

Synodality and education: The challenges facing the Church in Latin America from a Lasallian perspective

In an exclusive interview with *Vatican Radio*, Brother Edgar Nicodem, Director of the “Santísima Trinidad” Inter-District Novitiate, in Porto Alegre (Brazil) and a member of the team of theologians of the Latin American Confederation of Religious (CLAR), spoke about the future of religious life on the continent, the impact of artificial intelligence on education, and the recovery of Rio Grande do Sul following the floods.

As a member of ETAP — the Team of Theological Advisers to the CLAR Presidency — Brother Edgar highlighted that the main focus of current theological reflection is synodality, a concept that calls for “walking together” in the Church, which was taken up by Pope Francis.

In this regard, one of ETAP’s objectives is to “advise the CLAR Presidency on projects that connect the Church with popular movements, universities and civil organisations”, with a view to the synodal perspective.

To this end, in November 2026, Lima, the Peruvian capital, will host the Congress on Religious Life, which will discuss how synodality should transform the structures, relationships and spirituality of the Church.

Brother Edgar noted that, although the theme of synodality has been well received in many places, there is still a certain “passivity” in some communities, which must be overcome through concrete projects.

Education and Artificial Intelligence

Furthermore, in the context of the feast of Saint John Baptist de La Salle (celebrated on 15 May), the Lasallian religious reflected on modern educational challenges, particularly in Brazil.

A Lasallian principle holds that quality education must always be linked to

evangelisation and a values-based approach. Thus, for Brother Edgar, Artificial Intelligence is a tool from which there is no turning back, but one that demands critical thinking and ethical consideration. “We need to educate ourselves to embrace it, whilst remaining aware of the risks of manipulation and the loss of privacy that it also brings,” he stated.

The educator warned of the growing “dehumanisation” in families and schools, arguing that institutions must be spaces for dialogue, welcome and genuine coexistence.

Porto Alegre: Reconstruction and solidarity

A resident of Porto Alegre, the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, Brother Edgar also shared with listeners of *Vatican Radio* a moving account of the aftermath of the recent floods in the state.

Referring to the power of unity, he emphasised that solidarity “mobilised the country” and ensured there was no shortage of food or water when supply centres collapsed.

However, although the city is cleaner and better organised, the Lasallian religious noted that work on basic infrastructure is still progressing slowly and there is real concern about the forecast of further heavy rain at the start of spring.

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