

Lasallians Gather Online for the International Lasallian Days for Peace

On Wednesday 30 September, students, staff and Brothers from Lasallian schools and universities in the United States, Canada, Ireland, Great Britain, Malta and Bethlehem met on Zoom to mark the International Lasallian Days for Peace. The gathering was hosted by the District of Ireland, Great Britain and Malta (IGBM) together with the Lasallian Region of North America (RELAN).

Emily Vogel, Director of 1 La Salle for RELAN, and Jo Millea, Director of Formation for IGBM, led the hour. Both noted that the gathering had been in planning since last year, and that every participant had been chosen by someone in their school who saw them as a positive leader and an agent for peace.

Doug Brummel, 1 La Salle Associate for RELAN, led the 1 La Salle Prayer, and Chelsea Catli, Volunteer and Youth Ministry Coordinator for IGBM, led the Lasallian Prayer for Peace. The gathering prayed for all those suffering the effects of war, violence, poverty and oppression, with particular intentions for the people of Gaza, Lebanon, Iran, Ukraine, Nepal, Colombia, Venezuela and Haiti. Prayers were also offered for De La Salle Blackfeet School, which marked Orange Shirt Day and Every Child Matters on the same day, remembering the historic oppression and abuse of indigenous children in boarding schools across the United States and Canada.

Where ILDP began

Joe Gilson, Director of Mission for IGBM, traced the origins of the International Lasallian Days for Peace to the International Symposium of Young Lasallians in 2006 and the work of the International Council of Young Lasallians, which led to the first International Lasallian Day of Prayer for Peace the following year. In 2008 the single day became a month, running from 21 September, the United Nations International Day of Peace, to 21 October.

In a recorded message, Br. Chris Patino, FSC, General Councillor, invited participants to draw new maps of hope: “maps that do not simply show borders

and distances, but show where people need to be seen, heard, welcomed, and accompanied.”

Br. Mark McKeon, FSC, originally from Australia and serving at Bethlehem University for the past seven years, then spoke about the challenges facing the Holy Land and the ways in which Bethlehem University answers the call to peace.

A challenge to continue

Participants moved into breakout rooms by age level, with separate rooms for middle school, high school, university and adults. Each group introduced their school, described what it does to promote peace and justice, named the biggest barrier to peace in their area, and offered their message for peace. Representatives from each District then shared their discussions with everyone.

The gathering closed with a challenge to keep building peace through small creative actions, including making a mandala, decorating a jigsaw piece and taking a photograph, and to share them using #1Lasalle and #ILD26.

The International Lasallian Days for Peace continue until 21 October.

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