

RELAL

Lasallian Region of Latin America





Argentina **Brasil**
Chile **Bolivia** **Costa Rica**
Colombia **El Salvador**
Cuba **Ecuador** **Haití**
Guatemala **Honduras**
México **Nicaragua** **Perú**
Paraguay **Paraguay**
Panamá **Paraguay**
República Dominicana **Puerto Rico**
República Dominicana **Venezuela**
Venezuela **Uruguay**

Cover photo:
Students from Colégio La Salle in Brasilia, Brazil.

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De La Salle: A Church presence in Latin America and the Caribbean

Br. Paulo Petry, fsc
General Councillor
for RELAL

Together in community, we are all like a ripe ear of corn. We are sowing the seed of the word through the world of education in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the year 2018-2019, we welcomed as a Lasallian community the Superior General, Brother Robert Schieler, on his visit to the Latin American and Caribbean Lasallian Region (RELAL). This period became an occasion for mutual learning, growth and animation. On the one hand, the Lasallians of RELAL felt encouraged and sustained in their mission by the words, reflections and provocations of Brother Robert. On the other hand, the Superior General and his Council were able to approach the Lasallian reality in the various countries and perceive with enthusiasm how the charisma, the mission and the spirituality of Saint John Baptist de La Salle are incarnated in this continent.



In this *Bulletin*, we want to highlight the cultural diversity, creativity and passion with which the mission is brought to life in this part of the Lasallian world. This does not prevent us from also recognizing the great challenges faced by schools, universities, non-formal educational works and religious and educational communities in RELAL. These are challenges that arise from the social, religious and economic reality, as well as from the political choices and circumstances of several countries in the region.

The Superior General's visit to RELAL was an opportunity to get closer, an occasion to understand that, by sharing mission and life, we know ourselves better and we make ourselves known to others. Finally, we are part of a harmonious whole created by God, which challenges us to be creative also in our consecration, spirituality and mission, faithful to the charism that we want to incarnate today.

The visit to the RELAL has allowed us to emphasize the importance of several areas:

- Inter-congregationality. In this region, we Lasallians are workers, not masters of the harvest. We are ministers and ambassadors, not the Messiah. We are called, in Community, in the Districts and in the Region, to combine in and with the Institute, the Conferences of Religious and the Church. More than just Lasallians or isolated Christians in a District or Region, which would be inconceivable, we are a community of God's people.
- By listening to the Latin American and Caribbean people, we perceive and reaffirm the value of the family. This helps us to advance with enthusiasm, to discover our own vocation, to embrace consecration with joy, and it gives us the certainty that we can walk in community, with the support of people who are very close and special to us.



- Tertiary education, which is quite strong in some RELAL countries, is a fraternal and welcoming environment that promotes human values. It opens our minds and hearts to work with other entities that defend human rights. Higher education in the Region allows us to live our vocation, our charism and our mission to the full.
- The Region recognizes the work and dedicated life of past and present Lasallians who came from other parts of the Institute. We are heirs to a mission and to the consecration of many who have preceded us in the communities, in the Districts, in the Region, in the Institute.

As RELAL we continue to search with enthusiasm:

- Focus on Jesus Christ and his Gospel.
- Challenge us to be where the proclamation of God's Word is most needed.
- Announce the values of the Kingdom of God.
- Denounce injustices, violence and intolerance in all their manifestations.
- Discern God's will for us.





To present oneself in this way implies being coherent, constant and persevering in our choice of life. The Superior General strongly urged the Brothers of the Region to be the Brothers they say they are in their religious and educational communities.

In RELAL we ask the Lord to “give us his sight and that we may see the world from there”¹. At the end of the visit of the Superior General to the Region, after much sharing with Brothers and lay people, let us remember the invitation of our Holy Founder to look at reality with the eyes of faith. This is not the privilege of some; it is an invitation to Lasallians. It is in this way that we sustain our charism and mission in today's world, in tune with obedience, doing God's will, looking at everything with the eyes of faith.

Learn more about the visit of the Brother Superior General to RELAL in:



¹ Sr. Cecilia Rivero Borrel, RSCJ - CD "Espacio habitado".

THE REGIONAL ANIMATION COMMUNITY

The Lasallian Latin American Region (RELAL) is one of the five Regions that make up the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and it is made up of eight Districts: Antilles-South Mexico, Argentina-Paraguay, Bogota, Bolivia-Peru, Brazil-Chile, Central America-Panama, North Mexico and Norandino, in which 350,000 students are served, through the courage and dedication of more than 750 Brothers and 30,000 lay persons committed to the Educational Mission. These eight Districts make it possible for La Salle to be present in 19 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean through institutions of formal education from pre-school to secondary and higher education, many of them in sectors of social and economic vulnerability in youth ministry centers, community centers, publishing houses, foundations, institutions for children at risk, centers for the care of migrants, agricultural schools, technical schools, medical dispensaries, catechetical centers, spaces for popular education and observatories; and through the media and volunteer programs. On the continent of hope, RELAL also has a presence beyond the borders through various works for the most needy in society. Thus, as a Region, it is present in the town of Tabatinga-Brazil (on the triple border: Brazil, Colombia, Peru), with an international community of Brothers and volunteers, animated, supported, and sent by the eight Districts of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Each of the Districts is animated by a Brother Visitor. Antilles-South Mexico is the only District that has an Assistant Visitor. The Visitors and the Auxiliary Visitor make up the Regional Conference of Visitors (RCV) and meet twice a year with the Regional Animation Community (RAC), with the aim of evaluating and planning the ways of De La Salle in Latin America and the Caribbean. This projection is materialized in the Regional Action Plan (PAR), a document that is prepared with the collaboration of Brothers and lay persons and that projects how the life of the Region will be for three years.

RELAL is a diverse Region, not only because of the languages spoken there (Spanish, Portuguese, Guarani, Creole, German, Italian, Quechua, Aymara, and different indigenous languages), but also because of the multiple realities of each country.

The CAR is a community made up of three Brothers: the General Councillor for RELAL and two Regional Secretaries. Currently, it is composed of Brother Paulo Petry, Brazilian, who is the General Councilor; Brother Carlos Castañeda, Mexican, who serves as Regional Secretary of Mission and Brother Sergio Leal*, Colombian, who is the Regional Secretary of Management and Organization. This community is based in the city of Medellín-Colombia, where the RELAL offices are located. The three Brothers of the CAR and two lay people work there, one in the area of accounting (María Ríos) and one in communication (Katherine Tolosa). This office coordinates and supports different projects in the Region, the networks and services of communication and publication, as well as the preparation and annual coordination of the retreats in preparation for perpetual vows.



*As of January 2019 he was replaced by Br. Oscar Vinicio Gonzalez Gramajo.

LASALLIANS JOIN IN POPE FRANCIS' DREAM

By: Óscar Elizalde Prada

The wounds, the pain, the injustices and the violence that threaten the Amazon and compromise the life of the peoples who inhabit that environment have found an answer in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *“Dear Amazon”*, by Pope Francis, which was published on February 12, 2020.

From the first hour of his pontificate, the Bishop of Rome had revealed to us his sensitivity with regard to the Pan-Amazonian biome. “The Church has been present in the Amazon since the beginning, with missionaries of religious, priests, laity and bishops, and it is still present today and is decisive for the future of the area”, he said to the Brazilian bishops on his first trip to the Americas, during World Youth Day 2013, in Rio de Janeiro.

In Puerto Maldonado (Peru), the Pope's concern for the Amazon was evident when he denounced the “deep wounds” carried by the indigenous peoples, and reaffirmed “a sincere option for the defense of life, land and cultures,” in anticipation of what would be the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazonian Region, held in Rome, October 6-27, 2019.

On that occasion, he met with the peoples of the Amazon and told them that “the Church is no stranger to their problems and their lives, she does not want to be a stranger to their way of life and

organization”. Pope Francis also distanced himself from colonialist models of evangelization. “We need the native peoples to culturally mold the local Amazonian churches. Help your bishops, missionaries, so that they may become one with you, and in this way, dialoguing among yourselves, you may shape a Church with an Amazonian face and a Church with an indigenous face”.

The post-synodal exhortation confirmed once again “the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet, the conviction that everything in the world is connected” (LS 16). In the face of the socio-environmental crisis that the Pan-Amazon has been experiencing, it is increasingly evident that “a truly ecological approach always becomes a social one that must integrate justice into discussions about the environment, in order to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (QA 8; LS 49).

Pope Francis' dream reflects the desire of the native peoples who inhabit the biome and whose voices found a deep echo in the hall of the Synod. His dream is that of “an Amazon that integrates and promotes all its inhabitants so that they can establish a 'good life', but with a much needed prophetic cry and arduous work for the poorest” (QA 8), as the Pontiff acknowledges.



What does the rampant socio-environmental depredation of those who have appropriated the goods of nature - including water - in the Amazon tell us? How do we position ourselves in the face of structures and legislation that benefit logging companies (legal and illegal), mega-projects (hydroelectric, road, waterway and rail construction), oil companies, the extracting industry and the monocultures of large landowners?

“Dear Amazon” is on the side of the victims, the poorest and 'sister earth'. It makes an explicit call to abandon indifference in order to face the great scourges that derive from the socio-environmental crisis and that had already been denounced by the participants of the Amazon Synod: diseases derived from pollution, drug trafficking, illegal armed groups, alcoholism, violence against women, sexual exploitation, trafficking and smuggling of persons, sale of organs, sexual tourism, loss of the original culture and identity (language, spiritual practices and customs), criminalization and murder of leaders and defenders of the territory.

With Pope Francis, we feel invited to take another step to stop the predatory tactics and economic interests that devour the life of the earth and the poor in the Amazon and, above all, that of the most vulnerable (children, adolescents, youth, women and indigenous peoples). This is the integral conversion that underlies “Dear Amazon”.

Likewise, from an educational perspective, Lasallian institutions have the ethical imperative to provide good example and good practices in ecological, social, cultural and pastoral matters. We are called to “take the lead” in the pedagogy of care for creation, to combat consumerism and to bet on integral and sustainable human development.

For Lasallians, this priority task is also in communion with the educational communities that are on the front line of the Pan-Amazonian biome in Ananindeua (Brazil), Iquitos (Peru), Manaus (Brazil), Puerto Rico Pando (Bolivia), San Vicente del Caguán (Colombia), Tabatinga (Brazil), Trinidad (Bolivia), Zé Doca (Brazil), including the work of the La Salle Foundation for Natural Sciences in Venezuela.

We Lasallians share Francisco's dream:

I dream of an Amazon that fights for the rights of the poorest, of the original peoples, of those who come last, where their voice is heard and their dignity is promoted.

I dream of an Amazon that preserves that cultural richness that makes it stand out, where human beauty shines in such diverse ways.

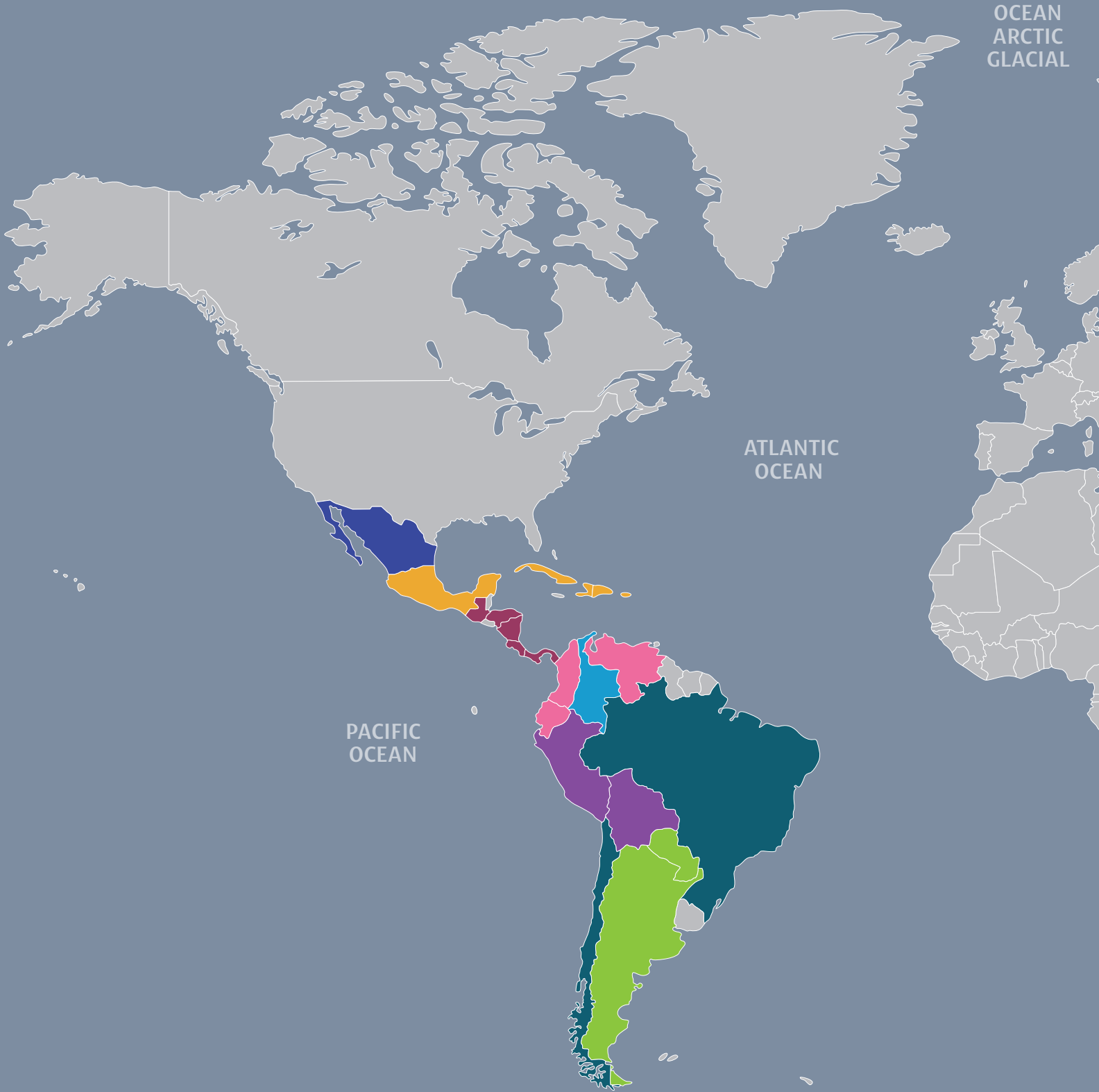
I dream of an Amazon that jealously guards the overwhelming natural beauty that adorns it, the overflowing life that fills its rivers and forests.

I dream of Christian communities capable of giving of themselves and becoming incarnate in the Amazon, to the point of giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features (QA 7).

* Director of Communications of the Universidad de La Salle, Bogotá, Colombia.

Amazonia





LASALLIAN REGION OF LATIN AMERICA (RELAL)

DISTRICT OF ANTILLES-MEXICO SOUTH



LASALLIAN DISTRICT OF BOGOTA



12 DISTRICT OF ARGENTINA-PARAGUAY



DISTRICT OF BOLIVIA-PERU





DISTRICT OF LA SALLE BRAZIL-CHILE



DISTRICT OF NORTH MEXICO



DISTRICT OF CENTRAL AMERICA-PANAMA



LASALLIAN DISTRICT OF NORANDINO



ANTILLES DISTRICT OF SOUTH

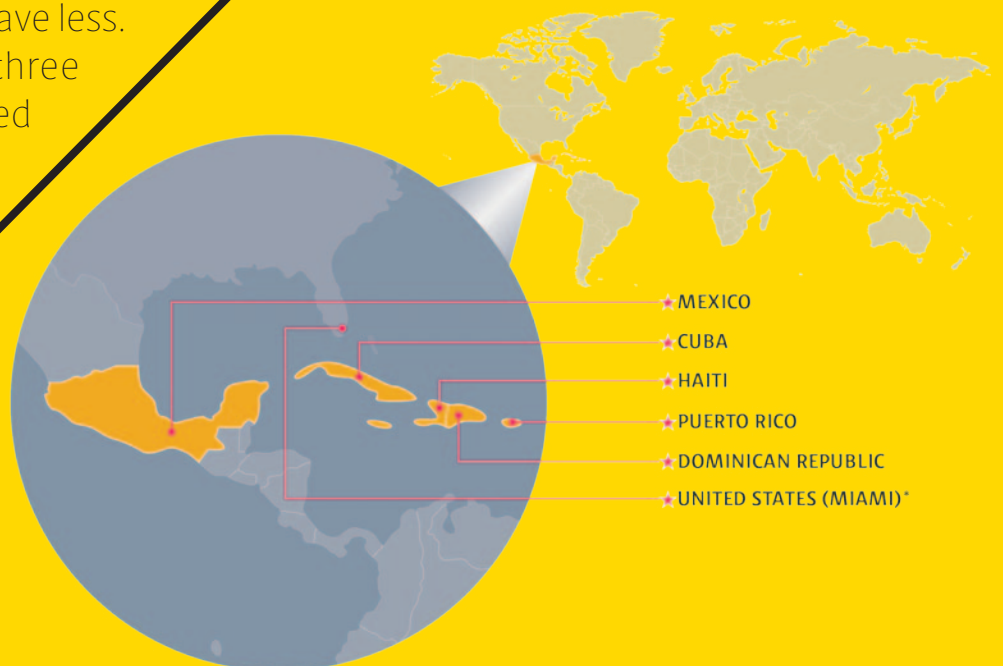


<http://www.lasalle.org.mx>

On January 1, 2008, after six years of meetings and discussions, thousands of Lasallians from Cuba, Florida, the United States, Haiti, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic received the news of the establishment of the District of Antilles-South Mexico. These territories, which had already been linked at the beginning of the 20th century, were brought together to form a dynamic, multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual District.

ES MEXICO

Twelve years later, the Lasallian trail now runs through the southern part of Mexico and several Caribbean countries, giving life to 52 educational works, including nine universities, which receive almost 105,000 students. 143 Brothers and 8,000 collaborators are in charge of this educational mission and, in a spirit of fraternity and association, they concretize daily the Lasallian slogan of educating those who have less. The District also has three health centres that served 50,000 people, many of them poor, during 2018-2019.







Brother Robert in our midst

Brother Robert Schieler's visit to the District of Antilles-South Mexico was an experience of longing and joy. This experience was like an encounter with someone who symbolizes the union of a family. It nourished the soul of the community and gave strength and hope to all the Brothers and Partners of the region.

The Brother Superior visited four of the five geographical zones that make up the District and had meetings with various groups of Brothers, postulants, aspirants, Guadalupanas De La Salle Sisters, Partners, students and parents. In addition, hundreds of collaborators accompanied him in a solemn Mass for the beginning of the Lasallian Jubilee Year.



Throughout the visit, his words celebrated the work of the educational mission and community in the District and opened up space for important reflections. Among other things, Brother Superior highlighted the diversity of popular works that demonstrate the District's commitment to the education of the poor and the working class, and he celebrated the generosity of all the Brothers who serve in countries other than their own. He was pleased with the rehabilitation of the Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle school in Haiti and with the existence of three Signum Fidei groups in the District, which he valued as a means of fostering Lasallian association.

In particular, he spoke of the relevance of initiatives such as the Lasallian Volunteer Movement, which introduces young people to the Lasallian mission and allows them to experience the community life of the Brothers. In the same vein, he applauded the formation of university networks that collaborate with the District and its ministries, and he pointed out that the participation of former students in the mission should be understood as a tribute to the Brothers who were their teachers. Examples such as the Cuban alumni who collaborate in the Homestead project would be a demonstration that those who have already benefited from Lasallian educational works can have a new and important role in promoting the mission in their region.





Our Mission



The District of Antilles-South Mexico guarantees the realization of the Lasallian educational mission in five Latin American countries: Cuba, Haiti, South Mexico, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, and in the city of Miami in the United States. Its mission is to offer human, Christian and non-profit education in these territories, giving priority to the poorest communities. To fulfill this mission. Educational institutions of all levels and of different modalities are created, educational communities that administer them are given life, and all kinds of educational activities. Research and the promotion and dissemination of culture are carried out, which contributes to the integral formation of people. This is a mission that is shared by Brothers and Partners who aspire to convert their profession into an evangelizing service and who are inspired by our Founder, the Rule, and the tradition of the Institute.

The colleges and schools in this District proclaim the Gospel and promote the Christian values of faith, fellowship and service. They are characterized by their educational quality and by offering an integral formation to the students, and they are also promoters of research, justice and peace. In addition, they are open to all types of students, without exclusion. They are institutions that have been developed to respond to local needs in conformity with the norms of each country, with the purpose proper to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the orientations and directives of the General Chapter and the International Assembly of the Lasallian Educational Mission.

GUADALUPAN CHILDREN'S BOARDING SCHOOL



There are 39 million children and adolescents in Mexico, of whom 51.1% live in poverty and 14% in extreme poverty. Despite progress in education, more than four million children are out of school and about 600,000 are at risk of dropping out. Poverty is a factor in other situations, such as entry into crime, which violates the integrity of children and their access to fundamental rights such as education. Specifically in Mexico City, more than 20% of those who are 15 years old are behind in education, while this same percentage in the whole State of Mexico is 29%. On the other hand, the rates of children suffering violence, abuse, malnutrition and neglect are not encouraging. It is in this scenario and in the face of this public problem that the work of the Guadalupeño Children's Boarding School was constituted, an institution that seeks to prevent the lack of education of children in the Valley of Mexico, breaking one of the barriers to their social development.

TThe history of this work began in 1946, when Brother Miguel Cacho Villa, a teacher at Colegio Cristóbal Colón and a De La Salle Brother, started to care on a weekly basis for a group of children who were lawbreakers and in the custody of the Tutelary Council. Sensitive to the situation of abandonment and treatment they were receiving there, the Brother undertook the creation of a work dedicated to the care of these minors, so that they could be reintegrated into society. Thus the boarding school was founded in 1954 in the Colonia Roma in Mexico City. After three years, the institution moved to its current address, a farm called El Retiro, located on the Mexico-Tulyehualco highway. The farm premises were adapted amidst great shortages and were modified over the years to meet the needs of a significantly increased child population. In 1985, after thirty years of work and in order to ensure the continuity of his work, Brother Cacho Villa delegated the administration of the boarding school to the De La Salle Brothers, who have carried the project forward ever since.

Currently, the boarding school is part of the Iztapalapa local authority, a district of Mexico City that suffers from high levels of poverty, violence and crime. Most of the children who attend the boarding school come from colonies in this municipality, as well as from different municipalities in the State of Mexico. 120 children, adolescents and young people benefit from this work. Thirty-three per cent of them have arrived through government institutions and have no family ties; the rest are under the guardianship of a relative, usually a single mother, father, grandparent or aunt.



In the boarding school, children are guaranteed their right to life and survival, the right to education, health protection and social security, and the right to live in conditions of well-being and healthy integral development. The mission of the boarding school is to contribute to the integral development of the children through an educational model that is composed of seven areas: domestic skills, work skills, educational accompaniment, independent living plan, integral health care, a justice and peace project and attention to families. The primary school is located on the premises, while external public institutions are used for the secondary school and high school. All children are formally enrolled in Mexico's education system and some young people have managed to enter university and get a degree.



DISTRICT OF



<http://www.lasalle.edu.ar>

ARGENTINA PARAGUAY



✦ PARAGUAY

✦ ARGENTINA

In 1889, the first two Lasallian Brothers arrived on the shores of the Rio de la Plata. They came with the purpose of studying the possibilities of rooting the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in these lands, but they soon saw that another opportunity was opening up. One of them decided to stay and open a school. In a short time, it wove links with people interested in the education of the poor and immigrants, who by then were arriving profusely in the south of the continent. Since then, the works of the District have followed the history of immigrants and internal migrants in this region and have built on the respectful and collaborative work of Brothers and lay people.

The process of integration of the District of Argentina and the Sub-District of Paraguay began in 1994 and ended in 1998 with the creation of the District of Argentina-Paraguay. This District lives the incarnation of the Gospel in culture through justice, with a growing and structured promotion of the laity. For this reason, the De La Salle Brothers, two teachers' associations and two foundations carry out various educational and pastoral works in both countries.





As part of his visit to the Latin American Lasallian Region (RELAL), Brother Robert Schieler made a pastoral visit to the District of Argentina-Paraguay from April 28 to May 4, 2019. He was accompanied by Brother Paulo Petry, Regional Councilor for Latin America.

On the first day of his visit, he shared the afternoon with the Brothers of the Communities in Buenos Aires. This fraternal meeting served as a framework for the celebration of his birthday. Brother Superior recalled that: "Here in Argentina, as throughout the Lasallian world, we are enriched by the presence and dedication of women and men who generously and professionally share our ministry. So it becomes important that we recognize that we are called to this cooperation that allows for a two-way exchange of energy and prevents us from becoming a closed system.

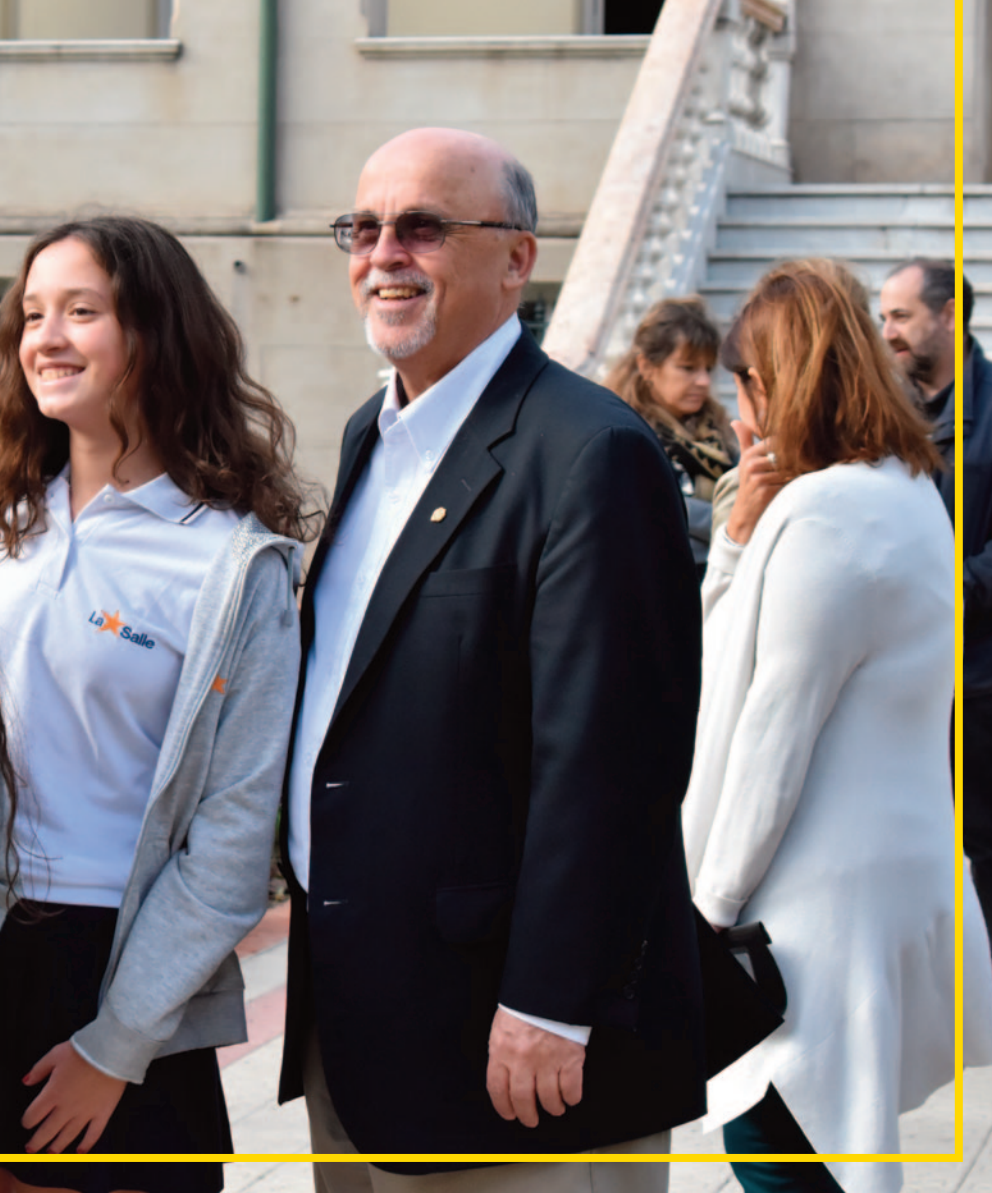
In the following days, the agenda of the Brother Superior included visits to Colegio La Salle in Buenos Aires; to various educational works in the province of Córdoba: Argüello, Escuela e Instituto Técnico Héctor Valdivielso; and to Instituto La Salle Florida, Fundación Armstrong and Casa Joven La Salle, in Buenos Aires.



BROTHER IN THE SOUTH

He also met with the members of the District Animation Community (DAC) and the District Animation Team, and he reflected on and analyzed with them the organization of the District and its animation structure.

He shared a lunch with Brothers from various Communities in the rest of the country at Amor Esperanza, the District's Community of senior Brothers, and he met with the Board of Directors of La Salle Foundation Argentina.



SUPERIOR THERN CONE

Brother Robert and Brother Paulo then moved, together with Brother Visitor Martín Digilio, to Paraguay. There they went to the San Isidro Labrador Boarding School, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018. Already in

the city of Asunción, they had a meeting with the Brothers and the postulants of the Communities of Fatima and Capiibary and they participated in a meeting of the District Council.

To close these two days, Brother Superior was present at the launching of La Salle Foundation Paraguay, an event of great relevance for the District. The activity took place in the Municipal Theatre of Asunción, where the objectives and lines of work of the organization were presented in the context of the country's educational situation. Brother Superior closed the event by saying: "I am very happy to be with you tonight, (...) and to witness this wonderful presentation. (...) It is a very special moment for the existence of La Salle in Paraguay (...) It is important to remember, we are not simply celebrating a memory. We are not simply celebrating the end of De La Salle's earthly life. This jubilee year is an invitation to all of us to take risks on new paths as De La Salle did, and to always look for ways to reach the most vulnerable, as the Foundation that we are inaugurating today proposes to do". After a week of intense experiences and emotions, Brother Robert left for Mexico. The District of Argentina-Paraguay expressed its gratitude for the pastoral visit, which invited the entire community to renew its efforts and commitment to the rights of children, adolescents and youth.

The District of Argentina-Paraguay brings together nineteen formal and three non-formal educational works, two foundations, a pastoral ministry institute, an editorial group made up of three printing houses, ten religious communities and six branches of La Salle Foundation Argentina. Together, the Brothers and the laity are committed to the development of Argentinean and Paraguayan societies, and they contribute their educational mission for the benefit of education and the Church.

The laity and the life of the Brothers are promoted with a vision of unity in the diversity of forms of experiencing the vocation to serve the most vulnerable. The District seeks to strengthen the sense of belonging to the community and, simultaneously, to maintain a disposition of openness with the proposals of other ecclesial areas; to cooperate with them to strengthen alliances and to progress in a Christian and regional mission that is assumed as a whole.

This District conceives the pedagogy of discernment as a tool for putting oneself in the shoes of the poorest and building community options of service. It is about growing together in a faith that always leads to action and that respects the values and processes of each community. Thus, not only are learning communities created, but there is a constant search for new forms of collective learning; and diversity is welcomed and cared for within each institution, respecting gender, free will, ways of understanding and especially the times and rhythms of learning of each person.

Argentinean and Paraguayan Lasallians try to offer in their institutions an education that promotes the protection of children's rights, an ecological vision of development and a spirituality that is reflected in actions in favor of justice. They also offer students at all levels of schooling experiences of commitment to solidarity, based on Gospel principles. This is a community that wants to discover new ways of experiencing the Christian school and living the Gospel based on the different vocations of its members, and that tries to make the classroom a meaningful learning space where pedagogical interaction is central.



**TWO COUNTRIES
THE POOR**



**NTRIES. A PASSION:
AS A PRIORITY**

A SHINING STAR IN PARAGUAY

The history of the San Isidro Labrador Boarding School began more than fifty years ago in the Paraguayan Chaco. When Brothers Alberto Weber Filho (Brazilian) and Alberto Molinero (Argentinean) arrived in Pozo Colorado on June 12, 1968, they were faced with the great challenge of forming a Community of Brothers to provide education for the poor of this region.

Some time before, Bishop Sinfiorano Lucas had taken possession of the Apostolic Vicariate of Pilcomayo, a piece of land of approximately 25,000 square kilometers where many families from Chaco lived and could not offer

their children any educational or pastoral formation. Faced with this reality, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate thought of creating a missionary boarding school in the vicariate. It was for this reason that Bishop Lucas invited the De La Salle Brothers to the Chaco region. Pozo Colorado was, in his words, "the best door to enter Paraguay, because it was the poorest", thus marking the path that the mission would follow.

The school opened with seven students who at first only spoke Guarani, but soon began to learn Spanish. Later on, children from the Nivaklé (Chulupíes) ethnic group were incorporated as boarders and, as external students, a group of

language children, coming from a nearby nursery. In this way, the education of indigenous children was initiated. And in 1976, the arrival of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny made possible the presence of girls in the project, giving rise to the mixed school and boarding school.

The students were trained from the beginning in responsibility and shared work. The morning was dedicated to academic activities and the afternoon to study and work for the benefit of the school. The weekend was used for recreational and religious activities. The work of accompanying the Brothers was always of the utmost importance, and it involved

being with the children twenty-four hours a day, not only in school work, but in all facets of life.

In the 1990s, the school grew significantly. The number of students exceeded 200 and, in the academic field, the basic cycle of secondary education was opened. The students were now able to complete their school training and lay teachers joined the project. Eventually, electricity came to the school and there was access to drinking water, a guest house

was built - so that the families of the children had a place to stay during their visits - and the volunteer house and dormitories were remodeled and expanded. The infrastructure of the garden was improved and a greenhouse was built, and the students began to learn about beekeeping and were able to work in a new bakery. Many of these achievements were made possible by the funding of third sector organisations.

The arrival of volunteers from all over the world, who have since dedicated their work and time to the project, was also extremely valuable for the life of the school. Every corner of the San Isidro Labrador School has witnessed, throughout all these years, dreams, illusions, challenges, worries, laughter, tears and hugs shared among thousands of faces and names that began to build their future in that location.



The De La Salle Brothers arrived in Colombia in 1890 and founded the San José de La Salle School in the city of Medellín. A few years later the District of Colombia was constituted and in 1928 the Lasallian District of Bogota was created. Technical and scientific education, a heritage of the French Brothers who came to the region, is the basis on which schools and colleges have been established in much of the country. The Universidad de La Salle in Bogota, which has been in operation since 1964, currently receives 15,000 students. In addition, the District has nineteen schools that educate 30,000 children, and twelve of these institutions are state schools designed for the working classes.



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These private schools and free schools employ 3,500 associate teachers - 49% of whom are women - who face the challenge of training new generations after the end of an internal armed conflict that affected the country for more than sixty years.

Lasallian youth ministry focuses mainly on adolescent students and, in recent years, the work with college alumni has been strengthened.

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<http://www.lasalle.org.co>





THE BROTHER SUPERIOR IN A COUNTRY THAT WANTS TO OVERCOME WAR



Brother Superior General Robert Schieler visited the Lasallian District of Bogota from 22 to 27 August, 2019. During his stay in Colombia, he got to know the educational works in Bogotá, San Vicente del Caguán and Cartagena. His passage through the coffee lands was accompanied by messages of reconciliation, encounter, admiration and hope for the Lasallian mission being carried out in the District.



His first stop was the Juan Luis Londoño IED La Salle School, south of the city of Bogotá. There he had a meeting with several teachers from schools in the Colombian capital. With a message of gratitude and admiration, Brother Robert expressed the pride he feels for the work of the Lasallian teachers, because it is thanks to them that the mission of De La Salle is possible in the world.

The next port of call in the visit was the gateway to the Colombian Amazon. The department of Caquetá received him in the city of Florencia, before he went to the municipality of San Vicente del Caguán. His arrival touched not only the Lasallians of the IE Dante Alighieri College, but also a large part of the San Vincentians who came to greet him. During his stay, he stressed several times that San Vicente del Caguán was an oasis of peace in the Colombian context.

At the end of his stay in the south of Colombia, Brother returned to the capital to meet with many Brothers of the District. There, in the midst of the characteristic fraternity of Lasallian Communities, the multiple challenges facing the Institute and the District were discussed.

Finally, Brother Superior travelled to the northern part of the country, to Cartagena de Indias. With the characteristic folklore of the coastal region, he was received in the three educational works of this emblematic Caribbean city. His invitation to the Lasallians of Cartagena was to continue expanding the commitment to the mission and to the transformation of their different contexts and realities.

After the tour of these Lasallian works, Brother Robert ended his stay in Colombia with a meeting with the District Council and the representatives of the Lasallian Educational Mission (MEL).

BUILDING PEACE THROUGH EDUCATION

The District of Bogotá develops its mission along lines of work such as educational innovation, the formation of students as citizens, the construction of pedagogical projects committed to the processes of peace and reconciliation in Colombia, and the integration of the family into the community as a collaborative and co-responsible agent in the pedagogical work.

One of its priorities is the generation of pedagogical knowledge for contemporary realities. The Lasallian school wants to be aware of its environment and to transform it. To this end, a knowledge management policy has been designed to respond to the country's challenges and a center of educational thought has been created in which Lasallian pedagogy can dialogue with new trends in education, science, technology or public policy, and propose alternative pedagogies for the new marginalities. The District seeks to articulate its educational communities in a network that allows the exchange of knowledge and experiences such as virtual classes and laboratories and digital seminars and repositories.

The works of this District have a commitment to building coexistence and reconciliation, and they base their work on and inspire their educational project by principles of respect and care. For this reason, a comprehensive plan for peace, truth, inclusion and justice has been designed, and a programme of civic, ethical and political education is being developed, which celebrates ecology as a proposal that defends life in all its manifestations. The District also wants to facilitate dialogue between urban and rural areas, promoting the integration of these two social scenarios and generating experiences of formal, non-formal and informal education that benefit peace and social justice.





It is hoped that the families of Lasallians in this region will participate actively in the development of the educational proposals of the different works. For this reason, the District supports the schools in the care and interaction with families, and it has sought to create a Family

Observatory to research and study family typologies, the roles of those involved in upbringing and care, and the social, political and religious contexts of families, becoming a space of thought that responds to the needs of each community.

Finally, the District of Bogotá is committed to the civic, ethical and political education of young people in order to legitimize the democratic system and strengthen public confidence. In this sense it guarantees the participation of the La Salle Network in the municipal boards of education and in the drawing up, development and monitoring of local and national public educational policies. In addition, one of its objectives is to consolidate a leadership training plan for the civic and political participation of young people that generates an impact on society and strengthens the leadership that emerges in schools.



AN EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENT TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE COLOMBIAN COUNTRYSIDE

A Almost ten years ago, when there was still no talk of peace in Colombia, La Salle University of Bogota took the risk of creating a proposal for the integral and sustainable development of the country: Utopia. This was a project for rural higher education, which aimed to train young peasants professionally and turn them into leaders capable of transforming the social, political and production situations in their various regions. This would be possible through a consolidation of the agricultural sector and the stimulation of processes of social inclusion and innovation.

La Salle University is convinced that peace in Colombia has to come through rural development and that is why it has dared to develop this unique project. Utopia generates educational and productive opportunities for young people with limited economic resources, who come from the rural corners of Colombia and who, in most cases, have been affected by the violence of the armed conflict. This proposal seeks to respond to the challenges of education in the Colombian countryside, which is often of low quality, and to the land tenure systems, which are inequitable and sometimes unproductive.



The project has three objectives: to enable young high school graduates from various rural areas to obtain a professional degree in agricultural engineering, with the best possible training; to help these young people become leaders in the social and political transformation of their region; and to create productive enterprises in the countryside by implementing the projects developed by the students.



Utopia's educational model is highly relevant to the needs of the most disadvantaged in society for several reasons. It is the only rural university campus in the country, located in the rural area of the municipality of Yopal, capital of the department of Casanare, in the eastern plains of Colombia. Its selection process does not work with a traditional model of open enrollment, but the university goes in search of young people, hand in hand with an interdisciplinary team that, over six months, travels to different territories of the country and in each place calls, interviews and selects students.

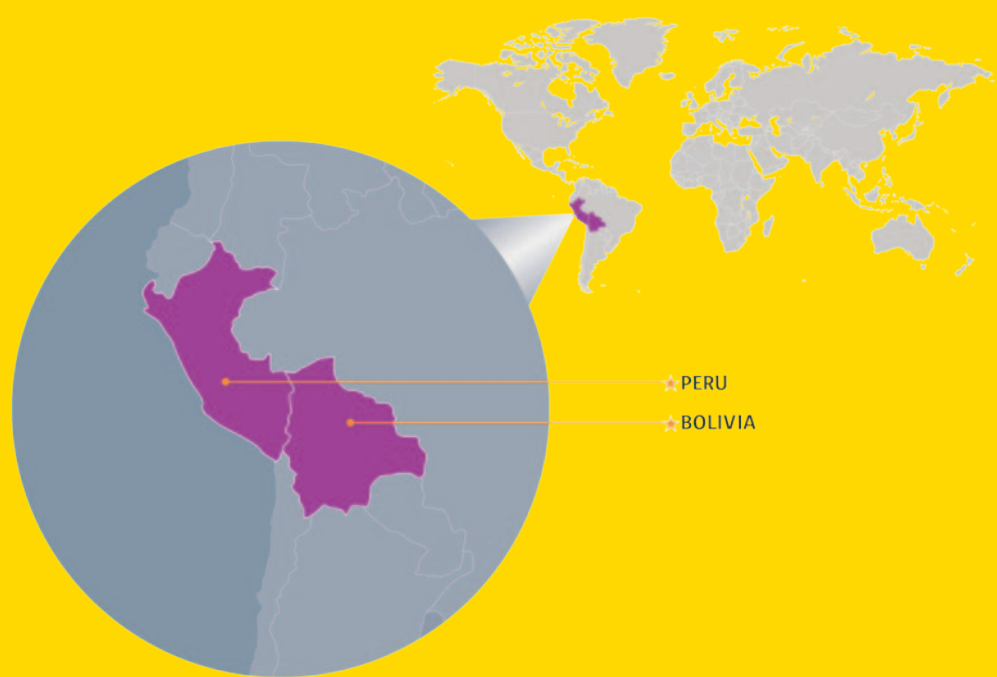
On the other hand, all the young people who enter Utopia are given scholarships, something made possible thanks to the cooperation with numerous public and private entities, as well as with foundations and national and international NGOs that have seen in this project an opportunity to invest in the hope of a peaceful country, generator of wealth and called to become a food pantry for a world with serious problems of hunger and poverty.

In Utopia, young people from many places, with different ideological situations and with marks and traces of violence in their lives, come together. However, when they find a common dream, they discover that it is better to look to the future with hope than to the past with hate. Currently, the university has 253 graduates and 205 active students, and has gained influence in more than 180 municipalities and 25 departments in Colombia.

BOLIVIA

DISTRICT OF

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The De La Salle Brothers arrived in Bolivia in 1919, when this country was part of the District of Argentina, and in 1921 they established themselves in Peru, which was at that time joined to the District of Ecuador. The two territories were reunited in 1936, forming an independent District, but then separated in 1966 and remained so for several decades. Finally, in 2015 and in response to the needs of the Region, the Peru-Bolivia District was reconstituted.

The path of Lasallians in this region has gone through numerous successful experiences. Attention has been given to the inmates of juvenile prisons in Lima. Technical and higher education for teachers was strengthened in rural Andean areas - in the training centres - and boarding schools were created in Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

A PERÚ

In addition, the educational and evangelizing presence of the Community was extended through La Salle Rimarinacusunchis Radio (Urubamba), San Gabriel Radio (El Alto) and Bruño Publishing House which has bases in Lima and La Paz.

Likewise, the efforts to contribute to the education and formation of citizens committed to the construction of a more just society have led to the foundation of La Salle University of Peace and La Salle University of Arequipa.





BROTHER ROBERT IN BOLIVIA AND PERU

The pastoral visit of Brother Superior to this Andean District began in the Peruvian capital in April 2019. The first educational work that received him was Colegio La Salle, where he met with the board of directors and representatives of Signum Fidei. He toured the pre-school facilities, and as he moved around the school grounds he was approached by children with whom he exchanged a few words in English and answered their questions.

He also visited the Lima headquarters of the Bruño publishing house and attended a solemn Mass celebrated in his honor by delegations from several Lasallian works: Brother Noé Zevallos, Fe y Alegría No. 43, Manos de Dios and La Salle schools, and the Signum Fidei fraternities Virgen de la Estrella and Virgen de Guadalupe and the Hermanas Guadalupanas de La Salle. After Mass, an event was held that included a photo exhibit and several artistic performances by students, and in the evening a musical group made up of Lasallian alumni entertained a gathering celebrating their presence in the District.

A few days later, Brother Superior traveled to the ancient Sacred Valley of the Incas to meet with the Lasallian communities of Cusco and the population of Urabamba. In Cusco, he had a meeting with the local community of Brothers and he blessed the new San José La Salle Educational Complex, accompanied by the Brother Councillor for RELAL, the Visitor, the Brothers from the communities in the south of Peru and many Lasallians and families of students. In this ceremony and with the presence of the metropolitan archbishop, Monsignor Richard Alarcón Urrutia, and the civil and military authorities of the city, a traditional tableau about the foundation of the Inca Empire was presented. Thus, Brother Robert received from the hands of the Inca the *varayok*, an object that symbolizes the power that is available for service. He was also given a *quipu*, used by the teachers as a representation of the teaching and transmission of traditional knowledge of the Inca culture.

Continuing his tour of the District, Brother Superior arrived in Bolivia, where he visited the Lasallian works in the cities of La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. At the airport in each place, he was warmly welcomed by students, teachers and administrative staff of local institutions. Several schools held spiritual, artistic and cultural events in his honor and the communities shared breakfast, lunch, evenings and Eucharist with him. He even had a meeting with former students from Lasallian schools and did the honor of taking the first kick of the ball in a soccer game.

In the interventions he made while visiting the educational works, Brother Robert shared reflections on the importance of Lasallian values and the education that is given in order to form free individuals. He highlighted the power that young people have to make a difference in the world, and he urged all the members of the community to think about the commitments they wanted to make to give meaning to their lives. He also thanked the teachers and the Brothers and Guadalupana Sisters for their service in educating the students, for their work is indispensable, and he reminded them that in an increasingly intolerant world, children and young people must be helped to believe in the brotherhood of all people, as the Gospel teaches.



COMMITTED TO GOD, HUMANITY AND NATURE

The District of Bolivia-Peru has officially existed since 2015, but the history of Lasallians in these two countries has already completed a century of educational work and service to the young and the most vulnerable in the Andean Region. In 2019, Bolivia celebrated 100 years of presence, and Peru will do the same in 2022. In gratitude, the entire community prays and works so that young people who are willing to give their lives as Brothers continue to arrive, as well as lay persons who commit themselves to the ideals of De La Salle.

Statistically, the District is made up of 22 Communities that bring together 76 De La Salle Brothers. In addition, 1,872 teachers, administrators and lay collaborators work to provide education to more than 33,000 children and young people in the region. Thirty-seven educational works have been founded in the two countries: two universities, three higher pedagogical institutes and one technological institute, two centres of basic special education (CEBE), an orphanage and 29 public and private schools. All these education centres, from their creation to date, enjoy a unique prestige in the places where they are located.

The conditions in which Peruvian and Bolivian children and young people are growing up imply challenges for the development of the Lasallian educational mission and motivate the whole community to redefine the role and the processes of the education that is offered. In a constantly changing society, the District promotes dialogue with new pedagogical and technological trends. Each new challenge is met with courage, willingness, commitment and a life that in itself demonstrates that Great things are possible.





MERCADO AGUADO ORPHANAGE

For seventy years, the De La Salle Brothers have dedicated themselves to the integral education of the adolescents of Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia) through the Jesús Mercado Aguado Orphanage. They have thus left an imprint on hundreds of young people who are now great professionals and contributors to society. Everything has been possible thanks to the faith, the love and the efforts of Brothers and educators who, with their testimony, promote values and the construction of worthy life projects.

Located in the center of the city of Santa Cruz, this work is in fact a true educational complex. Its home is the Arzobispo Daniel Rivero secondary school, which has 400 students and is recognized as one of the best public schools in the region. The Los Huérfanos print shop and bookstore are all located there.

Currently, the home houses 50 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 who attend the school, where they are trained as high school graduates in the humanities. They also take on various tasks in the printing press, something that generates income for the sustainability of the household and is valuable because the students learn a trade that will later allow them to have a decent job.

The work is supported by local and international volunteers, including professionals in the areas of education, health, psychology, social and environmental sciences, arts and sports. These volunteers are not only willing to serve others, but also to have a positive impact on the lives of the young people in the shelter.

The Jesus Mercado Aguado Institute Home is a faithful testimony that with effort and dedication great things are possible.





**DISTRICT OF
LA SALLE**

BRAZIL

CHILE

At the end of the 20th century, the De La Salle Brothers had already been developing their mission in Chile for more than a century through their own educational works and those belonging to the Church. On the other hand, since 1908 they had established similar works throughout the territory of Brazil, a country that was divided into two Districts: Porto Alegre and São Paulo. In addition, in 1992, the Brazilian Brothers took on a mission in Mozambique, the main Portuguese-speaking country in Africa.

On January 1, 2012, these lines were connected together and the La Salle District of Brazil-Chile was founded, in which 156 Brothers and nearly 3,400 educators are currently working. This District includes forty-five colleges and five universities, in addition to six social assistance works and twelve non-formal education works, pastoral support and other activities in marginal areas.

It is an extensive District that has works in the southern area, in the Brazilian plains, in the Atlantic Carioca, in the Amazon rainforest and in Southwest Africa, located in populated cities and small towns. Two languages and three cultures strengthen the presence of Lasallians in Latin America and on the African continent.



<http://www.irmaodelasalle.org>



<http://www.lasalle.edu.br>





THE LASALLIAN STYLE OF EDUCATION IN BRAZIL AND CHILE

In 2018, Brother Robert Schieler visited some educational and religious communities in the District of Brazil-Chile, accompanied by the General Councilor of RELAL, Paulo Petry. In Chile, the Superior had a collective meeting and personal interviews with the Brothers in charge of the various works, as well as a meeting with various groups of animation and pastoral commitment. They also visited the educational and assistance works for the needy that are carried out in the city of Santiago: the San Gregorio and De La Salle School in La Reina, the La Salle Institute, an open dining room in San Gregorio, a children's home and Hogar Esperanza; and they shared with the teachers of these establishments.

The tour of Brazil began in the town of Ananindeua (state of Pará), where Brother shared experiences with the aspirants and Brothers of that community and of the municipality of Zé Doca (state of Maranhão).

Afterwards, he went to the city of Porto Alegre, in the south of the country. There he visited the Casa de la Salud Nuestra Señora de la Estrella - a residence designed to welcome the Brothers when they need health care - where he thanked the Brothers of the community for their fidelity and for the witness of the Lasallian vocation that they express through their prayers. He then went to visit the La Salle São João School, spoke with the teachers and had a meeting with the leaders of some student groups from schools in Porto Alegre and the metropolitan region. He also visited Canoas, another city in the



southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, where he toured the facilities of La Salle University and met with the young people in formation of the La Salle Niterói Community, with whom he shared experiences about consecrated religious life and discussed the mission of Lasallians.

Finally, on his return to Porto Alegre, Brother Superior had a meeting with more than 190 Collaborators from the Lasallian network who presented themselves in the auditorium of the Colegio La Salle Santo Antônio. During the event, he expressed immense gratitude to the educators of the Region and spoke of the importance of having the support of lay men and women in the school units.

"For me networking is very important, not only in Brazil. We have to grow and focus on that ability to work together. If we succeed in that goal, we can do much more for children and young people. We can be a very powerful force for good. Let us look at the numbers of our Institute: 1,000 schools, located in 80 different countries, 90,000 collaborators who work in the educational mission, one million students who receive a human and integral formation. If we work ever more closely together, imagine how much we could expand those numbers even further," Brother Robert noted, and explained the importance of children and young people in a project of growth and permanence of Lasallian education, known for its excellence throughout the world.





Our MISSION

two languages, three countries, two continents

With the conviction that Brothers and lay people form a family and share a mission, the District has concentrated on strengthening a system of ongoing formation so that Brothers and Partners learn about pedagogy, pastoral ministry and management, as they appropriate all the knowledge of the Lasallian world. It has also promoted spaces and groups for research and reflection that involve all the members of the educational communities, in such a way that the protagonism of the Lasallian mission is lived in a collective way.

All the institutions in the District stand out for the pastoral dimension of their pedagogical work, for the formation based on ethical and moral values that they impart and because they respect the students in all their human facets. The institutions of higher education in the Region, in turn, have contributed to the Lasallian educational mission by training professionals in multiple disciplines and by becoming spaces for scientific discussion strengthened by the integration of science and faith.

The District of La Salle Brazil-Chile is an association for educational service which for more than a century has sought to respond to the calls of the Church and to the need for human and Christian education in some vulnerable regions of Latin America. For this reason, it carries out its work in basic, middle and higher education institutions and in assistance works, all focused on the integral formation of its students. In addition, since 1992, it has been present in a missionary and educational work in Beira*, a city in Mozambique, with the support of Brothers and lay people from that country.

In order to respond in a creative and audacious way to the needs of the most vulnerable and to go beyond geographical borders, reaching places where until recently there was no presence of the Institute, the La Salle District of Brazil-Chile has associated with RELAL to found the Tabatinga-Amazon La Salle Community, at the triple frontier between Brazil, Colombia and Peru, a region of profound human and educational needs. Priority has also been given to educational and social works in the north of Brazil, one of the areas with the highest concentration of poverty in that country, and investment is being made in the construction of a new, modern elementary school in Ananindeua, a municipality in the state of Pará.

Together and by association, the Chilean and Brazilian Brothers and lay people have committed themselves so that all the communities of the District fulfill a mission of teaching "how to live well."

In **BEIRA** there is hope!



Lasallians have been present in Mozambique* for more than 25 years and currently support three educational works: a private school that serves more than 268 children at the primary level, a welfare educational center for 455 students and the João XXIII School, which receives 3,250 students and is located in the city of Beira. In addition, they have a house of formation for the postulancy.

Many are the dreams that are waiting to be fulfilled in these works, including those of the Brothers and the lay volunteers who work in them. For that reason, the members of the community often travel difficult roads (like

Mozambique is a multicultural land, which welcomes many native languages and dialects and which is diverse in the ways in which its people live. The school atmosphere in Lasallian works is characterized by the joy, enthusiasm and hope that students and collaborators show. Likewise, the respectful and dignified treatment of all persons has defined the identity of the Brothers, who extend their brotherhood to all who come to the schools.

The community is aware that the lack of certain public policies causes suffering and increases the vulnerability of thousands of people. Among the most affected are children, victims of state indifference and neglect. Thinking of these children, the Brothers and Partners find the inspiration and enthusiasm to make the presence of the Institute truly effective and efficient in a place where needs abound.

Finally, the CEALS* develops projects in defence of children and adolescents. There, spaces have been opened for them to reflect and express themselves, as well as to denounce any illicit act that involves them, whether it occurs in the family environment or in the school they attend.

The mission of the Lasallian works is to educate with the objective of generating real changes in this region of Mozambique, through a quality human and Christian formation that welcomes students with firmness, tenderness and protection and that leads them to be good Mozambican citizens.

that of Cyclone Idai in 2019) to present the Lasallian educational proposal with daring and in a fraternal and supportive manner.

Educational works have an eclectic audience that includes Christians, Catholics, Evangelicals, Muslims and believers of other African traditional religions. In spite of this diversity, the Lasallian way of educating finds no resistance and on the contrary it enchants, since the community embodies solidarity, fraternity and love in the midst of so much social injustice and so much cultural diversity. The Brothers and Partners have sought to have all persons in the community integrated into the educational experience, thus forming a true Lasallian community.

The help of the volunteers, Portuguese and Brazilian, who have associated themselves with this project and who work for this cause, is especially noteworthy, since their work is an invitation to persevere in the Mission and because they show daily that one does not come to the world just in passing, but that it is necessary to do justice to one's own existence by leaving a legacy in the construction of a better, more human and more fraternal future.

*From January 2020 this work will be part of the Lwanga District of the RELAF Region (Africa) but it will continue to be supported by the Brothers of the Brazil-Chile District.

DISTRICT OF CENTRAL PANAMA

The first community of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to be founded in Central America was that of the San Juan de Dios Hospice in León, Nicaragua. Later, in 1904, the Brothers arrived in Panama, a few months after the country was constituted as an independent republic, and throughout the following decades they established themselves in Costa Rica (1935), Honduras (1953) and finally in Guatemala (1959), a country in which the Brothers from the United States already had a missionary presence since 1951. In this way, the De La Salle Institute came to have a presence in nine countries: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela and Spain.



- ★ GUATEMALA
- ★ HONDURAS
- ★ NICARAGUA
- ★ COSTA RICA
- ★ PANAMA



<http://www.lasalleca.org>

AMERICA PANAMA

Then, in December 2006, the Communities of the District of Central America and the Sub-District of Panama met in Guatemala City to celebrate the Constituent Chapter of the new District of Central America-Panama.

Currently, the District has 1,600 collaborators, including teachers, administrative and support staff, and almost 22,000 students attending 27 educational works, including two universities. More than seventy Brothers work in fifteen communities throughout Central America. In this region, politically fragile and convulsed and historically hit by multiple forms of poverty, the De La Salle presence has a multinational, multi-ethnic and culturally diverse face.





IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AMERICAS, FIVE COUNTRIES AND MILLIONS OF REASONS TO BUILD HUMANITY

As part of the celebration of the Lasallian Jubilee Year for the tercentenary of St. John Baptist de La Salle's death, the District of Central America-Panama was pleased to receive a pastoral visit from Brother Robert Schieler, Superior General, and Brother Paulo Petry, General Councilor for RELAL. With great joy, preparations were made to receive them from 17 to 26 March 2019 in each of the five countries that make up the District: Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.

The visit began in Guatemala City with an emotional meeting with the Brothers, the Directors and young students of the Instituto Mixto Intercultural Santiago. In the following days, Brother Superior met with the collaborators from the areas of administration, maintenance and catering of the Central Headquarters, and traveled to Antigua Guatemala, a city that welcomed delegations from the educational works of the country and several communities of Brothers. There, young students from different schools asked him questions about Lasallian life and about what motivates the Brothers to follow the legacy of Saint John-Baptist. Also in this city he met with the Signum Fidei of the country and with the children and parents of the La Salle School of Tierra Nueva.

In Honduras, he arrived in the city of San Pedro Sula, where he met representatives of the educational community of that country in the setting of folkloric activities that gave him a warm welcome. Likewise, he shared his Lasallian experience through a speech, participated in a discussion and visited some of the works: the Child Development Center and the San José La Salle Experimental Center in La Pradera neighborhood.



Then he traveled to the city of Managua to begin his tour of Nicaragua. There he visited the Monsignor Lezcano School and was also received by the students of the Pedagogical Institute, who recited choral poetry to celebrate his presence. Then, in the city of León, he toured the facilities of La Salle University of Technology and met with delegations from the educational communities of the rest of the country. In that meeting, he exhorted those present to continue building new realities and to take St. John Baptist de La Salle as an example that impossible things can be transformed into latent realities.

In San José, Costa Rica, he heard numerous testimonies about experiences of the University Social Action, toured different Lasallian works in the country and visited the Novitiate in Moravia. There he shared a message with the entire community about the great challenges involved in recognizing the other in diversity, working for inclusion and being committed to building a better world for all.

Finally, in Panama, he met with the Brothers of the country in the city of Colon, with the Lasallian Educational Mission Councils and the District Council, and he concluded his visit at Colegio La Salle in Panama, where he met with all the delegations of the country.

The District was grateful and honoured by this first pastoral visit of Brother Robert to the Region. With open arms and the hope of continuing with the mission entrusted by the Founder, they determined to continue working hard among the populations of Central America, so that the education of thousands of children and young people will continue to form good men and women for the future.

IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTIES: RISK AND PASSION

The mission of Lasallians in the District of Central America-Panama is to identify children and young people that are at risk and to offer them the relevant care and development opportunities. This commitment has required the joint effort of Brothers and lay people who cooperate in a loyal and disinterested manner. The educational works of the District honor the legacy of the Founder and of many others who along the way have contributed to developing the mission of the Institute: to educate children and young people in a human and Christian way, with a special concern for the most disadvantaged.

Lasallians have given innovative responses to different Central American situations through a project of education that focuses on people and on providing quality education. In these countries, the Lasallian presence has acquired relevance in the midst of unjust social structures and corrupt political systems, revolutions and internal wars that generate violence and increase the number of marginalized people neglected by the State.

Following the model of the Gospel and as expressed by the Founder, participation with empathy increases the attention of the recipients and their capacity to respond, and it increases the opportunities they have to learn, to be themselves and to gradually discover their vocation to transform their environment. After more than a century of presence in Central America and Panama, great things have been possible: several educational projects have benefited poor and vulnerable populations for decades; some Lasallian former students have occupied high positions in governments, directly and indirectly influencing projects of social development and defense of human rights; and Lasallian educational models have had a direct impact on pedagogical changes that have been implemented in the five nations that make up the District.



LA SALLE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY OF NICARAGUA





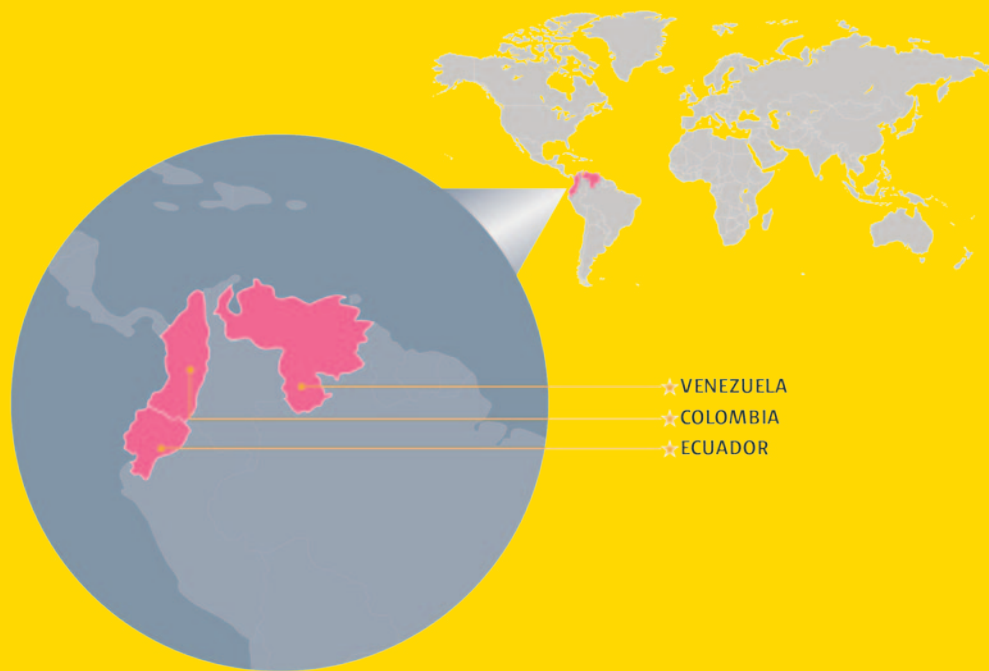
La Salle University of Technology "ULSA" is located in the indigenous neighbourhood of Sutiava, in León (Nicaragua), almost 100 kilometres from the capital, in the dry corridor of the north-west of the country and very close to the Pacific coast. It is the youngest work of the District of Central America-Panama and it shares grounds with the oldest work: the La Salle Polytechnic Institute.

In 2003, during the celebration of the centenary of the arrival of Lasallians in León, the community of Brothers and a group of graduates from the polytechnic decided to join forces, and they created the project of a Lasallian university in the region. After several years of hard work, the National Council of Universities of Nicaragua granted the authorization to operate and in 2009 the university opened its doors to students.

In recent years, ULSA has offered the Nicaraguan population a portfolio of engineering careers with a multidisciplinary focus. These programs are innovative for the industrial sector of the country and present good ways to become integrated into the national map of MSMEs, and thus they contribute to the democratization of knowledge and seek to bring technology closer to the people, thus improving the quality of life of the population. Especially valuable is the work done with some women's cooperatives and through associations that allow the university to have a presence in different rural areas through technology transfer programs.

ULSA thinks of itself as a university following four transversal axes: gender and engineering, human rights, institutional communication and explicit announcement of the Gospel. It is committed to networking both with the IALU and with other organizations working in the fields of renewable energy and the circular economy. It has an environmental management project that involves urban mining and work developed along with grassroots recyclers, and it has designed a strong line of research on the topics of biodiesel production, biogas production, energy efficiency, favoring the use of solar energy and low enthalpy geothermal initiatives. In addition, it has made an effort to arrange things so that young people are the protagonists in the area of student government, the IEEE Student Association and the robotics and mathematics club. Likewise, it has contrived to make the university pastoral group have an impact on the rural communities of the region.

Finally, with the aim of promoting interculturality and internationalization, the university has strengthened its student mobility and exchange programs, so that young people can access semester-long stays at three universities in Germany. In addition, it has managed Erasmus plus projects to cooperate with different universities and research institutions, to favour teaching mobility and to promote a line of research that explores the possibilities of frugal engineering.



The De La Salle Brothers arrived in Ecuador in 1863, in Colombia in 1890 and in Venezuela in 1913. These three countries make up the geographical territory of the Norandino District, constituted on January the 1, 2015, in the city of Rionegro, Colombia. The union that gave birth to the new District did not erase or obscure the cultural, social, economic, political and religious differences of each country. On the contrary, this diversity is the gateway to understanding the unity of the District and is presented as an opportunity for the District to project itself towards a new goal of evangelical understanding.

The name Norandino reflects the commitment to maintain unity in diversity. Although the geographical areas of the District are diverse, they are connected by a physical link: the vast Andes Mountains. Each geographical area and each situation of poverty, violence or injustice is an opportunity to discover God and to share Him in personal and community experiences. For this reason, the strength of the new District of Norandino lies in its historical and geographical diversity; from this complexity comes the commitment to the most vulnerable in society, following the Gospel and the traditional Lasallian charism.

Currently, with the work of 91 Brothers and the support of thousands of men and women, this District leads 55 educational works through strategies of pedagogical pastoral care, administrative pastoral care, Brothers' pastoral care, youth and vocational pastoral care, all of which are the axes that energize the processes that are carried out day by day.

LASALLIAN DISTRICT OF NORANDINO



<http://www.lasallenorandino.org>



Juan Carlo Sarango E.



LA SALLE



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Brother Robert in Medellín

The pastoral visit to the Lasallian District of Norandino by the Superior General, Brother Robert Schieler, and the General Councillor for RELAL, Brother Paulo Petry, took place in October 2019. On their arrival at the airport of Rionegro, Antioquia (Colombia), the two Brothers were welcomed by a delegation of young people from the Postulancy Community and by the Visitor, the Coordinator of the Medellín Sector, the Director of Postulancy and the Vice Rector for Pastoral Ministry of the Lasallian University Corporation. At Casa Parmenia, also known as the Community of Senior Brothers of the Medellín Sector, Brother Robert addressed a moving message to the Brothers, those in formation and the aspirants of the Region, which was also transmitted through the official District Facebook page, and he attended a Eucharist with all the members of the community.

Afterwards, the pastoral visit moved to the San Carlos Institute, an educational work located in the city of Medellín, where Brothers Robert and Paulo met with 400 young people who are members of the Youth and Vocation Ministry of the Medellín Sector. Brother Robert spoke to the students about hope, acceptance, the importance of teamwork and the responsibility they have to form themselves well and then contribute to building a better society, and he also answered some of the questions from the audience. In the following days, he held a conversation with the Brothers and the Collaborators of the Provincial House, visited Colegio San José de La Salle and the Corporación Universitaria Lasallista, and met with members of the Lasallian Association of Former Students ALDEA.

****** Due to circumstances in Ecuador and Venezuela, it was not possible for the Brother Superior to visit these sectors of the District. However, from the Provincial House in Medellín, he held a videoconference with delegations from both countries, led by their Coordinators - Brother Antón Marquiegui Candina and Brother Jeanpierre Zambrano Palma, respectively - in which they discussed and shared the experiences of the various educational institutions and communities of Brothers.



THE LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MISSION IN THE NORTH OF SOUTH AMERICA





The teaching work of the Lasallian community has spread to several cities in Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela, and has been very well received by the populations of these countries, thanks to the educational charism of the Brothers and the lay people of the Institute and to the fact that their mission is always directed towards children and young people. The

Lasallian works of the District have formed citizens of great Christian conviction, who now receive the admiration of the citizens and of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities for their performance in different fields. The education that students find in Lasallian colleges and universities is characterized by its high quality, by the promotion of science and leadership and by the teaching of Christian and human values. In this way, students are expected to become men and women committed to society and prepared to face the challenges of the world.

One of the pillars of the mission of this District is the celebration of collective leadership at all levels of action, closely linked to the commitment to leave behind individual preferences. Thus, for example, the District seeks to make the joint work of the pastoral ministries manifest and palpable in all actions of individuals, communities, institutions and sectors and of the District itself. In the same way, the Brothers and educators have undertaken the commitment to be completely involved in the personal, educational, administrative and formation processes of their respective communities, something that increases the sense of belonging to the community and develops proactiveness.

In the Norandino District, research processes are stimulated in the work of each sector, each educational institution and each group or community, with the aim of improving internal and pedagogical practices, and an attempt has been made to create a network and an environment conducive to the development of new undertakings in which the perspective of educational service to the poor prevails.



TRACES OF LA SALLE IN VENEZUELA

The city of Valencia (Carabobo, Venezuela) was elevated as an Episcopal city in November 1922. At that time, Monsignor Francisco Antonio Granadillo Ojeda, the first bishop of Valencia, began to work so that an educational center directed by the De La Salle Brothers would exist in the city. His efforts led to the foundation of Colegio Sagrado Corazón de Jesús La Salle Valencia in 1925. A large colonial house located in the center of the city was the first home of this Lasallian work, until in 1929 the project moved to a three-story building in which there were large classrooms, a space that served as a theater, a movie room or an auditorium for conferences, a kitchen, a dining room, the premises of the Brothers' community and a patio, that for many years served as a sports court.

At another point in the north of the city, there was the Guaparo estate, a piece of land that belonged to Mr. Rafael Yáñez which had been parcelled out and converted into an urban development. In 1956, Mr. Yáñez wrote a letter to the Brothers offering them land for the construction of a Primary School, a donation which was accepted by Brother Heraclio, then Principal of the Sacred Heart La Salle School. This is how the La Salle Guaparo headquarters was created, in a building that allowed eight classrooms to be opened, and simultaneously a residence for the Brothers was built in the surrounding area. Later, at the beginning of the 1960s, the project of unifying the two branches of the school was developed and in 1968 the modern version of the Colegio La Salle Guaparo was inaugurated.

The school currently receives 987 students in courses ranging from pre-school to the fifth year of high school, and has 64 teachers and 32 workers in the administrative and maintenance areas. The education provided there focuses on the experiences and life context of the children and seeks to prepare them to assume their responsibility in Venezuelan society. The school promotes integral formation and considers the family to be a fundamental part of the educational process, stimulating in all members of this Lasallian community a sense of belonging and a spirit of teamwork.



Since 1905 the Lasallian presence has provided thousands of Mexicans with a quality education, committed to the present and future of this nation.

On January 1, 1960, in order to better attend to the various works that had proliferated throughout this country over almost six decades, the former District of Mexico was divided in two, giving rise to the emergence of the District of Mexico North, which today celebrates 60 years of history, radiation and expansion.

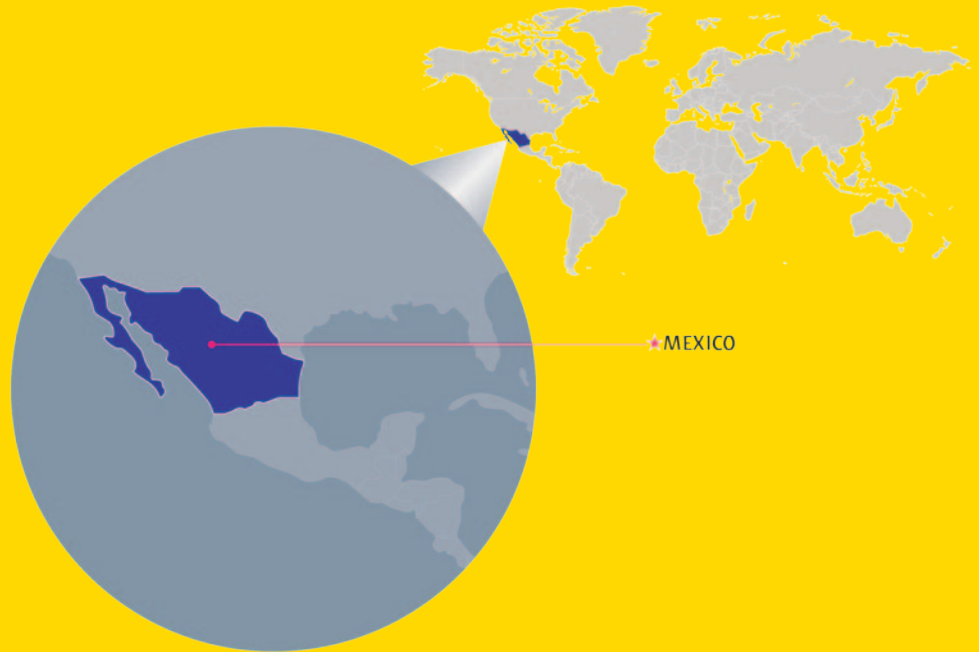
This District is made up of Communities of Brothers, Associates, and Partners who follow Jesus, and it provides formal education to more than 32,000 students in works ranging from pre-school education to university graduate studies. In addition, thousands of people benefit from non-formal education programs implemented in communities that require it, because of their characteristics.



<http://www.lasalle.edu.mx>

DISTRICT OF BROTHERS NORTH

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In total, there are 21 works of basic and upper secondary education, 6 institutions of higher education, 3 centers of non-formal education, 17 communities of Brothers and 4 houses of formation, 3 of which are inter-District. In these works, the District is concerned with offering an education that responds fully and integrally to the demands that Mexico and the society of the 21st century present.

The structures of District animation promote the professional service of the Brothers and lay teachers. Formed around the same commitment, this community of educators is constantly concerned with providing a quality educational service that integrates research, reflection and constant evaluation. The District promotes educational innovation, directs its management towards the achievement of the highest educational goals, and encourages the updating and ongoing formation of lay people and Brothers.





BROTHER ROBERT AMONG THE LASALLIANS OF NORTHERN MEXICO

From November 17 to 28, 2018, Brother Robert Schieler visited several communities and institutions of the District of North Mexico, in the company of the Councilor for the Lasallian Latin American Region (RELAL), Brother Paulo Petry, and the District Visitor, Brother Gabriel Alba. The tour included the communities of Durango, Gomez Palacio and El Salto, in the State of Durango; Ciudad Obregon and Hermosillo, in Sonora; Saltillo and Torreon, cities of Coahuila; and Monterrey, capital of Nuevo Leon.

His arrival in Durango coincided with the beginning of the Lasallian Jubilee Year and his visit to the District began with a Mass presided over by the Bishop and other religious authorities in the city's Cathedral. In the following days, Brother met with students, alumni and parents from various Lasallian universities and schools. He lived with volunteers doing their year of service and visited the community centers in each city. In Hermosillo, he had a meeting with members of the Lasallian Children and Youth Movement, and in Ciudad Obregón, he met with indigenous leaders of the Yaqui Nation, who expressed their gratitude for the support that La Salle has given to their community through the ProBecas Sonora A.C. program.

Brother Superior also toured the city of Monterrey in the company of the younger Brothers and then, at a District meeting, he gave opportunities for individual conversations with community members. In Coahuila, he visited the Casa Hogar de los Pequeños San José and participated in some of the activities that are done there with the children, and later he attended the inauguration of the French La Salle Institute.



The whole occasion of the visit demonstrated that the District of Mexico North is a network of connectivity and a platform for dialogue, through which community practices are compared and improved. In his interventions, Brother Robert gave recognition to all the Brothers who collaborate, encourage and support the opportunities for Lasallian formation, and he especially thanked the Associates, true protagonists of the mission of the Institute in Mexico, for the generous contribution of their time, their talents and their pedagogical wisdom for the well-being of the students and of the entire Lasallian Family.





OUR COMMITMENT TO THE MEXICAN PEOPLE

The District of North Mexico is a community of educational works that form children, young people and adults, so that they can integrate into society as a transforming and supportive force. Following the example of the Founder, educational responsibility is understood as a significant and far-reaching task that requires a sensitive and fraternal accompaniment aimed at facilitating and enriching the development of persons, with full respect for their human dignity and their culture of origin.

The Brothers and lay teachers of the region have associated themselves in a commitment to provide quality in educational services that integrate research, reflection, and self-evaluation. Therefore, the District promotes educational innovation and its educators are in a permanent process of formation and updating.

The commitment of this community is renewed every day and recalls what was laid down by Saint John Baptist de La Salle: "The purpose of this Institute is to provide a human and Christian education for the young, especially the poor". Thus, as part of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the District is committed to evangelization and the education of those most in need.

In the various works undertaken in the region, the idea is to offer an education that responds integrally to the demands that Mexico and society of the 21st century present and the challenges generated by that society in terms of knowledge and new economic schemes.

TIJUANA: A BORDER IN WHICH TO SOW HOPE

Since the end of the seventies, the Brothers of San Francisco had been carrying out support missions in some sectors of Tijuana, one of the principal cities on the border between Mexico and the United States. Upon learning of this work, Bishop Don Juan Jesús Posadas Ocampo asked the Brothers of the Christian Schools - specifically the Districts of California and Northern Mexico - to create a work to train lay leaders to serve the diocese.

The first community of Brothers arrived on August 16, 1981 and was made up of Brother Armando García, Brother Juan Gómez and Brother Enrique Vargas, who would later become the Director of the project. Their first task was to find premises and people who could help to sustain the work economically, since educational services had to be free so that people with few resources could have access to them.

With the support of the Franciscan Fathers, the La Salle Center for Integral Formation was founded on January 25, 1982, as a Civil Association of Tijuana. In a first stage, and considering the needs of the local parishes, courses were offered in English, in forms of communication for youth leaders, organization of youth groups, formation of catechists, organization of comprehensive sports programs, biblical initiation and human relations within the family. The project was very quickly well received and student enrolments increased, so a year later it was necessary to move the centre to a new location of its own which would be suitable for the development of activities.

Since then, the La Salle Comprehensive Formation Center continues to offer free non-formal education programs aimed at low-income youth and adults. It has already been recognized as a Community Plaza by the National Institute of Adult Education and as a Counseling Center by the Open High School Department, both in the city of Tijuana. Currently, the center receives about 1,700 students per quarter, offers more than 180 free courses in religious education, family and psychological training, job training, cultural promotion and health promotion, and promotes secondary and high school education in the open modality.

This educational work builds alternatives for the difficult social context of the Mexican border and relies on the work of the De La Salle Brothers, the young volunteers, the members of the Board of Trustees and all the teachers who give lessons free of charge.



VIRTUAL TALKS

In the Regional Plan of Action, both for the period 2015-2018 and for the period 2019-2021, the realization of virtual Regional conversations was established with the following purposes: to respond to the themes established in Circulars 469 and 470 of the Institute, to disseminate the thinking of the members of RELAL on themes of interest to the Region, and to share criteria for reflection and action by RELAL on the themes of study and the ongoing formation of the Lasallian family of RELAL.



Thus, from 2015 to 2019, seven Regional virtual talks have been held on the following topics:

- Declaration on Lasallian pedagogy 1**
5 October 2016
- Declaration on Lasallian pedagogy 2**
31st May 2017
- Achieving sustainable communities**
15 March 2018
- Prayer in the style of St. John-Baptist de La Salle**
23 May 2018
- The search for inclusive development, the option for the poor**
27 February 2019
- La Salle building a future**
On promoting and defending children's rights
5 March 2019
- La Salle building a future**
A conversation on the promotion and defence of children's rights, with which the Regional campaign "La Salle building the future" will be closed.
5 March 2020

Upcoming talks

For the near future, the Regional Action Plan 2019-2021 plans for the realization of two talks:

- May 27, 2020:** discussion on the mega-trend that Circular 470 proposes for the year: Overcoming divisions while respecting uniqueness. Interreligious dialogue.
- March 3, 2021:** discussion on the mega-trend proposed for that year: Affirmation of individual processes versus community experience.

More information: www.relal.org.co

WHAT DO THE TALKS MEAN FOR THE REGION?

- They are a space for dialogue and exchange of ideas; the opportunity to consolidate an identity as a Region. (Rafa Cerón, District Antilles-South Mexico).
- They are an opportunity to create learning communities in which we reflect together on being and working as Lasallian educators, and on the present and future of our mission, getting to know the different realities of Latin America and the Caribbean and learning from each other. (Adriana Bolaños, District Mexico North).
- They are a means that allows us to maintain and strengthen the bonds of belonging to the Region and to the Institute, as well as to strengthen the Lasallian identity and to feel that we are all "one spirit and one charism. (Cimar Rocha, District Bolivia-Peru).
- They are exercises in virtual encounters that constitute an example of the use of technology to bring Lasallians in the Region closer together. They have very positive consequences, above all because of the opportunity to systematize the educational experiences of the Region and because they stimulate the production of thought. (Br. Francisco Boniche, District of Central America-Panama).

WHAT CONTRIBUTION HAVE THEY MADE TO THE REGION?

- They have had a successful outcome, as well as excellent participation. They have positioned the name of RELAL, giving it a high degree of credibility and expectation in the audiences involved. They have integrated the Districts, thanks to joint participation. (Diego Castrillón, Norandino District).
- They give a sense of belonging, they help reflection in each of the Educational Institutions, they open up the perspective of the Institute. (Rafa Cerón, District Antilles-South Mexico).
- They are an exercise that generates identity and belonging, in addition to allowing us to experience that De La Salle goes beyond our immediate surroundings and invites us to open our eyes and our horizons to consider other realities as part of our educational mission. (Adriana Bolaños, District Mexico North).
- They have informed and enriched the cultural background of the Lasallians of the Region in the topics discussed. They have also made known current issues, some of which must be urgently addressed in our educational and social realities. (Antuaneth Jessica Ortega, District Bolivia-Peru).
- The talks are very important for the District, especially for addressing the issue of children's rights. In our District, a series of actions are being carried out with the intention of sensitizing the agents of the mission around this issue. I believe that we can advance in this project, as well as think about the diffusion of the topic at the level of the RELAL: 1) creating reflections or information that synthesize the actions; 2) carrying out a Regional seminar on the topic of the rights of the children. In the future, we can move forward with action by seeking to give more visibility to the project and the model actions at the level of the RELAL. (Br. Jorge Alexandre Bieluczyk, District of Brazil-Chile).

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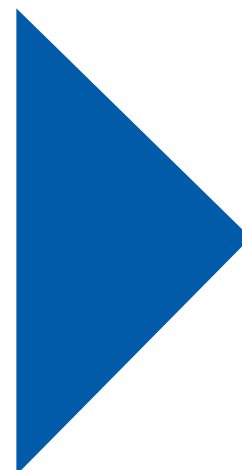
**And the
Tabatinga project**



**MEL
in the Amazon**



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