

NIRMALA CARVALHO

EduFocus appreciated by Vatican Curia

I had the singular honour of visiting the Vatican's top officials of the Dicastery of Interreligious Dialogue and Dicastery of Culture and Education at their respective Curia offices, and presenting to them copies of *EduFocus*, the magazine of the Archdiocesan Board of Education of Bombay Archdiocese.

Bishop Paul Tighe is the Secretary of the Dicastery for Culture and Education and one of the leading figures in the Vatican when it comes to Communications as well. He came with his team to meet us in the Curia office. His team included the undersecretaries of Culture and Education.

Being aware that carrying out the Apostolate of Education in a multireligious, multicultural and pluralistic society is fraught with both challenges as well as opportunities, the Curia officials were very interested in the Mission of *EduFocus*.

As soon as Bishop Tighe saw 'Aryabhata' on the cover of one of the issues, he remarked on its striking similarity to the famous *Time* magazine. I explained to him about the creative talents of Fr Magi Murzello, the Editor of *EduFocus* who conceptualised the cover with a twin objective. First and importantly, to highlight the contribution of the Indian scholar of ZERO to the world of mathematics and entwining the urgent need to Zero Out Carbon in our schools. We gave Zero to the world; let's give it another Zero, his editorial noted. The second and not less significant was a subtle display of our patriotism which at times is questioned.



Bishop Tighe and team were informed that in November 2018, *EduFocus* featured 'Scholas Occurrentes'. Msgr Melchor Sanchez from the Vatican Dicastery for Culture and Education then shared details of 'Scholas Occurrentes,' formed at the initiative of the then Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, now

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Pope Francis, found in educational projects created for children in impoverished areas in the city of Buenos Aires.

Education and social change are closely connected, and Fr Magi Murzello, Editor of *EduFocus*, the Rector of St Andrew's College, has an intense role to play where students come from diverse sociocultural and economic background.

EduFocus is aimed primarily at Principals and Heads of the Christian institutions and those who shape and form impressionable minds. Through its engagement with Christian Educators, *EduFocus* seeks to illumine concerned formators to foster equity, identity and dignity, especially among the disadvantaged.

The participation in the various cultural activities as showcased in *EduFocus* was symbolic of the cultural integration in the Education Apostolate where diverse religious, caste, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds are not impediments to the Mission.

Bishop Tighe and Msgr Melchor Sanchez noted with interest the keynote address of Cardinal Oswald Gracias, delivered on Cardinal Paul Poupard Foundation Chair of Inter Religious and Inter Cultural Dialogue at St Andrew's College, which was published in *EduFocus*.

Bishop Tighe, through *EduFocus*, saw pictures of students and staff and people of good will enthusiastically participating in Sports, Arts and Cultural festivals, showcasing the diversity of Indian Culture and the harmony in the institutions, thus seeking to sew together the fabric of fraternal humanity in a climate of suspicion and fabricated conversion allegations.

Bishop Tighe was impressed by *EduFocus*, not merely for authentic dissemination of the Vatican's documents, but also for the creative way the voice of the Pope was being heard in a secular environment aimed at developing a new universal solidarity and a more welcoming society.

It is not a coincidence that *EduFocus* was presented at the Vatican's top offices on the tenth anniversary of the pontificate of Pope Francis. Pope Francis desired a Church of the poor, for the poor. His pontificate has paid special attention to the marginalised and migrants. His advocacy for the environment and support for COP26 is unparalleled.

Throughout Pope Francis' ten years, *EduFocus* has faithfully disseminated the encyclicals of the Pope, besides providing concrete ways of implementing them. COP26, Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, *Fratelli Tutti*, etc. have been a priority for *EduFocus*.

Bishop Tighe was especially appreciative of the commitment to the Educational Apostolate to the poor and vulnerable students, the inclusive education, fostering better and mutual understanding. The senior Vatican Officials recognized the contribution of *EduFocus* in evangelising while engaged with culture and its success spiritually, academically and communally in Catholic Education being a catalyst for social transformation.

The Pope's encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* prioritises the most vulnerable, and this is a practical experience in the institutions. The Dicastery invited additional information from *EduFocus* for the Global Compact to work together as Catholic Educators. ■