EDUCATION TO FREEDOM
DON BOSCO AND JACQUES MARITAIN IN TANDEM?

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At a first glance, there seems to be very little in common between Don Bosco, the Saint of Turin, and the French Philosopher, Jacques Maritain. John Melchior Bosco (1815-1888), or Don Bosco, as he was familiarly called and is now known all over the world, was of peasant stock and was raised up on a farm in Castelnuovo d'Asti in Piedmont[1]. Brought up by his saintly mother, Mamma Margherita, after losing his father at the age of two, young Johnny Bosco received a deeply Christian education in the family, rich in human values and experiences that profoundly influenced his life and work. Though beset by poverty and financial difficulties that accompanied him all through his early years, John Bosco learnt to mature through these constraints, and became a priest with a clear identity as regards his God-given mission to young people. He dedicated his entire life to the care of poor and abandoned boys, and became the Founder of a vast Salesian Family of consecrated and lay men and women who continue his mission.

Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) came from an aristocratic family in Paris, and had an illustrious grandfather, Jules Favre.[2] His childhood was difficult and lonely, being brought up in an agnostic Protestant family, in which his mother had separated from his father. As a university student, Jacques, together with his future wife, Raïssa Oumançoff, a Russian Jewish émigré, underwent a profound existential crisis, which was resolved with their conversion to the Catholic Church and subsequently with the discovery of his philosophical vocation as a disciple of St Thomas Aquinas.

What unites Don Bosco and Jacques Maritain and justifies their being considered together in this paper, despite wide divergences in their early life and even more in their later development, is their passion for the education of young people. Writing to the Marquis Michele Benso of Cavour in 1846 about the transferring of his first Oratory to the Pinardi Shed, Don Bosco describes the boys he is particularly concerned about:

> "…usually they are from ten to sixteen years of age, without religious principles or education, the greater part of them prey to vices and on the point of becoming the reason for complaints from the public, or ready to be placed in correction homes."[3]

In one of his first books for boys, *Il giovane provveduto*, Don Bosco gives expression to his deepest sentiments with regard to them in almost lyrical terms:

> "My dear youngsters, I love you all from my heart, and it is enough that you are young for me to love you very much. I can assure that you can find many inspiring books written by persons much more virtuous and learned than I am, but with difficulty will you find anyone who loves you in the Lord, and who desires your true happiness more than I do."[4]

In more prosaic language perhaps, but with not less feeling, Jacques Maritain describes how he sees the young people of his time:

> "I like and respect contemporary youth, and I contemplate them with a strange feeling of anguish. They know a great deal about matter, natural facts and human facts, but almost nothing about the soul. All in all, their moral standard is not lower, though more openly lax, than that of the preceding generation. They

have a sort of confident candor which rends the heart. At first glance they appear close to the goodness of nature as Rousseau dreamed of it. For they are good indeed and generous and free, and they even display in noble as well as in immoral deeds, a kind of purity which resembles the innocence of birds and deer. In reality they are just at that stage where the acquired structures of moral and religious tradition have been taken away, and man still remains playing with his heritage. Their naked nature is not mere nature, but nature which for centuries had been strengthened by reason and faith and accustomed to virtues, and which is now stripped of every prop. They stand in goodness upon nothing. How will they be tested in the hard world of tomorrow? What will their children be? Anxiety and thirst arise in a number of them, and this very fact is a reason for hope."[5]

From the above statements we notice in both Don Bosco and Jacques Maritain on the one hand, a deep fascination with young people, for the mere fact that they are young (Don Bosco), for their innate candour, goodness, generosity, freedom and natural innocence (Maritain), and on the other, a realistic perception of their fragility and the great moral danger to which they are exposed for lack of clear principles and sure guidance. At the same time they both express a reason for hope. From this compassionate and almost contemplative gaze, we might say, there arises in both of them a desire to engage in the subject of education.

In this paper I intend to examine the theories of education of Don Bosco and Jacques Maritain with a view to discovering the affinities and points of convergence as also the differences between them, and furthermore to see if, and to what extent, a fruitful exchange between them is possible. Right at the outset it must be stated that in Don Bosco we do not find an elaborate and systematic theory of education. In fact, his life and mission tell us much more about education than his scanty writings on the subject. These writings must therefore be interpreted in the light of his educational practice, which is inextricably bound up with his mission to the young, and is by far richer than his educational theory. In a similar way, the few essays that Maritain dedicated explicitly to the theme of education form a small part of his vast philosophical output.[6] This latter, however, provides the underpinning principles and insights that explain more fully his reflections on education. The larger background of Don Bosco's life and mission to young people and the vast and closely-reasoned *corpus* of Maritain's philosophical stances must be kept in mind in interpreting and confronting their respective educational theories.

In the space of this essay, it will not be possible to treat exhaustively of Don Bosco's and Maritain's ideas on education. I therefore intend to limit myself to presenting a few salient themes, which are fundamental to understanding their positions, and thereby to facilitate a comparison. The following seem best suited for the purpose: the goal of education, the principle, the method and the means.

1. The Goal of Education

In his first book mentioned above, written explicitly for young people, *Il giovane provveduto,* Don Bosco had already expressed the goal of his educative work:

> "I present you a short and easy method to live well—, but sufficient enough for you to become the consolation of your family, the honour of your country, good citizens on earth in order to become one day blessed inhabitants of heaven."[7]

Don Bosco would use most often and on various occasions the expression 'good Christians and honest citizens' to sum up what he felt was the goal of his educative system.[8] Implicit in this apparently banal expression is a rich and nuanced conception of the human person as belonging to two worlds: the terrestrial world with its network of relationships—personal, familial, social, societal—and the transcendent world. The order of nature and the order of grace, the natural and the supernatural domains, are both given their due emphasis as distinct and important. Yet, for Don Bosco, they are not simply juxtaposed alongside each other without any link between them. The phrase "in order to become one day blessed inhabitants of heaven" clearly indicates that Don Bosco sees the two orders as hierarchically related in such a way that the natural order is in view of, or finalized towards, the supernatural order. And vice-versa, the supernatural order is seen as enhancing the natural order in its own domain. It is in this sense that the phrase 'honest citizens and good Christians' is sometimes understood by Don Bosco to mean 'honest citizens *because* [they are] good Christians.'[9]

Nature and grace: this typically Christian bipolar conception of the human person lies at the basis of Don Bosco's understanding of the goal of education: to help every young person to become fully human by being fully a citizen of this world, so as to become fully a child of God, a citizen of heaven. The two orders, though distinct, are not opposed. Rather, they interpenetrate each other, in such a manner that the natural order opens up to and finds its perfect fulfilment in the supernatural order, and the supernatural leavens the natural order from within, right down to its deepest recesses, in order to raise it beyond itself. The implications of this dual finality, one within and for the sake of the other, are enormous and will be fully exploited by Don Bosco in his pedagogy of sanctity. It is the perfect integration of these two orders, the delicate balance and harmony between them, and the practical support they extend to each other for the attainment of the goal of holiness that constitute the uniqueness and the originality of Don Bosco's method of education.

In a similar fashion, though with a more exhaustive treatment and with abundant arguments as befits a philosopher, Maritain sets out the goal of education in the Terry Lectures delivered at the Yale University in 1943, and later published in a book, *Education at the Crossroads*:

> "… the chief task of education is above all to shape man, or to guide the evolving dynamism through which man forms himself as a man."[10]

Not man in the abstract, but this "particular child belonging to a given nation, a given social environment, a given historical age"[11]. In another collection of essays, *The Education of Man*, Maritain enunciates the aims of education more fully, distinguishing between the primary and the secondary aims:

> "The primary aim of education in the broadest sense of this word is to 'form a man' or, rather, to help a child of man attain his full formation or his completeness as a man. The other aims (to convey the heritage of culture of a given area of civilization, to prepare for life in society and for good citizenship, and to secure the mental equipment required for implementing a particular function in the social whole, for performing family responsibilities, and for making a living) are corollaries and essential but secondary aims."[12]

Maritain then proceeds to counter some basic misconceptions in education, the first of which is a disregard of ends, whereby the means, i.e. pedagogical methods, techniques, etc., which today are so well developed, prevail over the end eventually leading one to lose sight of the goal of education:

> "The child is so well tested and observed, his needs so well detailed, his psychology so clearly cut out, the methods for making it easy for him everywhere so perfected, that the end of all these commendable improvements runs the risk of being forgotten and disregarded."[13]

The goal of education, which is to "form a man," necessarily depends on how one understands the nature of man. Here too there can be a misconception about the nature of man, the inevitable consequence of a rigidly empirical conception of science, a narrowly scientific idea, which excludes all ontological content, and merely links together measurable and observable data without reference to an ultimate reality. True, this purely scientific idea of man can provide better and better tools for investigation, research and measurement of quantifiable data, yielding more accurate information and devising more appropriate strategies and methods, but by itself, it can neither provide the basis for, nor guide the work of, education, which primarily needs to know who man *is* in his nature and his scale of values.

The authentic, complete and integral idea of man needed to adequately found and guide the work of education, says Maritain, can only be a philosophical and religious idea, which covers both his essential nature and his existential status in relation to God. Such is the Greco-Judeo-Christian idea of man.

> "In answer to our question, then, 'What is man?' we may give the Greek, Jewish, and Christian idea of man: man as an animal endowed with reason, whose supreme dignity is in the intellect; and man as a free individual in personal relation with God, whose supreme righteousness consists in voluntarily obeying the law of God; and man as a sinful and wounded creature called to divine life and to the freedom of grace, whose supreme perfection consists of love."[14]

Given the fact that this conception of man is the foundation of Maritain's philosophy of education, it is necessary to understand it more fully. Man is defined as a rational animal (whose perfection is the intellect), as a responsible individual (whose perfection is freedom) and as a creature wounded by sin (whose perfection is love). By reason of his intellect and will, he is a whole in himself and not just a part of a bigger whole; he possesses himself and is not just a thing among other things; there is in him a richer and nobler existence than just physical existence, a superexistence by which he is a microcosm, a universe unto himself. Through knowledge, the whole world can be present to him; and through love, he can make a gift of himself to others, who are to him other selves. Of such type of relationships there is no equivalent in the physical world.[15]

Within the contours of a philosophical conception of man, the above statement of Maritain, expressed in Aristotelian terms, would quite likely be acceptable to most people. But can the same be said about the Judaeo-Christian connotation of man "as a sinful and wounded creature called to divine life and the freedom of grace"? How does Maritain justify its insertion in a presumably rational discourse on the education of man? For an answer, one would have to go to his general understanding of philosophy as exercised by a Christian thinker. For Maritain, philosophy is a rational discourse based on common human experience available to all people, and employing rational principles in view of arriving at the ultimate causes of things. But philosophy is not to be found in the abstract and hanging in the air, as it were. It is exercised by a human person with his particular beliefs, suppositions and biases, from which one cannot totally prescind. Provided one is aware of them, weighs their soundness and their influence on his thinking, and lays them out for others to examine, one can perfectly engage in a philosophical enterprise. This is the basic distinction between the nature or order of specification of philosophy and its state or order of exercise by a concrete person that grounds the legitimacy of the so-called Christian philosophy, which Maritain so tenaciously defended in principle, if not in name.[16] A Christian thinker who holds his religious beliefs dear and true, will coherently draw inspiration and guidance from his Christian faith, and employ those objective data that his religious principles make available to him for his philosophical reflection, without in any way compromising its rational integrity.

Now, when it comes to a practical science or art, with specific objectives to be attained—and educational theory, like moral theory, is a case in point—, there is another aspect to be considered. Practical science or art, unlike speculative science, is concerned with an action to be posited or something to be made, not some knowledge to be gained, though knowledge has a role to play in bringing about the particular action. Here, one must further distinguish between an action that is to be realized remotely and an action to be realized proximately. In the former instance, we have a speculativo-practical knowledge or science, whereby a general theory and practical principles are assembled together that have a remote bearing on the action to be realized. In the latter instance, practical principles and concrete information are joined to prudential judgment to bring about proximately a desired action. In this latter case, we have a practico-practical knowledge or science.[17]

In the case of a moral theory, which concerns a morally right action to be performed, a further point is to be noted. Here, one must have true knowledge of the end to be attained and of the concrete situation of the subject performing the action, failing which one runs the risk of falling into error. Maritain, as a Christian philosopher, claims that true knowledge of man's final end and of his real situation, as a creature wounded by sin and redeemed by Christ, is given only through the Christian Revelation. Hence, if moral philosophy is to guide man's action correctly with regard to his last end, it is necessary that it should be super-elevated with respect to itself and subordinated to Christian theology. Thus, moral philosophy *adequately considered* depends intrinsically on Christian Revelation and is subordinated to Christian theology. Note that, different from Christian philosophy, which is a way of doing philosophy under the influence of Christian faith, which leaves the rational nature and process of philosophy intact, moral philosophy *adequately considered*, places both the way of doing moral philosophy and the nature of moral philosophy itself under the regime of theology: both the order of specification and the order of exercise are made dependent on Christian theology. Maritain attached great importance to the notion of moral philosophy *adequately considered* and strenuously defended it as a legitimate philosophy distinct from theology, in the face of stiff criticism, demonstrating its fruitfulness in the domain of a philosophy of culture, of history, of political philosophy, the interpretation of the data of the human sciences and the approach to the problem of evil.[18]

For the same reason as moral philosophy, the philosophy of education *adequately considered* is subordinated to theology in order to correctly guide the process of shaping the man to be formed, taking into account his supernatural end and his existential situation of a fragile creature wounded by sin. Maritain expresses this conviction clearly thus:

> "If the idea of man, of life and of human culture and their goals is the centre of all pedagogy, one must say—since man is not merely a being of nature, but is called to a supernatural end and finds himself actually in the state of a fallen and redeemed nature,—and one must state quite firmly that there is no truly complete pedagogical science (as there is no truly complete political science) except as attached and subordinated to theology: the existence or non-existence of original sin and of the *vulnera naturae* is not a question of little importance for pedagogy."[19]

If this position is true, and there are good reasons to believe so, then Maritain is quite justified in inserting the datum of Christian Revelation about man's supernatural calling and existential condition in relation to God in a rational discourse on the goal of the philosophy of education. Thus, through a long philosophical detour, Maritain reaches the same position as Don Bosco's twofold conception of the goal of his pedagogy: to form 'honest citizens and good Christians.' What Don Bosco affirms quite simply and directly as the objective of his educational project, something which he grasped intuitively as the result of his own Christian formation and his life's mission given him from on high, Maritain states with conviction as a Christian philosopher, grounding his position with reasoned argumentation.

The importance of this Christian vision of man at the foundation of the educational enterprise of both Don Bosco and Jacques Maritain should not be underestimated. With one stroke, Don Bosco and Maritain have cut the bonds that held, and still hold, some theories of education to a totally this-worldly, immanentist vision that makes the education of man not very unlike the training of animals in a circus, or the rearing of fowl in a farmyard—all predetermined for very specific ends, be they for social engineering or for ideological and totalitarian purposes. By stating very explicitly the transcendent dimension of man, they have ensured that education is at the service of his human dignity, spiritual depth and supernatural destiny. This Christian vision of man and his education can be offered to all people, even to those of other faiths, at least insofar as they share, in a broad way, a similar understanding of man's place in this world and his transcendence.

Perhaps it is the social and political dimension of education that is not sufficiently developed in Don Bosco. It is scarcely treated as a *specific goal* in its own right, but dealt with in some way within the moral and religious goal of education. Braido puts this down partly to the social situation at the time of Don Bosco, in which engaging in politics was reserved to those who could enjoy a certain cultural and economic status.[20] To this must be added a clear 'political' choice of Don Bosco in favour of education. For him, a person actively involved in civil and political society is a competent and honest Christian in the exercise of his job. He contributes to the good order and progress of society, governing his family wisely, taking part according to his means in works of charity and solidarity, exemplary in the practice of his faith and in the so-called 'spiritual and temporal works of mercy.' It is therefore more at the practical level than at the level of a conscious reflection that Don Bosco gave expression to, and developed in his boys, a profound social awareness and concern.[21]

Instead, Jacques Maritain, who had dedicated a considerable part of his reflection to the social and political questions of our times in major works such as *Integral Humanism*[22], *Christianity and Democracy*[23] and *Man and the State*[24], has quite a rich and well-articulated position on education to the social and political dimension.[25] In *Education at the Crossroads,* Maritain states:

> "Bourgeois individualism is done for. What will assume full importance for the man of tomorrow are the vital connections of man with society, that is, not only the social environment but also common work and common good. The problem is to replace the individualism of the bourgeois era not by totalitarianism or the sheer collectivism of the beehive but by a personalistic and communal civilization, grounded on human rights, and satisfying the social aspirations and needs of man. Education must remove the rift between the social claim and the individual claim within man himself".[26]

In other words, it is necessary to discern in the unity of the person the harmony between the individual and the social, between liberty and justice, between the part and the whole. Man is a social being not only because of his needs, but prevalently because of a certain generosity or exuberance of his being, his intelligence and his love, by which he is able to give himself, struggle and sacrifice himself for the society in which he lives. He is social not merely at the corporal level, but above all at the level of the spirit. Man is intimately social by the very structure of his being: he is born with a capacity to be social, and becomes so through education.

Man *as a person* transcends society and the State, because he comes from God and goes back to God. Man *as an individual* is wholly subordinated to society, which can in time of necessity even ask him the sacrifice of his life. But if man as an individual is wholly subordinated to society, he is not subordinated *by the whole of himself,* because as a person he transcends society.

In the reciprocity between the whole and the part, the two requirements of a democratic society emerge: the diversity of parts that must collaborate among themselves, and the hierarchy of the whole that must subordinate the parts to itself. Thus, we have the distinction between *social education,* which concerns the collaboration of parts among themselves with respect for persons, *civic education*, which concerns the subordination of the parts to the whole with respect for persons, and *political education,* which deals with the reform and the running of the institutions.

Social education tends on the one hand to ensure that everyone is himself and brings his original contribution to the common good, and on the other, that each one learns to respect, collaborate with, and love his neighbour in the love of God. Civic education consists in respecting social institutions, independently of the persons who administer them, and in obeying civil laws, while political education consists in learning to govern social institutions, and in modifying civil laws.

Hence, the problem posed by Rousseau whether one should first educate the man or the citizen, is revealed as a pseudo-problem, inasmuch as man is a citizen by nature. Therefore, education must be a social education; in other words, there cannot be true education unless it be education to the social dimension.

> "Not only is it nonsense to oppose education for the person and education for the commonwealth, but the latter supposes the former as a prerequisite, and in return the former is impossible without the latter, for one does not make a man except in the bosom of social ties where there is awakening of civic understanding and civic virtues."[27]

2. The Principle

"Two are the systems in use in every age in the education of young people: the Preventive and the Repressive." Thus wrote Don Bosco in *The Treatise on the Preventive System*, which he first gave as part of a long discourse at the inauguration of the *Patronage de Saint-Pierre* at Nice in France in 1877.[28] The category of *prevention* did not enter into Don Bosco's lexicon only on that occasion. It had been long in use in political, social, assistential and educational circles particularly in France and in Italy.[29] Don Bosco himself employed, if not the term, certainly the criterion of prevention in his work of education, from the very beginning of his pastoral ministry[30]. He conceived it as a complexus of pastoral activities and initiatives for the struggle against evil and the promotion of the good, the prevention of errors and the defence of the (Catholic) truth, the fight against indifference and ignorance in the matter of catechetics, the effort to revitalize religious life and Christian practice, the opposition to heresy as the source of immorality, the care of poor and abandoned youth, and their rehabilitation through material assistance, job placement, study, physical wellbeing, and their insertion into Church and society.

Don Bosco came to prefer the Preventive System over the Repressive in his work for boys as a result of some decisive turning points in his life, which obliged him to reflect on the unfortunate situation, diagnose the malady and envisage a future course of alternative action for himself as a possible remedy. The first of such turning points was his entrance into the Major Seminary of Chieri to begin his ecclesiastical studies to the priesthood in 1835 at the age of 20. His first impressions of the atmosphere of the Seminary, which he describes in his *Memoirs of the Oratory*, are very revealing in terms of what he will write later in the *Treatise on the Preventive System*:

> "I will begin with a word about the superiors: I was greatly attached to them, and they always treated me with the greatest kindness; but my heart was not satisfied. The rector and the other superiors usually saw us only when we returned after the holidays and when we were leaving for them. The students never went to talk to them, except to receive corrections. The staff members took weekly turns to assist in the refectory and to take us on walks. That was all. How often I would have liked to talk to them, ask their advice, or resolve a doubt, and could not. In fact, if a superior came on the scene, the seminarians, with no particular reason, would flee left and right as if he were a monster. This only served to inflame my heart to become a priest as quickly as I could so that I could associate with young people, help them and meet their every need."[31]

Even giving due consideration for his somewhat caricatured account of the situation prevailing in the Seminary, there is no doubt that Don Bosco reveals in this passage the keen desire he experienced as a young boy for friendship and guidance, and the resolution he formulated within himself to extend such help in his turn to other young people.

This attitude of keeping one's distance, Don Bosco perceived, not only among the staff members of his Seminary, but in general also among most priests of his time, in their relationship with young people.

> “I would see good priests working at their sacred ministry, but I could not strike up a good relationship with them. Often I would meet on the road our parish priest or his curate. I would greet them at a distance and bow to them as they passed. In their distant and courteous manner, they would return my greeting and go on their way. Often, I used to cry and say to myself and even to others, ‘If I were a priest, I would act differently. I would approach the children, say some kind words to them and give them good advice. How happy I would be if I could talk with my parish priest as I used to talk with Fr Calosso. Why shouldn’t it be so?’”[32]

Another decisive turning point in Don Bosco’s life was his experience in the prisons of Turin, which he used to visit as a young priest during his three-year stay (1841-44) at the *Convitto Ecclesiastico.*

> “I saw large numbers of young lads aged from 12 to 18, fine healthy youngsters, alert of mind, but seeing them idle there, infested with lice, lacking food for body and soul, horrified me. Public disgrace, family dishonour, and personal shame were personified in those unfortunates. What shocked me most was to see that many of them were released full of good resolutions to go straight, and yet in a short time they landed back in prison, within a few days of their release.
> On such occasions I found out how quite a few were brought back to that place; it was because they were abandoned to their own resources. ‘Who knows?’ I thought to myself, ‘if these youngsters had a friend outside who would take care of them, help them, teach them religion on feast days… Who knows but they could be steered away from ruin, or at least the number of those who return to prison could be lessened?’”[33]

In these personal reminiscences, recounted in his *Memoirs of the Oratory* and written a little earlier than the *Treatise on the Preventive System*, Don Bosco had already matured the idea of prevention as the principle of his educative and assistential work, more efficacious and lasting than what went by the name of ‘repression.’ Although the notion of prevention has a rather negative connotation, implying vigilance, supervision, protection, etc. (all of which, tempered by love—thus humanising these elements—, also formed an important part of Don Bosco’s method of education) in his manner of approach and in his style of relationship with the young, it was the positive aspect of promoting, nurturing and fostering the all-round growth of the youngsters that prevailed. In Don Bosco’s hands the preventive method of educating was something akin to preventive medicine in the hands of a skilled doctor—totally geared to preserving and promoting a robust state of health in a living person. And just as in medicine, the exterior action of the doctor aims at strengthening the interior principle of good health of the body, so too in education the principle of prevention is directed towards reinforcing the interior resources in the person, including that of grace. In this sense, Fr Colli was quite right in stating that the Preventive System is the exterior reflection of the interior action of the Holy Spirit in a soul.[34] From 1877 onwards, Don Bosco would constantly associate his educative method with the Preventive System, which increasingly came to characterize his mission to young people at risk, so as to be totally identified with it in all its dimensions: pedagogical, social and spiritual.

For Maritain, it is this interior aspect implied in the term ‘prevention’ that is of supreme importance in the art of education. He expresses it in the phrase: *the conquest of internal freedom.*

> “Thus the prime goal of education is the conquest of internal and spiritual freedom to be achieved by the individual person, or, in other words, his liberation through knowledge and wisdom, good will, and love.”[35]

The first point that one might observe in the idea of the conquest of internal freedom is that it is more in the nature of a goal than a principle: “…the prime goal of education,” as Maritain states it. No doubt this is true. However, while freedom is a goal to be attained in education, it is also true that the goal is attained only through the *exercise* of freedom. It is by regularly positing acts that emanate from freedom, that one passes from an incipient to a developing and finally to a mature, consolidated freedom. More precisely therefore, the exercise of freedom in view of gaining a mature internal freedom is the guiding principle of education in the thought of Maritain.

The freedom of which Maritain is speaking is, as he puts it, "not a mere unfolding of potentialities without any object to be grasped, or a mere movement for the sake of movement, without aim or objective to be attained".[36] In *The Education of Man* and *Scholasticism and Politics* he explains the meaning of freedom more fully.[37] The freedom he has in mind is not merely *absence of constraint,* nor is it simply *absence of necessity or necessitation* (free will), but *freedom of spontaneity* in its highest forms (*freedom of autonomy or of exultation*), where it means emancipation and personal autonomy. This kind of freedom must be dearly and strenuously bought because it is continuously threatened.

This is because man is both an *individual* (by reason of his material nature) and a *person* (by reason of his spiritual faculties).[38] These are not two separate things. The same human being is at one and the same time in strict unity both an individual because of his material dimension and a person because of his spiritual dimension. The freedom that he has and is called to perfect is that of an *incarnated spirit.* As an individual, he is a part of the material world, and subject to its laws and conditions. As a person, he is a whole who transcends the entire realm of the material universe. As an individual, he has connatural aspirations, whereby he strives to overcome the limitations that burden him on the material level, and to acquire a relative freedom, in the social and political order, proportionate to his human nature. He wins this type of freedom by striving for the common good of all, together with other persons, which common good then flows back to him and to others. As a person, he has transcendent aspirations towards absolute freedom and happiness, which however he cannot fulfil, except by giving himself over in knowledge and love to Subsistent Truth and Love that is God, who alone can fulfil them superabundantly. It is in dependence on God, Subsistent Freedom and Author of man's freedom, that man conquers his own freedom. From start to finish it is truth and love that liberate man and bring him to perfect freedom.

> "[T]he supreme freedom and independence of man are won by the supreme spiritual realization of his dependence, his dependence on a Being who being Life itself vivifies, and being Freedom itself, liberates all who participate in His essence. This kind of dependence is not one of external constraint, as is the case of one physical agent in regard to another physical agent. The more he realizes it the more does man participate in the nature of the Absolute. Men who have become something of God participate in the freedom of Him who cannot be contained by anything. By losing themselves they have won a mysterious and disappropriated personality which makes them act by virtue of that which they are eternally in the Uncreated Essence. Born of spirit they are free like it. To tell the truth, they have won nothing, and they have received all. While they worked and suffered to attain freedom, it gave itself to them. The true conquest of supreme and absolute freedom is to be made free by Subsistent Freedom and to consent freely to it. The true deification of man consists in opening himself to the gift which the Absolute makes of Itself, and the descent of the divine plenitude into the intelligent creature."[39]

3. The Method

It is clear that, although Don Bosco and Maritain express the guiding principle of education in two different ways, they are fundamentally in agreement that it consists in an inner principle that releases the interior resources of the human being and channels them in a process of self-perfection. For Don Bosco, the method of releasing and channelling the inner resources was through Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness, which appeal to the resources of the intelligence, of the heart and of the desire for God that every person bears in the depths of his being.[40] For Maritain too, the conquest of internal freedom brings into play the same three inner resources of the human person. Before examining each of these elements in turn, it is important to note their interconnections in the dynamics of education.

At the methodological level, they involve the young person in all his significant faculties: the mind, heart, will—all interpenetrating one another and acting together. The seriousness of the moral and religious commitment is developed on the basis of relationships that are governed by reason and are affectively warm. Loving kindness is not to be construed as weakness or sentimentality, but constantly illumined by reason and purified by faith. The reasonableness and balance in the things that are demanded of the educand, are motivated by a sincere piety and sustained by the empathetic presence of the educator. Thus, the compenetration and interaction of the three elements make for a unified and harmonious growth of the personality of the young person. If we were to ask which of the three inner resources is principal, Don Bosco would have no hesitation to reply that the primacy belongs to *Loving Kindness*, which in the educator is found as *educative charity*, drawing from the Heart of Christ the Good Shepherd, its fount, inspiration and model,[41] and leading the young person to do what is right because of love. Maritain, following the intellectualism of St Thomas Aquinas, would give precedence to reason considered in itself. But he would agree with Don Bosco that in the process of education, love has primacy. In fact, that is the position of Aquinas himself, who holds that considered in itself and absolutely, the intellect holds the primacy, because it is through the intellect, purified and elevated by supernatural grace, that the human person will see and possess God in eternity. Yet, in this life, the will (or love) has primacy, because we cannot see God as he is, and hence, it is more important to love him by faith than to know him with clarity.

3.1 Loving-kindness

Loving-kindness according to Don Bosco is *"demonstrated love"*. In the *Letter from Rome* to the Salesians of Valdocco, dated 10 May 1884, Don Bosco clearly indicated love as the foundation of his educational edifice. "But that is not enough." Something better and decisive is missing. "That the young are not only loved, but that they feel themselves loved." Even this is not sufficient. The awareness of feeling themselves loved will finally be compelling when they will feel themselves loved "in those things that they like, by [the educator's] taking part in their activities": they will then undertake willingly those things that the educator proposes, such as discipline and study, in other words, their 'duties.'

Loving-kindness implies the *presence* of the educator in the life and activities of the educand, especially in his leisure time activities. *Familiarity* is the key that opens hearts and makes them receptive to the influence of the educator. "Without familiarity one does not demonstrate love and without such demonstration there can be no confidence. He who wishes to be loved must show that he loves." Love that is expressed in familiarity brings about a certain reciprocity of affection between the educator and the pupil, that lightens and sweetens the work of education.

> "He who is loved, loves in his turn, and [the educator] who is loved, obtains everything especially from young people. Such confidence is like an electric current between young people and their [educators]. Hearts are opened and the young confide their needs and make known their defects. Such a love enables the [educators] to bear up with the fatigue, the annoyance, the ingratitude, the troubles, the failings and the negligence of young people".

Loving-kindness determines the affective environment of the place, which is that of a *family*, where familiarity, confidence and mutual affection take the place of rules—few and just the essential—, and where the atmosphere is joyful and festive. This makes the educational institution more like a home, where relationships are personal and spontaneous and the family spirit prevails. Even though the number of pupils in Don Bosco's houses was big, it was by no means a mass education. Salesian assistance seeks to ensure that the educator accompanies each student, pays attention to his growth and follows him up with advice, encouragement and correction. This is expressed very clearly and succinctly by Don Bosco in his Rome letter:

> "Let the [educator] be everything to everyone, always willing to listen to every difficulty or grievance of the young, all eyes to watch paternally over the conduct of each one, all heart to seek the spiritual and temporal good of those entrusted to him by Providence".

Unlike Don Bosco, who was more a practitioner than a theorist of education, one who lived more than forty years guiding young people, Maritain, a philosopher, who did not have the direct care and responsibility of the young, has little to say about the theme of loving-kindness as such. Nevertheless, his few remarks on the topic are pertinent and to the point. In his essay, "Some Typical Aspects of Christian education," where he dwells on the Christian idea of man and its influence on education[42], Maritain emphatically states that the perfection of Christian life is love:

> "There is no natural perfection for man. His perfection is supernatural, the very perfection of that love which is a diffusion of God's love in us, and the example of which Christ gave us in dying for those he loved. The task of the Christian is to enter Christ's work: that is to say, in some way to redeem his fellow-men, spiritually and temporally; and redemption is achieved by the Cross." [43]

The implication for Christian education is that it counts more on grace than on nature:

> "It tries to develop as far as possible natural energies and virtues, both intellectual and moral, and tied up with, and quickened by, infused virtues, but it counts more on grace than on nature; it sees man more as tending toward the perfection of love despite any possible mistakes and missteps and through the very frailty of nature… but being at the same time more and more deeply and totally in love with his God and united with Him.
> Christian education does not separate divine love from fraternal love, nor does it separate the effort toward self-perfection and personal salvation of others"[44]

Hence, the integral idea of Christian education, which is the development of the natural energies and virtues, quickened by the infused virtues and permeated through and through with the love of God and of fellow-men, must start early in the life of the child:

> "That is why the integral idea of Christian education, the idea of Christian education in its wholeness and as a lifelong process, already applies to the child in a way adapted to his condition, and must guide school education as to the general orientation of the educational process and the first beginnings of which the child is capable."[45]

3.2 Reason

In the introduction to one of his first books, *Storia Sacra*, Don Bosco wrote: "On every page I always had this guiding principle: to enlighten the mind in order to make the heart good"[46]. For Don Bosco, reason in the context of education meant the enlightening of the mind in order to strengthen the motivations and form convictions for an upright way of life. For this motive, he wanted nothing to be imposed as a rule on his pupils, unless it was first explained and its reasonableness and usefulness for good discipline was made clear. Under 'reason' in this sense would be included giving advice, offering suggestions, providing motivations, encouraging and correcting, always with a view to make the pupils see and desire the good. Even in the matter of giving correction or inflicting punishment the pupil is not resentful, because correction or punishment is accompanied by friendly advice and dialogue that succeeds in gaining the heart in such a way that the pupil understands the necessity of the punishment and almost as it were desires it.[47]

Continuing along the same path, reason also means *reasonableness*, and implies a certain openness of mind, willingness to dialogue, a readiness to see the other's point of view, and a welcoming attitude towards others. These are first qualities of the heart and mind of the educator, which are then instilled in those of his pupils, so that they become in them a form of life, a mentality. Reason therefore eschews all rigidity of mind and hardness of heart, and seeks to inculcate in the pupils a realistic and balanced outlook on life, and moderation and equilibrium in behaviour.

By reason, Don Bosco also meant the acquiring of *culture*, the broadening of the mind brought about by learning and the gaining of sound experience. And lest one think that this applies only in the academic field, Don Bosco understood reason to include the learning of a skill or a trade and the acquiring of professional competence in some field of work. Finally, reason includes also the understanding of the moral law inscribed in the heart, its justification and its persuasiveness. For Don Bosco the highest use of reason is in the formation of a good *conscience*.

As we can see from the above, reason for Don Bosco was primarily understood as employed in the service of forming a moral conscience and upright behaviour in young people. For Maritain instead, reason has a wider connotation, which, while including the formation of conscience, is primarily concerned with truth in all its extension. Man, being a person, is open to all truth, and in acquiring and submitting to truth in all its forms, he finds his perfection:

> "Truth—which does not depend on us but on *what is*—truth is not a set of ready-made formulas to be passively recorded, so as to have the mind closed and enclosed by them. Truth is an infinite realm—as infinite as being—whose wholeness transcends infinitely our powers of perception, and each fragment of which must be grasped through vital and purified internal activity. This conquest of being, this progressive attainment of new truths, or the progressive realization of the ever-growing and ever-renewed significance of truths already attained, opens and enlarges our mind and life, and really situates them in freedom and autonomy."[48]

Because man, through his reason, is made for the whole truth, which he can truly grasp in some way and to a certain extent, it is truth that determines every human action and endeavour:

> "At the beginning of human action, insofar as it is human, there is truth, grasped or believed to be grasped for the sake of truth. Without trust in truth, there is no human effectiveness." [49]

On this basis, Maritain severely criticises what he calls the various misconceptions concerning the aims of education. Among these is a false type of intellectualism[50] in two forms: one that engages reason in sheer dialectical or rhetorical skill (as in classical pedagogy), and the other that exploits reason predominantly in scientific and technical specialization (as in modern pedagogy). Both, taken to their extreme consequences, pervert the mind and dehumanise the person. The antidote is the right use of reason at the service of a liberal education for all.

Knowledge as submission to, and relishing the possession of, the truth of things, as distinct from merely accumulating information about things, involves, for Maritain, forming the conscience and leading to upright behaviour. In this way, Maritain meets Don Bosco's primary concern for the education of a sound moral conscience, starting from the mind's attitude to truth. Like Don Bosco, Maritain too insists that nothing should be taught or required of the child, unless it is clearly explained. In education there is no place for blind imposition:

> "And what matters most in the educational enterprise is a perpetual appeal to intelligence and free will in the young. Such an appeal, fittingly proportioned to age and circumstances, can and should begin with the first educational steps. Each field of training, each school activity—physical training as well as elementary reading or the rudiments of childhood etiquette and morals can be intrinsically improved and can outstrip its own practical value through being *humanized* in this way by understanding. Nothing

> should be required of the child without an explanation and without making sure that the child has understood."[51]

3.3 Religion

Religion, understood as a religious attitude (piety) and as positive religion, was for Don Bosco at the summit of the educative process as well as an instrument of education. Don Bosco was convinced that there could be no true education without a religious foundation, without a clear awareness of being a creature before God on whom we depend, and without that openness and relationship to Him. "Either religion or the stick," he remarked to the unknown visitor from the United Kingdom who had come to Valdocco. "Where there is no religion, there is immorality and disorder," he had written in *The History of Italy*, one of his first publications in history.[52] "Only religion is capable of beginning and completing the mighty undertaking of an authentic education."[53] From these and other like expressions, it is clear that for Don Bosco the religious dimension unites and synthesizes all the energies, impulses and turbulent forces of a young person and finalizes them towards a single goal: God. Without religion it is impossible to construct a sound, wholesome personality.

Don Bosco was emphatic on this point. The educator should take seriously the young person and his religious needs. With his collaboration the educator accompanies him on a project of life positively oriented towards a meaningful experience of God in a relationship of friendship with Him. As a Catholic priest, Don Bosco saw the educative process as directed towards the salvation of the young, and the Church, the sacraments and Marian devotion as the great means of leading them to God and making the religious attitude of piety the basis of their life, all the way to a heroic Christian life of sanctity. The biographies of St Dominic Savio and other young boys (Louis Comollo, Michael Magone, Francis Besucco) that he wrote, were meant for young people (and their educators) as exemplifications, models and success stories of a pedagogy in which the religious dimension was predominant.

Maritain was not less emphatic on the importance of religion in education. In *The Education of Man* he states it in no uncertain terms:

> "All serious-minded observers agree that the split between religion and life is the root of the spiritual disorder from which we suffer today. It is preposterous to make this split begin in childhood and to perpetuate it in the educational system by cutting off religious training from the training proper to schools and colleges… It is the very right of the child and the youth to be equipped through his formal education with religious knowledge as well as with any knowledge which plays an essential part in the life of man."[54]

Although Maritain is speaking here about the necessity of religious instruction in education, and not directly about religious attitude and practice as such, the point is applicable, since the aim of religious instruction is to inculcate religious piety in the heart and mind of the pupil.

In an essay entitled "The Public School in France and the Pluralist Principle," which he added as an Appendix to the French translation of his book, *Education at the Crossroads*, and published after World War II in 1946, Maritain makes some important reflections on the question of religious education. According to him, there are, in the development of the child, two crucial moments at which he takes his freedom in hand and decides on the future course of his life.[55] The first moment is when the child comes to the age of reason and makes his first act of freedom. With this first act of freedom, whose manner is still infantile, and of which perhaps the child will have no remembrance in later life, he chooses in a concrete instance in a light superior to the very simple notions he disposes of, the direction of his conduct and the ultimate end, confusedly grasped, towards which he is tending.[56] The second crucial moment is when the child, having reached late adolescence, deliberates on the faith in which he was educated, examines his reasons for believing and makes on the question of religion his first free act as an adult.

These are the two crucial moments that the process of education must take into consideration in order to place the young person, as far as possible, in the position of fulfilling well the act which he must accomplish, and in which he is alone with his conscience and with God. The role of the family and of the school or college at these moments is indispensable. Through the education imparted, the example given and the spiritual atmosphere provided in the family (for the first act of freedom), and in the school or college (for the first adult act of freedom) the young person is well or badly disposed to posit the requisite acts in a manner that will set him on the right path in life.

On this point of the necessity of religion and on the crucial importance of the two decisive moments in the psychological growth of the child one sees a striking convergence of views of Don Bosco and Maritain, albeit from different perspectives.

4. The Means

By ‘means’ I understand those agents, instruments and helps that facilitate the application of the method in view of attaining the goals of education. Under this section on means we shall consider *first*, the educative relationship between the child and the educator, who are the principal and secondary agents of education respectively; *second*, study and work; *third*, moral and religious instruction and piety; *fourth*, recreational and leisure time activities; and *finally*, the place of punishments.

4.1 The Educative Relationship

Both for Don Bosco and Maritain, the child is the principal agent of education, that is, he is the first one responsible for his own growth and formation. Both support a child-centred education. Of course, in this regard, Don Bosco speaks a language that is quite different from the categories generally used in pedagogical works, but that is very effective in conveying the centrality of the young person in education. It is the language of the heart. In the *Letter from Rome* this is evident from the first lines: “Near or far, I always think of you. I have only one desire, that of seeing you happy in time and in eternity.” Don Bosco’s whole attention was entirely focused on the good of the young person. That good however could only be attained with the collaboration of the youngster. He would make this explicitly clear to his boys time and again in different circumstances. Just to cite one example, in a goodnight talk he once gave to his boys at Valdocco, he earnestly sought their cooperation thus:

> “You know that as long as I live, I have no other aim but to want your moral, intellectual and physical good. But to accomplish this, I have need of your help. Without your help I can do nothing. I need that we are agreed among ourselves, and that between you and me a real friendship and true confidence are established.” [57]

In the educative relationship, the child is not a passive recipient but an active partner in his education. In fact, Don Bosco gave the young as much freedom as they needed to be themselves. “Let the boys have full liberty to jump, run and make as much noise as they please.”[58] The scene of the boys at recreation in the beginnings of the Oratory of Valdocco as described in the *Letter from Rome* vividly portrays the spirit of Don Bosco’s system of education with the youngsters in focus:

> “It was a scene full of life, full of movement, full of fun. Some were running, some were jumping, some were skipping. In one place they were playing leap-frog, in another tig, and in another a ball-game was in progress. In one place a group of youngsters were gathered round a priest, hanging on his every word as he told them a story. In another a cleric was playing with a number of lads at ‘chase the

> donkey' and 'trades'. There was singing and laughing on all sides, there were priests and clerics everywhere and the boys were yelling and shouting all round them. You could see that the greatest cordiality and confidence reigned between youngsters and superiors."[59]

The secret of the successful educative relationship between youngsters and educators, as was explained to Don Bosco by his guide, Valfré, was *confidence*:

> "You see, closeness leads to affection, and affection brings confidence. It is this that opens hearts and the young people express everything without fear to the teachers, to the assistants and to the superiors. They become frank both in the confessional and out of it, and they will do everything they are asked by one whom they know loves them."[60]

In a climate of mutual affection and confidence, the youngster becomes the protagonist of his own education, because he willingly takes to heart and interiorises the guidance offered him by the educator. Such a system of education is easier on the pupils, more satisfactory and more advantageous to their growth. It does, however, make demands on the educator, for which reason Don Bosco wanted a special type of educator:

> "An educator is one who is consecrated to the welfare of his pupils, and therefore he should be ready to face every difficulty and fatigue in order to attain his object, which is the civic, moral and intellectual education of his pupils". [61]
> "Let the superior [= educator] be all things to all, always ready to listen to any boy's complaints or doubts, always alert to keep a paternal eye on their conduct, all heart to seek the spiritual and temporal good of those Divine Providence has entrusted to him."[62]

Don Bosco himself gave the first example of living up to the high demands of a true educator entirely devoted to the integral good of his pupils. Let one explicit statement of his suffice as a synthesis of his wholehearted dedication to the welfare of the young: "For you I study, for you I work, for you I live, for you I am ready even to lay down my life"[63]

The experience of a lifetime of dedication to the growth of young people, as was that of Don Bosco, obviously cannot be expressed in all its richness in a treatise on education like that of Maritain. Nevertheless, Maritain has quite significant insights regarding the child and the educator and their respective roles and relationship, which complement those of Don Bosco. "Teaching is an art; the teacher is an artist,"[64] says Maritain; but that does not mean that the teacher imposes a form on passive matter after the manner of an artist. His art is like that of medicine, *ars cooperativa naturae,* an art of ministering, an art subservient to nature. The vital, active power of healing is in the sick person himself, which the doctor helps and strengthens to restore the sick person to health. So too in education, the vital and active principle of knowledge exists in the child, *viz.* his sense and intellectual faculties; by these he grasps naturally in sense experience the primary notions on which all knowledge depends, and proceeds from what he already knows to what he does not yet know. In this sense, the child is the principal agent of education. The role of the teacher is to facilitate the work of nature:

> "This inner vital principle the teacher must respect above all; his art consists in imitating the work of the intellectual nature in its own operations. Thus the teacher has to offer to the mind either examples from experience or particular statements which the pupil is able to judge by virtue of what he already knows and from which he will go on to discover broader horizons. The teacher has further to comfort the mind of the pupil by putting before his eyes the logical connections between ideas which the analytical or deductive power of the pupil's mind is perhaps not strong enough to establish by himself."[65]

All this points to the basic fact that in education, the child, with its internal principle of knowledge, is the principal agent, and the educator is only the secondary—though a genuinely effective—ministerial agent. It must not be forgotten, however, that the teacher too is a real cause and agent—though only cooperating with nature—whose dynamism, moral authority and guidance are indispensable. This is because the freedom of the child is inchoate and unformed. Unlike the spontaneity of an animal, strictly determined by its instincts, the spontaneity of a child is that of a human rational nature that is still largely undetermined, and that has its inner principle of determination only in reason, which in a child is not yet developed. Hence, the indispensable role of the educator:

> "The plastic and suggestible freedom of the child is harmed and led astray if it is not helped and guided. An education which consisted in making the child responsible for acquiring information about that of which he does not know that he is ignorant, an education which only contemplated a blossoming forth of the child's instincts, and which rendered the teacher a tractable and useless attendant, is but a bankruptcy of education and of the responsibility of adults towards the youth. The right of the child to be educated requires that the educator shall have moral authority over him, and this authority is nothing else than the duty of the adult to the freedom of the youth."[66]

This incisive statement puts paid to the theory of Rousseau and the school of pedagogy that draws inspiration from him, which claims that the child is to be given free rein to develop his instincts and preferences in the way he pleases, without let or hindrance from the teacher. Instead, Maritain's view of the role of the teacher is exactly the opposite, following from his distinction of individuality and personality in the human person, and what constitutes the true freeing of personality:

> "If it is true that the internal principle, that is to say, nature—and grace too, for man is not merely a natural being—is what matters most in education, it follows that the entire art consists in inspiring, schooling and pruning, teaching and enlightening, so that in the intimacy of man's activities the weight of the egoistic tendencies [deriving from his individual nature] diminishes, and the weight of the aspirations proper to personality and its spiritual generosity increases."[67]

In a statement that closely approximates Don Bosco's own expression of the fundamental attitude of a true educator with respect to the child, Maritain affirms:

> "The most precious gift in an educator is a sort of sacred and loving attention to the child's mysterious identity, which is a hidden thing that no techniques can reach. Encouragement is as fundamentally necessary as humiliation is harmful. But what must be specially stressed is the fact that the teacher has to centre the acquisition of knowledge and solid formation of the mind on the freeing of the learner's intuitive power."[68]

4.2 Study and Work

Study and work were, for Don Bosco, the principal duties of a young person, and the chief means for growth in discipline, character and holiness of life. He would repeatedly tell his boys that the formula for successful living was *Sanità, Studio, Santità (S.S.S.)*: Physical health, study, sanctity. The Regulations of the Salesian houses codified this in a concrete and dynamic pedagogical spirituality:

> "1. Man, my dear boys, is born to work. Adam was placed in a terrestrial paradise in order to cultivate it. The Apostle Paul says: He is not fit to eat who does not want to work. *He who does not want to work, let him not eat.*
> 2. By work is meant the fulfilment of the duties of one's state, whether of study, of trades or of profession.
> 3. Through work you can make yourself worthy of your society and of your religion, and do good to your soul, especially if you offer God your daily occupations […].
> 6. Remember that your age is the springtime of life. He who is not accustomed to work in the time of youth, will always be a lazy lout to his old age, bringing shame to his country and to his family, and perhaps irreparable damage to his soul.

7. He who is obliged to work and does not do so, robs God and his superiors. At the end of life the idle will experience terrible remorse for a life wasted."[69]

This was the constant theme of his talks and letters to his boys both personally and collectively. Here is one sample, written to the students of Lanzo:

"You are in the school to acquire a body of knowledge with which in due time you can earn your bread. Whatever be your situation, vocation or state in the future, you ought to act in such a way that should your family possessions fail, you would be able in other ways to make an honest living. Let it never be said of us that we live off the sweat of other people's work."[70]

Clearly, for Don Bosco, the ascetical and moral value of study and work, more than the pedagogical one of shaping the mind, was uppermost. However, his advice to teachers indicates also his pedagogical concerns:

"Generally the teachers tend to be complacent about their bright students and those who shine for their intellectual brilliance, and direct their explanations only to them. When the brighter ones in the class have understood well, they are fully satisfied, and thus they proceed to the end of the year. Instead, they are impatient with those who are short of understanding and behind in their lessons, and end up leaving them at the bottom of the class. I am instead of a completely opposite view. I believe that it is the duty of every teacher to keep an eye on the weakest ones in the class; to question them more often than others, and for their sakes to dwell longer in explaining and repeating and repeating until they have understood, and to adapt the homework and the lessons to their abilities."[71]
"Consider them as your brothers: loving kindness, sympathetic understanding, considerate attention… make them study only as much as they are able to and not more…. Ask questions of them very often, invite them to explain, to read, to read [*sic*], to explain. Always encourage, never humiliate; praise as much as possible without ever despising."[72]

For Maritain what is most important in education is *the freeing of the intuitive power*. "Particularly in the case of school and college education it is with the preconscious or the subconscious of the spirit that education is mainly concerned."[73] Maritain distinguishes the irrational unconscious of the instinct, discovered by Freud (Freudian Unconscious), from the preconscious of the spirit at its living source, there where the spiritual faculties of the soul (intellect, will, memory) first emerge from their common root, bound up with the imagination and sense faculties.[74] The preconscious of the spirit is identified with the agent intellect, that pure intellectual light that illumines the phantasms bringing to birth an initial vision, a first intuition, the germ of insight, not yet formed, but tending towards grasping the real within itself in the clarity of a concept.

In a remarkable and dense page of *Education at the Crossroads*, pregnant with profound significance for education as an awakening to freedom, Maritain states:

"With regard to the development of the human mind… [t]he great thing is the awakening of the inner resources and creativity…. What matters most in the life of reason is the intellectual insight or intuition. There is no training or learning for that…. The freeing of the intuitive power is achieved in the soul through the object grasped, the intelligible grasping towards which this power naturally tends. The germ of insight starts within a preconscious intellectual cloud, arising from experience, imagination, and a kind of spiritual feeling, but it is from the outset a tending toward an object to be grasped. And to the extent that this tendency is set free, and the intellect becomes accustomed to grasping, seeing, expressing the object towards which it tends, to that very extent its intuitive power is liberated and strengthened."[75]

One cannot fail to notice here the substantial agreement of Maritain with Don Bosco when the latter exhorts the teacher not to stop explaining until the weakest student has understood the lesson and gained insight, whereby even he—*at the bottom of the class!* —has his intuitive power liberated and he awakes to freedom of the mind. "Let us never deceive or rebuke the thirst for seeing in youth's intelligence!"[76]

Important implications follow from this principle for the teaching of children in Elementary and Middle School, of adolescents in High School and Junior College, and of young adults in Senior College and in the University, which Maritain takes pains to spell out in some detail.

For *children***,** their universe is that of imagination, which gradually metamorphoses into that of reason. Hence, the knowledge given to them is to be dressed in the form of stories that enable them to readily grasp things and values. Beauty is the child's mental atmosphere and the quality most fitted to quicken and spiritualise his budding intellectual powers. "Beauty makes intelligibility pass unawares through sense-awareness. It is by the allure of beautiful things and deeds and ideas that the child is to be led and awakened to intellectual and moral life."[77] The vitality and intuitiveness of the spirit, which are quick in the child, should be exploited to the full in the service of education. Hence, it is a great pity to see these spiritual resources neglected or snuffed out by educators either from a positivist bias or because they make themselves childish in their dealings with children.

The universe of the *adolescent* is in a state of transition to that of an adult. His powers of understanding and judgment are developing but not yet fully matured; they are sharp, fresh, exacting, and they crave insight. Just as imagination was the mental atmosphere of the child, natural reason with its freshness, boldness and high ambition make up the mental climate of the adolescent. It is this natural impulse of reasoning that must be turned to good account by both stimulating and disciplining it. The difficult task of education in this phase is to ensure that the natural power and gifts of the adolescent's mind, the natural intuitive power of reason are freed to grasp the meaning, the truth and the beauty of the sciences and the arts. The objective is not so much the acquisition of mathematics, science and arts in themselves and in all their details, as that of giving full scope to natural intelligence to discover and enjoy the meaning, truth and beauty enclosed by these subjects. Hence, the task of the educator in this phase is not so much to cram the adolescent's mind with a plethora of facts and figures to be memorized by heart, as to lead him to penetrate as deeply as possible into the great achievements of the human mind in various fields.[78] It is thus that he receives a universal and liberal education, a patrimony meant for all.[79]

The third and advanced stage concerns the *young adult*, who has entered the stage of manhood or womanhood and is now preparing to take up adult responsibilities in life and in society. The graduate and post-graduate studies in this stage should help the student acquire maturity in judgment and equip him with a stable and formed complex of intellectual virtues. This is the stage of specialization and professionalism. Nevertheless, the university should maintain its essential character of universality, imparting to the students a sense of the internal hierarchy of human knowledge that starts from the highest and the most general order and descends to the particular and the concrete realm, and opening them up to wisdom. This sapiential nature of human learning, which is at the core of university teaching, should be aimed at in all the courses imparted. It is only the seeking after wisdom enshrined in universal and liberal education, initiated in the first stage, further developed in the adolescent stage and given secure foundation in the adult stage, that will prevent the distressful atomization and fragmentation of the life of the mind that is so widespread today.[80]

As regards *work*, Maritain is convinced that a fundamental disposition to be cultivated in the child is his attitude to work, namely a respect for the job to be done, a feeling of faithfulness and responsibility regarding it, and a sense of pride in a job well done. It is the first natural step toward self-discipline. If this probity is marred, he states, an essential basis of human morality is lacking.[81] Moreover, education must strive to foster unity in man. Hence, all through the years of childhood and youth, hands and mind should be at work together. The importance of manual work accompanying the education of the mind is recognized more and more today, because "the intelligence of a man is not only in his head, but in his fingers too".[82] In today's industrial and technological age, it is craftsmanship and technical skills that must constitute manual training—all the more necessary in a world, “where the dignity of work will probably be more clearly recognized, and the social cleavage between *homo faber* and *homo sapiens* done away with”.[83] This is a point on which Maritain and Don Bosco are in perfect agreement.

In educating to freedom, the secret lies in the freeing of the intuitive power from the unconscious, the awakening of the inner resources and creativity of the pupil in the various stages of his growth from childhood to adulthood, with its different needs at each stage. What is needed is respect for the spirit and the dawning intellect of the pupil. Here, the role of the teacher is crucial:

> “Education thus calls for an intellectual sympathy and intuition on the part of the teacher, concern for the questions and difficulties with which the mind of the youth may be entangled without being able to give expression to them, a readiness to be at hand with the lessons of logic and reasoning that invite to action the unexercised reason of the youth. No tricks can do that, no set of techniques, but only personal attention to the inner blossoming of the rational nature and then confronting that budding reason with a system of rational knowledge.”[84]

4.3 Moral-Religious Instruction and Piety

For Don Bosco, religion lived and practised was the main purpose of every authentic education. To cultivate the religious sentiment, to inculcate in young people the fear of God, to educate them to a habitual life of grace was the goal of the ‘practices of piety’ that characterized the Salesian house. The idea of happiness without end, eternal salvation, was placed constantly before the mind as a permanent stimulus to reflection and commitment. With this idea fixed in his mind, the youngster was invited through several means—exhortations, brief personal talks, letters, readings—to subordinate every other activity to the salvation of his soul, as the dominant idea of the spiritual life. In a little *vademecum*, Don Bosco insisted on this in three points:

> “19. God wants all to be saved; moreover, it his will that all of us become saints.
> 20. Those who want to be saved must keep eternity in their mind, God in their heart and the world under their feet.
> 21. Everyone is obliged to fulfil the duties of the state of life in which he is placed.”[85]

Religious education in the mind of Don Bosco enables the youngster to bring about a vital synthesis between love and fear, which is the correct relationship of a believer with God, and the fulcrum of both spirituality and pedagogy. The youngster is made aware of his fragility before the seduction of evil, and of his creaturely dependence on a good and merciful God, from whom he fears to be separated. He is constantly taught to observe the commandments and the evangelical counsels, particularly the ‘new commandment’ of love. He is exhorted to entrust himself to God and to the Blessed Virgin in hope and prayer with regard to his final perseverance.

> “Remember, my dear boys, that we are created to love and serve God our Creator, and that all the learning and riches of the world without the fear of God would benefit us nothing. From this holy fear depends our temporal and eternal good.” [86] “He who does not have the fear of God should abandon his studies, because he works in vain”; “the principle of wisdom is the fear of God. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*, says the Holy Spirit”.[87]

Having inculcated the “fear of God” as the supreme goal, Don Bosco would add: “To keep oneself in the fear of God, prayer, the sacraments and the word of God are most useful”.[88] The *Rules for Externs* entrusted to the director the responsibility “to employ every means possible to inculcate in the hearts of the young love for God, respect for sacred things, frequent reception of the Sacraments, filial devotion to Mary Most Holy, and whatever constitutes true piety.”[89]

Such an intense personal involvement of the youngsters in religious practices and the maturation of the moral commitment presuppose an enlightened faith, which in turn would be impossible without a systematic work of instruction and reflection. For this, Don Bosco employed several methods: historical and doctrinal catechesis, religious culture as a real school, preaching—generally, instructional and narrative, simple and concrete—, meditation and spiritual reading. Ample space, in the pedagogy of faith, was provided also for explicit forms of public testimony: the solemn religious services, the organized participation at liturgical rites of special groups—altar boys, choir, sodalities—, pilgrimages to churches and sanctuaries.

Of special consideration is the place reserved by Don Bosco to the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the twin pillars of his educative system:

> "Frequent confession and communion and daily Mass are the pillars which must support the edifice of education, from which we propose to banish the use of threats and the cane. Never force the boys to frequent the sacraments, but encourage them to do so, and give them every opportunity. On occasions of retreats, triduums, novenas, sermons and catechism classes let the beauty, grandeur and holiness of the Catholic religion be dwelt on, for in the sacraments it offers to all a very easy and useful means to attain our salvation and peace of heart. In this way children take readily to these practices of piety and will adopt them willingly with joy and benefit."[90]

For Don Bosco, the sacraments are not only 'means' of grace but also instruments of human growth, for strengthening the moral virtues and for promoting interior and exterior joy.

> "You may say what you wish about the various systems of education; as for me I do not find any sure basis except in the frequent reception of the sacraments of confession and communion; and I believe I do not exaggerate if I say that without these two sacraments morality is thrown to the winds."[91]

Among the devotions that Don Bosco promoted among his boys, the most important from the pedagogical point of view was that to the Virgin Mother Mary, as a model and a help in the fight against evil and in the struggle to live the life of grace. In the *Letter from Rome,* Don Bosco makes this crystal clear:

> "Preach to all, young and old alike, that they must remember they are children of Mary Help of Christians. Tell them she has gathered them here to take them away from the dangers of the world, so that they may love one another as brothers and give glory to God and to her by their good behaviour. Tell them that it is Our Lady who provides them with bread and the means to study, by endless graces and wonders."

It is abundantly evident from all the above that Don Bosco's system of education was a pedagogy of holiness, meant explicitly and systematically to lead young people to sanctity and to form them into saints, the first and most striking example of which is St Dominic Savio!

While sharing in the Christian vision of moral and religious instruction, Maritain, the philosopher, is more concerned with sorting out the problems inherent in imparting moral teaching in the school. In *The Education of Man,* Maritain asks whether ethical behaviour can be taught in the school, and if so, how to go about it.[92] The paradox is this: the school and the college are meant to equip people for life, and more particularly, for an upright moral life in society. But right moral conduct is not a matter of teaching. Hence, how is the school to fulfil its scope of preparing people for life? Maritain responds with two basic assertions: the scope of the school and the college is not primarily to impart moral formation but intellectual formation. The primary function of the school and the college is to teach the students how to think. It is the prime duty of the family and of the religious community to which the child belongs to provide moral education. In the matter of moral formation the school and the college have an indirect responsibility, but not less necessary.

To explain his position, Maritain has recourse to the classical distinction between will, speculative reason and practical reason. Speculative reason deals with knowledge for the sake of knowledge alone; practical reason, with knowledge for the sake of action; and will, with action itself and human conduct itself. Now, in the dynamics of the act of freedom, the will is determined by the ultimate practical judgment of the intellect to decide its course of action; but it is the will itself that determines the intellect to issue the ultimate practical judgment by which it is determined. In other words, it is the will that bends the intellect, as it were, in one direction or another as it so desires, to elicit the ultimate practical judgment by which it is moved.

The task of the school and the college is to enlighten the practical reason with moral considerations and values so as to form a sound moral conscience. The primary task of the school therefore is to form the mind, while that of the family and the religious community, to form the heart or the will. Hence, the influence of the school on the moral formation of the young person is indirect, but not less necessary—*rather, supremely necessary!* —, because it shapes those motivations and moral convictions that the practical reason presents to the will at the moment of eliciting the ultimate practical judgment, which then determines the concrete free action. From this it is clear that, as Maritain says, "ethical knowledge is indeed far from being sufficient, but it is indispensable," for "virtue is not a by-product of knowledge, but true moral knowledge is a condition for virtue." [93]

The question of how to impart moral education in the school is also given careful attention by Maritain.[94] In the first place, the development of a sense of spiritual realities and spiritual values, and the effort toward integrated knowledge and wisdom concerns all the disciplines in the school. It is a question of how a particular discipline is taught. As we have seen earlier, Maritain insists that it is more important to know how the great discoveries and achievements of the mind were realized, and to grasp the essential truth and meaning at their core, than to memorize a large body of facts. Secondly, at the stage of childhood and adolescence, when the imagination plays a predominant role in the child's mental development, it is necessary to liberate the intuitive power of the natural intelligence also in the moral field, by offering children genuine images of grandeur and heroism, and to make them feel the appeal of the hero or heroine and of the concrete moral ideal.

Citing his former mentor, Henri Bergson in, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Maritain affirms:

> "The need to have a moral ideal embodied in a concrete human being who shows us the way is one of the basic needs of our moral growth. It is normal for a young person to feel enthusiasm for a hero or a saint of his or her choice, and to cling to him and to dream of him and try to imitate him. This hero, whom we love and who draws us above ourselves, is for us a real master in moral life."[95]

Hence, moral education in the school is imparted through great literature, poetry, plays, history and the fine arts, where the great drama of conscience and the struggle of good over evil are played out. They convey to youth the moral experience of mankind, and form what might be called a natural morality. Thus, attending theatrical performances, watching great movies, visiting museums, putting up plays, etc., are all means of moral education available to the school, provided that their central moral significance is appropriately brought out by means of discussions, cinefora, etc. Don Bosco would have wholeheartedly agreed with all this. In fact, the *Lives* of his friend, Louis Comollo, and of three of his pupils, Dominic Savio, Michael Magone and Francis Besucco, as well as other stories and little plays he wrote, had this moral and religious education as its scope.

Maritain insisted that moral education should also be given in a proper and systematic manner, and pursued all through formal education, but never abstractedly and detached from its religious environment. To be a genuine enlightenment of the practical reason, moral teaching should not leave religion out of account. It should be given together with its religious inspiration, while at the same time its rational basis should be clearly highlighted.

Christian education can never lose sight of the complexus of virtues and gifts which have been infused into the soul by grace, through which eternal life commences here on earth. Not only does it lay stress on the natural morality and spirituality of man; not only does it base its work on the inner vitality of human nature; it rests its entire work on the vital energies of grace and on the three theologal virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, turning man toward grace-bestowed spirituality, toward a participation in the freedom, wisdom and love of the saints.

> "Accordingly, Christian education does not tend to make a man naturally perfect, an athletic, self-sufficient hero with all the energies and beauty of nature, impeccable and unbeatable in tennis and football as well as in moral and intellectual competitions. It tries to develop as far as possible natural energies and virtues, both intellectual and moral, and tied up with, and quickened by, infused virtues, but it counts more on grace than on nature; it sees man as tending toward the perfection of love despite any possible mistakes and missteps, and through the very frailty of nature, praying not to be put to trial and sensing himself a failure, but being at the same time more and more deeply and totally in love with his God and united with him."[96]

There can be no doubt that Maritain's pedagogy, like that of Don Bosco, is a pedagogy of sanctity and holiness of life. Like Don Bosco, Maritain suggested that, to promote such an intense spiritual life, there is need of a rich sacramental and liturgical life, which he felt could be inculcated in self-organizing teams of students, which are genuine "workshops in the evangelical rules of mutual love" (the traditional sodalities of Don Bosco's time).

4.4 Recreational and Leisure-Time Activities

With a felicitous expression the philosopher, Francesco Orestano, is said to have affirmed that "if Saint Francis sanctified nature and poverty, Don Bosco sanctified *work* and *joy*".[97] Don Bosco was often wont to repeat to his boys another of his brief prescriptions for a successful life: *Cheerfulness, Study, Piety.* Explosive, noisy recreations were a characteristic of his houses, where the family atmosphere prevailed, permeated with a deep religious piety. This spontaneous outburst of cheerfulness was an expression of a deep interior peace that derived ultimately from the awareness of being loved by God and by those who took his place on earth in caring for them. It coincided with sanctity, as Dominic Savio expressed it to his young friend, Camillo Gavio, with unerring insight: "Here we make sanctity consists in being very cheerful."[98] Here was one of the secrets of the Oratory of Valdocco, as Don Bosco himself confided: "Cheerfulness, singing, music and great freedom to enjoy oneself." Cheerfulness, therefore, for Don Bosco, was not just recreation and enjoyment, but authentic, indispensable pedagogy.

Singing, music and the band occupied a privileged place in Don Bosco's educative method. "An Oratory without music is like a body without a soul" was a famous expression of his.[99] Both in religious functions and for recreational purposes, singing, music, the band had a prominent role to play. Here too, it is the pedagogical element that was uppermost in Don Bosco's mind as reason for encouraging music in his houses. Fr Eugenio Ceria, one of his first biographers, brings out this aspect clearly:

> "The principal reason is to be sought in the wholesome effect that he [Don Bosco] attributed it to have on the heart and the imagination of the youngsters with the purpose of making them gentle, elevating them and rendering them better."[100]

Theatre and dramatic performances also formed part of Don Bosco's method of education. Don Bosco did not want them to be overly serious, sophisticated and involving a huge investment of time and attention to detail. Above all, they should be educative and not contain anything that might disturb the impressionable minds of youngsters. Light comedy, musicals, and short plays on moral themes were his preferred fare.

To the above must be added also the role that *walks and excursions* had in Don Bosco's pedagogy. The weekly walks by classes, the annual picnic for students and artisans, and the famous autumnal excursions—all contributed to the creation of that climate of Christian joy that was an essential part of the integral formation of the young. The autumnal excursions were particularly well prepared in advance: they entered the village or town with the band at the head, to an enthusiastic reception by the people, the parish priest and prominent persons, and were given a place to stay and provided with meals. The days were spent in visits to important persons, in well-conducted religious services in the morning and evening, games, sports, band, theatrical performances and variety entertainment. Besides providing the youngsters with a useful and pleasant pastime, these long excursions also offered them a healthy outlet for their talents and creative energies.

Obviously, one cannot expect to find in Maritain's writings anything that can compare with the richness and diversity of Don Bosco's use of the possibilities inherent in the recreational and leisure-time activities for the education of the young. He did not live and deal with young people on a day-to-day basis as Don Bosco did. Nevertheless, his few remarks on the theme are quite pertinent, and show that he was alert to the pedagogical possibilities of recreation and leisure.

> "Play has an essential part, though secondary, in school life; it possesses a value and worth of its own, being the activity of free expansion and a gleam of poetry in the very field of those energies which tend by nature toward utility."[101]

Within this broad understanding of play Maritain included not only games, sports and physical training, but also handicrafts, hobbies and artistic training or accomplishments. All of these things, according to Maritain, have worth if they are dealt with as play activity, not with too much seriousness, but with freedom and cheerful spontaneity. They lose their educational significance if they are considered as an activity of formal learning.

The fundamental insight that Maritain offers here is what he calls one of the paradoxes of education, namely, the fallacy that everything can be learned only in a formal manner.[102] The best things of life, those which are most vital, such as experience, intuition, love, friendship and wisdom, cannot be taught in any school or courses. These are not matter of training and learning; they are gift and freedom. What is perhaps most paradoxical is that the extra-educational sphere—the entire field of human activity, including work and play and leisure time activities—exerts on man "an action which is more important in the achievement of his education than education itself."[103] It is the same insight as that of Don Bosco, who considered the playground and leisure time activities as important as, if not more than, the classroom for the free expansion of all the creative energies and talents of a youngster and for the moulding of his character.

4.5 A Word on Punishments

Don Bosco's quite subtle and nuanced use of corrections and punishments in the education of the young has its basis in a parting recommendation he gave the young Michael Rua, when he sent him as the first Rector of Mirabello: "Strive to make yourself loved rather than feared." Love and fear do not exclude each other, rather they call for each other, for the fear in question is not servile but filial or reverential. It is brought about by love, and in proportion as love grows, so too does reverential fear. This relationship between love and fear was brought out very clearly by Don Bosco in one of his recommendations to the Salesians at Valdocco:

> "Make yourselves loved as well as feared by the young. It is easy to do so. When young people see that the assistant [= educator] is all concern for their welfare, they cannot but love him. When they see that the assistant does not let anything pass, anything that is not good, that is, but points out all their mistakes, they cannot but have for him a certain fear, i.e., the reverential fear that they should have for their superiors."[104]

It is in this sense that the recommendations made by Don Bosco on various occasions, starting from the "Confidential Souvenirs to Rectors," must be understood:

> "Let charity and patience constantly accompany you in commanding and in correcting; act in such a way that each person will know from your actions and your words that you seek the good of their souls."[105]

In order that the young pupils grow in love and reverential fear for their educators, Don Bosco wanted that the rules be made known and clearly explained to all. Thus, each pupil knows in advance what is expected from him.

Don Bosco made use of corrections within a wide range of interventions of ascending seriousness: suggestions, advice, recommendations, reminders, warnings and threats of punishments. These were not 'punishments' strictly speaking, but interventions to help the pupils to avoid light-headedness and prevent bad habits from taking root, and at the same time to accustom them to a sense of propriety and help them cultivate good habits in thinking, speaking and acting. Correction in these terms is of the essence of Don Bosco's preventive system, because if the boys were never to make a mistake, they would hardly be boys and would not be in need of education. Hence, his recommendation:

> "In assistance therefore… let the pupils be allowed freely to express themselves, but pay attention to rectify and even correct their expressions, words and actions not in conformity with Christian education".[106]

As for punishments in the strict sense, they did not find a place in his system, his habitual way of thinking and acting. "I abhor punishments,"[107] "Where possible, let us never make use of punishments."[108] In the *Letter from Rome* Don Bosco laments the substitution of the preventive system by a system of rules and punishments in themselves most ineffective:

> "Why do people want to replace love with cold rules? Why do the superiors move away from the observance of the rules Don Bosco has given them? Why the replacement little by little of loving and watchful prevention by a system which consists in framing laws? Such laws either have to be sustained through punishment and so create hatred and cause unhappiness or, if they are not enforced, cause the superiors to be despised and bring about serious disorders."[109]

Punishment was not to be inflicted unless inevitable, only when every other means was exhausted, and there was hope to draw some advantage for the person concerned. Repeatedly Don Bosco would insist that the punishment should not be corporal and violent.

> "To strike a boy in any way, to make him kneel in a painful position, to pull his ears and other similar punishments must be absolutely avoided, because the law forbids them, they greatly irritate the pupils and degrade the educator."[110]

Don Bosco preferred above all, natural and psychological punishments that were motivated by reasonableness and goodness.

> "The withholding of some token of kindness is a punishment which stimulates emulation, gives courage and never degrades."

> "With the young, punishment is whatever is meant as a punishment. It has been noticed that in the case of some boys a reproachful look is more effective than a slap in the face would be. Praise of work well done, and blame in the case of carelessness are already a reward or punishment."[111]

While Don Bosco's approach to the question of punishments is careful, attentive and thoroughly evangelical, Maritain's treatment of the matter is brief and sketchy, yet convergent on the main issue. "Education by the rod is positively bad education,"[112] even though at times it has been able to produce some strong personalities, because it is difficult to kill the internal principle of spontaneity, and because this principle by reaction and rebellion against whatever constrains it, occasionally develops more powerfully. In most cases, however, overbearing authority and the use of corporal punishments result in producing stunted and insecure personalities. In a general way, Maritain is inclined to a reasonably authoritative type of education, where the teacher exercises an ascendancy over his pupils, and is opposed to a permissive and anarchic type which panders to the whims and fancies of the child, allowing him to play out his fantasies, for, as the adherents of this trend of education hold, he must be a savage before he can be a man.

5. Don Bosco and Maritain *in tandem*?

We have traced out the main lines of the educational theories of Don Bosco and Jacques Maritain, placing them alongside each other to facilitate comparison. For this purpose I have used a framework that respects the traditional exposition of Don Bosco's system of education, but that perhaps does not do full justice to the inner logic and development of the thought of Maritain.[113] He has much to say on the curriculum of studies at the school and the university level, which could not find a place in our arrangement. A major difficulty in putting together the thought of Don Bosco and Maritain stems from the fact that the former is a man of action, deeply involved in the life of his boys and tending to the concrete and the practical, while the other is a man of reflection at one remove from the hurly-burly of school and boarding life. However, what is a difficulty from one point of view, is an advantage from another, because it is the very difference of perspectives that makes for a certain complementarity between their positions.

Within a general framework deriving from Don Bosco's Preventive System our exposition has inserted the main themes of Maritain's philosophy of education: the aims of education, the dynamic factors, liberal education for all, the moral and spiritual values in education, the freeing of the intuitive power—, though not in the systematic manner in which they are treated in Maritain's writings on the subject.

An attempt has been made, however brief and inadequate, to state not just the positions of Don Bosco and Maritain, but to set them in the contexts of life (for Don Bosco) and of thought (for Maritain). Don Bosco and Maritain are both extremely consistent and coherent thinkers and practitioners of education. Their educational theory and practice flow from their life and their commitments. For Don Bosco, it was his vocation and mission to be a priest for poor and abandoned boys that determined his style of education. For Maritain it was his calling to be a Christian philosopher and Thomist that provided him with the basic inspiration and the fundamental principles of his philosophy of education. For Don Bosco, the basic category of prevention arose from his life experiences as a child, as a young seminarian and as a newly ordained priest. From this fundamental insight followed a spirituality and method of educational practice and theory with all its ramifications right down to the practice of correction and punishments. For Maritain, the category of freedom is central, the gaining of which is both the task and the way of education. Crucial to the idea of freedom is the important distinction of individuality and personality, and the immanent dialectic of the first act of freedom in a child.

On the basic goal, principle or foundation, method and means of education there is substantial agreement between Don Bosco and Maritain, although from different perspectives and with different justifications. The agreement is due to the fact that they both take their inspiration from their Christian faith, and see man in light of Christian revelation as destined for a life of complete happiness with God that, beginning on this earth, will find fulfilment in eternity, and that transcends the whole order of material reality. This forms the matrix for their choices and priorities in education that are strikingly convergent.

The differences arise from the fact that Don Bosco was a man of action, deeply immersed in the pressures and urgent needs of educating, training and looking after hundreds of poor and abandoned boys, for whom he had to invent concrete and practical solutions to help them grow into mature and responsible young men, equipped with a sound Christian education and those skills necessary to play a useful role in society. With such pressing preoccupations in hand, he had little time and less inclination to go into a sustained reflection on the underlying principles and presuppositions of his educational practice. Typical therefore was his immediate reply to some one who asked him about his system of education: "I have always gone ahead as the Lord inspired me and as circumstances demanded."[114] Hence he always falls short of a full justification and explanation of his basic intuitions, genial insights and his original synthesis of educational practice, but abounds in a wealth of concrete suggestions and practical exhortations about the work of education that are full of common sense and practical wisdom. As Father of the young and Founder of a religious congregation of educators, he knew how to inspire by word and example, and guide both educator and educand toward the goal of all education: a balanced and integrated person living a heroic life of sanctity. That was his genius, and the preventive system he fashioned, his masterpiece.

Maritain instead was a philosopher, a man accustomed to habits of reflection and reasoned justification for his assertions. He did not have the care and responsibility of a bunch of youngsters to look after and provide for. His was a different calling. His vocation as a Christian philosopher led him to reflect upon the questions of education in light of his fundamental principles under the guidance of his master, Thomas Aquinas, with whose basic positions he wholeheartedly concurred as true and valid for all times and seasons. The striking quality of his philosophical reflection on education is its complete coherence with the fundamental principles of Thomas Aquinas and its serious engagement with the modern trends and problems of education. This is because he set himself not merely to repeat the principles of Thomas Aquinas, but to creatively interpret them in the face of the challenges of our time. The result is a philosophy of education that is both timely and relevant, and one that provides a profound Christian response to the question of education today. A further consequence of his reflection is that one must search through his entire philosophical output to find the full justification for his specific positions on education. Thus, besides those central themes concerning freedom which we have mentioned above, we had also briefly to touch on the question of nature and grace, on the nature of Christian philosophy, on the distinction between speculative and practical philosophy, on the status of moral science and pedagogy adequately considered in respect to theology, etc.—all elements brought to bear in shaping his philosophy of education. His philosophy of education is of one piece with the rest of his philosophy and derives its justification from the fundamental intuitions of Thomas Aquinas creatively interpreted for the present time. Considered from this angle, Maritain is long on reflection and explanation, but short on concrete suggestions and practical dos and don'ts of how to go about the business of education.

Now, every educational enterprise is based on a philosophy, either fully explicitated or latent in its basic choices. Thus, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Dewey, Krishnamurti, to mention just three major educationists, have a fully articulated philosophy to back and provide a foundation to their theory and practice of education. Conversely, every major philosophy has a theory of education nesting in its principles, waiting to be drawn out and put into practice.

In fact, the totalitarian and revolutionary governments of the past and the present draw inspiration from the philosophies of Nietzsche, Hegel and Marx in the education of youth.

In this light, if we consider the rich educational experience of Don Bosco and the wealth of pedagogical wisdom that he left us as a precious legacy in the Preventive System, we realise that it stands in need of a sound Christian philosophy of education to provide it with a sure foundation. For us, Salesians of Don Bosco and inheritors of his charism and mission, such a philosophy, if one can be found that is in line with Don Bosco's basic positions, would enable us to see his original synthesis of educational practice in a deeper and fuller light, and come to understand and appreciate his distinctive pedagogical choices and methods more profoundly.

It is the contention of this paper, after having provided a point by point comparison of the main positions of Don Bosco and Maritain in the matter of the theory and practice of education, and after having verified their substantial agreement as regards the goal, the principle, the method and the means of education—albeit from different perspectives arising from their different experiences and practical concerns—, and after having noted too their affinities and mutual convergences on several points, and the fact that there is no serious disagreement on any issue, but rather an overall harmony of views and practical choices, that the Christian philosophy of education of Jacques Maritain could provide an adequate and valid foundation for the preventive system of education of Don Bosco.

There is a mutual complementarity in the two positions that is extremely beneficial and enriching to the cause of education. Don Bosco provides a wealth of practical insights, proposals and motivations that could fruitfully prolong the philosophical reflections of Maritain and extend their reach into the practical domain, renewing the quality of educational interventions. Maritain offers a sound philosophy of education that could provide a secure theoretical basis for the Preventive System, shedding on it a new light of understanding and a broader horizon of meaning. To relate the two together, we might borrow a distinction creatively exploited by Maritain and say that, if the philosophy of education of Maritain is in the realm of the speculativo-practical, the Preventive System of Don Bosco, at least in its close attention to the here and now of the details, is in the realm of the practico-practical.

It is above all in the goal of education, the conquest of perfect freedom, the attainment of sanctity, where the two are in complete agreement, that a fruitful exchange between Don Bosco's Preventive System and Maritain's philosophy of education, working *in tandem*, is possible and very much desirable.

Notes

[1] Several popular biographies exist. For serious historical biographies cf. Pietro Stella, *Don Bosco: Life and Work* (*Don Bosco in the History of Catholic Religious Thought and Practice*, Vol. 1), tr. John Drury, 2nd rev. ed. (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1985); Francis Desramaut, *Don Bosco en son temps (1815-1888)* (Turin: SEI, 1996); Pietro Braido, *Don Bosco prete dei giovani nel secolo delle libertà*, Istituto Storico Salesiano - Roma, Studi-21, vol. 1 and 2 (Rome: LAS, 2002).

[2] Various short biographies exist. A more detailed and complete one is Jean-Luc Barré, *Jacques et Raïssa Maritain. Les mendiants du ciel: biographies croisées* (Paris: Stock, 1995).

[3] *Epistolario. Introduzione, testi critici e note*, ed. Francesco Motto, vol. 1: 1835-1863 (Rome: LAS, 1991) 66.

[4] Giovanni Bosco, *Il giovane provveduto* (1847), in P. Braido, ed., *Don Bosco Educatore. Scritti e Testimonianze*, 3rd ed. revised with the help of Antonio da Silva Ferreira, Francesco Motto, José Manuel Prellezzo, Istituto Storico Salesiano — Roma, Studi-9 (Roma: LAS, 1996) 39. Translation mine.

[5] Jacques Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads* [*EC*] (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1943) 56-57 (*OeC* **VII**:870-871).

[6] Cf. Jacques et Raïssa Maritain, *Oeuvres Complètes* [*OeC*] (Fribourg Suisse : Éditions Universitaires ; Paris : Éditions Saint-Paul) 16 vols.

[7] G. Bosco, *Il giovane provveduto* 39. Translation mine.

[8] Cf. P. Braido, “Buon cristiano e onesto cittadino: Una formula dell’ ‘umanesimo educativo’ di don Bosco,” *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* [RSS] **13** (1994) 7-75. Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere. Il sistema educativo di don Bosco*, Istituto Storico Salesiano — Roma, Studi-11 (Rome: LAS, 1999) 230ff.
[9] Braido, “Buon cristiano e onesto cittadino” 61-62.
[10] *EC* 1. Other studies and lectures on the subject were put together in a book, *The Education of Man. The Educational Philosophy of Jacques Maritain* [*EM*], edited with an introduction by Donald and Idella Gallagher (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967). Subsequently, Maritain revised and unified his reflections in a definitive version: *Pour une philosophie de l’éducation* (1969) = *OeC* **VII**:769-988.
[11] *EC* 1.
[12] *EM* 50-51.
[13] *EC* 3.
[14] *EC* 7.
[15] Cf. *EC* 8. Cf. also *Principes d’une politique humaniste* (Paris: Hartmann,1945) = *OeC* **VIII**:181-355.
[16] Cf. J. Maritain, *De la philosophie chrétienne* (1933) = *OeC* **V**:225-316. English translation: *An Essay on Christian Philosophy* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955).
[17] J. Maritain, *To Distinguish in order to Unite or The Degrees of Knowledge* [*DK*], translated under the direction of Gerald B. Phelan (New York : Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1959) 311ff = *OeC* **V**:259-1111.
[18] J. Maritain, *DK* and *Science and Wisdom* (London: The Centenary Press, 1940) = *OeC* **VI**:15-250, and the particularly clear synthesis of his thought in a conference he gave in Buenos Aires in 1936, “Du savoir moral,” *OeC* **VI**:923-949.
[19] J. Maritain, “Preface” to Franz De Hovre’s *Essai de philosophie pédagogique* (Bruxelles : Librairie A. Dewit) = *OeC* **III**:1410.
[20] Cf. Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 245-246.
[21] Cf. Teresio Bosco, *Don Bosco* (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2003) 185-189: “Politics and the Social Question.”
[22] J. Maritain, *Integral Humanism: Temporal and Spiritual Problems of a New Christendom*, revised edition (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1968) = *OeC* **VI**:293-634.
[23] J. Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy* (London: The Centenary Press, 1945) = *OeC* **VII**:701-762.
[24] J. Maritain, *Man and the State* (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1998) = *OeC* **IX**:473-736.
[25] Cf. P. Viotto, *Per una filosofia dell’educazione secondo J. Maritain* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1985) 124-142, to whom I am indebted for my brief exposition.
[26] *EC* 89.
[27] *EC* 15.
[28] The genesis of the Treatise and its accompanying circumstances are described in detail in a critical edition of the text by P. Braido. Cf. “Il sistema preventivo nella educazione della gioventù (1877)” in Braido, ed., *Don Bosco Educatore. Scritti e Testimonianze* 205-266.
[29] Cf. Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 71ff.
[30] Cf P. Braido, “Il sistema preventivo di don Bosco alle origini (1841-1862): Il cammino del ‘preventivo’ nella realtà e nei documenti,” *RSS* 14 (1995) 255-320.
[31] John Bosco, *Memoirs of the Oratory of St Francis de Sales from 1815 to 1855 (The Autobiography of Saint John Bosco)*, tr. Daniel Lyons, with notes and commentary by Eugenio Ceria, Lawrence Castelvecchi and Michael Mendl (New Rochelle: Don Bosco Publications, 1989) 131. The Memoirs were probably written between 1873 and 1875, and revised after 1878.
[32] Ibid. 48.
[33] Ibid. 182.
[34] Cf. C. Colli, *Pedagogia spirituale di Don Bosco e spirito salesiano* (Rome: LAS, 1982) 155.
[35] *EC* 11.
[36] *EC* 11.
[37] *EM* Ch. VII:158-179 and J. Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics* [*SP*], Translation ed. Mortimer J. Adler (New York: Image Books, 1960) Ch. V: The Thomist Idea of Freedom, 117-138.
[38] Cf *SP* Ch. III: The Human Person and Society, 61-89.
[39] *EM* 176-177.
[40] Cf G. Bosco, “Il sistema preventivo nella educazione della gioventù (1877)” 249, and *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Editrice SDB, 2003) art. 38.
[41] Cf. *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales* arts. 10 and 11.
[42] *EM* Ch. VI:129-133.
[43] Ibid. 132.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid. 133.
[46] *Storia Sacra per Uso delle Scuole Utile ad ogni Stato di Persone* arrichita di Analoghe Incisioni Compilata dal Sacerdote Gioanni Bosco (Torino: Tipografi-Editori Speirani e Ferrero, 1847) 7 = Opere Edite [*OE*] **III**:7.

[47] Cf. G. Bosco, "Il sistema preventivo nella educazione della gioventù (1877)" 249.
[48] *EC* 12.
[49] Ibid. 13.
[50] Ibid. 18-20.
[51] Ibid. 9-10.
[52] *La storia d'Italia* (*OE* **VII**:525), as quoted in F. Motto, *Un sistema educativo sempre attuale* (Torino-Leumann: ElleDiCi, 2000) 58.
[53] "Avviso sacro," 1849 (cf. *Memorie Biografiche* [*MB*] **III**:605) as quoted in Motto, *Un sistema educativo* 58.
[54] *EM* 77.
[55] J. Maritain, *Per una filosofia dell'educazione*, ed. Giancarlo Galeazzi (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 2001) 307-332.
[56] Ibid. 320-321. For a fuller treatment of this first act of freedom and its import, cf. J. Maritain, "The Immanent Dialectic of the First Act of Freedom," *The Range of Reason*, Ch. VI (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952).
[57] As quoted by J.-M. Petitclerc, "Actualité du système préventif," *Éduquer à la suite de don Bosco*, sous la direction de Xavier Thévenot (Paris: Cerf / Desclée de Brouwer, 1996) 120. Translation mine.
[58] J. Bosco, "The Preventive System in the Education of the Young" # 2.3, *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales* 251.
[59] J. Bosco, "Letter from Rome," *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales* 257.
[60] Ibid.
[61] J. Bosco, "The Preventive System in the Education of the Young" # 3, *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales* 253.
[62] J. Bosco, "Letter from Rome," *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales* 262.
[63] As quoted by Ruffino, *Cronaca dell'Oratorio,* ASC 110, quaderno 5:10, *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales,* art. 14.
[64] *EC* 30.
[65] Ibid. 31.
[66] Ibid. 33.
[67] Ibid. 35.
[68] *EM* 61.
[69] G. Bosco, *OE* **XXIX**:68-69, as quoted in Motto, *Un sistema educativo* 110. Translation mine.
[70] G. Bosco, *Epistolario* 1264, as quoted in Motto, *Un sistema educativo* 111. Translation mine.
[71] *MB* **XI**:217-218, as quoted in Motto, *Un sistema educativo* 112. Translation mine.
[72] *MB* **XI**:291-292, as quoted in Motto, *Un sistema educativo* 112. Translation mine.
[73] *EC* 42.
[74] For a synthetic presentation of the preconscious of the spirit in the various writings of Maritain, cf. V. Possenti, "La vita preconscia dello spirito nella filosofia della persona di Jacques Maritain," *Jacques Maritain Oggi. Atti del Convegno internationale dell'Università cattolica nel centenario della nascita. Milano, 20-23 ottobre 1982*, intro. and ed. Vittorio Possenti (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1983) 228-242. For a more critical analysis, cf. G. Cavalcolli, "Il Problema del 'preconscio' in Maritain," *L'attualità di Jacques Maritain*, *Divus Thomas* **97** (1994) 71-107.
[75] *EC* 43-44.
[76] Ibid. 44
[77] Ibid. 61.
[78] Ibid. 61-63.
[79] Ibid. 64-65.
[80] Ibid. 47-49 (spiritual unity and wisdom), 66-70 (where M. spells out the curriculum), 71-75 (which includes philosophy and theology, the sciences of wisdom) and 75-86 (where M. delineates the architecture of an ideal university).
[81] Ibid. 38.
[82] Ibid. 45.
[83] Ibid. 46.
[84] Ibid. 43.
[85] *Porta teco cristiano…* 7 = *OE* **XI**:7 as quoted in P. Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 256. Translation mine.
[86] *Regolamento per le case …*, parte II, capo III: Della Pietà, art. 1, p. 63 = *OE* **XXIX**:159, as quoted in Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 257. Translation mine.
[87] *Regolamento per le case …*, parte II, capo VI: Contegno nella scuola e nello studio, art. 21 e 23, p. 73 = *OE* **XXIX**:169, as quoted in Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 257-258. Translation mine.
[88] *Regolamento per le case …*, parte II, capo III, art. 2, p. 63 = *OE* **XXIX**:159, as quoted in Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 257. Translation mine.

[89] *Regolamento dell'Oratorio…, per gli esterni*, parte I, capo I, art.7, p. 63, *OE* **XXIX**:36, as quoted in Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 258. Translation mine.
[90] J. Bosco, "The Preventive System in the Education of the Young" # 2, art. 4, *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales* 251-52.
[91] J. Bosco, *Il pastorello delle Alpi* 100, *OE* **XV**:342, as quoted in Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 261 (translation mine). In the "Letter from Rome," coldness in approaching the sacraments and a lack of a firm resolution to amend one's life in confession are given as the causes among others for the malaise in the Oratory of Valdocco.
[92] Cf. *EM* Ch. V:111-153.
[93] *EM* 122
[94] Cf. *EM* Ch. IV:103-110.
[95] Ibid. 108.
[96] Ibid. 132.
[97] As quoted in Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 324.
[98] G. Bosco, *Vita del giovanetto Savio Domenico* 86 = *OE* **XI**:236, as mentioned in Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 325.
[99] *MB* XV:57, as quoted in Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 334.
[100] *Annali della società salesiana* 691, as quoted in Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 335.
[101] *EC* 55.
[102] Cf *EC* 22ff.
[103] Ibid. 25.
[104] J.M. Prellezo, *Valdocco nell'Ottocento* 263-264, as quoted in Braido, *Prevenire non reprimere* 339. Translation mine.
[105] As quoted in Braido, ibid. 340. Translation mine.
[106] *Regolamento per le case…, Articoli generali*, art. 3. p. 15 = *OE* **XXIX**:111, as quoted in Braido, ibid. 344.
[107] In a goodnight in the summer of 1864, as noted down by D. Ruffino, *Libro di esperienza 1864*, 67, as quoted in Braido, ibid. 345.
[108] *Il sistema preventivo* (1877), 62 = *OE* **XXVIII**:440, as quoted in Braido, ibid. 345.
[109] *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales* 262.
[110] The article has been added to the text of the preventive system published in the *Regolamento per le case*, 12 = *OE* **XXIX**:108, as quoted in Braido, ibid. 346.
[111] *The Preventive System* (1877), 'A word on punishments' art.1 & 2, *Constitutions and Regulations of the Society of St Francis de Sales* 254.
[112] *EC* 32.
[113] For an exposition of Maritain's philosophy of education that does justice to its inner logic and development, cf. Jean-Louis Allard, *Education for Freedom: The Philosophy of Freedom of Jacques Maritain*, tr. Ralph C. Nelson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press and Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1982).
[114] The request was made by M. Dupuy, superior of the major seminary of Montpellier, in a letter sent to Don Bosco on 2 July 1886, thanking him for a visit he had made on his return journey from Barcelona. Dupuy's letter and Don Bosco's reply can be found in *MB* **XVIII**:165 et s., 65-667 (information supplied by L. Pazzaglia, "Don Bosco's option for youth and his educational approach," *Don Bosco's Place in History. Acts of the First International Congress of Don Bosco Studies*. *Salesian Pontifical University, Rome, 16-20 January 1989*, Pubblicazioni del Centro Studi Don Bosco, Studi Storici — 14 [Rome: LAS , 1993] 267).