
“Make the Peripheries Our Place”: Words of the Superior General and the Vicar General at Encuentro 2022¹

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Dear friends, it is an immense joy to share with all of you, the rectors, presidents, vice-rectors, and vice-presidents of our Lasallian higher education institutions. You come from many parts of the world and meet for the first time after the difficult years of the pandemic and the months that have followed, now marked by a very complex economic situation that portends difficulties for our countries and social and political problems of various characteristics.

The pandemic laid bare realities that are impossible to ignore, places and countries that we easily forget; it has seriously questioned the concepts of development, sustainability, and economic growth; it has cruelly revealed the reality of work without guarantees, the productivity that accumulates without redistribution, the precarious health systems – even in rich countries – and a global social reality that cannot be sustained politically, economically, or ethically.

The drama of the war in Ukraine impacts the world, and we live it daily in the news; but we cannot forget that in other parts of the world, there are also wars, which matter less in the international press, but by no means are they less dramatic and destructive.

Ethiopia is experiencing a very painful confrontation that threatens to spread in the form of a civil war that can tear the country to pieces and destabilize the “Horn of Africa”; Eritrea – where our schools were recently confiscated – is experiencing a dark dictatorship; East Africa has recently experienced coups d’état that threaten coexistence and increase violence; several Latin American countries are experiencing conflicts of “low intensity” but that also bring about displacement, death, and corruption; the conflict in Syria is far from being resolved; Iran is experiencing revolts unthinkable in the past; and new waves of violence are sweeping across peoples and continents.

To begin with, let us offer three thoughts for your reflection. Firstly, this is a time when we are painfully aware of critical issues faced by educational systems in the world. For instance, UNESCO⁴ reports a learning crisis that counts 750M illiterate adults, 260M out-of-school youth,⁵ and more recently 1.6B learners affected by the pandemic. It is a good time to acknowledge that there is much for us to be grateful for: the gift of our Founder, “a mystic in action” – as a very recent biography⁶ describes him – and the Lasallian mission worldwide that has actively participated in building God’s Reign of peace and justice in our world for more than three centuries now.

We are grateful for the inspiring leadership of many Lasallians who have gone before us – both Brothers and Lasallian Partners – and who have nurtured the fire of holiness and heroism, mysticism and audacity, faith and zeal. We have been blessed, over the past four decades, with many privileged encounters with great Lasallian leaders over our journeys as Brothers.

The 46th General Chapter⁷ invites us to re-experience another type of encounter with those who may not feel too welcome inside our schools and communities or who dare not knock at the gates of our schools or institutions and remain “far from salvation.” We recall with gratitude that John-Baptist de La Salle was so “deeply moved” by such encounters that he gave up everything, endured all things, and persevered until the end to do God’s will in his regard. Does our Lasallian founding story still hold meaning in a world radically different from that of the 17th century?

May we open our hearts anew to the same conversion experience personally and in our communities and institutions? Faced with the vulnerabilities of the Institute and fully aware of our human frailties, we find fresh inspiration from pioneering Lasallians who allowed God’s grace to work in and through them as they “promised to remain together in Society even if they would have been forced to beg and live on bread alone.”⁸

Secondly, we are also very much aware of many profound changes in our world, the Church, and our Institute. As to those profound changes in our world, just think about the disruptions caused by the pandemic. As to the profound changes happening in the Church, we could recognize the recurring, sensitive, and threatening issues that have surfaced in our lifetime and are being discussed as we speak in the ongoing synodal process. And as to the profound changes in our Institute, we could note the diminishing number of Brothers, now at a little over 3,000 worldwide, together with the phenomenal increase in the number of Lasallian Partners, now estimated at over 100,000. The total number of Lasallian students worldwide has continued to increase over the past four decades to its current level of a little over 1.1M. The General Chapter invites us in the midst of these profound changes to set aside our fears, let go, and let God!

Our founding story begins with John-Baptist’s encounter with children who were abandoned, left to themselves, and far from salvation. Deeply moved by such an encounter, he gave us an example of that holy audacity to leave our boats behind and venture into the deep, blue sea. In his meditation for the Feast of Saint Barnabas, he reflects on this spirit and says:

in detachment, there is deep faith because one abandons oneself to the providence of God, like one who sets out to sea without sails or oars.⁹

The 46th General Chapter challenges us to consider not just the tried and tested trails but also these new pathways. The Lord’s invitation for us is to go into the deep and cast our nets once more. We invite you now to see beyond your comfort zones – beyond your communities and institutions, Districts, and Regions – and consider diving deep again into the less traveled road. Let us venture with holy audacity to the unvisited peripheries of our world, where millions of young people are left to themselves and still far from salvation. Do we acknowledge that the unknown has come to us?

Thirdly, we are hopefully aware of the profound changes in our Lasallian schools and universities. We are currently dealing with many leadership issues: transitions in top leadership positions from Brothers to Lasallian Partners, as well as the turnovers of school management from the Lasallian community to the diocese or other religious groups. Some schools have ceased operations, while there are others left with no choice but to close due to changing demographics, political threats, or financial difficulties.

In the midst of these profound changes in the world and the Church, in our Institute, and our Lasallian educational institutions, we find at the center the names and faces of young people for whom we were sent. What kind of world have we created for our children? What are the consequences of our decisions today on the lives of future generations? A recent youth survey in the US has characterized our youth today as the loneliest generation.¹⁰ How should Lasallian universities welcome young people to our academic communities? Can we afford to do more of the same, or do we need to do an honest-to-goodness soul-searching? Are institutions capable of conversion?

Pope Francis challenged us at the conclusion of our 46th General Chapter to remember that our first vocation is to be a Brother and then urged us to share this simple gift of fraternity to the world. He says our world is just so broken. We are connected to so many through social media and other gadgets. Global mobility and connectivity with many diverse peoples and cultures characterize the world today. Yet, ours is a fragmented world.

We are painfully aware of the consequences of this fragmentation: violence, loneliness, meaninglessness, but also misery, hunger, and death. Pope Francis' invitation to the Brothers to return to the very foundation of who we are as Brothers of the Christian Schools is not exclusive to religious Brothers. It is also an invitation to all Lasallians to rediscover that our real vocation is, first of all, to be a brother to all, a sister to all: to be brothers and sisters to each other but most especially to the students who are entrusted to our care. But beyond the walls of our institutions and outside of our comfort zones, we are also challenged to rediscover and relive the essence of our fraternity in the peripheries of our broken world.

As the Community of the General Council, we want to share with you the preparations for a project that could help us give unity to the paths of transformation mandated by the 46th General Chapter as well as the 3rd AIMEL.¹¹ Undoubtedly, the last General Chapter, in its methodology, was inviting us to look at the value of ourselves and of our community. We soon understood that the profound invitation is to a change of conscience, to a profound change in the model we were used to, a profound change in our references for the daily reading of the world and of our place in it and in the Church. Echoes of *Fratelli Tutti*¹² and *Laudato Si'*¹³ resonate in us, focusing on the dream we want to share with the Institute – a dream for the future and a dream that cannot wait to be fulfilled in seven years.

Firstly, our starting point is the question, “*Where is your brother?*” that God asks Cain. It is for us, as Pope Francis referred to in his homily in Lampedusa,¹⁴ an uncomfortable question – a question that uninstalls, mobilizes, annoys, and above all, stirs one's conscience toward a new discernment of fraternity.

It is in *Genesis* 4:9 that the word “brother” is first used in the Bible. In the same Sacred Scriptures, we enter into the experience of Jesus Christ and discover this same question repeated again and again: before the wounded man on the side of the road, before the Phoenician woman, while with the mourning family of the sleeping girl, in reference to the widow who gives everything, the tax collector who distributes his goods, the rich young man who comes with a thorny question, the ten lepers who sought healing, the blind man who begged for his sight, and many more.

It is from this same experience and perspective that we are inspired to ask the same question, “Where is your brother? Where is your sister?” The starting point of our journey to conversion is an uncomfortable question – one that bothers us, moves us, worries us, and helps us begin anew the discernment of our place in the world, in the world of education, and in the mission of the Church. We should heed Pope Francis’ challenge to the capitulants of the General Chapter and to all Lasallians: our gift of fraternity and our commitment to integral ecology – themes illuminated well in *Laudato Si’* and *Fratelli Tutti* – are two fundamental educational challenges for the present and future of humanity.

Secondly, we wish to deepen our reflection using an image that is present in the dream conceptualized by the General Chapter. It is the metaphor of leaven, which was also used by Jesus in the Gospel: yeast, ferment for a new world. We adhere to the dream of God when our dream for ourselves and for the rest of humanity is in pursuit of the reign of fraternity, justice, and peace. The potency of leaven is shown when it is mixed with flour, but it needs time and care and will eventually need fire to bake the bread. The metaphor of leaven is used by Jesus to refer to the Reign of God that is present, that transforms, that acts by itself even though we cannot explain how. Leaven is also a good image to use in explaining God’s pedagogy of salvation: it is for service, from below, from within, and very near all of us.

Thirdly, we invite you to journey with us from where we are to the peripheries. In this journey, we should ask ourselves uncomfortable questions. It is also a clear orientation mandated by the 46th General Chapter: “make the peripheries our place.” We understand that it is a theological, epistemological place and a place from which to discern, “Who are we? Who are we for? Whose are we? Who are we with? What do we do?”

It is a place where we may discern our educational projects again. It is a perspective from which we evaluate our community policies and practices. It is a space where we discern our vocation to follow Jesus in the path of the Gospel. It is the locus where we examine our organization’s vision and management strategies. But at the same time, we also wish that for many Lasallians, it will be a real place of encounter with our brothers and sisters where we can discover the profound meaning of our lives.

We would like the Leavening Project [*Proyecto Levadura*] to help us walk in synodality – described as a process of fraternal collaboration and discernment – thus, to include and not to exclude, to go out together to meet the discarded and to go out together with Jesus.

We are convinced that the Leavening Project can serve to connect multiple sub-themes and goals, such as: the life of the Brothers, association for mission, formation for mission, and

leadership & governance. It will also connect Lasallians worldwide with other groups and cultures that may differ from what they are accustomed to. We would like the Leavening Project to move us away from our comfort zones so we can embrace our vulnerability, limitations, fragility, and our poverty. But more fundamentally, we hope the Leavening Project will help us enter into a conversion experience that will transform our lives and institutions.

We look forward to the realization of a dream that will generate life by radically committing ourselves to the collective construction of a fraternal world that practices justice and peace.

We are still in the elaboration stage of the project, so here we are, merely sharing our ideas with you and our updates, and we look forward to hearing your concerns, contributions, reflections, commitments, and other creative ideas that can fill in the gaps. We propose, and we openly say so, that IALU and all Lasallian universities consider taking on this commitment as the backbone of the Leavening Project [*The Leavening Project: Growing Together in the Lasallian Dream* was eventually finalized and published by Brother Superior and General Council on 27 November 2022].

Pope Francis has taught us that:

If you want to achieve profound changes, you have to keep in mind that the paradigms of thought really influence behaviors. Education will be ineffective and its efforts will be sterile if it does not also seek to spread a new paradigm about the human being, life, society, and the relationship with nature.¹⁵

On the other hand, the “Global Compact on Education”¹⁶ must be a fundamental part of Lasallian universities’ commitment. If we look closely at its seven pillars, they are all challenges and invitations to the university and, in our case, to the Lasallian university. These pillars could well be leaven for our university action. How can we not be aware that it is ethically obligatory for us to “put the person at the center,” “listen to the voices of children and young people,” “advance in the greater inclusion of women,” “empower the family,” “welcome the vulnerable and poor,” “find new ways to understand politics and the economy,” and “safeguard the ‘Common Home’”?

It is not hard to be creative at this point in history. There is so much to do that it is a matter of imagining new frontier educational proposals in terms of educational innovation, social transformation, and service to populations not frequently served by Lasallians, such as indigenous peoples, migrants, rural communities, or marginalized groups. We do not need to look very far to recognize among us “islands of creativity” – Lasallian initiatives that are signs of contradiction, paragons of prophecy, and sources of hope. They showcase best practices, inspire creativity, challenge conformity, and encourage replication. These revolutionary programs in Lasallian universities give clear, prophetic, and creative directions in support of justice, peace, and the care of creation. They can help position the global Institute to leave a lasting impact and have an effective presence in our world today.

Some Lasallian universities have already made valuable analyses to understand the social dynamics of violence, inequality, and social unrest and to unravel government policies’ intended and unintended consequences. Some have measured the economic impact of public policies and

reviewed the historical and cultural trends that would explain the validity and permanence of inequality. Some research has helped us understand and put in context the difficult history we have lived. The coming years must be fertile in creative approaches to understand complex realities so societies can overcome violence, address the root causes of injustice and social exclusion, and then begin to talk about and work for just and peaceful societies.

The immoral concentration of wealth and the hijacking of the public to serve particular interests are structural sins that will involve rethinking economic models, the political order, and the financial world. Our merciless devastation of Mother Earth, our common home, could further make us accomplices to this rampant and scandalous inequality in our societies.

There are many opportunities to ensure that university research creates a positive social impact and contributes to social innovation. We may find it easier to simply document the past or analyze the present instead of uncovering the power of prophecy to control the future and change the course of history. But to exercise our prophetic call requires taking risks that compel us to create something new. It urges us to generate approaches that defy inertia and challenge existing social dynamics and production systems, such as business models that promote solidarity, shared economies, and ethical engagements leading to social transformation.

If we are faced with an ethical crisis that manifests itself in inequitable societies and perverse economic models, the commitment to face these realities in our educational proposals is urgent. Beyond a fertile discourse, we have to make an honest assessment of the university environment and whether it promotes a humanism that engenders empathy for those who are suffering and zealous indignation in the face of injustice, thus urging its members to be protagonists for change.

It is valid to ask ourselves if these reflections are present in our daily lives because, although our ideologies contemplate them, our action or inaction could help to replicate the same models that we say we condemn. A university that does not critically rethink itself ends up being aseptic and inane. Martha Nussbaum is right when she invites the university to return to a humanism capable of questioning, confronting, and proposing. She reminded us that “*cultivating the capacity for reflection and critical thinking is fundamental to keeping democracy alive and alert.*”¹⁷ Let us remember that the university is an essential part of the critical consciousness of the countries in which we are located.

It is important to remember and be clearly aware that our universities and institutions of higher education are Catholic and Lasallian institutions. We share many things in common with most other universities. But today, we may need to also accentuate and emphasize our distinguishing identity as “Lasallian” and “Catholic” institutions, as well as use these as a basis and reference for the institutional conversion we need to undertake.

The humanism that inspires us comes from the Gospel. Pope Francis has challenged us with his magisterium, which is certainly far from lukewarm. *Fratelli Tutti* is a *vademecum* of Christian humanism rooted in the spirituality of fraternity. Pope Francis’ concepts are not neutral; they involve commitment and forceful steps. Let us remember that fraternity is a core Lasallian value, as we pointed out earlier.

Universities may respond to this papal invitation by defining projects and leading peace-building efforts. Institutions could exercise their social responsibility by ensuring that policies and programs promote inclusion and critical thinking. They could also exercise their moral influence to become powerful agents of change in the world today. This includes concerted efforts and a political will explicitly aimed at improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable people, as well as transferring technologies, educational interventions, and scientific knowledge to impact production, improve living conditions, and strengthen the social fabric.

Bringing the university to the peripheries is always a challenge but also an adventure. It is an immense job that demands resources, qualified people, creativity, and real risks. However, it is worth our sacrifice and attention when our ultimate goal is to be in solidarity with those who do not have opportunities, are constantly marginalized, or have been excluded from university admission due to an unjustified bias against poor and minority applicants.

The *Declaration on the Lasallian Mission* in the twenty-first century clearly stated that:

Our commitment to what is deeply human and to an education that is coherent with reality forces us to overcome the temptation to create or maintain successful schools and universities in fractured or unfeasible societies due to the practical ignorance of human rights or unbearable inequality; or else schools and universities will fail due to their inability to update themselves and respond to societies that are transforming and worlds that are evolving. The Lasallian proposal, fueled by faith, hope, and ardent zeal, transcends the temptation of self-preferentiality, commits itself to the causes of humanity and the permanent calls of the Church, and summons the world and men and women of good will.¹⁸

It is valid to ask ourselves, “Where is the Lasallian university in the great ethical, axiological, anthropological, and theological debate?” Aren’t universities centers of thought? Would we consider and direct our institutions to serve as ‘think tanks’ that could enrich the discussions and responses to the enormous challenges faced by Lasallian education?

We could only end these reflections by noting that there are also complex problems our Lasallian institutions are facing. There are Lasallian higher education institutions that have difficulty surviving. It is no secret that university enrollment is decreasing in several parts of the world either because of more accessible state-sponsored education, demographic realities, changes in anthropological beliefs, or because of the high cost of private education.

Accreditation systems, at times, have helped us grow. At other times, stark competition, the anguish of rankings, and the requirements of “scientometrics” have resulted in an ambiguous impact. Some other aspects need a closer look and rethinking, for example, the strengthening of research systems, university promotions supportive of an increasingly “performative” academic culture, and the expectation for national and international visibility. There is a push for greater clarity in identifying the university’s research agenda and priorities, including issues on the proliferation of publications with a low level of readability or dissemination and the consequent exponential and unsustainable cost growth.

We need Lasallian universities to address these challenges but not on an individual basis nor in an uncoordinated way. We must address these concertedly through collaboration, twinning arrangements, mergers of institutions, or the creation of fully functional networks of Lasallian institutions. We cannot hide from the reality of serious threats to the viability and long-term sustainability of our Lasallian institutions, and it is incumbent upon us to face these today rather than be caught unawares.

Elsewhere, attempts are made to start new university projects. In fact, your schedule includes time to discuss Lasallian higher education in Africa. The African Continent is a source of hope, no doubt, but also of great concern. We cannot risk embarking on new projects without discussing their sustainability. We have touched on these issues with our Marist Brothers¹⁹ to find ways to jointly address these realities. From the central governments of the two Institutes, there is a desire to work together and build on each other's strengths. There is no need to create more institutions if there is an opportunity for us to work together. United, we can be stronger and more sustainable; divided, we end up weak and insignificant. We recognize that a network of Lasallian and Marist universities might be a promising resource for our shared educational mission in these times.

In particular, we would like to ask for your collaboration in some specific areas of great importance for our Institute:

1. A few decades ago, the Generalate administered a formation institute for Brothers with programs in theology, catechetics, and pastoral ministry. It was called the *Jesus Magister Institute*. We are exploring how we could re-establish the Institute as an international certificate program responsive to the needs of Brothers and Lasallian Partners today. The two Institutes, FMS and FSC, could further look into the possibility of a partnership and the inclusion of several ongoing high-quality formation programs, such as those offered by CIL,²⁰ as well as other courses / seminars on leadership, volunteer formation, pastoral ministry, vocations promotions, etc. We intend to endorse these short-term programs to our universities toward granting a certificate or obtaining credits leading to a master's degree in fields like leadership and educational administration, spirituality of education, pedagogy, and didactics.
2. Educators and pastoral leaders now realize that we live in complex times with different and changing anthropological views influencing this generation. We are aware that loneliness is a key issue among today's youth. But we still have a long list of many other realities that today's generation faces and other youth concerns relevant to the Lasallian mission. Taking advantage of the internationality of IALU and the research resources of our universities, we request that you help us with cross-cultural research that can provide us with more insights and / or evidence to ensure that our educational programs are still effective and relevant to the young.

Universities could find better pedagogical, didactic, and pastoral approaches to accompany the young people entrusted to our care. We need tools, skills, knowledge, methodologies, and pastoral approaches to reach out to the youth. We must develop a

viable, updated, and fresh pastoral approach to entice university students to participate in social, political, and environmental projects. But we also need practical and creative ideas for a new evangelization of the young so they can have a profound encounter with Jesus Christ. In many ways, the Church and the Institute look old, out-of-fashion, and incapable of understanding contemporary realities.

Most of our Young Brothers are also educated in our Lasallian universities in programs related to education, theology, and catechesis. We are grateful for what you have done. However, we urge you to assure the highest standards possible for them to grow as effective and committed academicians and teachers.

3. The Leavening Project is a proposal to implement the decisions of the 46th General Chapter and the 3rd AIMEL, as well as other proposals from the Young Brothers and Young Lasallians. It is a search, a journey, a call to conversion that involves redefining our mission, transforming, and approaching the peripheries – which can be geographical, existential, social, economic, political, etc. The Leavening Project is also a theological place, a space from where we look at and understand our mission and transform it.

How could the Lasallian university be part of this process? We are aware that this process hopes to generate life, those new initiatives can and should appear, existing institutions need to be transformed, some would need to be turned over to others, while a few other ministries may need to be closed because they have lost the capacity to generate life or make a positive impact in the present situation.

Several topics are possible here, for example, the elaboration of a theological framework – an educational theology – that gathers our reflection of the last years but also proposals from the Church and insights from contemporary theology so that we can be leavened for our educational projects as well as for Lasallian institutions. We need new, viable, and inspiring theological frameworks with practical recommendations that can be easily implemented in Lasallian educational projects. We are not asking for a treatise, but in the best Lasallian style, a theological approach to education that is clear, short, inspiring, meaningful, rooted in accompaniment and has strong leavening content.

4. Finally, there is a concrete project that we would like to see accompanied and assisted by Lasallian institutions of higher education. This is the Project of the La Salle University of Africa. For some months now, we have been discussing the idea of initiating this project based in a regional center with satellite campuses in other countries of the continent where there is a Lasallian presence.

You have traveled important roads and have built a system of higher education. We are passionate about the idea that without renouncing the social responsibility that you have in your countries and regions – all together – we could collaborate on an international project with the strengths that we have, the creativity that we have deployed, the ideas that we have matured and the strengths that we have to help a continent that presents many challenges but fills all of us also with much hope.

We ask you to speak honestly, transparently, and unambiguously about these issues and contemplate them in your action plan.

As mentioned, our General Chapter has called us to “build new paths to transform lives.” Einstein is credited with saying that “the way of madness is to believe that things are going to change by always doing the same thing.” The distressed call is to answer a question that hurts and provokes, “*Where is your brother? Where is your sister?*” It also points toward a direction: to the peripheries!

We probably won’t change the world, but we will make it more livable and maybe make a difference for some, hopefully, for many. The General Chapter calls this *prophetic audacity*.

To conclude, every Lasallian university needs to answer the question, “Where is your brother? Where is your sister?” To do so and be meaningful, we must conjugate three verbs: believe, create, and risk.

- *Believe* that we can make an impact on our students’ lives. Believe that education transforms. Believe in humanity. And believe in the good God who inspires us and constantly calls us to cultivate a deep spirituality that nurtures humanism, fraternity, and hope. We have to believe that education is and will be the best way, the only non-violent option, to impact the political sphere – that is, to work for the common good and open paths to overcome exclusion. Education is undoubtedly an act of faith.
- *Dream* of ways to foster peace, justice, equity, and the integrity of creation. Generate knowledge that helps transform our world. Promote horizons of thought and new educational proposals that strengthen solidarity for sustainable development and make real our educational service to those enslaved by poverty. And, of course, create real projects where fraternity is evident and replicable in our schools and universities. Let us create opportunities to collaborate with other groups and faith traditions because we cannot do much alone. Education is, undoubtedly, a space to dream and, in these times, to dream it in the peripheries.
- *Take risks and leave your comfort zones*. Invest in new projects that address the roots of the problems of our peoples and countries. Generate life, build community, and spark hope. Do not be limited only to discourses on ethics, equity, justice, peace, and integral care of creation, but initiate educational interventions to make them possible. Ensure that the poor, excluded, and vulnerable are not only the object of research or used as marketing tools or posters but also as participants, protagonists, and recipients of high-quality educational processes. Education is surely a springboard to risk and reach the peripheries.

¹ The remarks were delivered at the 13th Encuentro of the International Association of La Salle Universities (IALU) that was held at UniLaSalle in Beauvais (France) from 7 to 9 November and at La Salle Campus Barcelona from 10 to 12 November 2022.

² Brother Armin Luistro was elected the 28th Superior General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools at the 46th General Chapter in 2022. He earned his doctorate in educational management at the University of Saint La Salle (Bacolod, Philippines) and is a past president of De La Salle University in Manila.

³ Brother Carlos Gómez-Restrepo was elected Vicar General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools at the 46th General Chapter in 2002. He earned his doctorate in educational leadership at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota (USA), is a past president of Universidad de La Salle (Bogota, Colombia), and is a past president of Ethiopian Catholic University – La Salle (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia).

⁴ UNESCO, “UNESCO Member States Unite to Increase Investment in Education,” retrieved from <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-member-states-unite-increase-investment-education-0>

⁵ UNESCO, “Out-of-School Children and Youth”, retrieved from <https://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/out-school-children-and-youth>

⁶ Bernard Hours, *Jean-Baptiste de La Salle: A Mystic in Action Biography*, translated by Anna Fitzgerald (Washington, DC: Christian Brothers Conference, 2022).

⁷ The 46th General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was held at the Generalate of the Brothers in Rome from 1 to 22 May 2022.

⁸ Cf. Gerard Rummery FSC, “Heroic Vow as Founding Vow” (Christian Brothers Conference, 2021), retrieved from: <https://issuu.com/christianbrothersconference/docs/dlst-autumn-2021-final/s/13985738>

⁹ *Meditations by John Baptist de La Salle*, translated by Richard Arnandez, FSC and Augustine Loes FSC and edited by Augustine Loes FSC and Francis Huether FSC (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1994), #134.1.

¹⁰ Springtide Research Institute, “The State of Religion and Young People 2020,” page 18.

¹¹ The 3rd International Assembly of the Lasallian Educational Mission (AIMEL) held its face-to-face session from 31 October to 4 November at the Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rome. The delegates, numbering just over a 100 (86 lay Lasallians and 27 Brothers), represented the global mission.

¹² Cf. *Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship* by Pope Francis (Vatican City, 2020).

¹³ Cf. *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home* by Pope Francis (Vatican City, 2015).

¹⁴ In July of 2013, Pope Francis visited Lampedusa in southern Italy to commemorate and highlight the plight of the thousands of migrants who have died attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa.

¹⁵ Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si’ on the Care for Our Common Home* (Vatican City, 2015), retrieved from

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

¹⁶ The *Global Compact on Education* is an initiative of Pope Francis that calls all of the Church’s teaching Orders and educators to renew their commitment to a more open and inclusive education of young people.

¹⁷ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Non-for-Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton University Press, 2010).

¹⁸ Brothers of the Christian Schools, *Declaration on the Lasallian Educational Mission* (Rome, 2020), page 102.

¹⁹ The Marist Brothers (FMS), who were founded in 1817 by Saint Marcellin Champagnat, are an international Religious community of teaching Brothers.

²⁰ CIL (*Centro Internazionale Lasalliano*) is a series of residential formation programs conducted under the auspices of the international Lasallian Studies Center.