The unfinished

In education, everything seems unfinished, because in order to exercise the "profession" of teacher, educator and parent, it is necessary to accept contingencies, uncertainties, the shifting "ground" that is consubstantial with youth, sociological and family developments that are subject to the relativity of the environment and to personal judgement, and the many official instructions, one of which drives out the other.

This "unfinished business" is something we have just experienced with even greater intensity in the face of the pandemic. Our so comfortable bearings are shattered when we are no longer masters of time, nor of our projects or agendas.

We have, however, shown resilience, inventiveness, availability and openness to take new paths through which the relationship remains a unanimous expectation.

On these paths where we, as educators, join the young people, we will remain the guardians of the light, constantly laying the foundations for recovery, attentive to the marginalized – who have become even more dropouts because of this health context – to the inclusive school, to professional insertion, to the gaps exacerbated by a shocking difference in the socio-economic environment. Without doubt, it will be a question – and this is perhaps urgent – of reconnecting, with equity, with the future of our society so that each young person can emerge with dignity.

We are therefore entering, perhaps in spite of ourselves, into a new vision of learning for a new school. It is a beautiful challenge that others have taken up before us, throughout history, to transform educational systems.

In our French history, it can be observed that religious congregations have played an eminent role in education and instruction. Paradoxically, their opponents, without shame, did not hesitate to imitate them in the establishment of public education. Let us be proud of this, for even today we appreciate rediscovering the vigour of the founding sources.

We know that the Conduct of Schools, initiated by Saint John Baptist de La Salle at the beginning of the 18th century, was the fruit of a sharing of experiences

among the first Brothers. They were already in this dynamic of the unfinished business and we are still in it, in our Lasallian network. We are carried along by the vectors which led Monsieur de La Salle in his project: the fraternal school, the formation and direction of teachers, the development, together, of pedagogical methods, the priority given to poor children, the empowerment of children, the follow-up of each one, the school in French… All this, of course, in view of God and in the name of the Gospel, the text of which the Brothers had permanently in the large pockets of their habits.

This creativity continues today and the Lasallian site gives the outlines adapted for our time.

Thus, this school year will be marked by four highlights (see box).

The General Chapter of the Brothers (Chapter: statutory assembly composed of Brothers representing their peers) which will take place in Rome next May and which will bring together 100 Brothers from the 77 countries where the Congregation is in mission.

The Chapter of our District of France and French-speaking Europe (France, Switzerland, South Belgium and Greece), which will bring together 35 Brothers and will meet in two sessions (Christmas and Summer).

The AIMEL (International Assembly for the Lasallian Educational Mission) composed of Brothers and lay people who, in conjunction with the General Chapter of the Brothers, define our mission for the coming years.

AMEL (the assembly of our District of France and French-speaking Europe), also composed of Brothers and lay people, which every four years, in conjunction with the Brothers' Chapter, reflects on the orientations to be defined for the future.

At first glance, all this deployment could give the image of a heavy institution.

For three centuries, it has been part of the tradition of the Brothers who have regularly met to harmonize their life project and bring it into line with their mission. The happy and fruitful sharing of the mission with many lay people has made it necessary to create Assemblies of the Mission.

New projects will also germinate in 2022 and will show our desire to serve young people and the Gospel better. Moreover, in the face of the events and the insult of this pandemic, would we remain comfortably idle?

For this we need the support, the competence, the fraternity and the friendship of all. It is this harmonious vitality that builds our Lasallian Family.

Maybe we need sponsors too?

It will be St. Joseph, Patron of the Brothers' Congregation, our "businessman" during this school year.

Brother Robert SCHIELER, Superior General of the Congregation of the Brothers, called on the Lasallian family to join the people of God in celebrating the Year dedicated to Saint Joseph.

St. Joseph was a discreet but no less attentive man. Those who lead important business deals, projects or operations know that the shadow of integrity is both effective and efficient.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle wrote to his first teachers: "*You are entrusted with a holy task as well as Saint Joseph's and which, having much in common with his, requires that your virtue should not be common... you must be so careful and affectionate in preserving the innocence of the children under your care and in keeping away from them all that can harm their education... ... since you are entrusted with these children on behalf of God as St. Joseph was with the Saviour of the world.*

On March 18, 2015, on the eve of the Feast of Saint Joseph, Pope Francis outlined seven qualities for fathers of families. We can adopt them for every Lasallian educator because they find their echo in the twelve Lasallian virtues of the Good Master:

Wisdom with "a proud and moved heart". Maturity: "I have taught you things, I have made you feel a deep and at the same time discreet affection". Closeness: "that he be close to his children as they grow, when they are afraid and take a wrong step and find their way back". Patience: "waiting with gentleness and mercy". Magnanimity "when children come back after their failures". Firmness:

waiting and forgiving, correcting without humiliating (we find again, with Francis, the very words of our Founder).

Faith is the source of "God's grace".

Saint Joseph, pray for us!

Brother Jean-René GENTRIC Provincial Visitor

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***The 46th General Chapter will be held in Rome.*