

Education in the Assumption

Reference Guide

Assumption International Educators Congress
July, 1998

EDUCATION IN THE ASSUMPTION

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EDUCATION IN THE ASSUMPTION

INTRODUCTION

It is a year since the first International Congress of the Assumption (July 1998). The International team of editors has produced "Education in the Assumption" for use as an international reference text. This is certainly what the Congress wanted. Still more, it wanted a text that would remain "open-minded", so that it would be a real tool for our work.

This booklet is indeed open-ended. It is the fruit of a long history and like all history it possesses:

◆ **A Past** - The text is rooted in the educational tradition of the Assumption Congregation. We take up our place in history. Others before us have lived out the same educational project with varying emphases, depending on their times and cultures. We have welcomed this heritage and made it our own. The source of inspiration was there in the past and it is there that we have gone to draw inspiration for today.

◆ **A Present** - The text has been enriched by the shared experiences, reflections, analyses, examples and discoveries of these last years and by the time of preparation for, and process of the Congress; also by the dreams and challenges both of society and of ourselves as Assumption educators on the way to the 21st century. Our heritage expresses itself today according to the spirit of each culture because, to use an expression from Africa, our ancestor, Marie Eugenie, must be known and loved so that our cultures may receive and welcome her heritage. The first inspiration is now present as a living tradition.

◆ **A Future** - Our mission of education has not yet attained its goal: a society transformed by the values of the Gospel. The work is in progress. The future opens out before us every day and it is there that society is being built.

This booklet is addressed to all those who are working in and with the Assumption:

- throughout the world, and in a great diversity of apostolates;
- in countries where there is a long Christian tradition, and also in those formed by other spiritual traditions;
- in schools or in those new educational projects which respond to the human situations and social needs of our day;

The tradition of the text needs to answer the actual situation; it should take into account not only the language, but also the expressions, symbols, cultural and spiritual traditions of each country, each reality.

The booklet throws light on what is specific to education in the Assumption. It should allow each one to find words to express:

- what is the spirit of the Assumption
- what is education in the Assumption

Thus, it should be possible to translate these things into a concrete education project and to seek out the means by which they will be put into practice effectively.

The text is simple, easy to read, accessible, concrete... its content is sound. For it to be really profitable, time is needed to become familiar with it and make it one's own. It witnesses to an educational thought and a way of educating that has been shaped over generations.

It will be necessary to discover the spiritual experience of Mere Marie Eugenie which makes us want to live and work for the realization of this educational project:

- The coming of the reign of God in us and around us.
- The forming of the intelligence; open to all truth and to the Truth of God.
- The transformation of people and groups according to the Gospel, so that this world grows in conformity to God's plan for humankind.

Then we will be capable of entering into this educational perspective and of committing ourselves to it personally as an educational community - educators, teachers, families, children, young people.

Let us take up this work. Let us work together, united beyond all frontiers, to make the Congress bear fruit in all the places, cultures, and situations where the Assumption has taken root. Let us be transformed by our mission. In five years' time, we shall look back and make an evaluation of what this first international educational experience of the Assumption has set in motion.

In our present day society - whether in Asia, Africa, America or Europe - education must be a call for life, a dynamic and energizing step forward, capable of giving birth to, and nurturing life and hope; a progression which helps to heal wounds and create places - spaces for communication, friendship, exchanges - where every person, whatever his/her origin, culture, religion, would have a place and be happy. May everything in our education contribute to the service of life, to the search for truth, to the creation of a way of thinking and a type of education which is attentive to human and spiritual values.

Marie Eugenie invites us today to believe in the vision of the Kingdom: new men and new women and a society, family and communication that is new. In our dialogue with her, we can ask her how to bring about today, through education, a great love of life and the joy of living it to the full.

Sr. Cristina Gonzalez, r.a.
Superior General

CHAPTER I

MARIE EUGENIE (1817-1898):

HER RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE DAY

A period marked by profound changes

1817-1898: in the 81 years of Marie Eugenie's life, seven political regimes followed one another in France. It was a troubled time, though from the point of view of social, philosophical, artistic and ecclesial life, it was rich in change and innovation.

The French Revolution of 1789 signaled a break with the past: new ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity shook the foundations of monarchy, not only in France, but throughout Europe.

New philosophies challenged traditional understanding of human thought; there was a new consciousness of self, the world and others; people became increasingly interested in their own emotions and passions - human nature itself became a fascinating field for study.

Schools of thought, such as the Romantics and the Symbolists, succeeded each other in literature and painting, putting the accent on feelings, emotions and imagination.

The new scientific method and mentality gained ground and shaped minds, sharpening the conflict between science and faith, the latter all too often paralyzed by scrupulosity, guilt and fear of offending God.

Industrialization, too, was beginning to transform not only economic structures but also the lifestyle of society, relationships and ambitions.

The German philosopher Hegel (1770-1831) had proposed a theory of progress in which, it seemed, the poor paid the price.

Social reformers and theorists invented the vocabulary used and spread by Karl Marx (1859-1913), to explain history in terms of economic theory. Working men began to, organize themselves and France discovered the power of popular movements.

Such a historical upheaval brings about profound changes in a culture and destabilizes the structures of society - its government, social order, economy, education - and its Church.

Anne Eugenie - child and adolescent

In 1830, Anne Eugenie was thirteen. At the tune of the July Revolution, the banks failed and Monsieur Milleret was ruined. About this time too, Lamennais published his periodical "L'Avenir" (The Future), as a mouthpiece for the struggle for freedom, especially in education. The Gospel, for him, must penetrate the whole of life, including social institutions and politics.

During this period, Marie Eugenie made her First Communion in the Church of St. Segolene, at Metz.

"At my First Communion, which I made on my own and without the usual course of preparation, I felt, as profoundly as I have ever done since, a silent separation from anything to which I was attached, so as to enter, alone, into the immensity of the One whom I possessed for the first time."

In 1835, Father Lacordaire began his conferences at Notre Dame. Anne Eugenie was eighteen and her mother had died of cholera three years earlier. She wrote:

*"My thoughts are like a troubled sea which wearies me and weighs me down.... Tired of myself, I would like to destroy this mind of mine, quieten it, stop its probings."*¹

¹ Notes [Intimes. No. 178/01](#) (Sept. 1841), p.88.

² Notes [Intimes. No. 151/01](#) (1835), p.3.

*"I was incredibly ignorant of the doctrine and teaching of the Church, yet I had been instructed for my First Communion like other children. I had made my First Communion with love and had even received on that occasion, graces from God which, together with your preaching, have been the basic of salvation for me."*³

A radical conversion of heart and mind

1836: At Notre Dame, Anne Eugenie underwent a conversion while listening to Father Lacordaire. Later she wrote:

*"Your words fitted in with all my ideas, my impulses, completed my picture of reality, revived my notion of duty and my longing for goodness. All had been on the point of fading from my heart but your words gave me a new generosity and faith which, henceforth, nothing was to shake... I was truly converted."*⁴

This was for her a radical conversion, not only of the heart but also of the intelligence. She was dazzled by the light of Christ and of His Kingdom.

It was above all an intellectual conversion. Marie Eugenie was to speak, later, of the "renewal" of her intelligence. She continued, *"I hold on to faith as to something I have discovered."*⁵ Divine truth illuminated and transformed her own ambitions, ideals, and her understanding of the word. Her heart was on fire with the passion for truth and for God's cause. She expressed it in this way:

*"I had conceived the longing to devote all my strength or rather all my weakness to the Church which, from that moment, I saw as holding the only key to the knowledge and achievement of what is good."*⁶

The foundress: Anne Eugenie at 22

Anne Eugenie wanted to be part of the new and evolving world of her day and to find her own place in it. She renounced her own comfort in order to write her vision into human history. On 30th April 1839 she founded the Congregation of the Religious of the Assumption in a small apartment in the parish of St. Sulpice: No. 15. rue Ferou.

The letter that she wrote to Abbe Gros two years later expresses the way she was rooted in her own times:

*"The dominant idea in the foundation of this undertaking of ours was that of an inspiration of zeal and it was this that decided my vocation. Daughter of a family unhappily without religion, brought up in a social circle which was still less so, left motherless at fifteen, and, through the workings of chance because of my position, having had many more contacts and greater knowledge of society than is usual at that age, I had been able to realize how unfortunate from a Christian point of view, had been the class to which I belonged... It seems to me that anyone who has a love for the Church and is aware of the profoundly irreligious outlook of three quarters of the rich and influential families of Paris, must feel compelled to try every means to bring Christ into their lives."*⁷

She looked upon her times with hope, and unlike some of the other religious and spiritual thinkers of the day, considered that the world was the place of the revelation and the glory of God. This way of looking at it, this mode of contemplation, far from distancing her from the world, impelled her to love it better.

*"It pains me to hear this earth called a land of exile. I consider it a place of glory for God. Here He can receive from our free and suffering wills the only homage that He does not find in Himself"*⁸

She understood that God has a plan for the world and that each one is called to partnership in it.

*"I believe that each one of us has a mission on earth... the final aim of religion is not just to seek our eternal beatitude but also to make us seek how God can use us for the spreading of His Gospel and for its fulfillment."*⁹

³ Letter to Lacordaire N°1501, 13.12.1841, in Foundation Texts (hereafter F.T.), pp. 60-61.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Notes Intimes. No. 152/01 (1836).

⁶ Letter to Lacordaire N°1501, 13.12.1841, F.T. p.61.

⁷ Letter to Abbé Gros N°1504, (Nov. 1841), F.T. p.48.

⁸ Letter to Lacordaire (undated, but between 1841 and 1844), F.T. p.117.

⁹ Ibid.

The light of Christian faith is the source of coherence. Marie Eugenie believed in the earthly consequences of living out the Gospel and in its power to transform society. She emphasized the fact that, if her contemporaries did not share in God's project, it was from ignorance rather than from malice. It was a matter of understanding one's times and bringing them within a Christian perspective, according to the Gospel.

*"What seems to be lacking... nowadays... is religious orders that communicate with the characters, the spirits, and I would even say, with the physical forces of our times."*¹⁰

She was confident that it was within the capacity of women to bring about this transformation.

*"You will see that women believe they are in a family to assure a fortune and hardly ever to bring about honor and justice. But it is they whom heaven intended as the educators of the world..."*¹¹

Instead of bewailing this state of affairs, Marie Eugenie set about changing them by inculcating, through education, a Christian social spirit which corrected the superficiality she denounced.

*"The goal of education is that, once they have gone out into the world, they should be Christian women who are able to carry Christian ideas, thoughts and practices into the midst of their families."*¹²

The intelligence should be trained in such a way that it animates and directs the will. A person should act according to reason and have good reasons for acting.

*"We had all experienced the difficulties that result from an education based on worldly or anti-Catholic principles. Doubtless, it was not deliberate that God's name was never mentioned nor religion made the oasis of our education. However it lacked conviction. We could read any type of book, our teachers had widely differing beliefs..."*¹³

It was her reflection on her own experience, on the needs of her time, as well as on the growing split between faith and reason, that led her to choose education as her response to the challenges of her times.

Marie Eugenie was convinced that her project was within God's plan. Her faith gave her not only boldness but also endurance, not only the energy for action but also the strength to carry it out in the face of misunderstanding, opposition and even persecution. She had patience when confronted by the lethargy of people and the weight of institutions. Her faith and her love of Christ were for her a source of unity. Her obedience to the will of God and her sense of her calling kept her gaze fixed on her goal. She wrote to Fr. Lacordaire in 1841:

*"I knew none of the members of this Church.... I imagined they were all apostles. Later, I was to find that they were but men."*¹⁴

Her intuition and her experience of the true nature of the Church made her always see there Christ, the Good Shepherd.

¹⁰ Letter to Fr. D'Alzon N°1627, (05.08. 1844)

¹¹ Counsels on Education, F.T. p.374.

¹² Chapter 20.07.1879.

¹³ Chapter 28.04.1889 F.T. p.365

¹⁴ Letter to Lacordaire N°1501, (13.12.1841) F.T. p.61.

CHAPTER II TODAY'S CHALLENGES - ASSUMPTION RESPONSES

Today, as always, the Assumption contemplates reality in all its dimensions - people, society, the world - to be able to discern everything that favors life and leads to an ever greater hope in God, in humankind, and in society, and also all that moves in the direction of death, which dehumanizes our world and empties it of meaning.

Like Marie Eugenie in her day, we Assumption educators, at the threshold of the third millennium, want to be deeply faithful to our vocation:

"To shape the people and the society to come, in partnership with God."¹⁵

God became man, a member of our human family, in solidarity with our humanness, to reveal to us the value of all human life, so that every human being might attain full potential, and to fulfill God's plan: to make of humankind one people, thus destroying the walls of separation.¹⁶ The dynamism of the mystery of the Incarnation dwells within us and is the foundation of all our actions.

Together, in listening to and contemplating the hopes and sufferings of our different peoples, we identified the challenges and the responses that are before us as Assumption educators:

1. To approach everything human in a new way.
2. To shape a society where there is more justice, more humanity and more solidarity.
3. To work at bringing about a welcoming ecclesial community.

1. To approach everything human in a new way - in our educational work, we will endeavour:

*To be attentive to the spiritual thirst of each person, expressed according to his/her own culture, traditions and convictions, maintaining his/her openness to the transcendent.

*To join in the search for a new ethical frame of reference inspired by the Gospel:

- ◆ which shapes thought, leads to action, and inspires decisions;
- ◆ by which actions are consistent with words;
- ◆ that transforms the heart and thought of people and of society;

* To strive for all human beings to take their places as "citizens of the world."

- ◆ in a pluralist society, to educate people in respect and dialogue and to be open to diversity of people and cultures;
- ◆ in an individualistic society, to educate people in the community dimension of life and to give priority to the common good;
- ◆ in a society that excludes, to insist on the rights of every human person to life, to the earth's goods, to education, to knowledge and technical expertise, to culture, to information and communication, to religious liberty and the freedom to express one's faith.

* To work so that every human being may become a citizen among their own people

- ◆ by acknowledging and developing their cultural identity;
- ◆ by knowing and understanding the values of their culture;
- ◆ by being open to other cultures and allowing themselves to be enriched by them;
- ◆ by learning to resolve differences so as to be able to live together.

Therefore, we will endeavour to unite both the universal and the particular dimensions of human life: to be citizens of the world and think globally, to be citizens of our own people and act locally.

¹⁵ Sr. Cristina Maria Gonzalez: Opening of the International Educators Congress. 1998.

¹⁶ Epistle to the Ephesians 2:14.

2. To shape a society where there is more justice, more humanity, and more solidarity, we will endeavour:

- * To foster a culture of peace in thought, in mentalities, in attitudes and institutions.
- * To commit ourselves to the rejection of violence and injustice, to have respect for everyone without exception, to a Gospel-inspired struggle against every form of misery, marginalization and exclusion.
- * To put our efforts into the arduous work of educating people for responsibility.
- * To allow ourselves to be moved by the plight of the poor and to stand up against those situations which negate human dignity.
- * To educate people in tolerance, so that the right to be different is respected and fundamentalism is resisted.
- * To do all we can to give women their true place, their proper role in the family, the Church and society;
give priority to the family and family values.
- * To help young people to discover meaning in their lives and to commit themselves to the transformation of society.
- * To work for the protection of **the environment** and for the integrity of Creation.

3. To work at bringing about a welcoming ecclesial community –

- * Where the communion of believers in Jesus Christ is lived without distinction or exclusion of anyone;
- * Where all people can deepen their experience of the Christian mystery and express it according to their own cultural roots;
- * Where the different vocations are lived out in harmony and complementarily;
- * Where an ecumenical approach is encouraged towards other Churches of the Christian family, and dialogue with other faiths.

This prophetic community of the Church enters into the social, economic and political realities of the world where it desires to be light and salt.

WE WILL SHAPE THE SOCIETY TO COME

by being women and men who have learned to be contemplative, on fire for the Gospel and for our times, who have allowed ourselves to be transformed by eternal wisdom and love.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION IN THE ASSUMPTION

....a philosophy, a passion, a steadfast character.."¹⁷

Marie Eugenie, aflame with the mystery of Christ, had in mind, a society inspired by his Kingdom. She founded the Assumption to commit itself to the transformation of society.

She wrote in these terms to Father Lacordaire:

"Can you imagine the beauty of a truly Christian society? God, Lord of minds under the shadow of our faith, Lord of wills amid the anxieties of trials and tribulations, reigning everywhere, though invisible, adored even when He strikes. All the virtues which are God's very life, preferred to these needs which make up the natural life of man... I am both simple and daring to speak to you in this way, but I cannot refrain before this thought. This reign of Christ is perhaps more beautiful to me, more dear to my soul than the tents of Israel of which the prophets speak, more dear than the heavenly Jerusalem itself where one cannot belong to God without receiving his reward. "¹⁸

This perception of the fulfillment of God's plan and of the role each person should play in it gave Marie Eugenie the elements of what can be called a philosophy or a vision. This is explained through the biblical images of kingdom and church. This is her personal way of expressing that phrase from the Letter to the Ephesians, which later she would give to the Congregation as a motto: *"To bring everything together under Christ, as Head. "¹⁹*

A GUIDING PHILOSOPHY...²⁰

The Kingdom

What makes *"the beauty of a truly Christian society"*, for Marie Eugenie, can be glimpsed through the signs of the Kingdom already at work. The Kingdom of justice, peace, and the universal reconciliation of men and women among themselves and with nature, prophesied by Isaiah,²¹ has become a reality in Jesus Christ. The Kingdom is already here: it can be seen where men and women form communities, showing by their choice of solidarity, respect, willingness to share, that they are united in moving towards a common destiny.

Yet the kingdom is still to come: Marie Eugenie calls us to pray and work that it may come indeed:

"We should pray to God that His Kingdom may come...There is.... a social reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ that we can bring about... and for which we should ask him. We are engaged in various apostolic works. Is our main concern in our work with the pupils that they pass their examinations, that they know more history or geography? No, our first concern is that the reign of our Lord be formed in them, that His Kingdom should come in them and that through our education a Christian family may exist. We all recognize the marvel of a family in which the Christian spirit reigns in such a way that from birth the children are filled with all that should make them true Christians. If through education we first form Christian girls and then Christian women and families, shall we not have contributed to the social reign of Jesus Christ? "²²

¹⁷ Letter to Fr. D'Alzon N°1627, 05.08.1844

¹⁸ Letter to Lacordaire (undated, but between 1841 and 1844), F.T. pp. 72-75.

¹⁹ Epistle to the Ephesians 1:10

²⁰ Letter to Fr. D'Alzon N°1627, 05.08.1844: "I must tell you that I was wholly convinced that one would never attain that intellectual superiority necessary for Catholics today, except by a superiority of character ingrained in both teachers and pupils, the passion that should inspire them and the philosophy that should guide them."

²¹ Isaiah 11:6-9

²² Chapter 03.12.1882, F.T. p.355ff.

The Church

The Church makes visible the saving presence of God, at work in the history of today. It provides the place and time for direct contact with God through Jesus Christ and his sacraments, a place for learning. Marie Eugenie loved the Church: her love was rooted in her faith, faith in what the Church really is, in its great theological realities. However, Marie Eugenie did not bypass intelligence in her love, for she recognized the Church's human limitations.

The Church, the People of God, prolongs the Incarnation of Christ in human history. It is the instrument chosen to bring about the coming of the Kingdom. It is "*for the world*". Christian communities are the sign that the world can be dwelt in, that it is possible for people to live together. These communities proclaim that the world has been saved and that each one must play the part and carry out the mission that has been assigned. Mistress of wisdom, the Church tells us of the divine vocation of humankind.

A passion which inspires...

"I must tell you that I was wholly convinced that one would never attain that intellectual superiority necessary for Catholics today, except by a superiority of character ingrained in both teachers and pupils, the passion that should inspire them and the philosophy that should guide them..."

...What expands a character and intelligence when you study? What coordinates so powerfully all the things you learn, serves as goal and links them together? In one sense, it is a philosophy, but in another sense, a broader one, it is a passion. But what passion should be given?... It is the passion of the faith, of love and of the fulfillment of the law of Christ."²³

The passion of faith, of love and of the fulfillment of the law of Christ. For Marie Eugenie, passion is born of contemplation; it arises from prayer and implies a deep sharing in the Passover of Christ.

"This source seemed to me to be in contemplation and love of truth, in energy of soul, unity of spirit, in simplicity of heart, and in the power and truth of feelings. That is why I have desired the spirit of the Gospel even in the appreciation of spiritual matters. Besides, that is our vocation and what always seems to me to distinguish us from others is the steady will to go forward, led by faith and the support of its certainty."²⁴

Passion means the capacity to love, it is the unifying element of all our energies, focusing action and urging us to the commitment of our whole person: it is synonymous with determination.

A steadfast character..

It is this same passion that forms strong character and men and women aware of their own dignity, who are active partners in God's plan and builders of the civilization of love.

"It is better to possess a character, tempered by the notions of human and worldly honor, than one that is fragmented and not steadfast. Better, for the development of the intelligence, to have the false enthusiasm coming from natural passions and the torch of a bad philosophy than to have no movement in the soul and studies undertaken uniquely to learn facts, one after the other. But, how great would be the superiority of an education which took these three elements from the Source of all life instead of from the "broken cisterns" of which the prophet speaks. If characters were forged by the force of the Gospel, if souls were set on fire by the Truth of God and for His Kingdom; if the Wisdom revealed by the Son of God Himself and the knowledge of the unity of all beings in Him, became the philosophy, the principle and goal of one's education."²⁵

Marie Eugenie's desire is for the intelligence to be trained in such a way that it will enliven and give direction to the will. It is thus that one acts according to reason and has reasons for acting:

"I do not give much value to all this teaching about pure knowledge. Rather I esteem what elevates the understanding, what gives it a character of superiority in intellectual and Christian feelings."²⁶

²³ Letter to Fr. D'Alzon N°1627, 05.08.1844

²⁴ Note No. 1513, Vol. VI, quoted in "Relectures" p.50.

²⁵ Letter to Fr. D'Alzon N°1627, 05.08.1844.

²⁶ Notes of Conversations in "Un Projet Éducatif au XIX^e siècle' p.67

*"To know a little more about one subject or another.. this, I consider, is not what makes one mind superior to another; it is rather the turn of mind, its particular stamp or character given to the person... What is needful is that the children should have serious ideas and be purposeful about them."*²⁷

Marked by her own education, Marie Eugenie considers "affectivity" as an energy that needs directing and which should be utilized. *"When emotion awakens... it should not be suppressed but guided."*²⁸

In her plan for education, Marie Eugenie would insist on the formation of the will and of the character. *"Other places of education are more concerned with the imagination and the emotional faculties; for us, what matters more is the development and enlightening of the understanding by faith and still more, the training of the will so that it may be capable of renunciation and sacrifice."*²⁹

*"Form steadfast characters, with particular attention to establishing straightforwardness, loyalty, openness, honor, generosity and devotedness... For if these characteristics are weak it is because truths have been watered down. These are the great principles that forge great characters."*³⁰

We are called to participate actively, according to our particular vocation, to extend the Kingdom of God and thereby work at the transformation of society according to the Gospel.

The patient work of education is a difficult vocation. We have to "plough our furrow and feel the weight of the earth,"³¹ but those who have been chosen will experience the fullness of life.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 65

²⁸ Quoted in : 'Un Projet Éducatif'. p. 52

²⁹ Ibid. p. 67

³⁰ "L'Éducation du Caractère" p. 119

³¹ Letter to Fr. D'Alzon N°2300, 20.03.1853: "I would love to have spoken of our sanctification to you today, rather than of our earthly dwelling - but we are pioneers and we must plough our furrow and feel the weight of the earth. God is good to give this trouble for it is meritorious as well as difficult :"

CHAPTER IV

FONDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES³²

OF ASSUMPTION EDUCATION³³

In the Assumption, understanding of the world and the sense of life are both rooted in faith in Jesus Christ. This perspective nourishes in us recognition and love of the Truth revealed by the Church through the Word of God and the person of Jesus Christ.

Marie Eugenie considered that knowledge of the Word of God and of the ideas of the Church gives us a greater capacity to approach questions about humanity and to find solutions to the problems of society. This study encourages an attitude of openness and dialogue, of research and conversion. It requires an intelligent faith; it reinforces reflection as we try to understand what we believe. All truths are a part of the Truth who is God and all truths find their unity in the mystery of Christ. An enlightened understanding, guided by faith, establishes a greater openness to God.

We are called to approach all reality, personal and social, in the light of the truth revealed in Jesus Christ. It means a conversion process so that everything - heart, mind, vision and attitudes - springs from the Gospel. This seeing everything in the light of faith is what Marie Eugenie called "*the Christianization of the Intelligence*"³⁴ "a principle which should govern our decisions, our efforts and our work."³⁵

1. Education at the Assumption flows from faith in Jesus Christ.

The whole educational process is guided and sustained by faith in a constant endeavour to unity faith and life. Intelligence formed in all these dimensions should "become a power"³⁶ for personal and community action which is fully human because it is inspired by the Gospel.

Faith, on which our dimensional projects are based, opens horizons, inspires great ambitions and encourages creativity. It teaches us to believe in the human person and brings an increase in confidence. Education in the Assumption is a constant effort for a harmonious and simultaneous development of the intellect, the heart and the will. It stresses and leans on the *natural virtues*³⁷ and gives value to life and the very existence of every individual.

It is inseparable from the proclamation of the Gospel and its values.

The vision and goal of Assumption education is the coming of the Kingdom of God in and around us.

2. The whole of creation is called to the fullness of life.

The world of today is the place where God continues to speak and be present. Christ is at the heart of all that we are living. Through the Incarnation, God takes on the face of each one, especially of the marginalized, the poor, and those who suffer. This is why the point of departure of all transforming action is the reality of life. We need to listen to and have feeling for the cries of our peoples and societies. We have to know and love our own history, our culture, our own times, and to make a preferential option for the poor and marginalized.

When God came into our history, He assumed the whole of humanity: we are called to become fully human in the image of Christ.

³² Principle: what is logically the first, the fundamental; not to be confused with pedagogy. Principles are universal and timeless. Pedagogy is adapted to place, history and individuals. Principles order different kinds of actions, wherever and whatever we do.

³³ The heritage of M. Eugenie is living in us and we are living it." Sr. Cristina.

³⁴ Un Project Éducatif." p.67

³⁵ Chapter, 28.04.1889, F.T. p.364 36

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Chapter, 26.05.1878, F.T. p.333

"It pains me to hear this earth called a land of exile. I consider it a place of glory for God..."³⁸
"It is madness not to be what one is, as fully as possible."³⁹

3. Education in the Assumption is a process of liberation for the human person and for the transformation of society.

It is a participation in the creative work of God who, like an artist, works to fashion each human being in the image of his/her Creator.

It depends on the conviction that we are all in the process of becoming and can be educated. It aims to develop the intellect and heart according to Gospel values. It seeks to form characters that are *"strong and have a clear-cut and positive action even in our own little sphere."*⁴⁰

The education proposed by Marie Eugenie is one that aims at the transformation of the whole human person. She favors a widening freedom which allows each individual to develop *"in the particular way that is the will of God for them"*⁴¹ and allows them to discover their vocation in order to commit themselves to the transformation of society.

This education allows the person to find within herself resources for her own transformation; it makes her capable of, and responsible for, her own development.

4. All educational activity should emphasize the community dimension.

Every human being is at one and the same time a unique individual and essentially social in nature.

"By giving each of us a special character and particular gifts, God wanted to create our personality and our individual vocation. He has fashioned us in such a way because he wants us to hold a certain place in His plan."⁴²

Assumption education acts as an apprenticeship for life in the community. It aims at considering one's personal vocation as leading to service. In the community, each one has a share of responsibility and must play a part in carrying out the project. This sense of community develops a disposition for dialogue, openness and the ability to listen to others. It is the foundation of the right kind of social life and a sign of the Church and the Kingdom.

Assumption education offers a wide vision, enabling bridges to be built, a community spirit to be developed, and allowing religious and lay people to work in partnership. It helps to promote dialogue with other faiths and work with those who want to establish a world where there is more justice and where men and women live as members of the same family.

³⁸ Letter to Lacordaire, (undated, but between 1841 and 1844), F.T. p.72

³⁹ Letter to Fr. D'Alzon. No. 1563, 11.10. 1842

⁴⁰ Letter to Fr. D'Alzon. No. 1556, 19.07.1842

⁴¹ L'éducation du Caractère." p.134

⁴² Letter to Fr. D'Alzon. No. 1630, 23.08.1844

CHAPTER V

THE ASSUMPTION EDUCATOR

The work of the Assumption is part of the Church's mission of evangelization.⁴³ All those involved in education at the Assumption, whether they are Christians or not, are invited to get to know and become part of its project. All should be able to find their place in it, feeling members of the one body, able to work with others and become instrumental in carrying out the project. As Marie Eugenie said:

"It is characteristic of the spirit of the Assumption to allow each soul to develop in its own way, although the same virtues must in fact be the base of that individual development..."⁴⁴

VALUES

Joy

The only effective pedagogy is that of love and example. The educator is one who brings unity and the witness of a joyful love. True personal fulfillment is the sign of a vocation that is followed through. It brings joy. Marie Eugenie wrote:

"I need to respond to my vocation to be supremely outgoing, loving and joyful..."⁴⁵

"Joy is the happy and secret light springing from within..."⁴⁶

The educator possesses a certain joyfulness of thought and action which communicates itself to the very atmosphere of the educational environment.

Truth

"You know that without openness and straightforwardness one could not live in the Assumption."⁴⁷

The values that Marie Eugenie calls the natural virtues are based on love of truth. This makes a demand on the educator; to be open to what may be disconcertingly new; Marie Eugenie speaks of a wide open heart.⁴⁸

In Christianity, Truth is a Person. Thus it means welcoming the other, openness to dialogue and respect for the mystery that is every human being.

Justice

Love of truth leads to the search for justice with the aim of transforming society. It leads the educator to be in communion with the sufferings of the world, and to denounce all forms of exclusion and intolerance. It inspires the awakening and formation of social and political consciences that are enlightened by Gospel principles.

⁴³ "We had all experienced the difficulties that result from an education based on worldly or anti-Catholic principles. Doubtless it was not deliberate that God's name was never mentioned nor religion made the basis of our education. However, it lacked conviction. We could read any type of book, our teachers had widely differing beliefs and at our age it was impossible, having acquired a certain culture, not to understand the disadvantages of having been taught matters that were not always based on truth. M. Therese Emmanuel felt this as strongly as I did. The principle we wanted as foundation of our work was to offer to our pupils only those ideas which came from Christian faith or accorded with the Church's teaching. In fact we would cease to exist and could still do so, if we proposed something different, something not based on the principles we had chosen as the foundation of our education." Chapter 28.01.1889 F.T. p.365 cf. Clare Teresa, Congrès éducation, Cannes, 1998 p.8.

⁴⁴ Chapter, 10.06. 1877

⁴⁵ Letter No. 2046, 21 June 1849

⁴⁶ Letter No. 1862, 25 June 1847

⁴⁷ Chapter, 26.05.1878, F.T. p.333.

⁴⁸ Chapter, 26.08.1877: "We need to bring our heart to God, asking him to make it bigger, and, for our part, work at opening it to be as wide as God wishes it to be."

Freedom

*"The truth makes us free."⁴⁹ This was Marie Eugenie's own experience, and it becomes for us, as it was for her, an ongoing task. She wrote to Fr. Lacordaire: *"to make Jesus Christ, liberator and sovereign of the world, known.... is, for me, the beginning and end of all Christian education."*⁵⁰*

"There is a great freedom of spirit in the Assumption. In the educational field, the educator arouses a readiness to work out and fulfill one's destiny."⁵¹

So that Assumption education should be imbued with these values, Marie Eugenie gave us the appropriate benchmarks.

BENCHMARKS

A sense of vocation

Marie Eugenie asked her sisters to deepen their vocation with the greatest respect for others and a complete lack of proselytism.⁵²

⁴⁹ John 8:32ff

⁵⁰ Letter to Lacordaire (undated, but between 1841 and 1844), F.T. p.73

⁵¹ cf. Conference of Clare Teresa on the Anthropology of M. Eugenie. Congress Text.

⁵² « Counsels on Education » (1842) N° 1511 in Foundation Texts p. 376

*"We should always seek the plan of God, a plan that the Saviour alone can reveal to us.... Faith informs the intelligence more than age does,"*⁵³ more than experience.

For those who take on the responsibility, education at the Assumption is exacting; it tends to become a way of life.

In the Assumption, the source of educational action is a contemplative attitude, and also a capacity for conversion and personal transformation. The educators, having opened their minds to the light of Christ, gradually make permanent the necessary link between faith and life. They are nourished by the Word of God so that their thoughts, actions and relationships bear the imprint of Gospel values. Each one is invited to share in a challenging process of personal growth and transformation. In fact, the way education unfolds means that, while teaching, one also learns.

Ability to accompany

Instruction is only one of an educator's tasks; the essential mission is to allow pupils to discover and enter into their own personal vocations. For Marie Eugenie:

*"Each of us has a mission on earth."*⁵⁴ She firmly believed: *"that God gives to everyone what they need to carry out their duty."*⁵⁵

All educators know that they need to lead their pupils, as individuals and as a community, to a higher level of being. The Assumption education inspires maximum participation and commitment on the part of both.

Speaking of the individual vocation, Marie Eugenie insists that each one should be a sort of essential cog in the machinery of the whole. An Assumption education means that the student becomes responsible and ready to play a part in the transformation of society. The concept of empowerment expresses this idea well: the educator helps the student to become autonomous and in charge of his or her own destiny.

Living in the real world

The departure point for all educational action is the reality of life. *"We must feel for, and listen to, the cries of our own people and societies, know and love our cultures, our histories and our times."*⁵⁶

It is important for the educators to understand the way of life and the culture of the pupils or the communities among whom they are working⁵⁷. They need to be capable of analysis and of evaluating needs, desires and aspirations. Assumption educators need to have an interest in, and a real sympathy for, the society and the people to whom they are sent. They come to them with a true, simple, humble and sincere sense of solidarity.

Competence

In her "Counsels on Education," Marie Eugenie wrote, *"No mistress should teach without knowledge and reflection"* and in the notes on her conversations we read, *"We give our sisters enough intellectual training and culture for them to pass this on to their pupils and give them a really sound education."*⁵⁸

Education is an ongoing apprenticeship and the educators are professional about this. They know how to exercise discernment and creativity in order to seek out, adapt or improve their methods so that all their pupils reach the level of attainment and excellence appropriate to each individual.

⁵³ « Counsels on Education » (1842) N° 1511 in Foundation Texts p. 371

⁵⁴ Letter to Lacordaire, (undated, but between 1841 and 1844), F.T. p. 73

⁵⁵ "Counsels", F.T. p.370

⁵⁶ cf. Congress Text of the Philippine Province.

⁵⁷ See Ch. IV. Principle 2.

⁵⁸ cf. "Un Projet Educatif au 19^e siècle" (Études d'Archives 5) p.65

Ability to work in a team

*"Do you know what it is that is the most important, the most difficult, acquired neither by study nor intelligence... ? It is a perfect unity in our way of treating the pupils."*⁵⁹

Assumption educators are privileged to work in a team, seeking a common policy for effective educational action. They are able to train others, watching out for the individual gifts of the team. Marie Eugenie said, on the subject of differing opinions, *"It would be better for education to adapt a manner perhaps not as good as all these, but which can be followed uniformly by all the mistresses."*⁶⁰

⁵⁹ "Counsels", F.T. p.376

⁶⁰ Ibid. p.378

Bearing witness to the good

For Marie Eugenie, the essential thing is **to be** as fully as possible⁶¹ Education ought to witness to the unity and dignity of the human family, something of particular importance today. Marie Eugenie emphasized both the difficulty and the necessity "of *being all that one should be, with those whom we educate...*"⁶²

THE EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE ASSOMPTION

rests, as it were, on the three pillars of Marie Eugenie's three great loves: Jesus Christ, Mary and the Church.

Marie Eugenie's vision was completely rooted in Jesus Christ: "*My gaze is entirely fixed upon Jesus Christ and the extension of His Kingdom.*"⁶³ *As they journey in faith, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is there.*"⁶⁴ Wherever a work of the Assumption is, a Christian community is gathered to share the Word, to pray and to celebrate, thereby rendering the Church present to the world a sign of the Kingdom.

This ecclesial community is open-hearted to other Christian churches and also to a dialogue between the faiths. It is a prophetic community, concerned with social and economic realities, in the midst of which it desires to be light and salt.

⁶¹ Letter No. 1563 Vol.7 (11.07.1842).

⁶² "Counsels" F.T. p. 370ff.

⁶³ Undated letter to Lacordaire. F.T. p. 75

⁶⁴ Rule of Life of the Religions of the Assumption: Introduction

CHAPTER VI

SOME ELEMENTS OF THE ASSUMPTION EDUCATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGY

A COMMON VISION OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN

Introduction

To educate means to lead out - from the Latin: *e-ducere*. The inspiration, action, and educational focus of the educational task should fit into a clear anthropology, agreed upon by all who are working in the Assumption. Marie Eugenie's concept of what it means to be human was explicitly Christian. The practical consequences of this is to offer all men and women of good will, sound motivation for action together.

1. POINTS OF DEPARTURE

Every human being is educable

As a created being, the human person is unfinished. Though finite, each one is called to the greatest possible fullness. The aim of education is to help this development, with the conviction that, in each one, good is emerging and will become even better.

Every human being is unique

"Each one has a mission on earth." Fulfilling this with all the sincerity of one's being is essential to the building of the human community. The Assumption recognizes the need for a certain freedom for people to grow in the way that corresponds to their own grace.

There is good in everyone

*"Hidden, even in the worst natures, there is always something good. That is what we believe in, what we persevere in seeking out, and if we do not find it, we blame the idea of our own excellence which is blinding us."*⁶⁵

Human beings are social by nature

*"By their innermost nature, human beings are social beings; and if they do not enter into relations with others they can neither live nor develop their gifts"*⁶⁶

The community and social dimension is essential to the spirit of the Assumption.

2. SPRINGBOARDS OF EDUCATION

Instruction

Instruction is a powerful means of transformation, both personal and social. The educator should have a sound personal culture and show a concern for real intellectual openness.⁶⁷ The way in which an educator approaches knowledge and learning is as instructive as the lessons that are taught.⁶⁸

Teaching will be of a good standard and an even better quality, so that it seeks not only the acquisition of knowledge but a growth in intelligence and the harmonious development of the whole person.

Education, in relying on instruction to enlighten consciences and form judgments, allows students to free themselves from the negative influences of society or family (if any), and to reach true autonomy of self and of action.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ "Counsels on Education" p.547 (French text; this paragraph is missing in the current English version.)

⁶⁶ Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes* Part I, N°. 12, para. 4

⁶⁷ see Ch. 5 under "Competence."

⁶⁸ Letter to Lacordaire, N°1502, 04.02.1842, F .T. p.67

⁶⁹ Letter to Fr. D'Alzon (27 Dec. 1843): M. Eugenie speaks of the role of Christianity in the "ransom" of human beings from the fatality of their birth and past.

Intelligence

Human beings are intelligent: This is presupposed in the Assumption.

*"Intelligence means the ability to reflect, to judge, to discern. It is the ability to understand how human beings think and how thought leads them to make decisions and to act."*⁷⁰

Intelligence also allows itself to be permanently stimulated and urged on by truth. It allows one to go beyond mere appearance and superficiality. It gives justification for one's moral stance and underpins the certainties of one's belief.⁷¹ It means the understanding and constant searching out of the sparks of truth in the heart of human beings and of the world.

No human being possesses the whole truth, this is what makes us complement one another: one teaches the other and all spend their lives in the search for truth.

For Christians, truth is something that has to be built up. Faith is not believing that which we hold as the truth; it is the movement of our being which receives the growth of God's own Being in our humanity.

*"Making concessions convinces no one. Goodness and gentleness do, if we maintain the truth whole and without alloy."*⁷²

Natural virtues

The natural virtues have always been spoken of in the Assumption. Today, it is necessary to make a distinction between values and virtues. We can perhaps assume that values define that to which the subject gives importance and that virtues express what that same subject tries to put into practice.

Marie Eugenie insists on these virtues in particular:⁷³

"Simplicity of heart and spirit, gentleness, goodness, kindness, equanimity, patience, modesty."

She also considers it a virtue to develop the ability to give up one's own ideas in order to be open to those of others. She expresses this as *"being used to submitting and sacrificing oneself for others."*⁷⁴

All education values and promotes these virtues. But what makes all the difference is the relative attention paid to each. For example, if the accent is placed on discipline and order, good behavior can take precedence and will effectively come first. For M. Eugenie, the two most important virtues are *kindness*, without which one does not have the spirit of the Assumption and *straightforwardness*, without which one cannot live nor exist in the Assumption. These virtues, which are found in all people of goodwill, are the necessary foundations of an authentic spiritual life.⁷⁵

Character

Marie Eugenie gave great importance to the education of character. This means a person's temperament and individuality taken together. For Marie Eugenie, to envisage an education of the character means expressing faith in the real person, in that person's capacity to change and to be fulfilled in carrying out a project. *"The intelligence must be formed in such a way that it animates and gives direction to the will."* Affectivity is an energy which needs to be directed and which should be used: *"at the time of awakening feelings (in pupils)... one should not wish to repress them but give direction to them."*⁷⁶

Freedom

⁷⁰ Sr. Clare Teresa: "The Anthropology underlying the Philosophy and Pedagogy of MME." Cannes. April, 1993.

⁷¹ "I hold on to my faith, as to something I have discovered..." Notes Intimes, N° 152.

⁷² Chapter, 5th May 1878, F.T. p.322

⁷³ "Counsels on Education" F.T. pp. 375-6

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ Chapter, 26 May 1878, F.T. p. 334 last paragraph.

⁷⁶ Cf. Chapter III

These is a great freedom of spirit in the Assumption. The essential freedom for each person is to have the capacity to actualize his or her potential; it is the possibility of constructing one's own destiny. That means it is my responsibility to become what I am (meant to be) and this freedom gives me the capacity to be myself, to achieve my identity. The freedom of spirit that we experience in the Assumption is based on a climate that encourages and even pushes people to be themselves, to build themselves, without constraints or useless rules which can break a person's élan.⁷⁷

3. EDUCATIONAL AIMS

Personal action

Education in the Assumption is geared to action. It aims to build up solid principles in each person to guide and direct all action. *"Assumption education inculcates convictions which have proper roots, so that, sooner or later, they bear fruit."*⁷⁸

Social and political action

In seeking to develop the particular steadfastness of each student's own character, Assumption education wants to help build a world made up of human variety, difference and complementarity. The working out of an individual vocation is always directed to the building of a society in which all are invited to share their gifts, to take real responsibility and to enrich through their own personality, the community in which each one is called to live and act.

Faith in the future of human beings

Education is meant for beings who are likely to fall and be stranded, There is a negative at the beginning of all human progress. It cannot damage our hope in each person and in the future. There is always an effort to be made to struggle against egoism, beginning with one's own. Indeed, life is made up of renunciation, sacrifice, and even penance. But *"any penance which has no relevance for the future is not good."*⁷⁹

Commitment within structures

No human being can be completely without roots. Each one is the fruit of a story which is a constitutive part of the history of a people. Little by little, we learn what we owe to the structures which have shaped us, just as we learn that we should play our part in making these structures work. Structures are essential. In education, structures are particularly important when it is a question of helping those *"who unfortunately were born outside the conditions which assure moral liberty and those in misery who do not fend liberty even of an honest state."*⁸⁰

**To educate always means
allowing the good that is in every person
to break through the rock which imprisons them
and to lead it into the light
where it can flower and shine forth.**

⁷⁷ Sr. Clare Teresa op. cit.

⁷⁸ Cf. Chapter, 26 May 1878, F.T. p.333

⁷⁹ Letter to Fr. D'Alzon, N°1603, 27 Dec. 1843

⁸⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER VII

METHODS⁸¹

In order to attain the objectives of education, it is necessary to employ all the various means and approaches deemed most appropriate to the task. This is why the objectives need to be clearly defined as well as the goal to be attained and the means to be taken. Indicators will facilitate the evaluation of attitudes, values, behavior and levels of performance throughout the educational process.

1. For many years the Congregation has made use of the following proven method (known in English as “Project Making”). This comprises:

- a vocabulary
- a tool for creating an objective
- a tool for evaluating an action

A VOCABULARY

The Vision (Utopia)

A plan for society, a vision of the world and humankind which impels action, the inspiration
(Why do we want to act?)

Goal

A specific action chosen because it is directly related to the Vision
(What do we want to attain, obtain, realize?)

Orientations

All the main lines of action and creative options which lead to the attainment of the stated goal
(How do we want to do it?)

Priorities

Choices of actions made according to urgency and importance *(For each orientation)*

Objectives

Results sought (for each priority), which can be measured, recorded, dated and evaluated. Indicators of success.

Programming

Decisions about the stages and sequences in the action *(necessary for gaining objectives)*.

Resources

Evaluation of resources, particular means of support both internal and external
(which we can use to attain the objectives).

Obstacles

Evaluation of difficulties, opposition, possible hostility, or limitations, which may be in the way of success.

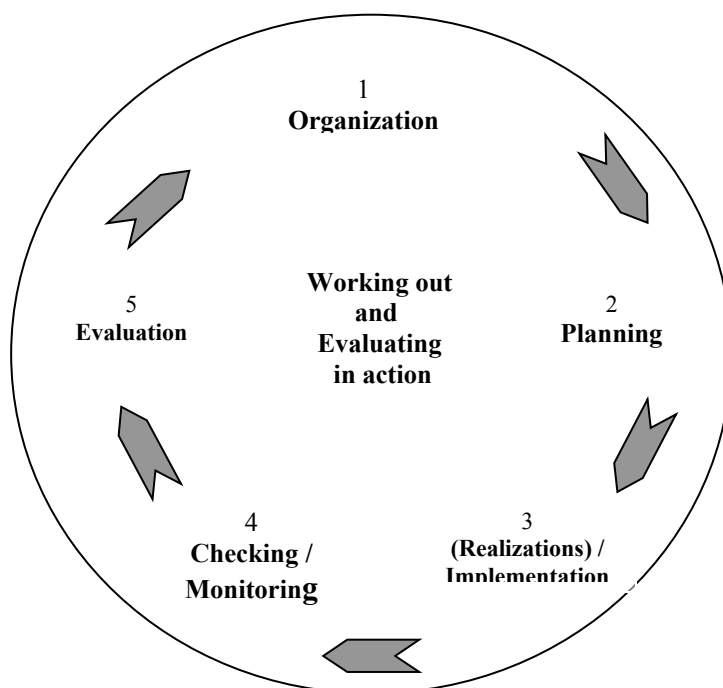
Strategy

Long-term organization of action geared to the fulfillment of the Vision, including both present realities and future possibilities of situations and of the global reality.

Tactics

Concrete procedures geared to the objectives, taking account of the whole strategy

⁸¹ This chapter should be set alongside Chapter 5: The Assumption Educator.



A tool for constructing an objective

WHO? People in partnership
 DOING WHAT? Tasks, activities
 WITH WHOM? Partners
 WHEN? Calendar (dates, time scale)
 WHERE? Place
 WITH WHAT? Means
 HOW? Practical and/or educational methods

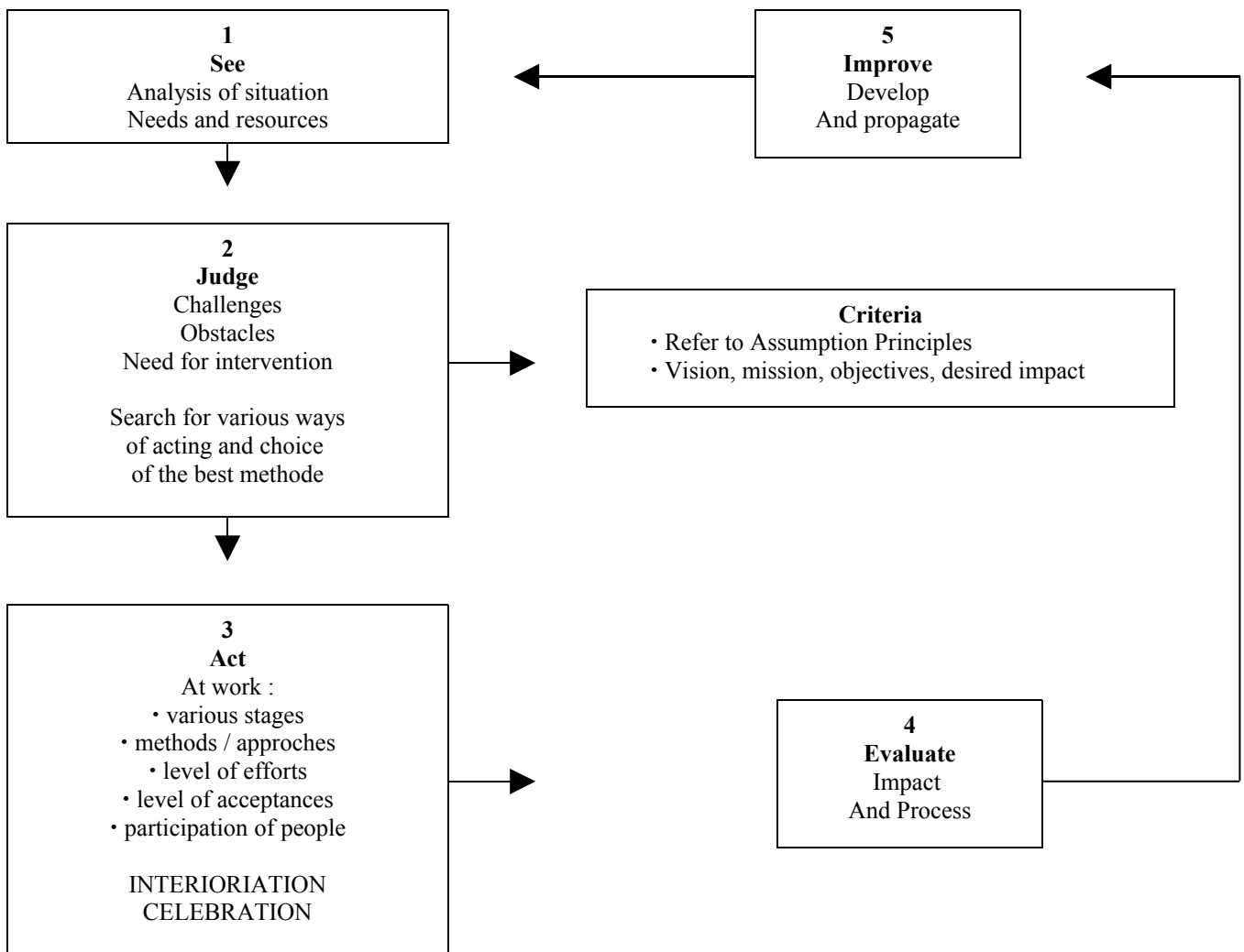
2. Within the framework of the International Congress, another method was studied,

		Methods	Means	
Preview	1. Why did you begin this activity ?	2. How did you foresee this activity being carried out ?	3. With what things, people, money, did you plan to do it ?	
Actual situation		4. How has this come about ? As foreseen, or in another way ? Why ?	5. With what has it been done ? As foreseen, or in another way ? Why ?	6. What results have you got ? Are you satisfied ? Why ?
For the future	7. Why are you continuing this action ?	8. How do you want to do it ?	9. With what (things, people, money) do you plan to continue ?	

using the Pastoral Cycle as basic.

Elements of this method:

- * **1. See:** full analysis of the situation: needs and resources
- * **2. Judge:** identify the best way of acting on the situation according to these criteria:
 - the principles of MME
 - the educational plan
 - the desired impact
- * **3. Act:** carry out the project concretely according to stages and methods that have been planned, and in the context and time-scale needed for its development, Accompany this with reflection, interiorization and celebration.
- * **4. Evaluate:** at a pre-arranged time, review the impact of the project, and the methods used, with a view to growth and fruition.
- * **5. Improve:** when a project is succeeding, it can be made even better and/or set up -gain in other places.



3. The documents of the International Congress contain examples of these methods in the reports made by the delegates of their own experiences in education.

Likewise, they highlight the particular strategies favoured in the Assumption.

A. Community at work⁸²

This is the natural setting of all educational work in the Assumption.

- it promotes the meeting of, and dialogue between, people;
- it requires teamwork, develops co-responsibility between the members and fosters partnership;
- it increases efficiency and creates multipliers;
- it allows for the celebration of, and witness to, the reality of the Kingdom.

B. Spiritual accompaniment

Means a love which is at the same time friendly, encouraging and challenging. It entails listening, dialogue and discernment.

C. "Immersion experiences"

Allow people to understand the reality of a situation from within, to be challenged by whatever is of the Gospel there, and to take appropriate action.

⁸² See Chapter 4. Principle 4.

GLOSSARY

Some of Marie Eugenie's expressions

(Many of these were translated literally into English and have become a certain "Assumption vocabulary". Such expressions are placed within quotation marks).

Adoration

The greatest and most profound love of which the human heart is capable. It is an attitude which seeks and finds God in all things and it implies passing beyond the self (to seek the love of God to the point of forgetting self).

"To Christianize the Intelligence"

This phrase expresses a way of seeing everything in the light of faith, according to the law of Christ, according to what is most deeply human. It means seeing things in the broadest fashion, from the angle of the transcendent, basing everything on Gospel values. Working thus to make the whole outlook Christian means accepting it for oneself and offering to the young the possibility of opening their hearts and spirits to this light of God which lives within them, at the depth of all human experience.

"Joyful detachment"

This attitude leads us to see everything in the light of God's goodness, in His love, and to welcome trustfully all that comes from Him. We face the troubles and contradictions inherent in life, knowing that nothing can separate us from Him. (Rule of Life 47)

To forestall God

To be so ready to do God's will that we are on the watch for whatever He wants, almost, as it were, in advance.

Straightforwardness

The quality that consists of saying what one is thinking, without evasion, and of keeping one's word. Having committed oneself to an action, one holds firm.

Family spirit

A style of relationship expressing itself in acceptance of the other, respect, confidence and affection.

Humility

This is connected with love: Humility does not consist in words or discourses nor in external behavior, but in a heart that gives itself completely and that receives Jesus Christ. Humility, a fruit of the Spirit of the Son, is the source of praise and thanksgiving. It gives confidence and true joy; it leads to simplicity. (Rule of Life 42)

Freedom of spirit

This means giving others the space to be themselves and it implies both confidence in them and respect.

"Zeal"

An ardent and energetic love. "*Being zealous for the rights of God*" was a virtue which distinguished Marie Eugenie from the time of her conversion.

**The thought that determined the foundation of this work
was one of zeal, and it is this that determined a vocation...
I believe each one of us has a mission on earth.**

Marie Eugenie (1817 – 1898)