Pope Francis warns of “educational catastrophe” and calls for right to education

“Today we are experiencing an educational catastrophe. This is no exaggeration”, Pope Francis declares in a short video sharing his intentions for the month of January: for the right to an education.

“Let us pray for migrants, refugees, and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a more human world, might always be respected”, asks the Pope, who is deeply concerned about the situation **of some 250 million children who today lack education “because of war, migration and poverty”**.

In this sense, The Pope Video, an initiative of the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network, echoes the intentions of the Bishop of Rome for this month, with the conviction that **“all children and youth have the right to go to school, regardless of their migration status”**.

“Education is a hope for everyone”

With regards to the human mobility situation that impacts the lives of millions of people around the world, the Pope is particularly concerned about the scourge of human trafficking suffered by “so many exploited minors”.

In the face of this reality, “education is a hope for everyone: it can save migrants and refugees from discrimination, criminal networks, and exploitation”, affirms Francis, recalling that **“education opens the doors to a better future”.**

Moreover, through education “migrants and refugees can contribute to society, either in their new country or in their country of origin, should they decide to return”, the Pope continues, calling for this right. “Let us never forget that whoever welcomes the foreigner, welcomes Jesus Christ”, Francis underlines.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle, too, in his Meditation for the vigil of the Nativity of Jesus Christ, asks us: “**For how long has Jesus been presenting himself to**

you and knocking at the door of your heart to make his dwelling within you, and you have not wanted to receive him? Why? Because he only presents himself under the form of a poor man, a slave, a man of sorrows" (*Meditation* 85.1).

This year, the Lasallian Reflection reminds us that **our heart is in the peripheries**: "Peripheries are also those human situations of migrants, in small boats, in cargo trucks and on trains, who on the way lose rights, identity, and all kinds of assurances" (*Lasallian Reflection No. 10*, p.4). **As a Lasallian Family we are called to intensify our commitment to the education of migrant and refugee children and young people.**