

# Education: A Global Commitment

During and after the 2018 Synod of Bishops on Young People, it became clear that today's youth are not interested only in embarking on their own personal journeys. In fact, they complain about finding themselves alone in trying to navigate this complex world. They long to be accompanied, to be heard and understood in order to discover their own way forward together. They are the builders of today's society and the prophets of tomorrow. They are in search of new understandings and deep roots. They can be prophets – observes Pope Francis – if as adults they will be able to 'dream', and to preserve, protect, and give witness to great ideals.

Much like in the past, today's youth have an anti-institutional streak, but it is one that renders them capable of forging innovation and change. They manage to free the more mature among us from what may have become mere empty rituals or abstract formulas. In this way, we can return to the essentials and rediscover that existential dimension. Although not always coherent with what they profess, young people are sensitive to authenticity. Youth are the wakeup call to God's People, that constant call to renew oneself with the Gospel. Then, this in turn will give life to new encounters between young people and the Church.

But there is a premise to all this: Older generations need to let go of wanting to fit youth into stereotypical images, and instead see them as 'unedited' pieces, made in Jesus' image. It is no coincidence that the Synod's final document affirmed that "the young are one of the 'theological arenas' in which the Lord tells us some of his expectations and challenges for building tomorrow. (64)"

These convictions lie at the heart of the insights and experiences found in this issue of *Ekklesia*. The articles, representative of both older and newer charisms as well as the Church's institutional dimension, include insights and experiences from youth themselves. Given the sensitivity of today's younger generations regarding authentic, concrete witness, it is also imperative (despite the knots still to be untied) that we demonstrate the already existing communion uniting all Christians. Thus, the horizons of this issue expand onto initiatives relating to ecumenism, ecology and peace as well.

As we write new pages of history – ones being written by youth themselves – a new paradigm seems to be emerging. It is one focused on the value of relationships, on walking together, on encounters rooted in principles of reciprocity extending far beyond any barriers. New fruits are emerging through open, creative, and forward-thinking relationships among generations, and through ecumenical, interreligious and educational collaboration. This is becoming evident in communities, pastoral activities, social networking, and our relationship with the natural world. It also forms the backdrop for *The Global Compact on Education* launched by Pope Francis this past year.

