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Jubilee of the World of Education – 2025

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‘Pilgrims of Hope’

Programme of the World Union of Catholic Teachers (UMEC-WUCT)

In collaboration with the European Education Law and Policy Association (ELA) and the Italian Association of Catholic Teachers (AIMC)

Location: Rome, Italy

Dates: 30 October – 2 November 2025

“We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision. The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire; that is why I have chosen as the motto of the Jubilee, Pilgrims of Hope. This will indeed be the case if we can recover a sense of universal fraternity and refuse to turn a blind eye to the tragedy of rampant poverty that prevents millions of men, women, young people and children from living in a manner worthy of our human dignity”.

Pope Francis, 11 February 2022

I consider important for all of us: attention to current events and the ministerial and missionary dimension of teaching in the community..... All this can but make us think, and it also raises useful questions. What, in the world of youth today, are the most urgent challenges to be faced? What values are to be promoted?

What resources can be counted on?

Pope Leo XVI, 15 May 2025

A Jubilee Gathering for Catholic Educators

In response to the Holy Father's invitation to celebrate the Jubilee Year 2025 under the theme *Pilgrims of Hope*, the World Union of Catholic Teachers (UMEC-WUCT), in partnership with AIMC and ELA, will convene in Rome for a significant international event. This gathering offers a unique opportunity for Catholic educators from across the globe to engage in reflection, dialogue and public witness to the enduring value of Christian education. The Jubilee is a time of renewal — not only spiritual but professional and communal. Catholic teachers are at the forefront of shaping future generations, and in the face of global uncertainty, conflict and change, they are called to be bearers of hope through the daily practice of their vocation.

This event, focused on enhancing the pedagogical and spiritual skills of Catholic educators, aims to consolidate a more united global educational community, inspired by the principles of the Gospel. With the patronage of the [*Dicastery for Education and Culture*](#) and [*Dicastery for Layci, Family and Life*](#) of the Holy See, Catholic teachers from around the world will gather in the heart of the Eternal City, in a symposium of innovative ideas and practices.

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Aims and Objectives of the Programme

The objectives of the project are to promote quality Catholic education and education by Catholic teachers in non-confessional schools, facilitate dialogue among educators of different cultures, raise community awareness on contemporary educational dynamics, and pay tribute to the invaluable contribution of Catholic teachers to the improvement of educational systems worldwide. Therefore, this initiative aims:

1. To affirm and celebrate the vocation of Catholic teachers, recognising their professional and spiritual contributions to education in diverse contexts — whether in confessional, public or intercultural settings.
2. To facilitate global exchange and dialogue among educators and Catholic education advocates, particularly those working in environments marked by conflict, poverty or political instability.
3. To deepen awareness of the ethical, anthropological and theological dimensions of education in our time, particularly in light of Pope Francis's call for a renewed global educational compact.
4. To showcase innovative practices in Catholic education that respond creatively and courageously to the needs of today's learners, families and societies.

Core Themes and Reflections

At the heart of this Jubilee event lies a recognition of the Catholic teacher as more than a transmitter of knowledge. The Catholic educator is:

- A witness to the Gospel through word and example, forming young people in truth, justice, compassion and freedom.
- A guardian of hope, offering stability and moral clarity in increasingly fragmented societies.
- A builder of bridges, promoting dialogue, peace and inclusion across cultures and belief systems.

"You are co-workers of the Pope in supporting Catholic teachers in the faith, so that they can carry out their work and bear witness in the best way possible."

— Pope Francis to UMEC-WUCT, 12 November 2022

Programme Structure and Key Events

30 October – Arrival and Orientation

Participants arrive in Rome and have informal networking opportunities

31 October (Morning)

Location: Paul VI Audience Hall, Vatican

Audience with Pope Francis (with educators), preceded by the passage through the Holy Door.

Papal Audience and Jubilee Pilgrimage

At the heart of this programme is a pilgrimage of faith. Participants will journey together to the Vatican for a Jubilee Audience with the Holy Father and to pass through the Holy Door — a powerful sign of mercy, renewal and commissioning for Catholic educators around the world. Details to follow.

Education Village: Exhibition and Public Engagement

Location: Jubilee Education Village, Central Rome

The Education Village will serve as a dynamic platform for visibility, participation and encounter. International educational networks will be invited to present their mission, their experiences and good practices, contributing to reflection on the theme: “How can we give visibility to hope in education? Catholic educators will have the opportunity to have a stand presenting a variety of projects, research and classroom innovations that embody Gospel-inspired pedagogy.

The Village will include:

- Interactive exhibits and teaching resources
- Hands-on workshops for families, teachers and youth
- Screenings of short films, digital presentations and storytelling corners
- Expert-led mini seminars on key global education issues

1 November :

10:00 - Celebration of the Eucharist with Pope Leo XVI

Location: St Peter's Basilica

14:30– Pre-Conference Event: Teaching in Times of Conflict

Location: LUMSA University

A dedicated roundtable and workshop series focusing on the unique challenges and responsibilities of educators working in zones affected by war, social division or humanitarian crisis. The session will explore:

- Strategies for promoting resilience and healing through education
- Pedagogical approaches to teaching hope and peace
- Testimonies from educators on the frontlines of global instability

Meeting with the Belgian Ambassador and buffet

2 November – Academic Conference: ‘The Catholic Teacher Today: Witness, Innovator and Guid

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A full-day symposium featuring internationally acclaimed keynote speakers, academic panels and facilitated dialogue. Topics will include:

- The spiritual and moral formation of the Catholic educator
- New challenges and opportunities in religious education
- Human dignity and Catholic anthropology in curriculum and school life
- Catholic education and digital culture
- Policy and legal frameworks impacting Catholic schools globally

Conclusion: A Call to Renew Our Commitment

As Catholic educators, we are invited to embrace the Jubilee not only as a celebration of what has been accomplished, but as a challenge to reimagine how we carry out our mission in the face of new realities.

“We must fan the flame of hope... This will indeed be the case if we can recover a sense of universal fraternity.”

— Pope Francis, 11 February 2022

By coming together as pilgrims of hope, we affirm our shared responsibility for the future of Catholic education — one rooted in truth, justice and love.



DETAILED PROGRAMME

(Subject to change)

Thursday 30 October – Arrival

Delegates arrive in Rome and check into hotel accommodation.

Friday 31 October – Audience & Round Table

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10:30 AM – Vatican, Paul VI Audience Hall

Audience with Pope Francis (with educators), preceded by the passage through the Holy Door.

“Village of Education” Hosted by the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

A collaborative international exhibition showcasing the missions, experiences, and best practices of leading global educational networks. Theme: *“How can we give visibility to hope in education?”*

Saturday 1 November – Jubilee Eucharist

10:00 AM – St. Peter’s Basilica

Jubilee Eucharistic Celebration with Pope Francis, for the entire educational community.

2:30 PM – 6:00 PM – LUMSA University, Borgo S. Angelo 13, Rome

Conference Round Table: *“The Catholic Teacher’s Mission in Societies in Conflict”*

Welcome: Prof. Francesco Bonini, Rector of LUMSA

Opening Prayer: Archbishop Vincent Dollmann, Ecclesial Assistant to UMEC-WUCT

Introduction: Prof. Jan De Groof, President of UMEC-WUCT – *“The Determining Role of Education and of the Values-Driven Teacher Promoting Peace in Conflict Areas”*

Presentations by:

- H.E. Cardinal Matteo Zuppi (Ukraine & Middle East) (TBC)
- H.E. Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, OFM (DRC) (TBC)
- Prof Bartholomew McGettrick (Bethlehem University)

Responses by:

- Prof. Antonio Pedro Barbas Homem (Lisbon)
- Prof. Merilin Kiviorg (Tartu & Oxford)
- Prof. Pasquale Moliterni (Roma IV)
- Dr. Maria Smirnova (UN OCHR, Geneva)

With interventions from:

- Prof. Andrea Riccardi, Founder of Sant’Egidio (TBC)
- Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, Nobel Prize Nominee

Concluding remarks and open discussion.

Meeting with the Belgian Ambassador and Buffet (TBC)

Sunday 2 November – Conference Day

8:00 AM – Holy Mass

Celebrated by Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education (TBC), and Archbishop Vincent Dollmann.

9:15 AM – 12:15 PM :

Conference: *"The Catholic Teacher Today: Witness, Innovator and Guide"*

Topics include the significance of Catholic education in forming young people; best practices and innovation; curricula for religious education; international collaboration; and professional formation.

Introductions by the Rector, Prof. Jan De Groof, WUCT President, Dr. Esther Flocco, AIMC National President, Prof. Giuseppe Desideri, General Secretary UMEC-WUCT.

Plenary Sessions:

– Keynotes:

- Prof. Jan De Groof – *“Educating Today and Tomorrow: the Role of the Catholic Teacher, 60 years after Gravissimum Educationis Momentum”*
- Prof. Roisín Coll – *“Catholic Education – Catholic Teachers: State of the Art, Challenges and Opportunities for 2025”*

Two Parallel Morning Sessions:

Session 1: “Catholic Education and Catholic Teachers: A Gift to Our Faith”

Chair: Prof. John James (St. Louis University)

Speaker: Prof. James Arthur (Birmingham University)

Panellists include: Prof. Italo Fiorin (LUMSA), Prof. Charlie Russo (Dayton), Prof. Balázs Gerencsér (Hungary), Prof. Mariette Reyneke (South Africa), N. (Kenia)

Session 2: “Catholic Academics and Students in Higher Education: Rights, Freedom and Responsibility”

Chair: Prof. Mario Sandoval (Chile)

Speakers: Prof. Ines Murzaku (Seton Hall), Prof. Ignacio Sánchez (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile)

Panellists: Prof. Fiorucci (Roma Tre), Prof. Klaus Beiter (NWU), Prof. Ausrine Pasvenskienė (Lithuania), Student leaders, Dr. Venkatesh Rao G. (India), Prof. Alexandre Moreira (Brazil and KU Leuven)

12:30 PM – Short Lunch Break

Two Parallel Afternoon Sessions (2:30 PM – 6:30 PM):

Session 3: “Teachers of Religious Education in Catholic and Non-Confessional Schools”

Chair: Dr. Caroline Healy (St Mary’s University, UK)

Speakers: Prof. Didier Pollefeyt (KU Leuven), Prof. Philomena Njeri Mwaura (Kenyatta University)

Panellists: John P. Nish (CATSC, England and Wales), school leaders, teachers.

Session 4: “Teacher Education and the Benefits of Artificial Intelligence”

Chair: Dr. Giuseppe Desideri (UMEC-WUCT)

Speaker: Prof. Linda Darling-Hammond (Stanford)

Panellists: Prof. Cheryl Peralta (Philippines), Prof. Pablo Meix Cereceda (Spain), Prof. John Lydon (St Mary’s, London), Prof. Kurt Willems (KU Leuven), Pietro Fochi (Bologna)

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Closing Plenary Session

Presentation of the Report on the Role and Future of the Teacher: Danielle Woestenberg

Round Table with WUCT Regional Coordinators:

Fr. Albert Kabuge (Africa), Prof. Belen Tangco (Asia), Prof. John James (North America),

Prof. Mario Sandoval (South America), Fr. Adrian Podar (Eastern Europe), Danielle

Woestenberg (Western Europe)

Final Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Meeting with the Portuguese Ambassador, Buffet (TBC)

Monday 3 November – Final Meetings & Departure

8:00 AM – Holy Mass at AIMC Centre

Celebrant: Archbishop Vincent Dollmann

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM – General Council of UMEC-WUCT

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM – Lunch

3:00 PM – 7:00 PM – Enlarged Executive Committee Meeting

7:00 PM – Dinner

ANNEX

EDUCATION VILAGE

Proposed Activities at the Stand, subject to changes.

- Interactive Workshops: Workshops on innovative and inclusive teaching methods.
- Multimedia Presentations: Screenings of educational documentaries and videos.
- Distribution of Informative Materials: Brochures, pamphlets, and flyers on UMEC and AIMC activities.
- Meetings with Experts: Q&A sessions with educators and specialists in Catholic pedagogy.

Workshops:

- FIDE publication, presentation by Mr Pedro Diaz, FIDE, Chile, introduced by Prof. Mario Sandoval;
- WIJCT publication, presentation by Prof. Roisin Coll, Dr. Theresa Ofokar, Prof. John James and Prof. Belen;
- Teachers' Rights and Duties as defined by the international community, presentation by Luc Cortebeeck, former President of the International Labour Organisation and the General Christian Work Union (Belgium), introduced by COV Secretary-General and Prof. Evelien Timbermont, Free University of Brussels;
- The Inclusivity of Catholic Education, presentation by Prof. Lieven Boeve, Faculty of Theology, and previous Director General of Catholic Education (Belgium).
- Best Education Practices — Catholic and non-Catholic schools
Research Report by Prof. Jorge Martinez, La Salle University (Colombia)

Closing Reflections

“Your Union can help raise awareness among Catholic teachers of the Global Compact on Education... I encourage you to give new impetus to the Union of Catholic Teachers. A noble task and an important mission await you in the world of education and schooling.”

— Pope Francis, 12 November 2022

“Let's think of the isolation caused by superficiality, individualism, emotional instability... the rhythms of life that leave little space for listening, reflection, and dialogue.”

— Pope Francis

