

Br. Alan Parham: “Accompanying migrants has always been part of our history”

“We De La Salle Brothers in the United States are very happy to accompany the migrants”, says Brother Alan Parham of the Midwest District, who recently participated in the Jubilee for Migrants in Rome, together with the delegation from the Institute for Faith and Life.

“It has always been part of our history”, continues Brother Alan. “We started the St. Michael Schools in Chicago and continue to do so in our schools and in our other ministries, especially as catechists”.

On 7 October, Brother Alan received the greeting and blessing of Pope Leo XIV during the Pontiff’s brief meeting with nearly a hundred leaders and representatives of the Hispanic Pastoral Ministry in the United States.

“God never abandons the poorest”

As a gesture of profound closeness and support, the Pope spoke to them in Spanish: **“You have a very important task in your hands, which is to accompany people who truly need a sign that God never abandons anyone: the least, the poorest, the foreigner, everyone.** And you, in the service you offer in the pastoral ministry, are clearly that witness, which is so important, perhaps especially in the United States, but throughout the world. A world that suffers so much from war, violence, hatred”.

Before imparting his blessing and greeting each person present, Leo XIV expressed his gratitude to the pastoral ministers: “Thank you for all that you do. May God bless you; May He strengthen you, **and may your hearts always be filled with faith and hope so that you may share with others that sign** which is truly the fruit of God’s grace, of God’s love for all of you”.

“It was a great day for us to hear these words from the Holy Father,” highlights Brother Alan.

“Pilgrims of peace”

Brother Juan Manuel Hernández, from the District of Bogotá, who is currently pursuing postgraduate studies and collaborating in the pastoral ministry of vocations in the Midwest District, also witnessed this significant moment: “As Lasallians we presented him with a scarf that reads ‘Pilgrims of Peace’ because **we Lasallians are committed to world peace and we are pilgrims and migrants**”, he said.

For the Institute for Faith and Life, an organisation linked to Lewis University that has been dedicated to the training and accompaniment of Hispanic pastoral leaders for 31 years, the experience of meeting the Pope has confirmed its commitment to migrants and its option for young people.

“No matter how the world tries to belittle us, **we all have a mission, the mission to promote the dignity of every person** (...). God never abandons us!” said Mr. Juan Escarfuller, Executive Director of the Faith and Life Institute.

For Ms. Elisabeth Román, Director of Interinstitutional Relations and Communication, “this experience, for the Hispanic Pastoral Ministry of the United States, which is currently suffering persecution (...), is not only a miracle, but it has lifted us up, **it has raised our prophetic voices**”.

The Faith and Life Institute is clear that its mission is to “continue moving forward”, as stated by Mr. Juan Soto, who is part of the Executive Committee.