Brother Álvaro Rodríguez: “The most important mission we have is to live as brothers and sisters.”

“All is connected,” a part of the title of *Lasallian Reflection 11* for the period 2025–2026; is an expression that comes from Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter *Laudato si’*. “It is repeated nine times (in the Pope’s document),” comments Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría in *LaSalleOrg Interviews*. **It refers to “a connection with nature, a connection with humanity (…), which invites us to be attentive to the cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth,”** underlines the former Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

A world of relationships

“I think it is very appropriate for the Institute to make us reflect on this very important topic” adds Brother Álvaro, highlighting the need to make the transition “from a mechanistic paradigm to a paradigm that opens us up to the reality that **everything we do, live and feel, is connected to many other experiences and realities**. And I believe that this opens us up to a world of relationships.”

For the former Superior General, this relational dimension permeates the Lasallian Mission: “I am convinced that relationships, the ability to relate to others, are also fundamental in education.” Moreover, “**the most important mission we have is to create a world where we can all live as sons and daughters of God**, as brothers and sisters among ourselves.”

Fraternal relationships

The experience of fraternity is anchored in the identity and origins of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, recalls Brother Álvaro: “Our first name was Masters of the Christian and Gratuitous Schools. And Blain tells us why the Founder very soon changed the name from ‘Masters’ to ‘Brothers’. He explains it very well by saying that **the fundamental thing is that ability to relate to each other, truly as brothers and sisters.** And I believe that every Lasallian – some of us bear the name Brothers – should feel like a brother and sisters to others.”

In fact, during his years as Superior General (2000–2014), he was able to see how fraternal relationships are in Lasallian DNA: “I was fortunate enough to visit 80 countries, and **what struck me most was the quality of the relationships that exist within each Lasallian work**, thinking for example of Asia, where there are different religions… and the spirit of unity and fraternity.”

Option for the poor

Likewise, **Lasallian fraternity is expressed in its commitment to the education of the most impoverished**. “That is why we were born!” asserts Brother Álvaro, claiming that “in the vision that the Founder gives us in the first two *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* , inspired by a text from Saint Paul, ‘God wants everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth’. But if God wants that, God has to make the means available to those who are most abandoned, in the Founder’s expression: ‘very far from’ God.”

Hence, the call that Pope Leo XIV makes in his apostolic exhortation *Dilexi te*, on love for the poor, concerns all Lasallians, as Brother Álvaro has said: **“it is for us a reaffirmation of our commitment to the poor**. And for many years now we have had this inclination, that experience of going ever closer to the poor, ‘brothers without borders’, and today *the ‘Leavening Project’,* which also invites us to a closer commitment to the poor.”

At the end of the interview on the theme of *Lasallian Reflection 11* and its inspiring documents: *Laudato si’* and *Fratelli tutti*, by Pope Francis, as well as *Dilexi te,* the first apostolic exhortation of Pope Leo XIV, Brother Álvaro concludes that “a very interesting element that encompasses the three documents we have been discussing is the ‘culture of care’. **I believe that as Lasallians we must be very open to a culture of care**.”