The Young Brothers of RELAL meet with Brother Superior General

With virtual sessions, geographical frontiers have been disappearing and new possibilities of encounter have been created. With this intention and with the desire to feel more and more part of a large network, the Brothers of the Latin American Region have been meeting month after month to encourage and accompany each other in these times of uncertainty.

Under the leadership of the Young Brothers' Commission of RELAL, a telematic meeting was held on Saturday 30th January on the Lasallian feast of Saint Mutien-Marie, including Brother Robert Schieler, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and the 70 young Brothers who were present. It was a special opportunity to listen to Brother Robert: his greetings, encouragement and of course the answers and reflections to all the questions that arose. The meeting was moderated by Brother Andrés Caballero, from the District of Bogotá.

Brother Bob Schieller began his message by sharing with joy and hope the new opening of a community in the city of Molenbeek, in Belgium. This new community is part of the Institute's initiatives *beyond borders*.

Part of his message invited us to recall the Synod on the young people led by Pope Francis in 2018. On that occasion many young Brothers sent to the centre of the Institute their hopes and dreams, which were a source of inspiration for the reflections that Pope Francis sent to the universal Church through his Apostolic Exhortation Christus Vivit. Brother Bob then shared several ideas with us.

Firstly, he stressed that we must not discourage young people, because youth is destined to make great things possible. And secondly, he expressed that young people want to offer the best of themselves to build something better. Therefore, we must accompany them to take on the world by facing the new challenges of the current times.

With an attentive look at the screen, the participants were examining these words

with hope, as they make more sense now with the circumnstances that humanity is facing due to the different realities that the coronavirus has revealed in our society. In that set of realities the Brother is called to be hope for others and in a special way for the children and young people entrusted to his care, Brother Superior urged us.

Resilience and Solidarity

As his reflection progressed, he highlighted two key words to bear in mind: resilience and solidarity. "*These two words have maintained the Lasallian mission in the world*," said Brother Superior, adding that school directors, teachers, Brothers, families and other partners have maintained a creative attitude and have continued to accompany the children and young people where we are present, and facing the difficulties we are living at this time.

He remarked with joy that we are all together sustaining the mission of the Institute and he invited us, as young Brothers, to continue to be creative in accompanying others; there are many experiences that have been facilitated through virtual media, and especially through social networks. One example has been the monthly meetings of young Brothers from the Latin American Lasallian Region.

In line with many other events in the virtual world, we have been able to accompany teenagers in situations of risk, virtual seminars on racism from a Lasallian perspective, university conversations, conferences, as well as virtual schools of formation and study of the documents of the Institute and Lasallian spirituality. In addition, with a message of encouragement, Brother Superior General motivated us to add to this list of virtual experiences the initiative of the International Network of Young Lasallians to create a Global OnlineCommunity with the INDIVISA MANENT Project. This project seeks to make us a network of young people focused on serving with fraternity and sharing our initiatives with one another to build a better world.

We Brothers are builders of fraternity in the world.

Part of the reflection focused on the Brothers' life in community. Therefore, he reminded us that as Brothers we must share the joys and the frustrations of our life. "*We know that our life is fragile, but we are called to be prophetic signs of brotherhood in the world,*" said Schieler. This element, absent today in many

parts of our society, must call us to share and witness who we are.

The Brothers' life is part of the response to what is needed in our society. But it is especially in the oppressed, the neglected and the weak that we are called to offer that concrete model of community. We have an obligation to be credible signs of inspiration for others, our brothers and sisters in humanity," said Brother Superior.

Considering that the International Assembly of Young Brothers of the Institute will take place in October, we were reminded that we cannot remain silent, but must meet the needs and sufferings of our post-modern world. That is what it means to be a witness of fraternity.

He then invited us to feel part of this global network of young Brothers so that we can think about poverty, migration, racism, violence and hardship in our world. "*We must look out into the world and respond to the needs of others",* urged Brother Robert.

He certainly emphasised in his reflection that we are called to transform the lives of others by accompanying them on the journey of maturing into adulthood. And that such accompaniment we do mutually, to become mature disciples of Jesus Christ destined to be attentive to the most vulnerable.

With a message of gratitude to the Young Brothers for their life and mission, he reminded us that we have that commitment and responsibility.

What is your hope and dream for the young Brothers?

These are some of the answers from Bro. Robert Schieler:

"Responding to the mission wherever the greatest needs are".

"I dream of mature disciples. We are disciples when we step out of our comfort zone. A small step out of the comfort zone can achieve great things and great changes. This is how we will become mature in our lives as consecrated people".

"I dream of experiences where young Brothers can volunteer together. "(As it is happening with the new community in Belgium where Brothers from India, Burkina Faso, the Philippines and Colombia come together to serve).

To this, he added an invitation to prepare ourselves for the uncertain new normality by reading Pope Francis as a starting point. He invited us to take community and spiritual life seriously. And he reminded us that mission, consecration and community are vital to grow in our spiritual life and build a life of prayer.

Finally, he asked us to be inspired by the latest documents of the Institute. On a humorous tone, he asked us not to let these documents collect dust on shelves. He asked us to read them as a source of inspiration in order to take it up with concrete actions.

WE ARE BROTHERS!

The meeting was coming to a close with a series of open questions to share life and fraternity where a series of monthly formative meetings were announced by the RELAL Young Brothers' Commission.

These virtual meetings will take place during the first half of 2021. The aim is to consolidate the network of Young Brothers of the Latin American Lasallian Region and to include all those who have a young heart willing to be part of the miracle.

The meeting ended with a screenshot inclucing us and the hashtag **#WitnessesToFraternity** in unity with the motto of the International Assembly of Young Brothers 2021 and also with the launching of a video explaining the Young Brothers network called "FSC Young RELAL".

In the content of the video, a message full of passion and hope to continue to find opportunities to revitalise our vocation and our mission could be noticed.

The big conclusion: WE ARE BROTHERS!**Carlos Pinto-Corredor, FSC.**