him the greatest reverence for the way of being proper to individuals, not excluding those who wished to join the Congregation to further its objectives.

### **b) Global Vision**

The missionary outlook introduced to the Congregation in the eighteenth century and reinforced by Libermann has given the Congregation a global vision which inspires the hope for the realization of one world united in peace and justice in the Kingdom of God. In education, it means working for the empowerment of peoples and their liberation from injustice, poverty and ignorance. Catholic belief presumes that the human person is essentially social, created in the image of God who is love, God who is communion, the one God who in essence is personal relations in love. It further presumes that humankind is destined to live eternally in loving union with God and all of humanity.

In education, our tradition has meant combining concern for the disadvantaged with openness to the needs of people from all walks of life. Their global mission in the service of the Kingdom of God enables Spiritans to bring to the poor empowerment through education and to bring to the rich a consciousness of their responsibility to work towards a global society where poverty will be eliminated.

### **c) A Sense of Community**

The motto of the Congregation is "One Heart and One Soul," evoking the first Christian community in Jerusalem. As might be expected, therefore, a sense of community was highly prized by both des Places and Libermann. This is expressed in common living with shared prayer, meals, work and a simple lifestyle. In education, a sense of community translates into closeness to the students, a family spirit and accessibility.

Spiritana educators are mentors. As mentors they face two challenges. On the one hand, they are responsible for communicating a body of objective knowledge to students and holding them responsible for knowing that body of knowledge. On the other hand, they must provide nurture to students in their growth process towards human integration. This mentoring takes

place in the ongoing dialogue between teacher and student. Both grow and become themselves through the dialogue. Relationship is at the core of the Spiritana educational process.

### **d) Concern for the Poor**

Both des Places and Libermann focused their attention on the most needy people of their day. Poullart des Places first became interested in helping the young "Savoyards" or chimney-sweeps of Paris and later expanded his concern to helping poor theological students who would later work in the neglected rural parishes of France and in overseas missions. Libermann felt called by God to help the slaves and freed slaves in the old French colonies, whose miserable condition had been brought to his attention by two student friends, Eugene Tisserant (whose mother was Haitian) and Frederick Le Vavasseur from Reunion.

Concern for the poor remains a top priority for the Holy Spirit Congregation in fulfillment of its mission "to follow Jesus and to announce the Good News of the Kingdom" (SRL, 1), a priority which it shares with all religious congregations and with the Church in general. Education has remained a potent means of translating that concern into action. For many, education is the beginning of the Good News, leading to spiritual and social empowerment.

### **e) Commitment to Service**

Closely associated with concern for the disadvantaged was the Founders' commitment to service. Poullart des Places was not content simply to pursue his theological studies in Paris oblivious to what was going on around him. He was motivated by a spirit of service to others which inspired him to help the young chimney-sweeps and impoverished theological students. His untimely death in October 1709 was hastened by his prodigious efforts to develop his young society and to provide food for his community during the early months of the year when extremely cold weather caused disruption of the food supply and widespread famine in Paris.

Libermann also had a strong sense of service as shown by his total commitment to the development of his society in the service of the poor and disadvantaged people of his day. His spirit of service also led him to carry on a voluminous correspondence devoted to spiritual counseling in addition to his responsibilities as Superior General of the Congregation. He put service to others before his own welfare, regardless of his weak health. He saw education as service to the Church and to people in need.

### f) High Academic Standards

The standards set by des Places for the education of priests were remarkable for his time, when requirements varied widely throughout the Church, in many cases amounting to no more than one and a half years of theological studies. He required that the course of study should extend over at least six years to include two years of philosophy and four years of theology. He encouraged an additional two-year postgraduate course oriented to law or Scripture. He exemplified commitment to high academic standards in his own life. Having graduated “*summa cum laude*” as the youngest and brightest of several hundred students, he was chosen as valedictorian of his philosophy class. He then went on to earn his law degree and later took theology in Paris.

Although he had been a brilliant student himself, Libermann at first was not convinced of the need for high academic standards for members of his society. However, he changed his mind after he became Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit when he came to know the scholarly Father Gaultier who was widely respected in academic circles in Paris. Gaultier had endowed the seminary with a rich library and had attracted a circle of prominent scholars that included the great patrologist, J.P. Migne. Libermann’s policy of encouraging higher studies from then onwards was to provide the Congregation with a number of experts and specialists in various fields.

### g) Academic Freedom

When Claude Poullart des Places arrived in Paris to study theology, the University of Paris was dominated by the Jansenist faction. Rather than compromise his beliefs, Claude preferred to forego taking a degree which would have required him to follow courses at the Sorbonne. He took his theology courses instead at the Jesuit School of Theology, in the prestigious College Louis LeGrand, across the street from the Sorbonne.

The struggle for academic freedom and refusal to conform to ways of thinking that were “politically correct” continued for many decades. Poullart des Place’s immediate successors preferred to sacrifice even the lure of a large endowment rather than give up their freedom to teach what they saw as the truth.

The Founders’ concern for freedom was rooted neither in a blind adherence to outdated ideas nor in an appeal to a direct communication from the Holy Spirit. They believed that the Spirit usually speaks to us through events in

the contemporary world. That is why des Places insisted that all his students should master mathematics and the “new-fangled” Newtonian physics as prerequisites for the study of theology. This is also why Libermann insisted on the over-riding importance of learning from experience rather than depending on outdated paradigms, when he undertook the giant task of evangelizing Africa.

The foregoing brief survey shows that education in the Spiritan tradition is energized by values flowing from the living heritage of the Founders: openness to the Spirit, a strong sense of community, concern for the disadvantaged, a global vision, commitment to service, high academic standards and commitment to academic freedom.

## III. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE SPIRITAN EDUCATIONAL ETHOS AND MINISTRIES

Ever aware of the theological image underlying our educational efforts, we turn to some elements and emphases that pervade Spiritan educational ministry. These elements accent and highlight dimensions of Christian adult living that are not the principal focus of education offered by others within the Catholic community, e.g., Jesuits, Marianists, Salesians, etc. These elements are inherent in and flow from our Spiritan vocation and way of life as evidenced in SRL, #18. What is more important, however, is how these attitudes and dispositions of heart are embodied in Spiritans who live our educational ministry. These philosophical and theological characteristics shape the image that embodies the education that we offer and can be found in all aspects of our institutions: modes of governance, curricula, faculty and student body composition, extracurricular activities, community service, standards of academic excellence, etc. Among these elements are:

- **Indwelling Presence of the Transcendent**

We educate to bring people to an awareness of the indwelling of the Transcendent God within them (SRL #6). Spiritan educational ministry has a special emphasis on the indwelling of the Divine Spirit in every human person journeying toward becoming fully alive, humanly, spiritually, intellectually, and socially. Spiritan education presumes that every human being possesses a specific vocation in and through which the personality unfolds and character is developed. This presumes that all our educational, evangelizing efforts seek to form and provide an “upbringing” in the image of Christ, who is “the image of the unseen God” (Colossians 1:15). Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18) those whom we serve in educational ministry are being transformed into and reflect

that image in brighter and brighter glory” (2 Corinthians 3:18). “This is the working of the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18). What we are sent to teach is meant to bring all to realize that they “are a temple of God with the Spirit of God living in” them as temples who are holy (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

- **Following the Lead of the Spirit in Life**

Our educational ministry seeks to develop a keen awareness of the Spirit’s lead in every aspect and every moment of our lives. While others may contrast contemplation and action, we see Christian life as quickened by the Spirit at every moment, as did Mary. It responds to our need be aware of God’s presence in all of the practical circumstances of life, the concrete, the real. Libermann expressed this in his concept of practical union with God (SRL #5).

- **Relational and Communitarian Living**

Our lives are relational and communitarian just as our God is One in Three. The Church is the sacrament of God’s desire that we all may be one through loving relationships. This communitarian and relational focus confronts the schizophrenic culture rooted in individualism (SRL #1). The image of Christ, the Spirit-filled Messiah and Leader in faith (Luke 6; Hebrews 12), informs all of our educational efforts as we seek to fulfill Christ’s mandate to go and teach all nations. We educate for relationships in human community, that “all may be one” (John 17:22). No matter what area of instruction we provide - the arts, sciences, math, literature, technology — all is seen as contributing to the life of the community and the preparation of citizens who are faith-filled in a culturally diverse and pluralistic world. Spiritan educational ministry provides a New Evangelization in cultures that have forgotten their Christian roots.

- **Self-Transcendence in Sacrificial Love**

Just as Christ constantly transcended himself in love for the Father, we invite all to transcend themselves in the same sacrificial love that Jesus lived. This is the primary educational principle that constitutes the content and shape of our educational ministry. We are called to this fullness of life in loving relationships (SRL #3, #38-39).

- **Relishing Diversity**

While the Spirit is the source of our unity, we relish diversity: cultural, human, spiritual, ecumenical, interreligious, and the distribution of charismata for the

building up of the People of God and the world. Variety and complementarity are characteristic of our education. The Spirit is the giver and the shaper of the gifts that each person receives for the building up of the Body of Christ and the human family. Spiritan educators are Spirit-linking leaders who appreciate the diverse ways the Spirit works in persons in community (SRL #15, #24.2).

- **Focus on Freedom.**

Spiritans education focuses on freedom. The Spirit which gives life in Christ Jesus sets us free (Rom. 8:2). Where the Spirit is, there is freedom. We have been released from fear which enslaves and have been brought to the freedom of sons and daughters of God (Rom. 8:14). It is a freedom that moves us beyond self-indulgence to freedom in the Spirit (Gal. 5). This freedom is also the foundation of the charismatic, creative life of the Church which complements the gift of hierarchy and magisterium in the Church. Spiritans education accents the charismatic life of the Church (SRL #7, #14).

- **Masters of Dialogue**

To live a spirituality of communion presumes that we develop the art and asceticism of dialogue. For Spiritans, dialogue is the only way to be a Christian in the world. Those educated by Spiritans have learned how to enter into dialogue in a pluralistic world and are capable of articulating the Catholic voice in realizing the common good (SRL#16.3,#17.1).

- **Solidarity, Subsidiarity and Discernment**

All Spiritan educational ministry presumes that the Gospel is essentially social and seeks peace and justice for all. There is no peace without justice just as there is no justice that does not lead to peace. Our educational ministry is informed by the two sisters of social justice, solidarity and subsidiarity. These two principles inform the way we govern our institutions and all of our pedagogy. They shape the ethos of our lives and communities. Those whom we educate should be immersed in this ethos and be brought up in the art of discerning how to integrate subsidiarity and solidarity in society. This is our way of educating with a sense of seeking the good in common (common good). Integration of the two can only be accomplished by people who possess discerning spirits, individually and communally; spirits that see, understand what they see, judge the value of what they understand and choose to act for the good of all (SRL #21-23, #44, #46).

• **Preferential Love for and Outreach to the Poor**

All aspects of our educational ministry presume that all people have the right to hear the liberating message of Gospel love. This is especially true for the poor, those whose needs are the greatest, the oppressed and those who have no voice. All aspects of our educational ministry offer preferential love for the poor whom we serve, either directly or indirectly (SRL #4, #12, #14).

These elements build on and inform all of the components that are presumed to be present in any accredited, academically excellent, educational institution — academic excellence, academic outcomes, moral discipline, the design of curricula, community outreach programs, professionalism of administrators and faculty, sports programs, the very spirit of the institution, etc.

**IV. THE LIVED TRADITION**

Francis Libermann’s new position as the eleventh Superior General of the Holy Spirit Congregation in 1848 obliged him to face the question of assuming responsibility for educational work, which had always been the primary focus of the Congregation. Since its inception it had provided teachers to seminaries and colleges both in France and overseas. With his customary openness to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in changing circumstances, Libermann quickly adapted to the new situation and continued the tradition of supplying teachers for seminaries and colleges.

The first new educational project undertaken following Libermann’s death was the establishment of a national major seminary for the French clergy in Rome in 1853. This was in the tradition of des Places’ interest in the education of the clergy. Libermann heard the voice of the Spirit in the Pope’s invitation to open the seminary. That the seminary was faithful to the spiritual and academic values of the Congregation’s founders was demonstrated when it celebrated its first centennial in 1953. By then more than 3,000 priests had been educated within its walls and quite a number had been raised to the ranks of bishop and cardinal. Although the Spiritans were obliged to withdraw from its governance in 2009 because of declining numbers in the French Province, the French Seminary, situated near the Pantheon in the historic center of Rome, continues to be a respected center of higher education for the French Church today.

The same values inspired the expansion of educational works during the thirty years’ administration of Libermann’s successor, Father Schwindenhammer. Under his leadership the Congregation opened 31 minor and major seminaries and colleges, of which only one — Chevilly, near

Paris — was reserved exclusively for future members. The most important of these were Beauvais and Mesnieres in France, Blackrock and Rockwell in Ireland, Braga in Portugal, St. Mary’s in Trinidad and Holy Ghost College (Duquesne University) in Pittsburgh. In addition, it established 15 trade and agricultural schools (collectively known as Auteuil) mostly staffed by Brothers, who were officially recognized by the government of France as teachers.

**At the Service of the Local Church**

The written form of the Spiritan charism and tradition is found principally in the *Spiritans Rule of Life*. The Spiritan Rule (SRL), like that of all religious Orders and Congregations in the Catholic Church, is inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus. The Spiritan Rule has had a varied history going back to the first version written by Father des Places. It has had to be updated at intervals in order to meet changing conditions in the religious and secular world. The most recent revision of the Spiritan Rule of Life was approved by the Holy See in 1987. While the SRL references to educational ministry are brief, they express quite clearly the nature, goals, and means required to carry out this ministry.

SRL #18. “In local Churches the following are our principal activities: Fostering Christian communities and the education and training of a committed and responsible laity; Engaging in social and educational work in line with our Spiritan calling;

#18.1 We consider the following to be especially important tasks for our times: Youth apostolate, because the present situation of young people is crying out more than ever for social and educational works.

The General Chapter at Maynooth in 1998 included a thorough reflection on the role of Spiritan education as an integral part of our mission:

- “Formal and informal education is not something on the margins of our apostolate, but is an integral part of our mission of evangelization. This conviction is based on two considerations: on the one hand, this social ministry to the poor brings them freedom and promotes the dignity that is theirs as children of God; on the other, the contact it gives with the world of young people provides an opportunity for passing on the Good News, above all through the witness of the educator” (Maynooth, p. 102).
- “We will make a point of making young people aware of the problems of poverty and unjust structures in their society and the world at large” (Maynooth 2.13).

- “Where it is desirable, we will further involve lay people in the administration of our educational institutions, while retaining a Spiritan presence as a witness and a source of inspiration. In collaborating with lay people, we will try to share the spirit of our Spiritan tradition with them” (Maynooth, 2.14).
- “The training of educators is a priority for us” (Maynooth 2.15).
- “We will put greater emphasis on the training of some confreres as specialists in education, especially for the service of the poor. This presupposes a prior assessment of their needs and will take into account the resources available” (Maynooth, 2.16).

## V. SPIRITAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY, FORMAL AND INFORMAL, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

### Presence Formal

In the United States, Spiritans have been engaged in a good number of educational endeavors since almost the very beginning of Spiritan presence on these shores. These institutions are stamped with the Spiritan character in a similar way to our own formation as Spiritans, by “osmosis,” the milieu of the institution and the lived witness of Spiritans engaged in the particular ministry of education. Their values are experienced on a daily basis by the students and passed on subliminally.

As we acknowledge the changing circumstances regarding the challenge of providing trained Spiritans at our sponsored institutions, we continue to focus on highlighting and strengthening the Spiritan charism at these institutions. We emphasize the necessity to make explicit what constitutes a Spiritan educational institution in this age and place. Reflection and planning is a critical point of laying the foundation for the future. The process involves a considerable collaboration with the laity at these institutions.

### Mission Statements

The Congregation sponsors two exceptional educational institutions in the US that serve the church and society in preparing persons for a variety of vocations and careers. There is a parallel development at these two Spiritan institutions as they both are deeply rooted in a clear mission statement for each school. Duquesne University’s statement speaks of five concerns: Academic Excellence, Moral and Spiritual Values, and Ecumenical Atmosphere, the Spirit of Service and World Concerns. Composed by a totally different faculty and student body, we find similar concerns expressed in the Mission Statement of Holy Ghost Preparatory School:

Academic Excellence; moral, intellectual and spiritual formation; service to the poor; development of community and the cultivation of unique gifts. Both statements look upon education as formation of the person and not just the intellect.

The Mission Statements really have no import in and of themselves except that they are the basis of constant reflection by the various constituencies of the institutions. So it is the process of developing a mission statement, of continued reflection on the meaning of the statement by all engaged at the institutions, and of implementing the implications of that statement that are the foundation on which these sponsored works continue to institutionalize the Spiritan charism at these schools. These institutions are blessed to have administrators, faculties, staff and alumni that espouse, embody, and make substantial contributions of time, talent and treasure in implementing the Spiritan educational philosophy.

In addition to these sponsored Spiritan institutions in the United States, the Congregation also serves dioceses through parochial ministries that have parochial schools. Many Spiritans also serve as administrators, faculty and campus ministers in both Catholic and secular academic institutions and diocesan seminaries that are not sponsored by the Congregation. The contributions of Spiritans to the education apostolate are varied and dynamic. Benefactors, through their financial support, are a critical part of ensuring the mission focus and financial viability of our institutions. In addition to advancing the mission of these institutions at home, some have even made possible the construction of schools in other Spiritan circumscriptions, e.g., Tanzania, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nigeria, etc. Internationally, the work by US Spiritans in Tanzania, focused on the promotion of education for women within the Maasai culture, is another important expression of our unique Spiritan commitment to education for the purpose of liberation and the promotion of their dignity as children of God.

### Presence Informal

Many Spiritans serve as retreat directors, participate in parochial youth and adult educational programs, and are involved in justice and peace activities at the local and national levels. Spiritans also serve as Campus Ministers at institutions not sponsored by the Congregation.

In taking on new parochial ministries, one important consideration might be to look at how we are able to provide youth with a safe atmosphere, academically challenging, and accessible education at the elementary and secondary levels. When we consider taking on a new parochial ministry, one

of the questions we should ask is what potential impact our engagement and Spiritana presence will have on the integral development and education of the people we serve.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit has made a clear choice for evangelization, the promotion of justice, and for the service and liberation of the poor (SRL, 14). These objectives are realized through a commitment to quality education with a clear vision of the Spiritana values. The Spiritana charism clearly embraces education as an important instrument of evangelization. Properly understood and fully embraced, this will entail an intensification of the educational ministry which can be a powerful tool for the transformation of attitudes and for promoting social change. Faithful to our Founders and to our sources of inspiration for over 300 years, Spiritans continue to respond to the challenges of our contemporary world and the needs of the Church through an openness to the Spirit which is revealed to us in the people that we serve.

## Acknowledgements

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*Spiritana Education Committee:* Jeffrey Duaine, Chair, John Hansen, William Headley, James McCloskey, and Paulinus Odozor. May 2012.

## 5. EDUCATION ETHOS: CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IRISH PROVINCE 2006

The Memorandum and Articles of the Des Places Educational Association (DEA) state the two main objectives to which the Association is committed. They are: "to ensure and foster the advancement of education," and "to further the aims and purposes of Roman Catholic education." The Memorandum directs that these main objectives are to be pursued in accordance with the ethos and educational philosophy of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

The ethos and educational philosophy of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit is therefore an integral part of the ethos and vision of the Association. Moreover, since the Association, by its main objectives, is committed to the advancement of education in general and of Catholic education in particular, there are two further sources for its ethos and vision. The first is the ethos and tradition of the Irish education system; the second is the ethos and tradition of Roman Catholic education philosophy. The Holy Ghost Congregation, or Spiritana, ethos is a particular expression of the Catholic ethos.

It is not the intention of this statement to elucidate Catholic educational ethos in depth as information on Catholic education is readily available. It will be sufficient to indicate how Spiritana educational ethos is rooted in the mainstream Catholic education tradition. Neither will it be possible to explore Irish educational ethos other than to mention some of the contributions which the Congregation has made to Irish education. It is worth noting that "Catholic education" does not mean education for Catholics only. Spiritana colleges in Ireland and elsewhere have always welcomed students of other religions. Parents are attracted by the caring community ethos of the schools which respects the religious beliefs of all students and bridges ethnic differences.

## THE HOLY GHOST CONGREGATION TRADITION AND ETHOS

In any organisation, vision and ethos are central to its identity, because they give it inspiration and direction. Where an apostolate has been given a civil law identity separate from its religious sponsor, by virtue of its establishment as an association registered as a non-profit company, its identity is affirmed by means of its Memorandum and Articles of Association and its Mission Statement, which incorporate the ethos of the sponsor. This is the case with the DEA, which incorporates the education ethos of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Vision and ethos are two sides of the same coin. "Vision"

refers to how the leadership and members see the role and purpose of the organization, whereas “ethos” refers to how the vision is lived out in daily practice. In education other expressions are often used for ethos and vision. Some educators speak of “ethos and educational philosophy,” which is the expression used in the Memorandum and Articles of the DEA. The Mission Statement of the DEA uses the expression, “education tradition of the Congregation.” The Education Act refers to school ethos as “the characteristic spirit” of a school (Art. 9-d), while others speak of it as the school “climate.” In the business world, “corporate culture” is often used in the same sense. By means of this statement of ethos, the Members of the DEA wish to articulate our understanding of the education ethos of the Congregation, with particular reference to the Irish context.

Another term often associated with ethos is “charism.” One definition of charism is: “an inspiration from the Spirit of God which urges the individual to perform a special role in the community” (Iglesias, 1984). Rather than being a set of directives, a charism is a vision which is handed on by the individual recipient to his or her followers, as in the case of the founders of religious orders and congregations. The Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education notes that in Catholic schools belonging to religious congregations, “each congregation brings the richness of its own educational tradition to the school, found in its original charism” (*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 1988).

The Spiritan tradition is understood here as a lived reality which embodies the charism or vision of the Founders in different ways in different times and circumstances. It is nourished by reflection and dialogue. The DEA is one embodiment of the Spiritan tradition. The main thrust of this statement, therefore, is not so much to attempt to identify the differences between the Spiritan tradition and that of other congregations, but rather to heighten our awareness of the Spiritan tradition and education ethos.

This statement attempts to answer the question; “What is the ethos of Spiritan education?” Three sources of Spiritan ethos are referred to: the inspiration of the Founders, the lived tradition throughout the three hundred years that the Congregation has been in existence, and the Spiritan Rule of Life (SRL). The works of several authors used in writing the statement are gratefully acknowledged and are listed at the end. To avoid overloading the document with references, only the sources of direct quotations are given in the text.

## THE INSPIRATION OF THE FOUNDERS

### Claude Francis Poullart des Places

The Spiritan education story begins with Claude Francis Poullart des Places, after whom our Association has been named. He was born in Rennes, Brittany, on 26th February, 1679, the son of a rich merchant, François Claude Poullart des Places. His mother, Jeanne, was a teacher and a woman of deep Christian faith. Claude received his secondary education in the Jesuit College of St. Thomas near his home in Rennes, where he was ranked at the top of his class in his final year, 1698. He went on to study law at the University of Nantes. However, instead of entering the legal profession after graduation, he gave up a promising career as a lawyer and decided to become a priest. As a young man aged twenty-two he arrived in Paris to study for the priesthood. He had a profound concern for the poor which found expression in helping the young chimney-sweeps of Paris. In 1703, while still a student, he founded a house for disadvantaged theological students. At the same time he and a few followers founded a community consecrated to the Holy Spirit under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin Conceived Without Sin, which later became the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. These were to be the main achievements of his short life. He was ordained priest, on 17th December, 1707. Two years later, worn out with his efforts on behalf of his community, he died on 2nd October, 1709 at the age of thirty years.

After Claude’s death the congregation he had founded continued to flourish and to maintain his tradition of high academic standards, a simple lifestyle, and a religious commitment to difficult ministries. It is a remarkable fact that although Claude died so soon after the foundation of his community, it has continued to exist up to the present day, having developed into a seminary and later, the international Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

### Francis Libermann

The second outstanding personality in the Spiritan story is Francis Libermann. He was born Jacob Libermann in 1802 in Saverne, Alsace, the son of a Jewish rabbi. He studied first at home and later at the Rabbinical School in Metz. After a period of agnosticism, he went to Paris and was baptised into the Catholic Church in 1826. Soon afterwards, he experienced the call to become a priest and in 1827 entered the seminary of St. Sulpice. However, the onset of epilepsy in 1828 meant that Francis’ ordination was postponed indefinitely. Having spent thirteen years in various institutes of theological education, he became interested in a project to establish a society for the pastoral care and education of freed slaves. Francis was ordained priest in 1841 and the same year opened the novitiate of the new society, the “Society of the Holy Heart of Mary.”

In 1848 an unusual event took place when, following negotiations between the two congregations and the Holy See, all the members of the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary joined the Congregation of the Holy Spirit founded by Des Places, and Libermann became its Superior General. From then on the Congregation has been known as the “Congregation of the Holy Spirit under the Protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.” This union brought an infusion of new members who revitalized the older congregation.

Under Libermann’s leadership the Congregation continued to grow and to develop its educational, missionary, and pastoral work in many countries outside France and her colonies. Francis Libermann died on February 2nd, 1852, leaving behind him a reputation for holiness. The inspiration provided by Fr. des Places and Fr. Libermann for education may best be appreciated by considering some of the values and traditions which they passed on to their Congregation.

### Openness to the Spirit

An important core value inherited from the two Founders is openness to the Spirit. In this they imitated Jesus, who was “led by the Spirit” (Luke, 4:1). Des Places dedicated his community to the Holy Spirit. Libermann regarded openness to the Spirit as the guiding principle of his life and of the Congregation. This represented a departure from the traditional emphasis on blind obedience. Two examples of their openness to the Spirit are adaptability to change and respect for each person’s uniqueness.

First, they showed a deep respect for the light of the Holy Spirit manifesting himself in the changing circumstances of life. In education this meant responding to the most pressing educational needs of the people of their times. Second, they respected each one’s personal vocation as a manifestation of the Spirit’s guidance. In an educational context this meant respect for each individual’s personality and talents.

Libermann’s respect for the Spirit at work in peoples and cultures led him to adopt an innovative approach to cross-cultural education. In sharp contrast to the “assimilation” policy of both Church and State in the colonies of the time, he advocated respect for local cultures in both educational and missionary activities.

*[The missionaries] “must pay particular attention to which customs and habits are characteristic of the people and the land. They must carefully avoid disturbing these customs (unless they are against God’s law) and modifying them in a European fashion. They will simply try to make [the people] more perfect in their own way of life and in accord with their own customs” (N.D. X 452 cited from Koren, 1983, p. 260).*

### Sense of Community

The motto of the Congregation is, “One heart and one soul,” (*Cor unum et anima una*) evoking the first Christian community in Jerusalem. As might be expected, therefore, a sense of community was a basic principle for both des Places and Libermann. This is expressed in common living with shared prayer, meals and work, and a simple lifestyle. In education a sense of community translates into concern for the students, a family spirit, and accessibility.

It is interesting in the context of ethos to note that the Second Vatican Council describes the distinguishing characteristic of a Catholic school in terms of community: “What makes a Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love” (Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, art. 8).

### Concern for the Poor

It was his concern for the poor that led des Places to found his community for poor students. Libermann felt called by God to help the slaves and freed slaves in the old French colonies, whose miserable condition had been brought to his attention by two student friends, Eugene Tisserant and Frederick Le Vasseur. Concern for the poor remains a top priority for the Congregation of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of its mission “to follow Jesus and to announce the good news of the Kingdom” (SRL 1). Education is a potent means of translating that concern into action. For many, education is the beginning of the good news, leading to spiritual and social empowerment. Libermann had an inclusive approach to education which combined concern for the disadvantaged with openness to the needs of people from all walks of life.

*The general aim of the Congregation is to preach the Gospel to the poor. “We consider the missions our principal objective... We also want to work for the salvation of the people of France, but always having the poor as our principal objective, without neglecting those who are not poor” (Letter to Dom Salier, May 1851, N.D. XIII, 170-171 in Daly, 1986, p. 34).*

### Global Vision

The missionary outlook of the Congregation has given its members a global vision which inspires hope for the realization of one world united in peace and justice in the Kingdom of God. In education it means working for the empowerment of peoples and their liberation from injustice, poverty and ignorance. Their global mission in the service of the Kingdom of God



enables members of the Congregation to bring to the poor empowerment through education and to bring to the better off a consciousness of their responsibility to work towards a global society where poverty will be eliminated.

### Commitment to Service

Closely associated with concern for the disadvantaged was the Founders' commitment to service. Des Places was not content simply to pursue his theological studies in Paris oblivious to what was going on around him. He was motivated by a spirit of service to others which inspired him to help the young chimney-sweeps and impoverished theological students. His untimely death in October 1709 was hastened by his prodigious efforts to develop his young society and to provide food for his community during the early months of the year when extremely cold weather caused disruption of the food supply and widespread hunger in Paris.

Libermann also had a strong sense of service as shown by his total commitment to the development of his society in the service of the poor and disadvantaged people of his day. He continually emphasized the spirit of service in his instructions to his missionaries. In the same spirit he carried on a voluminous correspondence devoted to spiritual counseling in addition to his responsibilities as Superior General of the Congregation. He put service to others before his own welfare, regardless of his weak health. He saw education as service to the Church and to people in need.

### High Educational Standards

Des Places exemplified commitment to high educational standards in his own life. Having graduated *summa cum laude* as the youngest and brightest of several hundred students, he was chosen to represent his school in a public disputation before the invited elite of the city of Rennes. Later, when he had founded his Congregation, the standards set by des Places for the education of priests were remarkable for his time. Requirements varied widely throughout the Church, in many cases amounting to no more than one and a half years of theological studies. He required that the course of study should extend over at least six years, to include two years of philosophy and four years of theology. He insisted on high academic standards from the students in his community, even insisting on the study of science in addition to theology — a new idea at the time.

Libermann at first was not convinced of the need for high educational standards for members of his society. However, he changed his mind when he came to know Fr. Gaultier, who was widely respected in academic circles in Paris. Gaultier had endowed the seminary with a rich library and had

attracted a circle of prominent scholars that included the great patrologist, J. P. Migne. Libermann's policy of encouragement for higher studies from then onwards was to provide the Congregation with a number of experts and specialists in various fields of study.

### Personal Development

Both Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann are outstanding examples of personal development, although the Spirit led them by very different and unforeseen paths. Claude had a good Catholic education up to university level, but renounced a promising career as a lawyer to become a priest and an educator of students for the priesthood. Francis, on the other hand, was a child of two worlds. Born into the world of traditional Judaism, he was led by the Spirit to become a Christian and a priest in the world of early 19th century Christianity. He overcame almost insuperable obstacles of education and health to become a founder of a religious congregation, a priest and a renowned spiritual guide.

The community founded by Fr. des Places became a tertiary-level seminary, which, as mentioned earlier, maintained the highest academic standards and fostered the faith development of the students. Later, the Congregation expanded its educational activities to other levels and other types of education in response to the developmental needs of the people whom they served, including orphans, delinquents, refugees, and the unemployed.

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit inherited from its Founders a respect for the Holy Spirit guiding each person's development, as he guided Jesus our teacher and model. The concern of the Congregation for all, whether Catholics or not, has been to promote personal development and to facilitate spiritual growth. For Catholic learners, the goal has been to help them to develop a knowledge of the mystery of salvation, so that they may daily grow more conscious of the gift they have received, to encourage them to adore God the Father in spirit and in truth, especially through liturgical worship, to facilitate their moral and spiritual development towards maturity in imitation of Jesus and as members of his Mystical Body. They are also led to be witnesses to their faith and to be active in the service of others in need (cf. *Gravissimum Educationis*, Art. 2).

The foregoing brief survey shows some of the basic values flowing from the living heritage left to us by Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann which inspire education in the schools of the Congregation down to the present day: openness to the Spirit, a strong sense of community, concern for the disadvantaged, a global vision, commitment to service, high educational standards, and personal development.

## THE LIVING TRADITION IN EDUCATION

When Libermann assumed his new position as Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit he was obliged to face the question of assuming responsibility for educational work, which had been the main focus of the Congregation's work up to that time. Since its inception it had provided teachers to seminaries and colleges both in France and overseas.

With his customary openness to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in changing circumstances, Libermann quickly adapted to the new situation and continued the tradition of supplying teachers for seminaries and colleges. However, he was also interested in the education of the laity, particularly in mission countries. Lay people were to be taught to become teachers, farmers and master craftsmen. They should likewise be given a more advanced knowledge of religious principles and careful training in moral conduct.

### Education 1852-1925

The first new educational project undertaken following Libermann's death was the establishment of a national senior seminary for the French clergy in Rome in 1853. This was in the tradition of des Places' interest in the education of the clergy. That the seminary was faithful to the spiritual and educational values of the Congregation's founders was demonstrated when it celebrated its first centennial in 1953. By then more than 3000 priests had been educated within its walls and a considerable number had been raised to the ranks of bishop and cardinal. The French seminary in Rome continues to be a respected centre of higher education for the French Church today, under the management of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

The same values inspired the expansion of educational works during the thirty years' administration of Libermann's successor, Father Schwindenhammer. Under his leadership the Congregation opened 31 junior and senior seminaries and colleges, of which only one – Chevilly, near Paris – was reserved exclusively for future members. These included Beauvais and Mesnières in France, Braga in Portugal, St. Mary's in Trinidad and Holy Ghost College (Duquesne University) in Pittsburgh. In addition, it established 15 trade and agricultural schools, mostly staffed by Brothers, who were officially recognized by the government of France as teachers.

### Ireland (1860-1925)

The first school to be established in Ireland was Blackrock College, founded in 1860 by Fr. Jules Leman. The original intention had been that the Irish foundation would be confined to recruiting members for the Holy Ghost Congregation. However, Fr. Leman, following the Congregation's tradition

of openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, soon saw the great need for secondary education in Ireland. He also felt that the Congregation should not only take from the Christian community in Ireland, but should contribute to it in a spirit of service.

This was followed in 1864 by the opening of Rockwell College which also combined a secondary school with a junior seminary for future members of the Congregation. By virtue of their concern for high educational standards, both colleges soon gained a high reputation for their contribution to Irish education. Blackrock College was even affiliated to the Royal University for a time. A third college, St. Mary's, was opened in Ireland in 1890 at Rathmines, Dublin. It closed in 1916 but reopened ten years later.

The Irish colleges promoted a global vision of education. Almost from the beginning, Irish members of the Congregation were active in education abroad. As early as 1862 a newly-professed Brother, John Carey (Brother Francis Joseph), was teaching English in Chandernagore, near Calcutta. He taught in a trade school staffed by Brothers which the Congregation had founded in a spirit of concern for the poor. Another example of service to education abroad was Fr. Patrick William Power whose first appointment was to Chandernagore. He next served in Mauritius and in Trinidad before being appointed President of the newly-opened Holy Ghost College in Pittsburgh, later to become Duquesne University.

### Education 1926-2001

Under successive Superiors General, the same values have guided the many educational undertakings of the Congregation worldwide. The scope of these undertakings has been on a massive scale, particularly from 1926, when Archbishop Louis Le Hunsec became Superior General.

### Ireland

In Ireland, St. Michael's College was founded in 1943 and Templeogue College in 1966.

Missions dependent on the Irish Province of the Congregation played a leading part in the expansion of educational undertakings, bringing to young people in the developing countries wider horizons and increased opportunities for personal development. In West Africa, a leading figure in this development was Bishop Joseph Shanahan of Southern Nigeria. Thus, the Onitsha diocese of Nigeria alone had 4000 schools in 1932. In 1950 the total number of students being educated in the two Spiritan dioceses of Onitsha and Owerri exceeded that of all government and mission schools in French West Africa, which had five times the population of the two dioceses.

In East Africa, a Teacher Education College was founded at Kabaa, Kenya, in 1924. This became a high school in 1930 and from then on was staffed mainly by Spiritans from Ireland. Other high schools soon followed in Kenya, such as Mangu, near Thika and St. Mary's School, Nairobi, both opened in 1939. Pugu, near Dar-es Salaam in Tanzania opened in 1950. During the period after World War II, many secondary schools and hundreds of primary schools were opened under the management of the Holy Ghost Missions in Kenya and Tanzania. Educational development was not confined to Africa. In Mauritius, Collège du Saint-Esprit was reopened in 1926 by Bishop James Leen. In Trinidad, members of the Irish Province replaced their French confrères from 1914 onwards at St. Mary's, Port of Spain. In 1945 a second college, Fatima College, was opened, also staffed mainly by the Irish Province.

There was a similar, though less massive expansion of higher education. In the late 1950s members of the Congregation had responsibility for thirty colleges, teachers' colleges, and seminaries in British-controlled Africa and nineteen others in French, Belgian and Portuguese territories. Altogether, by the time of Vatican II, the congregation's educational commitments extended to about eighty seminaries and colleges for the general public, in addition to about fifty houses of study reserved for its own aspirants.

The Irish Province has conducted tertiary-level courses in Philosophy since 1911 and in Theology from 1917, for students who were members of the Congregation. Some members of the Congregation have studied for degrees at University College Dublin, Fribourg University Switzerland and The Gregorian University, Rome. In the missions dependent on the Irish Province, many third-level Colleges of Education have been managed by the Congregation, particularly in East and West Africa. In some cases members of the Congregation have taught in secular universities.

As already mentioned, the Irish Province supported the development of Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, from its earliest beginnings. It was under the leadership of Fr. Martin A. Hehir, a native of Killaloe diocese, that Holy Ghost College became, in 1911, Duquesne University, the first Catholic university in Pennsylvania. Fr. Hehir spent a record 31 years as President of Duquesne as a college and as a university.

### Looking to the Future

When an international symposium of Spiritan educators and their lay colleagues met at Duquesne in June, 1991, a survey indicated that 304 members of the Congregation still had responsibility for involvement with 222 schools, 141, 000 students and 7,000 teachers. These figures are evidence of a very considerable commitment to education.

Moreover, reports from various countries showed the Spirit at work inspiring new initiatives in education, particularly in the area of "alternative" education for unemployed youth and leadership training for socioeconomic development.

The emergence of many newly-independent nations in recent years has enabled the Congregation to relinquish responsibility for many schools and colleges to public education systems. Des Places and Libermann would have been happy to know that members of their Congregation, by making such an outstanding contribution to education, had helped to build the national education systems of many of the African countries which became independent since the 1960s. In other cases, as with Duquesne University in the USA, the Des Places Educational Association in Ireland, and the Auteuil Foundation in France, the Congregation has entered into a collaborative arrangement with lay administrators and Boards of Trustees for the administration of its schools and colleges.

### THE WRITTEN TRADITION

The written tradition as a source of the Holy Ghost vision and ethos is exemplified in the rule of life of the Congregation (Spiritan Rule of Life). Like that of all religious orders and congregations in the Catholic Church, the Rule of Life is inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus. It has had a varied history going back to the first version written by Claude Poullart des Places. The Rule has been updated at intervals to meet changing conditions in the religious and secular world, the latest update being in 1987.

The Spiritan Rule of Life has three aspects. It describes the mission of the Congregation, articulates the charisms of the Founders, and describes the commitments made by members of the Congregation in living out their mission. It has a total of 235 constitutions in seven chapters. The small number of constitutions referring directly to education is discussed here as well as those relating to the work of the Congregation in general which are applicable to education. Chapter 1 describes the mission of the Congregation in the Church as a continuation of the mission of Jesus to announce the Good News of the Kingdom of God in the world — an era of truth, love, justice and peace. In Constitution 2 the mission is described as a creative response to the spiritual and human needs of our time, inspired by the charisms of the Founders and fidelity to the traditions of the Congregation.

Constitution 4 and Constitution 12 point to those people in most need as the preferred focus of the Congregation's mission and to a willingness to serve in difficult situations. While Constitutions 4 and 12 do not exclude any group of people from the Congregation's mission, it is generally accepted that

these constitutions are to be interpreted as meaning that a criterion for any work to be undertaken is that the work and its effects must be seen from the perspective of the poor.

Education is recognized as an apostolate within the mission of the Congregation because it meets the following general criteria. It furthers the spiritual and moral values of the Kingdom of God, meets an urgent need in today's world and is a means of empowering the neediest people on a worldwide scale.

Constitution 13 emphasizes the universality of the Congregation's mission. This is another constitution of a general nature which nonetheless has implications for education. The five aspects of mission to which it refers may be applied to education as follows:

**Universality:** Education for global co-operation and the fulfillment of global human aspirations.

**Proclamation:** Education proclaiming the spiritual and moral values of God's Kingdom.

**Service and Liberation:** Education offering service to society and access to empowering knowledge, skills, and means of expression to the poor and powerless.

**Dialogue:** Education for dialogue, fostering respect for people of other religions and cultures.

**Inculturation:** Education for peace and harmony between cultures by offering opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue.

The Spiritan Rule of Life refers specifically to education in Constitutions 18 and 142. Constitution 18 puts education in the context of service to the local Church by fostering Christian communities, listing its principal activities as:

1. The education of a committed and responsible laity;
2. Training for ministries and for the missionary and religious life;
3. Engaging in educational work in line with the Spiritan calling;
4. Awakening an understanding of the universal mission, of justice, and of kinship between peoples;
5. The education of young people, because the present situation is crying out more than ever for social and educational works;
6. Educational work with refugees, with immigrants and with those who are on the margins of society.

Constitution 142 emphasises the need for ongoing or continuing education of the members of the Congregation: "It is a necessity for all of us to re-train ourselves without fail if we are to remain true to our calling in the world and in the Church" (SRL 142).

The revised Rule of Life, therefore, confirms the traditional role of education in the mission of the Congregation, as an apostolate worthy of the dedication of its members and as a service to the local Churches and to peoples throughout the world. In addition to the Rule of Life, other forms of the written tradition include biographies, histories, theological and philosophical works and the mission statements of our educational institutions, including that of the Des Places Educational Association.

### MISSION STATEMENTS

The mission statements of the Spiritan colleges in Ireland incorporate and interpret the ethos and educational philosophy of the Congregation. The format of the mission statements is in two parts: a preamble and the statement of mission either as a continuous text or as a list of aims and goals. The preamble refers to the history of the school and its commitment to the ethos and vision of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. The second part, containing the statement of mission, varies somewhat from college to college in emphasis and to a lesser extent in content. The following list shows the main aims mentioned in the mission statements.

- An environment supportive of Christian faith
- Harmonious development of the whole person
- A caring community environment
- High academic standards
- Social and moral development
- Community service and social justice
- Preparation for a career
- Cultural and physical education
- Partnership of parents, teachers and community
- Global concerns and the mission of the Church

It is clear that the mission statements incorporate the values mentioned in the section on the inspiration of our Founders. The mission of the Des Places Educational Association, is expressed in the Memorandum and Articles of Association and in its Mission Statement. We have already referred to the Memorandum and Articles. Here we briefly consider the Mission Statement.

The first paragraph of the Mission Statement affirms the commitment of the DEA to the education tradition of the Congregation: "Des Places Educational

Association Ltd. (the “DEA”) is committed to continuing and developing the Catholic education tradition of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans) in Ireland, as Patron of its schools.”

The second paragraph states the main functions of the Association: direction, supervision, communication with school management, fostering co-operation among all stakeholders, and strategic planning. The third paragraph highlights the education policies of the Association, which are intended to “nurture and develop the abilities, talents and interests of each person.” The statement concludes with the values which characterize the work of the DEA: “partnership, openness and accountability.” Thus, the Mission Statement of the Des Places Educational Association affirms the commitment of the Association to continuing and developing the education tradition of the Congregation in the third millennium.

In this statement we have attempted to articulate the ethos and vision (educational philosophy) of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, in the context of Catholic ethos and Irish educational Ethos. Our main attention was focused on the education ethos of the Congregation, exploring the inspiration of the Founders, the living tradition and the written tradition. The Des Places Educational Association shares this rich heritage of the education ethos of the Congregation.

The Members of the Des Places Educational Association Ltd.  
April, 2001.

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