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Heirs and pioneers in the realm of education

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, and we heard this from Scripture this morning during mass : "... I place my words in your mouth ! This day, I set you over nations and over kingdoms. To root up and tear down, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant."

"To build and to plant" Here are two words that tell us about what the participants of the congress did today in the morning when they worked in small groups to identify in the texts they were given to read, the convictions of Emmanuel d'Alzon regarding education. These convictions give them the opportunity to build up a system of education that "forms and educates the human person" in all the dimensions of his being. And Jean-Michel BROCHEC (Assumptionist) in a brillant input on the vision of Fr Emmanuel d'Alzon on teaching and education, highlighted with emphasis that what Emmanuel d'Alzon intended to do through teaching was "the formation of intelligence, judgment, sensitivity, commitment and freedom." And quoting Fr d'Alzon, Jean Michel Brochec added : " ... We must provide our children with a great spirit of faith, of openness, of sacrifice, of initiative ...".

It was Fr d'Alzon's dream to build a university. Fr Richard LAMOUREUX, (Assumptionist) presented the importance that Fr d'Alzon attached to higher education through three arguments :

- the university provides the student with the possibility to reflect seriously on the principles on which he will build his life and work in order to make choices,
- the university is a place where ideas and rigorous reflection are the central preoccupation,
- Finally, the university gives those who make decisions on school curricula at primary and secondary levels the qualifications required. Therefore, "As educators, education at higher level should be for us a prioriry" in order to promote the dignity of the person, to form the human intellect and to give reasoning a place in the acquisition of knowledge and to provide all that is 'good', 'just' and 'true' in education.

The series of conferences of the day came to an end with the presentation of Fr Tomas GONZALEZ on the "mysticism of education according to Fr d'Alzon". Sr Thérèse-Agnès de BALINCOURT (Religious sister of the Assumption) gave a talk on the common features between Fr d'Alzon and M-Eugénie's visions of education. Then followed the presentation of Deacon Bernie NOJADERA on "Child protection policies in our schools."

There is no doubt that this day was spent not only on careful listening and deep reflection for the participants to the congress but also on developing ideas in order to "build and to plant ..."

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