PASSIONATE WITNESSES OF FRATERNITY – IYBA

“All our passions reflect the stars” (Victor Hugo). Rightly understanding this assertion of Victor Hugo as a flame to be kept burning, the young Brothers have, since their first international assembly held in Manila, Philippines, wanted to reflect in the existential peripheries of today through their enthusiasm and passion the unfathomable riches of interculturality lived in community. Thus, after more than two years of waiting due to the coronavirus pandemic but burning with the desire for renewed testimonies through intense online meetings, they managed to hold their second International Assembly (IYBA) in Rome from November 8 to 20, 2022, on the theme: “Passionate Witnesses of Fraternity”.

In fact, the day of Tuesday, November 08 was dedicated to the official welcome and the opening of the assembly ceremonies with the sub-theme: Connect to the passionate witness. Each day having its own theme, the young Brothers progressed progressively in the work based on twelve sub-themes, the last of which was entitled: Bringing everything back home.

Before the delegates started their work, Brother Armin Luistro, Superior General,

with a symbolic but meaningful gift of a wooden cross, invited them to fix their eyes on the cross of Christ in order to glimpse the light that shines on the horizon. The crosses were distributed by Brother Councilors Chris and Anatole, in the name of the General Council. Brother Chris thanked the Brothers for their vocation, for the daily joys and sacrifices and the desire to witness fraternity to the world. He insisted on the new philosophy of the government of the Institute which makes each Brother and Lasallian living the mission with zeal and enthusiasm the center of the Institute. He called on the Brothers to be leaven in the world today. He then shared with each delegate the final document of the 46th General Chapter.

After the plenary session, work continued in language groups or discernment groups on the following questions

- What does it mean to be passionate witnesses of fraternity?
- What are the strengths of our Institute?
- What are the hopes and expectations of the assembly delegates?

A *Lasallian Conversation took place* with the Superior General and the General Council on Thursday, November 10, 2022. During this time of exchange and sharing, the young Brothers presented the report of the first two days: a reflection on the strengths of the Institute and the expectations of the Assembly, the calls of the Church and the calls of the Institute. The sharing continued after the words of the Brother Superior General and the presentation of the *Levadura* Project by Brother Ricky Laguda, General Councilor. Brother Armin Luistro, Superior General, asked them, among other things, to always ask themselves the question "Where is my Brother? This question, which will animate their reflections and their prayer, will push them to be Brothers according to the heart of God, following the example of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, Saint Francis of Assisi and the Virgin Mary. Brother Armin did not fail to allude to St. Paul's letter to Philemon about Onesimus when he said to them, "Brothers, give me this satisfaction in the Lord, let my heart find rest in Christ." Philemon 1:20. The *Conversation* concluded by answering questions from the young Brothers.

The work of this day continued in workshops led by some of the Secretariats of the Center of the Institute: Secretariat for Formation, Secretariat for Association and the Secretariat Solidarity and Development.

The next day, a *World Café* brought together the young Brothers present at the International Assembly for interactions from the three days of reflection. As part of the transition from the discernment phase to the project phase, the Brothers were invited to discuss the question, "If we live out the calls we have identified, what would be the most important changes in the Institute by 2029?"

The reflection was continued in the discernment groups to deepen the challenges and propose projects according to the most urgent priorities. After this work, project groups were formed. They will serve for the reflection during the second week of the Assembly.

The Brothers divided into project groups had a time of *team building* by spending the rest of Saturday together. They participated in Mass in different basilicas in Rome and strengthened their bonds of fraternity by sharing a dinner together.

As the delegates of the International Symposium of Young Lasallians landed in Rome from the four corners of the world, on Sunday, November 13, the young Brothers, to close the first week of work, made a pilgrimage to Assisi. They walked in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare, visiting the Convent of St. Damien, the Hermitage of St. Francis and the basilicas of the Brother of All Creatures and his sister Clare. Times of prayer and recollection deepened the personal reflection of the pilgrims in front of the relics of St. Francis, St. Clare and the young Blessed Carlo Acutis.

The 4th International Young Lasallian Symposium (IYLS) started its work on Monday, November 14, 2022, joining the International Young Brothers Assembly (IYBA) which was in its second week.

After the opening session of the IYLS, the Young Lasallians and the Young Brothers met in the Aula Magna of the Generalate to share the work they had done up to that point: a week's work in person for some and online for others. The Brothers and the young Lasallians presented the fruits of their reflections. Many common points came out and also in connection with the work of AIMEL (International Assembly of the Lasallian Educational Mission) and of IALU (International Association of LaSalle Universities) which were held two weeks earlier.

The participants continued the day in their respective groups before ending it

with a *social time* prepared by the Young Lasallians after dinner.

On Wednesday, November 16, 2022, the Young Brothers and Young Lasallians participated in the general audience of Pope Francis in the square in front of Saint Peter's Basilica. In the afternoon, the Young Brothers resumed their work session by continuing to develop lines of action for each priority area of the proposed projects.

At the end of the plenary session, Brother Miguel, on behalf of the young Brothers, thanked Brother Chris Patino, General Councilor, who accompanied and supported the organization of the Assembly. Brother Chris promised to carry each young Brother in his prayers.

While the community of the Generalate celebrated the 85th anniversary of the inauguration of the Shrine of St. John Baptist de La Salle and the 25th priestly anniversary of the house chaplain, Father Adriano Dancă, the work of the Assembly and of the Symposium were in full symphony. A solemn Eucharistic celebration ended all the activities of this Thursday.

Inviting us to the strength of decisions, the work of the assembly on Friday 18 and Saturday 19 November brought us together in regional groups on thematic reflections and the formation of the International Committee of Young Brothers. In a relaxed and fraternal atmosphere, the work of the Assembly ended to the satisfaction of the young Brothers' delegates.