

# Meeting between StAR Commission and General Council: a step forward for RELEM

This month, the StAR Commission (Strategic Alliances for RELEM) held another important meeting in the process of restructuring the RELEM Region. The meeting with the General Council, scheduled since October 2024, took place on 12 June at the Generalate in Rome.

The memory of Brother Gabriel Drolin, sent by the Holy Founder to Rome in a new, unknown and challenging environment, can be reread in the light of the experience RELEM is having today.

Between De La Salle and Brother Gabriel there was certainly affection, trust and a deep love for the Lasallian vocation. The same relationship can be seen between Brother Armin, the General Council and the members of the StAR Commission (Brother Joel Palud, General Councillor; Brother Jesús Félix from the Arlep District; Brother Paul Cornec, France and French-speaking Europe; Mr. Joseph Gilson, member of the RELEM TEAM, from the IGBM District; Brother Enrico Muller, Executive Secretary of RELEM; and Ms. Joke Maex, Director of the VLP\* of the North Belgian Delegation, who was absent due to other commitments). The palpable affection was therefore the undisputed protagonist of a meeting between “brothers” eager to discover together the will of God to better respond to the needs of young people and the poor in the Region.

The mutual trust was expressed in the very attentive listening of the entire General Council, both in the path outlined, which may also be useful for other Regions of the Institute, and in the strategies and responses that the Commission wishes to offer for vitality and sustainability, which are the key words and the ultimate goal of the entire path, charism and mission.

The Commission also presented the “ecclesial entrepreneurship” model of the Belgian sociologist and anthropologist Wim Vandewiele, professor at the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Louvaine, who usually conducts meetings with the District Councils and the MEL Councils of the Region, so that knowledge

of the realities can be combined with the building of bonds of fraternity and mutual understanding among Lasallians in the Region.

The Commission then shared the results of the joint conference, which brought together Visitors and Auxiliary Visitors, and members of the MEL Council of RELEM; by 2027, two Districts and three educational networks will be formed.

The anomaly of this strange situation of two Districts and three networks, which have different historical and linguistic roots, aroused interest and curiosity and became a new challenge. Both the Council of Visitors and the MEL Council are involved in the division of the Districts and educational networks to ensure that everything is done in a synodal way as much as possible, in accordance with the decisions taken. Brother Armin recalled that he had already been impressed, during the Conference, by the boldness of the proposal and amazed that it was so innovative despite coming from a not-so-young 'Body' like RELEM.

Attention to the path and involvement of the Brothers is the main concern, also urged by the General Council, which is at the heart of the StAR process: some Brothers believe that the mission will be well entrusted to Lasallians, others accept the changes with greater difficulty or less hope; it will certainly be an evangelical challenge to find ways to renew the Brothers' vocation in the new context and also to understand what the essential places for the Brothers' presence in a territory as vast as RELEM might be.

The Council emphasised that this path should also offer a different response to the needs of the poor, such as immigrants, whom the region is called upon to serve. The General Council reassured the team to fearlessly experiment with new and novel paths and structures before seeking their ultimate implementation.

The journey is not over, but has only taken a clear direction in which everyone is invited to participate and contribute through collaboration and meetings between District Councils and MEL Councils, joint initiatives such as the Fraternity in Action by the Young Lasallians, or the "Formation of Formators" course in mid-June in Malta, which will involve Lasallians from the five Districts.

Brother Gabriel Drolin, who carried out the charism and mission, sometimes paid the price for misunderstandings on the part of De La Salle, but was always reassured by the trust and affection of the Founder: "I do not fail to pray to God for you and for the success of your work" (L. 66:17).

“We, too, ask everyone for ‘support’ with prayer, full involvement and the necessary *parrhesia* so that we too can say *Domine, Opus Tuum!*”, all members of the StaR Commission unanimously affirm.

\* VLP (Vlaams Lasalliaans Perspectief) = Flemish Lasallian Perspective.