

Rafael Ruiz: “We must learn to live with artificial intelligence”

With the rise of artificial intelligence, the need to address the impact of new technologies on youth cultures – and, more specifically, on the educational background – is becoming increasingly evident. “They have been born into a fully digitalised context; they are digital natives,” says Lasallian lecturer and researcher **Rafael Ruiz, who is affiliated with the Universidad Complutense, Madrid (Spain)**. In fact, he continues, “their human experience is being redefined by the realm of social media”.

The impact of digital culture

In conversation with *LaSalleOrg Interviews*, **the Lasallian expert explores some of the nuances of the impact of digital culture and artificial intelligence on education**, ranging from the way in which “they relate to one another – intersubjectivity” – to their “expectations, perceptions of reality and new models of influence”, including “influencers amongst themselves”.

In fact, when it comes to the world of work, “many young people no longer wish to pursue certain professions because what they want is to get involved in cryptocurrencies or build an influencer profile”, explains Rafael. “And even at the level of religious experience, we see that **much of that religiosity is generated and transmitted via social media, once again impacting the way in which young people understand their approach to spirituality**”.

Hence, the Lasallian researcher maintains that **“we are facing a field that is redefining and transforming all areas of the young people’s experience**, all aspects of what it means to be a person for young people.”

Challenges for the Lasallian Educational Mission

What does all this mean for the Lasallian Educational Mission? For Rafael, there are two major challenges arising from digital culture. On the one hand, “as for education, it is a clear challenge because we live in a world where changes are happening so rapidly that we implement them first and, in many cases, only then reflect on them – even legally. **First comes the change, and then the social reflections and legal frameworks**. And this generates a great deal of

controversy and debate”.

“So I believe that to understand our educational mission in the 21st century, we must answer the key question of what human beings can do in that educational process that artificial intelligence cannot do in the same way,” highlights the Spanish professor, clarifying that it is not a question of artificial intelligence replacing human beings, “but rather that we must emphasise that human element so characteristic of the Lasallian charism in the educational process”, because **“artificial intelligence cannot provide companionship. It can impart knowledge, but it cannot generate educational processes**. So, for me, that is the first challenge.”

“The second challenge is that particular emphasis of the Lasallian Mission on Christian education and the most impoverished. Why? Because (...) **artificial intelligence may widen the gap between those who have greater access to resources and those who have less access to resources**. It may exacerbate the great inequality that exists in our world. Consequently, it poses a challenge not only to our understanding of what education is, but above all to how we address these new inequalities and vulnerabilities that artificial intelligence itself may generate, (...) but may not know how to resolve.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the Lasallian Educational Mission is embedded in these new realities and, for the leaders of the various works at a global level, as well as for educators, this means that **‘we must know how to navigate it, we must know how to use it, we must find our way within that context** and, above all, we must rediscover what is strictly human, essentially human, in education so that we can put our hearts into it. Thus, as we mentioned earlier, whilst artificial intelligence can be a great ally, a powerful tool to assist us in matters of efficiency, rationality, reasoning and content, we must not forget that what will remain at the heart of our mission, and the core that will give that human emphasis to the educational process will be found in what artificial intelligence cannot do (...), such as the processes of support, the process of caring for the individual, and striving to understand not only the content but also to think about it critically”.

Of course, ultimately, artificial intelligence (...) provides answers, but these are not neutral answers; they are conceived within a specific framework and system. I believe that critical re-evaluation and critical reflection must also be placed at the

heart of that educational experience. So, in short, alongside artificial intelligence as a tool for tasks we are already carrying out, perhaps **we should emphasise the human aspect, support, care and the critical thinking that also helps us to uncover vulnerability and inequality, and to champion a stronger message of justice** (...) through educational processes”, concludes the Lasallian expert.

See below for the full interview that Rafael Ruiz gave to *LaSalleOrg Interviews*.