Visitor’s Conference RELEM 2024 – Romania (Iasi)

Two General Councillors (Brothers Joël and Martin), 21 Brother Visitors, 6 members of the MEL Council, 4 of whom are Lasallian women, and 3 members of the RELEM Team: these are the numbers of the Brother Visitors’ Conference that took place from 8 to 12 April 2024 in Iași (Romania).

Historically, the Lasallian presence in Romania dates back to 1864. Senior Alumni still live in Oradea. It should be remembered that the Brothers suffered imprisonment and persecution under Communism and it was only after the revolution of 1989 that they were able to resume their common life and apostolate in 1991 in Iași.

The beginning of the Conference was marked by the feast of the Annunciation, when the common call to say ‘Yes’ to the project of newness that the Lord desires, inspired the five days of work, fraternity, prayer and also a little knowledge of the Romanian sector and the Lasallian Mission as well as the history of the Christian faith, mostly Orthodox .

Concerns about how to communicate the MEL Assembly, held from 26 February to 1 March, characterised the first day: the focus on young people, especially young adults and the educational vocation, a shared reflection on the Association, also with the creation of a Commission at the Regional level, and the renewal of the Culture of Vocation were the elements that required further analysis for a more effective articulation and sharing with the rest of the Region.

The “Sustainability of the Lasallian Mission”, explicitly entailed for the Conference to appoint the Commission for the journey towards a single District; the members elected were: Brother Joel Palud, as a member of the General Council; Ms Joke Maex and Mr Joseph Gilson as members of the MEL Council; Brother Paul Cornec, Auxiliary Visitor of the District of France and Francophone Europe; and Brother Visitor of Arlep District.

The Conference, with the accompaniment of Brother Martin Digilio, General Councillor, also underwent a phase of discernment on the *Leavening Project in*

order to choose the five educational ministries that will be involved in this first continental and international phase.

The selected projects were: **Molenbeek Community** (Brussels), North Belgium Delegation; **Bayadeya Community** of Upper Egypt, Proche Orient District; **St. Cassian's Centre** of Kintbury, IGBM District; **Lasallian Community of Scampia** (Naples), Italy Province; and the **Community of Hogar** San Ramón and San Fernando of Loja (Granada), Arlep District.

The Brothers also reflected on the life of the Brothers themselves, looking at it through the lens of accompaniment to be offered to senior Brothers, Brother Directors of Community and younger Brothers immersed in the Mission.

Of course, issues of future commitments were also addressed, such as *Fraternity in Action*, the Young Lasallians' initiative that will have its formative moment from 25 to 28 April 2024 in Cairo in order to send young people from almost all Districts to both Molenbeek and Bayadeya for summer volunteering.

On 10 April, the Brothers also went to Pildesti to visit the St John Baptist de La Salle High School of Technology, which has more than 160 students. There are two courses at this school: Construction-Installation of Public Works and Electronics and Automation.

It is worth mentioning that the last Romanian Brother who experienced the persecution of communism, **Brother Marcellin Magui**, is buried in the cemetery of this town.

The year 2025, then, in anticipation of the next conference, looks particularly eventful, in which RELEM intends to actively participate:

The Jubilee of Hope, called by Pope Francis on the occasion of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea;

The Year of Lasallian Spirituality, as requested by the 46th General Chapter;

The 300th anniversary of the approval of the Institute through Pope Benedict XIII's Bull '**In apostolicae dignitatis solio**';

The 75th anniversary of the **proclamation of** St John Baptist de La Salle as the

Patron saint of teachers.

Brother Martin Diglilio recalled that “first of all we are a fraternity and that we must be a vibrant fraternity everywhere because that is what distinguishes us, and that all structures must be in support of it”. He also said he was impressed by the choice of young people: he invited everyone to find “suitable moments and places to listen to them and involve them in our journey and in our decisions”.

In his final greeting, Br. Joel Palud, General Councillor, emphasised the beautiful experience lived together in fraternity, like a regenerating pause in a mountain walk, which one would like to prolong a little longer, but which requires a renewed effort to continue with confidence and hope, despite the fact that we have “been led into the desert” (Hosea 2) by the Lord to renew the Covenant that unites us to Him and to each other, “and to let the small signs, such as the *Leavening Project* or our fragilities, that have been shared, speak to our hearts and to those of the whole RELEM“.

The commitment of all **did not**, therefore, **end on** Friday 12 April, when the Gospel of the “sharing of the loaves, according to John (Jn. 6), invited each Brother to share the “little” that one has so that all may be fed with the certainty that by entrusting everything to the Lord, there will be enough left over for the rest of the journey.

Dutiful thanks are due, first of all, to Brother **Vicentiu Ghiurca**, Visitor of the District of Central Europe, and to all the Brothers who were very helpful. To the Brother Translators from the Generalate: Brother Antoine Salinas and Brother Agustín Ranchal and Brother José Antonio Villalabeita from the Distrito Arlep.


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