

# The Superior General's Pastoral Visit to the Norandino District, “a Sign of Closeness, Encouragement and Fraternal Communion”

The Pastoral Visit of the Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Brother Armin Luistro, to the Norandino District, together with Brother Rafael Cerón, General Councillor, has been **a “living sign of closeness, encouragement and fraternal communion that strengthens Lasallian identity and renews commitment to the educational mission”**, as expressed by Jorge García, Administrator of the Instituto San Carlos in Medellín (Colombia).

## **Education and Human Dignity**

From the moment of his arrival in the District on 16 January, the experience of visiting the *Comuna 13*, in the metropolitan area of Medellín, which until a few years ago was synonymous with violence and is now an example of resilience and commitment to a culture of peace, each of the meetings held evoked “that **Lasallian-style education is about**

**reaching out to human beings and giving them the best tools to dignify their lives”**, according to Mr Jeison Julián Franco Medina, Academic Coordinator of the Instituto San Carlos.





It was also an encouraging time to strengthen fraternity and a sense of community, as was experienced the following day, Saturday 17 January, when Brothers Armin and Rafael participated in the **Eucharist for the Habit Taking of Brothers Edinair Díaz and Luis Arbelio Moya, and the Profession of First**

**Religious Vows of Brother David Pérez.** The liturgical ceremony took place at the Fundación Autónoma De La Salle Casa de Encuentros, located in Rionegro, on the outskirts of Medellín, and was attended by the Brothers of the District, the Lasallian community, family members and friends.

### **The Leavening Movement in Istmina**

Yet, the **meeting with several indigenous communities, especially the Wounaan, in the municipality of Istmina** - located in the department of Chocó, on the banks of the San Juan River in the west of the country - was one of the most significant moments of Brother Superior General's visit.



There they had the opportunity to learn about various initiatives that are part of the Leavening Movement promoted by the Institute, which aim to train indigenous teachers and promote indigenous children and young people. They also accompanied other projects implemented by La Salle in the region, such as the workshop for seamstresses and the Villa La Salle Boarding School, among others, visiting the facilities of these educational works and holding **meetings with religious leaders and leaders of Afro-descendant and indigenous communities, in order to plan actions that strengthen the Lasallian presence through service and dedication to the most needy and vulnerable.**



Upon their return to Medellín on Tuesday, 20 January, Brothers Armin and Rafael visited the facilities of Colegio San José De La Salle, the first Lasallian educational institution founded in Colombia, in 1890, where they shared with students, Partners, and Brothers of the District through **a discussion that became an opportunity to exchange ideas about the realities of Youth and Pastoral Ministry of Vocations, Formation and Association Ministry, Administrative Ministry, and Pedagogical Ministry**. These spaces allowed for the sharing of how the District Strategic Plan, proposed and led by Brother Luis Bernardo Bolívar, Visitor of the Norandino District, is being developed.

Finally, the Brothers participated in the inauguration of the new high school block at La Salle Envigado School, **a modern 5,000 square metres building, distributed over six floors, and designed to facilitate learning, encounter and the holistic formation** of students.

During the afternoon, Brother Armin and Brother Rafael travelled to **Corporación Universitaria Unilasallista**, where they visited its headquarters, including the Néstor Suárez Veterinary Clinic. A meeting with the Brothers of the District Council was also held there.



This completed the Pastoral Visit of the Brother Superior General, which included various meetings with Brothers – including the elderly Brothers of the District – young people and children, Partners, pastoral agents, and academic and administrative leaders, who from 16 to 21 January shared their experiences through listening, empathy, fraternity and passion for the human and Christian education of the new generations in the works of the Norandino District.

“The visit of Brother Superior General Armin Luistro leaves us with a teaching that challenges us deeply. As Catholic Christians, we are called to connect our lives with God, with our environment, with our brothers and sisters, and with our common home (...). Today, this message resonates strongly: **All is connected! Our faith, our educational mission, and our fraternity cannot be lived separately**”, concluded Mr Camilo Ceballos, Youth and Pastoral Ministry of Vocations Coordinator at La Salle Bello School in Medellín.

*\* Article and video produced in collaboration with the Norandino District.*