

# COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION



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## International Day of Education (24 January)

This year's United Nations International Day of Education reminds us of the transformation that is needed in the world to realise everyone's fundamental right to education in order to build a more sustainable, inclusive, and peaceful future. The COVID-19 pandemic-related school closures worldwide and the ineffectiveness of remote learning have meant, according to a new report by the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF, that in low and middle income countries, the number of children living in "Learning Poverty" (being unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10), already 53% before the pandemic, could potentially reach 70%.

Education, as Fr Chevalier believed wholeheartedly, is a human right and a common good which helps cure the ills of society because it can unlock the God-given potential in every person to contribute to collective well-being and our shared home. He wrote, in the 1877 MSC Constitutions:

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*Our Society accepts responsibility for young people who are to be initiated into Christian living. It considers this work to be one of its principal aims...for the well-being of society, both civil and ecclesiastical, hinges especially on the Christian education of youth.*

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Let us pray with gratitude for our wonderful OLSH (and MSC) history in education ministries of all types, where so many of the OLSH (and MSC) have worked and lived their mission of love, being enriched by the cultures of those they have ministered to and the people from these cultures who have joined the Congregation. And may we continue to pray for all the OLSH (and MSC) teachers of today, committed men and women who are 'standing on the shoulders' of the ones who have gone before them to assist those young people in their care to be Heart people: faith-filled, reverencing relationships, pursuing excellence and touching the hearts of others.

# International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Holocaust (27 January)

In 1933, the Nazi Party took control of the government of Germany and put its ideology into practice, identifying who could claim Germany as home and who belonged. The Nazis and their racist collaborators not only rendered many millions homeless and stateless before and during the Second World War; the after-effects of this trauma and cruelty continue for those who hid and survived, as well as the children born in death camps and subsequent generations of these families.



This United Nations commemorative day seeks to promote Holocaust remembrance and education that provides opportunities to develop a deeper appreciation of the victims and survivors and their agency; to illuminate the humanity of victims of atrocities today and the impact of anti-Semitism fuelled by disinformation and the distortion of history. (United Nations 2023)

In his book, *Jules Chevalier's Charism and the Identity of the Chevalier Family*, Hans Kwakman MSC writes,

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*Fr Chevalier's concern for humanity remains an integral element of his charism. As Jesus was sent into a deeply wounded world, we are also called to take part in his mission. As members of the Chevalier Family, we all have 'a social mission.' That means that a Spirituality of the Heart should be lived and promoted in a way relevant to the changing ills of our times.*

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Focussing on the humanity of victims of atrocities of all kinds, including the Holocaust, prompts us to remember our humanity, and our responsibility in our own times to combat hate speech, anti-Semitism, and prejudice wherever we meet it in our lives, our work, among our families, friends, and acquaintances, and in the wider community.

