Pastoral Letter to the Lasallian Family 2025-2026

Our host ushered our group into a preschool classroom of around three dozen kids who were happily engaged in their activity for the day. The preschoolers were all animated and cheerfully greeted me as I went from table to table. All of them, except one four-year-old boy. Sergio was self-absorbed and none of the color, music, and noise around him could shake his loneliness. In the commotion created by our intrusive presence, this four-year-old approached me ever so quietly and just wrapped his arms around my legs. I sat on one of the kids' low chairs to receive his tight embrace and look him in the eye. But Sergio buried his head on my lap and just kept saying, "Mama, Mama".

For one sacred minute, I felt deeply connected with Sergio whom I held on to my lap. Connected with myself. With all of humanity. With my God. In a flash, I realized I was entering into the realm of mystery. Not that which belongs to the category of an unsolvable puzzle, but one that unravels deeper truths at each heightened level of engagement. I felt real—woefully human, blissfully divine.

"We are either brothers and sisters or everything else falls apart"
Pope Francis has highlighted on many occasions our universal fraternity, reminding everyone that we are "*born from the same Father*". Not just made from the same genetic pool but brought into being by the same loving God who brings us to existence because he loves us. I exist because I am loved! Unconditionally. Infinitely. Eternally.

What a radical departure from the Cartesian principle of radical doubt, *"Cogito, ergo sum"!* The serendipitous encounter with the Sergio brought me to a heightened awareness of a profound presence that called for an urgent and real response. Whatever doubts I had with my existence or abilities to make a difference in our world faded in the background in the face of an urgent situation that calls for MY immediate response. I was confronted with an expressed need from one who looked up to me for comfort. I could have pushed the reality aside and everything would have faded back into the limbo of emptiness and obscurity. Like grass that withers and fades.

I chose to engage. A fraternal bond was forged. Two strangers are now invested with each other as brothers-in-arms. The chance meeting has turned into a grace-filled moment.

I found new meaning in this new reality. I rediscovered myself, my vocation, my God.

That moment in time was game-changing, soul-shaking. The experience of being in a loving presence—for myself and for the boy I held on to my lap—changes the way we perceive reality. We are never the same again. One who is immersed in the foolhardiness of love sees the world differently: Light is never extinguished. Problems suddenly find a solution. Nothing is impossible. Kindness becomes unlimited. Challenges only make you stronger. Joy overflows. Hope does not disappoint (…).

Each vignette is a window into what it means to live as if God is communion—because God is. I invite you to look at your own story. Think of the colleague who stayed with you during a difficult season. The student who taught you humility. The Brother who made you feel seen. The community that carried you when you could not walk alone. In those moments, you lived the Trinity. You may not have named it, but you embodied it. And in doing so, you made God's love visible. That is what the following vignettes reveal.

Fraternity is not an ideal far off in the distance, but something that is already unfolding—in our classrooms, our offices, our ministries, and our hearts. May we, as one Lasallian Family, continue the sacred work of making the love of the Triune God visible in our world—with prophetic audacity and much joy.

Br. Armin A. Luistro
Superior General

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