Pope Leo XIV to Lasallians: “Evangelizing through education and educating through evangelization”



Recalling the saying of St. John Baptist de La Salle “Your altar is the classroom,” Pope Leo XIV commends the educational efforts of the Christian Brothers, and encourages them to continue “inspiring joyful and fruitful paths of holiness.”

“I hope that vocations to Lasallian religious consecration may grow, that they be encouraged and promoted—within your schools and beyond—and that, in synergy with all the other formative components, they may contribute to inspiring joyful and fruitful paths of holiness among the young who attend them.”

Pope Leo XIV gave this encouragement to Christian Brothers when receiving them in the Vatican on Thursday.

Frequently referred to as Christian Brothers, the Lasallian Brothers are named after their founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle, who founded the mission to provide a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor. The Brothers, lay religious men dedicated exclusively to education, are known for their global education efforts.

“After three centuries,” Pope Leo XIV noted in his remarks, “it is wonderful to see how your presence continues to carry the freshness of a rich and far-reaching educational reality, through which, still today and in various parts of the world, you devote yourselves to the formation of young people with enthusiasm, fidelity, and a spirit of sacrifice.”

With this in mind, the Holy Father turned to two aspects of the Brothers' history, their "attention to the present moment" and "the ministerial and missionary dimension of teaching within the community."

Founder got to work and forged ahead

The Holy Father immediately observed how their Founder accepted challenges as a sign from God, and got to work.



Beyond his own intentions and expectations, Pope Leo said, De La Salle "gave life to a new system of education."

When problems arose, instead of getting discouraged, he noted, the Saint let them spur him to seek creative responses and forge ahead on new and often unexplored paths.

All of this, the Holy Father said, raises, "for us as well," useful questions, such as, "What are the most urgent challenges to face today in the world of youth? What values need to be promoted? What resources can we rely on?"

Transforming serious challenges



Highlighting several specific difficulties, he observed, "Think of the isolation caused by widespread relational models increasingly marked by superficiality, individualism, and emotional instability; of the spread of thought patterns weakened by relativism; of the dominance of lifestyles and rhythms in which there is not enough space for listening, reflection, and dialogue—in school, in the family, and sometimes even among peers—with the resulting loneliness."

While these realities may be daunting, the Pope said, we too, like St. John Baptist de La Salle, "can transform [them] into springboards," in order to "explore new paths, develop new tools, and adopt new languages through which to continue

to touch the hearts of students, helping and encouraging them to face every obstacle with courage so they may give the best of themselves in life, according to God's designs."

In this sense, the Pope commended how much attention they give in their schools to the formation of teachers and to building educational communities.

Teaching lived as a ministry

Pope Leo XIV also highlighted another aspect of the Lasallian reality, namely "teaching lived as ministry and mission," "as a form of consecration in the Church."



"St. John Baptist de La Salle," he underscored, "did not want priests among the teachers of the Christian Schools, but only "brothers," so that all your efforts would be directed, with God's help, toward the education of your students. He loved to say: 'Your altar is the classroom.'"

In doing so, Pope Leo marveled, he was "promoting in the Church of his time a reality that was until then unknown: that of lay teachers and catechists invested within the community with a true ministry, according to the principle of evangelizing through education and educating through evangelization."

"The charism of the school, which you embrace with your fourth vow of teaching, besides being a service to society and a precious work of charity," the Pope explained, "still appears today as one of the most beautiful and eloquent expressions of that priestly, prophetic, and royal munus which we all received in Baptism, as emphasized by the documents of the Second Vatican Council."

The Pope praised how religious men, in their educational institutions, "make visible in a prophetic way, through their consecration, the baptismal ministry that urges all —each according to their state and role, without distinctions—to contribute, as living members, to the growth of the Church and its ongoing sanctification."

Pope Leo XIV concluded by thanking the Brothers of the Christian Schools for all

they do. “I pray for you and impart upon you my Apostolic Blessing, which I gladly extend to the entire Lasallian Family.”

Read here the complete address of Holy Father Pope Leo XIV to the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

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