Br. José María Pérez: “In a multicultural, multireligious society, the way of spreading the Gospel must be different.”

In the context of the Year of Catechesis that has taken place during 2025 in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Brother José María Pérez, from the Arlep District (La Salle in Spain and Portugal), explores the meaning of the catechetical project of the first Lasallian generations, their paths and their current challenges.

Brother José María holds a Doctorate in Theology with a major in Catechetics from the Pontifical University of Salamanca (Spain). For many years he has been associated with *Instituto Superior de Ciencias Religiosas y Catequéticas San Pío X* in Madrid, as a professor and administrator. He is currently the President of the Spanish Association of Catechists (AECA) and editor of *Revista Sinite*.

Educating true Christians

Referring to the origins of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and, more specifically, to the catechetical project undertaken by the Founder and the first Brothers, Brother José María recalls that it **was “a time of Christendom, when religion was important**, and what La Salle wanted to do was to educate true Christians”.

The Christian school was, then, the setting for embracing this necessity, “an open school, where education is comprehensive, but which strongly emphasises the importance of religion classes or catechism,” as Brother José María assures us, highlighting three key elements of the catechetical project of the first Lasallian generation: “Everything that is done in the school has an apostolic character, and that is why we speak of religious immersion; secondly, the moment of catechism, of learning the doctrine, is very important. And one very important thing is that religion is also learned in the interaction with the educator, which is why **we must touch the hearts of children**.”

“Apostles of Catechism”

Hence, from the beginning, “religion class, catechesis, is fundamental for the Brothers,” as expressed in the Bull of Approbation of the Institute. And this has endured over time, to the point that “Pope Saint Pius X declared us Brothers to be ‘Apostles of catechism’,” highlights Brother José María, so that, to this day, “**the fundamental objective of our Lasallian schools is evangelisation**. And evangelisation is done through witness and the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, even though our society is very different from that of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.”

Precisely in regard to the current challenges of the Lasallian catechetical project, Brother José María affirms that **“in a multicultural and multireligious society, the way of transmitting the Gospel must be different.”** Therefore, the ongoing formation of evangelisers is a priority, particularly for teachers working in Lasallian educational centres, as “a very important challenge is the formation of Lasallians in theological matters”.

Responding to human and spiritual needs

Another challenge has to do with **getting to know the young people and children we want to evangelise**. “And to get to know them, we have to be close to them. That is why Lasallian educators must be very close to these young people and children in order to know how to respond to their human and spiritual needs.”

Finally, Brother José María pointed out the importance of evangelising in the various religious and denominational contexts in which the Lasallian Educational Mission is carried out, where it is necessary **to** “**continue dialogue without renouncing who we are**,” with the conviction that “we do not speak of the Gospel to convert them, but rather we proclaim the Gospel to offer them the treasure we have.”

See below for the full interview that Brother José María Pérez gave to ***LaSalleOrg Interviews***.