“The most exciting thing about being a Brother is to work with young people”

“The most exciting thing about being a Brother for me has been to work with young people. And **that is the Brother’s vocation: to teach and be with them, helping them to decide what they want to do with their lives**.” With these words, Brother Robert Veselsky, from the Midwest District in the United States, refers to his vocation as a Brother of the Christian Schools, convinced that young people “need leaders, they need mentors, people who would listen to them.”

Brother Robert recalls that **when he first met the Brothers**, **he was** “**very impressed by how happy they were as men**”. So, at the age of only 15, he decided to become one of them and join the Congregation founded by Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the Patron Saint of educators, more than 300 years ago in France. “It has been a wonderful, wonderful life”, he confesses. “We are blessed as Brothers be part of their lives”.

For his part, Brother Alan Parham joined the community at the age of 40. “I’m in awe, the fact that I am getting to live this vocation” he states. “I tried many things before I became a Brother, but when I finally ended up in the Brothers I knew that this was it. And I think most of all **I care and of a lot about young people, what is happening to them, because they live in a much more difficult world than I grew up in**”, says the Lasallian religious.

Identity as a Brother

Brother Alan is also part of the Midwest District and enthusiastically maintains that “I love being a Brother; it is my whole identity”. He is also convinced that “**God puts a call in everyone’s heart. We just have to listen**”.

Both Brother Robert and Brother Alan have been collaborating for several years with the Midwest District vocational team, along with Brothers Larry Schatz, Matthew Kotek, and Juan Manuel Hernández.

Brother Juan Manuel is Colombian, belongs to the Lasallian District of Bogotá,

and in recent years has combined his studies for a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota with his service in Pastoral Ministry of Vocations. He agrees with Brother Alan that "we all have a call from God, a call to serve the Lord, and in the midst of that call, some of us are called to serve in religious life".

"**My motivation to be a De La Salle Christian Brother, to be able to bring hope to children, to young people and to show them that God's plan for their lives is possible**", continues Brother Juan Manuel, who has also been involved in pastoral training programmes for Hispanics at the Faith and Life Institute, because for him "the Lasallian mission goes beyond borders, beyond cultures, beyond languages. Children and young people are seeking God at this time from different parts of our planet".

How can we respond to this challenge in today's world? Brother Juan Manuel believes that "we as Lasallians, and in my case **from my vocation as a Brother, give this message of the Gospel, of hope, in the educational world**. That is what fulfils me, what makes me proud to be a Brother", he concludes.

We invite you to watch the following video with the testimonies of Brothers Robert, Alan, and Juan Manuel.