The District of France and French-speaking Europe establishes a University College with the Catholic University of Paris

In France, the home land of the Founder, there are many Primary and Secondary schools, as well as three Engineering schools. There is now a University Centre dedicated to the figure of John Baptist de La Salle, to the Lasallian educational tradition and to the training of teachers. It is attached to the Faculty of Education and Formation of the Catholic Institute of Paris (ICP in French).



Brother Visitor Jean-René Gentric and Father Emmanuel Petit, Rector of the ICP, inaugurated this new place of formation and research on Tuesday, 13 May 2025, in the presence of Brother Joël Palud, General Councillor, Mr Josep Santos Fernández, representative of IALU, and many leaders of the Lasallian network, Catholic education and the university.

Brother Joël emphasised the essential role of creativity and innovation in the history of the Lasallians: 'The university has a prominent role to play in making the education system a driving force for the changes the world needs, so that future educators can awaken young people's awareness of the challenges facing us.' He also pointed out that 'Higher education is currently the fastest growing sector in the Lasallian world. A third of the million learners in our network are now in higher education. (…) The expertise you are developing yourselves is a contribution that other Institutes could benefit from.'

The new John Baptiste de La Salle University Centre (CJBS)* already offers

several courses: a Master's Degree in 'International and Intercultural Education' and two University Diplomas in 'Social Action and Migration' and 'Active Pedagogies'. It also aims to become an internationally-oriented centre for interdisciplinary research, combining Education Sciences, Theology, Philosophy, History and Sociology. It will be headed by Brother André-Pierre Gauthier, starting on 1 September 2025.

The Lasallians are taking their place at the university, just a few hundred metres from where the Founder came to study… This is a momentous occasion! This new university centre aims to become a hub of Lasallian thought in Paris, training teachers and educators from all over the world.

* The CJBS aims to promote the educational thinking of Saint John Baptist de La Salle and his pedagogical legacy. It is an internationally-oriented centre for interdisciplinary research, combining Education Sciences, Theology, Philosophy, History and Sociology. The University Centre pursues four objectives:

- To be a place of academic research on the figure of John Baptist de La Salle, the Brothers of the Christian Schools and their educational works over the past 300 years;
- To develop specific training programmes in the fields of Education, Pedagogy, Interculturality and Catechesis;
- To support research programmes related to Lasallian thought and disseminate them through seminars, conferences and publications;
- To establish partnerships with Lasallian universities on all five continents.

** *Article written by Mr.Jean-Marie Ballenghien.*