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EDITORIAL

Apostolic Aims

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In 1944, Allan P. Farrell, S.J. (1896–1976) the managing editor of *Jesuit Educational Quarterly* (*JEQ*), produced a report on how the 6-year-old periodical was perceived by Jesuit readers throughout the United States. Having synthesized the responses, Farrell felt the need to reiterate the purpose of the *JEQ*. And so, he offered the following:

> [*JEQ*'s] aims are to establish and illumine principles which are lacking or erroneous in secular education, to help *all* [all emphasis in the original] Jesuits to determine what *Jesuit* education really is, and to provide a stimulating challenge to Jesuits to broaden their educational interests and thinking... It is undoubtedly true that "great teaching" has always been a Jesuit ideal. That ideal needs constantly to be reaffirmed and revivified. Mere techniques and methods, however, are not enough. They draw what value they have from a clear and deep understanding of educational aims and principles, from a growing and inspiring sense of power over the subjects one teaches, and from a mastery of the art of eliciting, by communication of mind with mind, a fruitful response in the student. It is this that is the essence of great teaching. And it is this that the *Quarterly* would make its chief concern.[1]

Farrell's statement is far more substantial than the brief "Foreword" that marked the beginning of the *Jesuit Educational Quarterly* in June 1938. As Taiga Guterres indicates in his commentary on the 1934 *Instructio* below, *JEQ* was established as a direct response to the Superior General's instruc-

1 Allan P. Farrell, S.J., "Readers' Survey of the Quarterly," *Jesuit Educational Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1944): 222–31, at 230–31.

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tion on Jesuit education in the United States.[2] The "Foreword" for the first issue matter-of-factly marks the purpose of *JEQ* as the fulfillment of the final part of Article 4 of the *Instructio*: the Jesuit Education Association should publish a bulletin frequently disseminating useful information regarding issues in education relevant to Jesuit educators.[3]

JEQ ran for 32 years until a terse notice appeared in the June 1970 issue:

> Publication of the JESUIT EDUCATIONAL QUARTERLY will cease with this issue. During the coming academic year, 1970–71, while plans for the restructuring of the JEA are being implemented, a study will be made of the advisability of resuming publication at a later date.[4]

The *Quarterly* went off-line 55 years ago. Although there have been many significant publications around Jesuit education since then, the world of teaching, administration, and spiritual formation in Jesuit schools, colleges, and universities—the *all* of it—in the United States has lacked a forum where, as Farrell put it, excellent teaching can be discussed, reaffirmed, and revivified. The joint effort of Boston College and the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies in relaunching *JEQ* reestablishes a forum that has as its core concern the flourishing of Jesuit education at all levels.

To offer a vivisection of the original run of *JEQ*'s best essays would burst the bounds of this brief editorial comment. And so, in order to restart the conversation, I have selected what I think to be most the enduringly relevant comment on Jesuit education ever published in the 32-year original run of the *JEQ*. In an essay entitled "Jesuit Aims in Higher Education" published in the March 1967 issue of *JEQ*, Fr. Robert Henle, S.J. (1909–2001), the then Vice Present for Academic Affairs at St. Louis University, reached the following conclusions from his own iterative attempts at defining Jesuit education:

> There is then no way in which Jesuit education can be defined as a set of specific traits. I myself have made various attempts so to define it, but I finally became convinced that the effort was futile. I think we must say that *Jesuit education is education given by Jesuits* [emphasis in the original]. Jesuit education cannot be described in a set of specific educational traits, specific

2 A. Taiga Guterres, "Articulating a Jesuit Philosophy of Education in the Twentieth Century: A Critical Translation and Commentary on the *Instructio* of 1934 and 1948," *Jesuit Educational Quarterly*, 2nd ser., 1, no. 1 (2025): 73–114, https://doi.org/10.51238/1ZnRn8z.

3 "Foreword," *Jesuit Educational Quarterly,* 1, no. 1 (1938): 4.

4 "Notice," *Jesuit Educational Quarterly,* 32, no. 4 (1970): 229.

> subjects, procedures or methods; it can be described in terms of Jesuits, in terms of Jesuit character.[5]

That is the most reasonable statement I have read about Jesuit education in the last 35 years of being a part of it in some way. Henle puts forth the statement in a periodical that had run essays with the following titles over the years: "Permanent Values in the Ratio," "The Present Status of the Ratio in America," "The Question of Latin," "The Question of Latin: Replies," "Why Blame Latin?," "Is Latin Worth Fighting For?," "Jesuit Liberal Arts Education and Humane Letters," "Latin and the Liberal Arts Objective," "President Hutchins and the Modern Problem of Education," and on and on. Robert Henle sought to free Jesuit education from the notion that it entailed solely formation in Classical languages or liberal humanist education or prelection (or some other pedagogical method) or the *Ratio studiorum* or some seemingly definitive aspect of Jesuit education as it had been conducted in 1747, 1847, or 1947.

Henle was a critical realist Thomist, trained under Étienne Gilson (1884–1978) at University of Toronto and St. Michael's College. He understood the world through instrumental causes, essences, ends, and aims not method or aspects of structure or historical accidents. Henle continues:

> There is no work that is by definition specifically Jesuit, but if Jesuits, men like these, put their hand to a work, they leave upon it the mark of their own character. Jesuit education is education inspired, directed and given by Jesuits who leave upon it—no matter what kind it may be—elementary, classical, technical, professional, theological,—in craft, technique, skills, research,—their own mark.[6]

Exasperated by his own struggle to define Jesuit education, Henle articulates well the aims of Jesuit education:

> I personally have given up any effort to describe Jesuit education as a set of specifics. This just is historically unsound. I think it is unsound philosophically and in principle. I think it blocks our proper approach to educational problems in the future and particularly in an age like this, an age of great change. This is not to say of course that there are not very fundamental things that the Jesuit does regard as essential and that will show up in any kind of activity that the Jesuit puts his hand to. The fundamental thing about the Jesuit Order is that it was instituted to further the work of Christ in the world and to bring Christ to all levels of society and to all individuals, and by bringing Christ to individuals to sanctify the whole of society and all parts of society, to

5 Robert J. Henle, S.J., "Jesuit Aims in Higher Education," *Jesuit Educational Quarterly*, 29, no. 4 (1967): 213–29, at 219.

6 Henle, "Jesuit Aims in Higher Education," 220.

> promote its welfare, to use individuals for social reform and for the development of societies which would be humanly good societies and supernaturally holy societies.[7]

Jesuit education—in the immortal words of Charlton Heston—is people; it's people! Its aim is to form students in order to further the work of Jesus Christ in the world. Jesuit education is apostolic, and it is conducted by people—Jesuits—who are missioned to further the work of Jesus Christ and the Church in the world.

The conversation about Jesuit education in the last thirty years has centered itself around terms: "cura personalis," "Ignatian pedagogy," "magis." These terms and the concepts they typify are under tremendous strain to fit and define a variety of educational contexts where Jesuits themselves are nearly absent and where an apostolic, evangelizing mission may seem overbearing and ideologically intemperate. Remember Henle: Jesuit education is people; it is not concepts or institutions, nor is its aim the preservation of educational institutions. Its aim is to "further the work of Christ in the world." Its purveyors, its constitutive members testify to the incarnational truth of Jesus, and, from commitment to that truth, they embody an incarnational worldliness that is bound up in the dignity of humanity and the capacity for humanity to have a meaningful relationship with God through Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Jesuit education is committed to the truth of the incarnation and the cultivation of the intellectual and artistic excellences that are definitive of human creature-hood. Commitment to the truth of the incarnation of Jesus is the essence, the character, the mark of Jesuits and the ministries they partake in, including education.

The most significant bearers and enactors of the mission of Jesuit education in the United States in the last 55 years have been lay men and women who have taught, professed, led, counseled, ministered, coached, and served as trustees in Jesuit schools. As the presence of Jesuits has receded, these men and women continue to testify to the incarnational truth of Jesus Christ and the educational aims that are grounded in that truth. These lay men and women do not represent proxies or placeholders in the work of Jesuit education until some time when Jesuits can repopulate the ranks. They are Jesuit educators; they have known and worked alongside Jesuits for decades in the mission of Jesuit education. They are steeped in Ignatian spirituality. They go to daily mass. They feel a deep connection to and an affection for flesh and blood Jesuits, and Jesuits feel a deep affection for them and their selfless witness to the work of Jesus Christ in the work of teaching and learning.

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7 Henle, "Jesuit Aims in Higher Education," 220.

Yet, even these executors of the work of Jesuit education are receding. Their ranks are thinning out as the presence of actual Jesuits co-workers becomes rarer and rarer. Furthermore, these first two generations of lay educators are retiring. Two concrete realities are disappearing as they retire: first, the basic experience that Jesuit education is a shared enterprise between vowed religious and lay men and women of faith; second, Jesuit education inheres in people not concepts. Jesuit education inheres in the witness of men and women who are transformed by the truth of the incarnation of Jesus and desire to teach from that truth.

The work of the relaunched *Jesuit Educational Quarterly* continues conversation and debate around Jesuit education in North America and beyond. How Jesuit education will continue and flourish in the absence of its principal purveyors—Jesuits themselves—is *the* critical question. Consider the conversation revivified.

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