

Dear friends from all over Europe,

Welcome to the 17th edition of the ***Jesuit European Educational Project***, first edition of virtual JEEP, the so called “JEEP reloaded”.

*Hey guy, be positive!* This is what I used to tell my students in order to get them more enthusiastic, more sympathetic with what they were doing.

*Be positive!!* Today if one student is positive he is immediately sent to the doctor's, in any case out of the school: negative students are much better ... and negative teachers too!

The world is upside down. We had problems and doubts about having our students use their mobile phones or digital devices during our lessons: now without technology we cannot even contact our students. None of us teachers would dare to say: *switch off your mobile, please!* A terrible, empty silence would follow. *Switch off your device and be positive!!* Can you imagine anything worse than this today?

The world is upside down. The rules have changed, or even worse there are no rules, except chance and fate. We are players on a board, it looks as if we were playing the *Game of the Goose*: we move pieces around a track by rolling two dice, that means we repeat our days, day per day, waiting for governmental decisions, the sole compass for our GPS. The aim of the game is to reach square number sixty-three before any of the other players, while avoiding obstacles such as the Inn, the Bridge and Death. No matter how we do it: we have to win, i.e. we have to survive!

Till when? When are we going to finish this game, that was unusual and even amusing in the beginning, but which we are fed up of now ???

Everything seems to start continuously from the beginning, when we are about to reach the goal, we fall down back and we have to start again.

The idea of a virtual JEEP was born from this ugly situation. For years we have been moving students and teachers all around Europe, having them meet in different cities, enjoying companies, life, works, discussions, food and drinks, playing with the tools of democracy. Today we can share

our ideas and experience only through a video, keeping physical and social distance, as requested. Sad, very sad, isn't it?

That's why we ask: till when? When is this going to end? When are we going to get rid of Corona virus and go back to our normal life?

Listen guys, I am going to tell you something, lend me your ears still for some minutes! We will never go back to normal life, if "normal life" means what we were doing before meeting with Corona virus. Corona has definitely changed our lives! There is no way back to 2019, we only have to prepare our future by living our present situation a little bit better. Most probably vaccines will save us, we have to trust them, we have to trust our scientific heritage, it's one of the few milestones we can rely on in present time. But for sure our future will be different. Your future will be different. I don't know if it will be better or worse, I am not a wizard and as a history teacher I am not used to invent anything. But for sure it will be different.

It makes no sense to say today: let's tolerate this situation, let's pretend we can do it, be patient. We don't have to worry, because in a few months everything will be as ever, normal life will come back. When we finally reach normal life, we will discover that "normal" is something different than what we are used to considering. The world has changed forever.

And you shouldn't be frightened of this, on the contrary you should be enthusiastic. You are living on the border between old and new, you are pioneers of a new world, of a new way of imagining our existence on this planet. We cannot be sure that Corona virus pandemic is the last one, a sad, undesirable accident that just happened once and that is not going to happen again! Other viruses might follow: according to WHO, there are many viruses all around the world and many of them are ready to strike. And they might be much worse than Corona. If so, what are you going to do? Are you flying to the Moon, looking for better conditions? Are you going to lie in a corner, weeping and mourning all day long and remembering all good times with a nostalgic attitude?

No, absolutely not! You are in the wonderful position of living a new era: this might be the dawn of a new era. For years we have been telling that it is time to change the world, we were even convinced of it, but we didn't move an inch. We didn't care about the origin of our good, enjoyable, tender life, we didn't care if behind our welfare there were slaves working for a couple of dollars on the other side of the world or if a forest was going to be burnt or if someone was going to dig social trenches, deeper and deeper. Our normal life was worth the candle!

Well, my dear guys, I come to the end. This normal life has finished: you have to invent and build up a new kind of normality, with more respect for other people and for nature, in a word you have to imagine a sustainable world and give life to it. Before it is too late.

Young age and technology are your first allies. You are young, but being young doesn't mean to be arrogant. Don't be arrogant, pay attention to what grown up people are telling you. Even if they did some mistakes, they can still teach you something. It's worth listening to them. Corona virus crisis proved that without technology it's difficult to live today. Remember however that technology is only a tool, it is not the goal of your education: no Twitter, no WA will never save you from ignorance and obsolescence. Switch off your Facebook from time to time and... face a book, I mean a real one: enjoy the smell of the paper, the weight of a real book in your hands, take your time to build up your ideas.

But above all stop crying and complaining: stand up proudly and start building your new future from today. Don't wait for anything to come back, it will not! Imagine a new future, starting from the topics of discussion you will meet during these days. Today it is not even enough to stay hungry and foolish, as Steve Jobs suggested: you have to be visionaries, heralds of the future, of your future. Have a good week, have a good life.