"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." (Matthew 12:30)

Dear friend, take a moment. Let's discuss something vital, something touching the very heart of who we are and where we're headed: the education of our children, of the new generations. Today, a seductive yet profoundly deceptive idea circulates: that of "religiously neutral education." We're told it's the fairest, most modern approach—one that avoids conflict. But is it possible? Is it even desirable? As someone deeply immersed in the depths of faith and Church history, I tell you with conviction and love: **there is no such thing as religiously neutral education. It is a dangerous illusion, an abdication of our most sacred responsibility.**

Where does this myth come from? A brief historical journey

This idea of neutrality doesn't emerge from nothing. It's the fruit of philosophical and social currents gaining strength since the Enlightenment and accelerating in the 20th century:

- **Radical Secularism:** Which seeks not merely a healthy separation of Church and State (something the Church herself defends in its proper sphere) but the complete expulsion of God and religion from public life, including education. It aims to create an "empty space" devoid of transcendent values.
- **Relativism:** The belief that "all religions are equal" or that "none possess complete truth." If all are subjective opinions, why teach one specifically? Better to remain "neutral." But Christ did not say, "I am an opinion"; He said, **"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"** (John 14:6).
- **Fear of Conflict:** In increasingly pluralistic societies, some believe avoiding religion is the easiest path to peace. But silence about God does not bring true peace; it brings emptiness, confusion, and ultimately new conflicts rooted in the absence of shared moral foundations.

The Theological Impossibility: Why "Neutrality" Is an Illusion

Catholic faith offers a clear and profound vision of humanity and the world, grounded in Revelation and reason illuminated by faith. From this perspective, religious neutrality is a chimera for fundamental reasons:

1. **Man Is a Religious Being by Nature (Homo Religiosus):** St. Augustine expressed it with eternal beauty: **"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."** (Confessions, I, 1). Seeking meaning, transcendence,

and connection with the divine is constitutive of our humanity. To educate while ignoring this dimension is to mutilate the human person, offering only a fragment of their identity.

2. **All Education Transmits a Vision of Humanity and the World (Anthropology):** Who is man? A mere product of evolutionary chance? A consumer? A rootless citizen? Or a creature made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), redeemed by Christ, destined for eternal life? **Every history, science, literature, or ethics lesson implicitly or explicitly answers these questions.** Education excluding God *de facto* transmits a materialistic, secularized vision of man. That is not neutrality—it is another concrete worldview!
3. **Truth Exists and Is Christ:** The Church proclaims that in Jesus Christ, the Face of God and the meaning of humanity are fully revealed. To pretend "neutrality" before this claim is, in practice, to relegate it to irrelevance or mere privacy. But Christ claims the whole of human life, including intellect and formation. Neutrality, in this sense, is a subtle form of rejection. As the Gospel reminds us, we cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).
4. **Grace Presupposes Nature but Perfects It:** St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that divine grace does not destroy human nature but presupposes, heals, and elevates it. A purely "neutral" (i.e., secular) education may develop some natural capacities but leaves the soul thirsty—without the living water only Christ can give (John 4:14). It ignores the wound of original sin and the need for Redemption.

The Consequences of the Mirage: The Cost of "Neutrality"

This false neutrality is not harmless. It bears bitter fruit evident in our society:

- **Existential Void and Pursuit of Substitutes:** Youth without direction, easy prey to radical ideologies, addiction, consumerism, or superficial New Age spiritualities.
- **Moral Relativism:** If God does not exist or is irrelevant, who determines good and evil? Morality reduces to changing social consensus or subjective feelings, leading to confusion and loss of the sense of sin.
- **Loss of Christian Cultural Identity:** The Christian roots of the West fade, creating an amnesiac society disconnected from its deepest spiritual heritage.
- **Weakening of Faith in New Generations:** When faith isn't presented as relevant, coherent, and beautiful in all areas—including intellectual formation—it's perceived as anecdotal, private, and ultimately dispensable.

Practical Guide: Building an Authentically Catholic Education in a Secular World

Faced with this reality, what can we do? This is not a time for sterile lament but for loving, coherent action. Here is a theological and pastoral guide to apply these principles:

1. In the Family: The "Domestic Sanctuary" (The First and Foremost Seminary)
* **Live Your Faith Authentically and Joyfully:** Your children learn more from what they see than what they hear. Let prayer (individual and family), frequent participation in the Sacraments (especially Eucharist and Reconciliation), concrete charity, and respect for moral law be the air breathed at home. Celebrate liturgical feasts.
* **Speak of God Naturally:** Don't relegate God to "catechism hour." Integrate faith into daily conversations: when admiring creation, facing problems, or giving thanks. Answer their questions with simplicity and depth, according to their age.
* **Parents' Ongoing Formation:** You cannot give what you do not have. Grow in your knowledge of the faith (Catechism, Bible, Magisterial documents) and spiritual life. Join study groups, retreats, and talks.
* **Guard Environments and Influences:** Prudently and without smothering, be aware of what your children consume (TV, internet, social media, friendships). Offer good, beautiful, and true alternatives: books, music, art, nature, apostolic activities.

2. In Choosing an Educational Institution: Beyond Academics
* **Seek Explicit and Committed Catholic Ethos:** Don't settle for vague "Christian atmosphere." Research: Does the school have a clear Catholic identity in its educational project? Are leadership and teachers committed to it? Is Catholic Religion taught rigorously and as an integral part of the curriculum? Is sacramental life and prayer fostered?
* **Demand Coherence:** Ensure the Catholic vision of the human person permeates all subjects—not just Religion class. Teach anthropology, ethics, history, and science in the light of faith, showing harmony between reason and revelation. Defend natural law.
* **Participate Actively:** Engage in the educational community (PTAs, boards). Support pastoral initiatives. Be a constructive voice defending the school's Catholic identity.

3. In Society: Courageous Witnesses to the Truth
* **Defend the Right to Religious Education:** Demand that the State truly guarantee (not just on paper) parents' right to choose Catholic religious education for their children, even in public schools (where it must be offered as a real, quality option).
* **Denounce the Imposition of Secularism as "Neutrality":** Charitably but firmly point out when a secular, materialistic worldview is presented as the only "neutral" or "objective" one. It is another particular worldview.
* **Be a Light in Your Environment:** Live your faith coherently at work, in your neighborhood, and in relationships. Let your life be a compelling argument for the Gospel's beauty and truth. Education also happens through public witness.

* **Support Catholic Formation Initiatives:** Parishes, apostolic movements, Catholic universities, Catholic media. They are essential beacons.

4. Personally: The Disciple Who Never Stops Learning
* **Deepen Your Knowledge of the Faith:** Study the Catechism of the Catholic Church, read the Bible assiduously (Lectio Divina is a treasure!), know Magisterial documents, read the Saints and Doctors of the Church.
* **Strengthen Your Prayer and Sacramental Life:** Your personal relationship with Christ is the source of all authentic faith education. Without deep roots, there are no lasting fruits.
* **Ask for the Gift of Wisdom:** To discern spirits, to know how to speak, to educate with patience and love—even when the world offers noise and confusion.

Conclusion: The Urgency of the Moment

Friend, the challenge is great, but hope is greater. We cannot allow the myth of neutrality to steal our children's souls, leaving them adrift in a sea of uncertainty. Education is an act of profound love, and the greatest love is to desire for others the Supreme Good, who is God Himself.

Let us remember St. Paul's words to Timothy, echoing urgently today:
"Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths." (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

That time, in many ways, is here. Thus, more than ever, we need courageous parents, educators, priests, bishops, and lay faithful who understand that **there are no shortcuts, no possible neutrality when it comes to the salvation of souls.** Let us embrace with joy and responsibility this sacred task of *integrally* educating—forming not only minds but hearts and souls for Christ and eternity.

Education that silences God is not neutral; it is a sentence to spiritual desert. Let us choose, with courage and love, to water the garden of the soul with the Living Water of Truth.
May the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Sedem Sapientiae* (Throne of Wisdom), guide us in this irreplaceable mission.