

La Salle Spain and Portugal commit to the comprehensive

“Composing the comprehensive well-being of children and young people”. **This is the theme of the Harmonia Congress**, an educational initiative of the Arlep District (La Salle in Spain and Portugal), which will bring together Lasallian leaders and educators in Valencia (Spain) on 28 October, Lasallian leaders and educators who seek to place “at the centre of social reflection the importance of children, adolescents and young people being cared for and caring for themselves so that they can grow as individuals capable of transforming the world in which they live and making it a better place”.

The term ‘harmonia’, which gives the Congress its title, comes from the Greek *ἁρμονία* and is written in Latin with an ‘h’ and without an accent, to express balance, an appropriate combination of elements that form a harmonious and coherent whole.

Commitment to well-being

“This Congress stems from our desire to work for a better world, starting with the children and young people we have in our classrooms”, says Brother Esteban de Vega, Visitor of the Arlep District. “Their well-being, understood in a holistic way, is for us an objective in itself and, at the same time, an objective that goes further, as a platform **to enable our students to commit themselves to the well-being of others**, as something we strive for and advance together, because we cannot be well on our own”.

On the other hand, the **Harmonia Congress is also a response to current challenges, in “a reality that speaks to us of tensions**, lack of communication, lack of relationships, social unrest, deteriorating mental health, fragile trust, self-harm...”, explains Brother Esteban, adding that these are situations that “we want to address, raise awareness about, learn from, and do so ‘in harmony’, in order to work towards a more harmonious world”.

Building safe environments

Faced with these realities, the Congress seeks to inspire a unique melody, composed of notes that remind us of the importance of caring for and attending to

the 'being' from different areas, as Brother Julio González, Director of the Network of Lasallian Educational Works in Spain and Portugal, comments, explaining that **"the fundamental objective is to highlight the issue of the comprehensive well-being of people in our society"**. This is an issue on which Lasallian schools want to offer avenues for reflection so that this theme is not just an addition to our educational proposal but, as the latest Mission Assembly of the Arlep District points out, becomes a point of reference in our educational proposal". Similarly, Brother Julio continues, "we want to generate synergies with other educational institutions and create areas of research and reflection in our society in order to build safe environments for people".

What will the dynamics of this event be like? Brother Jesús Félix Martínez, coordinator of the congress, refers to this: "It is based on a series of presentations that aim to shed light and provide clues so that integral well-being in childhood, adolescence and youth can become a reality. The aim is to highlight the importance of **combining synergies between all those involved in personal growth: the family, the school, the environment around them, society as a whole, and with an emphasis on the contribution that public administrations must make** to address situations that arise when this wellbeing is not a reality, which is particularly worrying in the current situation in our society".

Speakers and registration

"For this reason", adds Brother Jesús Félix, "the speakers will include people from organisations such as UNICEF, the FAD, Oxford University, and two centres that deal with mental health issues. **We have not forgotten the well-being of educators**, and so we will have a presentation on how to facilitate that well-being". "We will also have a space to learn how a judge of a Family Court writes letters to children to help them better understand the difficult situations they are facing".

Although the congress is open to the general public and offers the possibility of participating online via streaming, it also includes two days of internal work, on 30 and 31 October, for the ARLEP District's network of educational works.

"During the internal part of the congress, Mr Francesc Torralba will present how interiority and spirituality must be part of personal growth in order to achieve integral well-being", points out Brother Jesús Félix.

Anyone wishing to participate, either in person or online, can register via the Harmonia Congress website, where you can also find the agenda and list of speakers.