

Education must necessarily be a developing process. It should concern itself with the whole person - body, mind and spirit. It should be universal, that is, available to all at all times; and it should be suitable for the person at the moment of time he is in and be relevant to his education.

Education is not a pouring in, but is a bringing out and fulfilling process. It begins at birth and continues to the end of life. Unfortunately, education has often been confused with schooling. If a person has gone through the system - primary, secondary, higher - then frequently that person is looked upon as educated. What about those who have never been touched by school? Are they to be termed uneducated?

Sadly, education has come to be looked upon in terms of "qualifications". People are so often valued for what they have - mentally, physically, not for what they are in themselves. Education should begin in the family context, and the young should be led along, absorbing from things and people about them, what they can grasp and understand. They should receive what is right for them at each moment of being, and this is what I mean by a just education. The whole person must be seen to be developing and receiving help to develop, physically, mentally, spiritually.

We are all free beings, and education must foster man's inner freedom. True education should lead to a fuller awareness of self, and of others. It should prepare the individual to live a life fully in the society of other individuals.

Ideally, the school situation should help to develop a self-esteem and esteem for others. It is necessary for basic skills to be taught so that each one's life may be enriched. Therefore the one being educated must be the centre of consideration - what are his needs, his gifts, his shortcomings? The school must educate to improve quality of life. Does it merely educate to fit the unfortunate young into our present form of society? Is the school geared to develop freedom, and a sense of responsibility which helps to reveal each person's dignity and each one's rights?

Education should be a continuing process which is helping to build up a worthwhile society, where each man's dignity, each man's pride is respected. Does the school pander to those who seek only academic result and forget that the young need help to develop emotionally and spiritually, to express themselves freely and with joy in many different dimensions? The school that helps the young to live together in love, that creates a caring community where all forms of discrimination are frowned on; where the less able, the less educable, the under privileged feel at home - such a school is surely a preparation for real life where everyone has a right to share as part of the human family, part of the family of God.

What a responsibility, and what power is in the hands of the educators. They must respect and be sensitive to the needs of the pupil. Systems may enslave, but good will, concern and sensitivity can conquer systems. Of the good teacher, God asks only this: "to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah, 6, 8).