Videomessage for the feast of St John Baptist de La Salle

"Hope is a formative act: it opens up possibilities, cultivates the social imagination and sustains the commitment to transformation".

Dear Lasallians, Brothers, Partners, Students, Alumni, Teachers, those connected to our institutions, and the entire Lasallian Family.

Today is a day of celebration for our spiritual family, which is present throughout the world, providing educational opportunities for the many young people and children who attend our institutions and are nourished by our spirituality. We remember, of course, Saint John Baptist de La Salle, father, founder and patron of Educators worldwide, and the Brothers who began this fruitful and prophetic story, which has had such a profound impact on the life of the Church and on the communities where our educational mission has taken root.

We also mark an important anniversary: 325 years since two Brothers were sent to Rome to found the Institute beyond our borders. It was the first step towards internationalisation and towards understanding that, from our very origins, going

beyond borders and inhabiting the peripheries has been part of our DNA.

Today we continue to make the founding dreams a reality, especially where educational conditions are precarious and the plight of the children of the poor and marginalised cries out for an education that liberates, allows them to dream, and provides the necessary skills to pave the way towards opportunities and a dignified life. Undoubtedly, education is the only non-violent weapon capable of changing the world and the lives of children and young people; it is our particular way of cultivating a 'disarmed and disarming' peace, as Pope Leo XIV asks of us.

Indeed, the Lasallian spirit is a choice based on community-building and concern for the poor and vulnerable; an educational approach contextualised within economic, social and political realities; and with teaching methods that take into account each person's abilities and a commitment to building a just, equitable and peaceful society, respectful of the environment and inspired by integral ecology. And all of this, with fraternity at the heart of the educational project.

"Education is an act of hope", Pope Francis often proclaimed; Pope Leo calls us to "draw new maps for hope". One of the greatest gifts education bestows upon us is the ability to live constantly with the gift and the promise, to sow and to water, and to act as the hinge connecting historical times – even the most dramatic ones – with the hope of the promised land we dream of, with the utopias that inspire our journey, and with the longing for a world at peace. Thus, we join many individuals, groups and peoples who place their actions and their hopeful gaze on the journey, on the search, on the commitment to justice, peace, solidarity, inclusion, the integrity of Creation and harmony among peoples.

We must not forget that we are in the midst of an ethical crisis manifested in deeply unequal societies and exclusionary economic models; it is therefore imperative that we commit ourselves to addressing these realities in our educational proposals, which should promote a humanism that fosters empathy for those who suffer and a passionate indignation in the face of injustice, so as to encourage and prepare children and young people to be agents of the change that is needed.

Current realities frequently present us with faces that reveal the pain of uprooting, the drama of migration, the scourge of war, and the many forms of marginalisation. Here, then, lies the power of education: it provides roots, opens

up horizons and creates pathways to opportunities. The Institute remains committed to innovative solutions, such as the ‘educational passport’ – a dream of our Brother Superior General – which will enable the schooling of children and young people whilst they are migrating. Educational initiatives are being created that bring together young rural people, marginalised women, children with no resources other than their desire to learn, and even stateless children who know that education is the key to realising their dreams.

Likewise, we have prioritised the “peripheries”, which are geographical, social, existential, educational, and economic. Peripheries inhabited by those marginalised by wars and missed opportunities, by unjust social systems, by the neglect of mercy and the entrenchment of violence. Often, amidst the pain, educational works endure as sources of hope and anchors for the future.

Hope takes shape as an ethical, historical and pedagogical category: it is neither naive optimism nor passive waiting, but a lucid way of navigating the crisis without succumbing to cynicism. Hope springs from the care of memory – for without memory there is no future – and manifests itself as an intergenerational responsibility, where the past is not a burden but a source of meaning.

It is deeply linked to truth in the face of a saturation of opinions, to humanism, because dignity cannot be reduced to a mere resource, and to solidarity as a structure, not merely as a gesture. Hope is a formative act: it opens up possibilities, cultivates the social imagination and sustains the commitment to transformation.

As we offer our greetings today on the feast of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, we extend a word of thanks to our Brothers who devote their lives – from morning to night – to opening doors and revealing horizons to teachers and partners who are guides and sources of hope, and to all benefactors who help us keep the mission alive. A special greeting to the young Brothers who have accepted the challenge of going to the peripheries and who today, with joy, are helping to build a future in complex and distant places.

Happy feast of Saint John Baptist de La Salle

and a big thank you to everyone who makes this mission a reality!

- **Download the message on the occasion of the feast of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, Patron Saint of Teachers.**