

The revitalisation of Consecrated Life and the Lasallian Charism in the District of Brazil-Chile

The revitalisation of consecrated life was the main theme of the gathering of the Brothers of the District of Brazil-Chile, held between 21 and 24 May in Santiago de Chile, as a special moment of reflection on the vocation of the Brothers, through spaces of prayer, formation and fraternity, with the participation of the Brother Directors of the religious communities, of the Brothers in perpetual vows over 45 years of age, of the District Council and of the Council for Mission.

After the celebration of the opening Eucharist, presided over by Father Fernando Falcó - who also facilitated the formation sessions - Brother Olavo Dalvit, Visitor of the District, shared a message on fraternal life, the educational mission and evangelisation.

During his reflections, Father. Fernando raised some situations that challenge the living of consecrated life, such as the decrease in resources due to the ageing of the institutions, the tensions, the difficulty of living together and of generating changes among the religious, and not achieving the expected fruits in the face of the desire to attract others to consecrated life. "All these are situations which can discourage us in living our own consecration, but which also encourage us to move forward and overcome difficulties", the priest pointed out, underlining the importance of knowing how to articulate individual and institutional projects: "this happens in the community space".

"Fr Fernando's dynamism and wisdom helped us to guide the dialogue and the theme of our fraternal gathering", remarked Brother Elisandro Paulo Kaiser, from the *comunidad La Salle Nuestra Señora de la Estrella*. "It was enriching for everyone's life", he added.

Taking care of the spiritual dimension

From Brother Fábio Kolling's point of view, "this gathering is part of the District's efforts to care for the spiritual, community and apostolic dimension of the Brothers, especially those with a long vocational journey, who continue to be

living witnesses to the charism of Saint John Baptist de La Salle”.

“The theme, as well as the informal moments, were very important for the dialogue and the memory of the years lived together with the Brothers”, observed Brother João Angelo Lando, who appreciated the opportunity “to have lived together and met again so many Brothers after so many years”.

“The revitalisation of religious life also involves the renewal of a heart that listens, serves and loves in the human and spiritual peripheries of our time”, said another participant.

For his part, Brother Juan Báez Leiva, Director of the *Comunidad La Granja* (Santiago de Chile), appraised that “there was a lot of fraternity, we felt like a single body (...), more united and members of the same District”, and that “the visit of the Brothers from Brazil to the educational works in Santiago de Chile was very pleasant”.

Indeed, in addition to the formative moments of fraternity and Lasallian spirituality, the programme included visits to these Lasallian educational works and a cultural tour of the cities of Valparaíso and Viña del Mar.

The last day of the gathering focused on the meeting with the Directors of the religious communities, reinforcing their commitment to community leadership and animation.

District Day

Another significant and historic moment for the Lasallian District of Brazil-Chile was the District Day celebrated at the Colegio La Salle Reina, in Santiago (Chile), with the participation of Brothers, lay partners, Lasallian students and representatives of the Institute, among them Brother Armin Luistro, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and his Councillors, Brothers Martin Digilio and Rafael Cerón.

This day began with the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Cardinal Celestino Aós, Archbishop Emeritus of Santiago, who recalled during his homily the prayer pronounced by Saint John Baptist de La Salle at the end of his life: “I adore in all things the will of God in my regard”. “This profession of trusting faith should be repeated and meditated on by the Brothers, because it teaches us that beyond science or technology, we must live and accept God’s will for us and fulfil

it”, the Archbishop pointed out.

The celebration included the renewal of vows of jubilarian Brothers Gabriel Pedro Idilio González González, Albino Francisco Márquez Márquez, Paulo Lari Dullius and Rodolfo Patricio Andaur Zamora, a symbolic gesture of their ongoing commitment to Lasallian values. Some commemorative plaques were also presented to the jubilarian educational communities, in recognition of decades of dedication to education and human formation.

During the occasion, Br. Armin Luistro stressed the importance of unity and the shared educational mission between Brazil and Chile, as well as fraternal life and spirituality, evoking the legacy of St. John Baptist de La Salle and the transforming role of local communities.

Brothers and Lasallians in Chile with the Superior General

The visit of Brother Armin and the General Councillors to Chile included a meeting with the Brothers of the country. “His were words of encouragement, of hope for the future, an invitation to stand firm in the person of Jesus Christ. All this under the dynamism of the Leavening Movement”, expressed one of the participants.

The subsequent dialogue revolved around three questions proposed by Brother Martín Digilio: what inspires us? what hurts us? how do we see the future? The hopes and dreams that motivate the Brothers vocationally were also shared.

Brother Juan Báez emphasised that “these were moments of great fraternity and reflection, which help us to think that, in our life as Brothers, we are not alone, that although we are few Brothers in Chile, we feel the support of the Institute which encourages us to renew our look”.

A current charism for Brothers and lay people

Like the gathering with the Brothers, the meeting of the District Council and the Council for Mission expressed the commitment of the District to revitalisation. An opportunity to “strengthen the conviction that the Lasallian charism is a permanent and present call for Brothers and lay people”, as Brother Cristian Moncada, Director of Colegio La Salle Temuco (Chile), mentioned, referring to the initiative to “deepen the Institute’s invitation to place our hearts and eyes on the peripheries”, as well as to “make significant changes” in order to embrace this fundamental option.

“In the same way, based on the directives of the 46th General Chapter and the seven Pathways of transformation of the Institute, we discussed what aspects should be prioritised”, added Br Cristian.

For Brother João Rocha, from the Pão dos Pobres Foundation, the meeting “was an important and transforming experience, where we had the opportunity to live together as Brothers and lay people, deepening our understanding of the elements that compose the Lasallian identity, looking for ways to inspire communities to strengthen their spirituality and their commitment to social responsibility”.

United in one big global family

Finally, the visits of Brother Superior General and the Brother Councillors to some educational works in Chile were also welcomed with enthusiasm and hope.

“On Tuesday 27 May, our beloved Escuela La Salle San Lázaro was privileged to welcome Br. Armin Luistro. His visit was much more than an event. It was a profound invitation to reflect on the essence of our Lasallian Mission and the transformative impact of education in every life, which allowed us to feel even more united to this great global family”, said the school’s Director, Boris Miño.

Likewise, on 27 and 28 May, Brother Armin, together with Brothers Rafael Cerón, Olavo Dalvit and Nicolás Herrera, visited the religious community and the educational communities of Escuela Francia and Colegio La Salle in the city of Temuco.

These were moments lived with great joy and enthusiasm, in which Bro. Armin highlighted the importance of feeling deeply loved by God and with great opportunities to realise dreams and goals.

The visit included moments of exchange with the leaders of the educational communities and representatives of the families. There was even a special visit to one of the families accompanied by the school’s Social Project.

At the same time, Brother Martín visited Colegio La Salle Talca, where he met with different members of the educational community to reflect on the importance of the role of Lasallians in Chilean society. “We need to be open to our surroundings, to be leaven in a world that needs human innovation, that is to say, to innovate in the way we relate to others in order to become better people,

following in the footsteps of Jesus”, the General Councillor stated.

** Article drafted in collaboration with Brother Fábio Kolling and the Communication Team of the District of Brazil-Chile.*