

LASALLE

# RELEM NEWS

N. 9 SEPTEMBER 2024



This school year 2024-2025 brings us the joy of the incorporation of new District delegates in the MEL Council of RELEM; as well as a 'farewell' to our dear **Jean Chapuis**, in charge of Lasallian Identity in the RELEM Team and District delegates **Br Jesús Félix Martínez**, **Mrs. France Goossens** and **Mr. Alberto Tornatora**.

**Jean Chapuis** has played different roles in his District of France, becoming 'delegate of tutelle' of different schools in Paris and since 2018 responsible for the Identity in the Regional Team of Europe and the Near East.

Those of us who have had the honour and pleasure of sharing work and responsibilities with Jean highlight his friendship, his loyalty to the Lasallian project, but especially his leadership and capacity for work. His vision and experience have ensured that, in the difficult times of the pandemic, the 'on line' work of the joint formation of directors with Assedil has been successful.

We wish Jean a very happy and well-deserved retirement, knowing that we will meet again on the Lasallian roads of our RELEM Region...thank you very much Jean!

And as we said in the heading, we would like to thank **Brother Jesús Félix Martínez** from Arlep, **Mme France Goossens** from Belgium South and **Dott. Alberto Tornatora** from Italy. They have also carried out the invaluable work of being the link and liaison between their Districts and the MEL Council, coinciding also with Assedil Assemblies, Regional Assemblies, Assedil congresses and other commitments in which their participation has been very positive. Thank you very much for your excellent work!

*Thank you  
Jean!*



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And we happily welcome to Bro. Andrea Biondi from Italy, Bro. Julio González from Arlep and M. Olivier Husquin from Belgium South (France and French-speaking Europe). Each of them has had different responsibilities within the educational and pastoral world in their districts. We are convinced that their points of view and experience will enrich the Council at this time of an exciting future, which awaits us, if we follow the guidelines of the Leaven Project, the contributions of the 46th General Chapter and the II AMEL of the Region. Welcome to our journey!

# ASSOCIATION COMMISSION

RELEM HAS SET UP AN ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE AS REQUESTED BY THE MEL ASSEMBLY; THE MEMBERS ARE: MRS CLAIRE SAID (P.O.); MRS COLETTE ALIX (F.E.F.); MRS HEATHER RUPLE GILSON (IGBM); MRS ISABEL SOLER (ARLEP); MR LORENZO CUTORE (ITALY); BROTHER PETER MAGAC (C.E.). THE FIRST ONLINE MEETING TOOK PLACE ON 20 SEPTEMBER. WE HOPE THAT THE SPIRIT WILL ACCOMPANY THIS NEW COMMISSION, WHICH IS SO IMPORTANT FOR ALL OF US.

# VOCATIONS COMMISSION



THE COMMISSION, MADE UP OF HEATHER RUPLE AND BROTHERS BRICE, DANIEL, ENRICO, HOSSAM, JANUSZ AND JORGE, HAS ALREADY MET TWICE ONLINE TO BEGIN THE JOURNEY OF THE NEXT FEW YEARS. AS WELL AS SHARING THE JOURNEY THAT THE DIFFERENT DISTRICTS ARE TAKING, THE FOCUS HAS BEEN ON THE "HOTSPOT" SO THAT THE FOURTH REGIONAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE CAN BE REALISED AND TOGETHER WE CAN GIVE CREATIVE, SHARED AND CONCRETE RESPONSES TO THE FUTURE OF ALL LASALLIAN VOCATIONS, ESPECIALLY THOSE OF THE BROTHERS. ALL THE INFORMATION IS TO COME.





# JOSEPH C. GILSON :

## NEW MEMBER OF THE RELEM TEAM

As I embark on this new role, I am delighted to (re-)introduce myself to the Lasallian Family in Europe and the Mediterranean.

My Lasallian Vocation is shared with my wife, Heather Ruple, and our two daughters, Mary Angela and Charley. As a family we belong to a newly established intentional community, the Lasallian Community of Southern England, and reside in South Oxfordshire, United Kingdom.

My Lasallian journey began in September 1989 when I joined De La Salle College in Malta. I pursued my education at De La Salle through primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. During university, I volunteered with several Lasallian NGOs both locally and internationally, later returning to De La Salle College as a teacher of Mathematics and Physics. The seed of my Lasallian Vocation had been planted.

In 2006, I was invited to join the International Council of Young Lasallians and attend the 2nd International Symposium of Young Lasallians. By September 2010, I began serving as the inaugural International Coordinator for Young Lasallians within the Institute's Secretariat for Lasallian Family and Association. As that role concluded, I transitioned to a new chapter in September 2015 as Director of Formation for Mission for the then newly formed District of Ireland, Great Britain, and Malta.

In my roles as Director of Formation for Mission and Director of Mission (since September 2019), I focused on coordinating and promoting the Lasallian Mission. This involved strengthening formation programmes and preparing for leadership and governance changes to ensure the sustainability and vitality of our Mission.

Throughout my time in the District and at Institute level, I have been privileged to be accompanied by inspiring Brothers and Partners. On various RELEM Councils, Commissions, and Committees, I have collaborated with committed Lasallians who work tirelessly to uphold our Mission of educating and forming young people in faith, service, and community.

In my new role for RELEM, I will have two days a week to contribute to the strengthening of collaboration within the Region and fostering connections across the Lasallian network. A key focus for my first year will be to support the Strategic Alliances in RELEM (StAR) Commission as it develops a concrete plan for closer cooperation and alignment among the RELEM Districts. These efforts are essential as we continue to advance St. John Baptist de La Salle's educational and spiritual vision across our network of over 450 ministries in Europe and the Mediterranean.

I look forward to meeting many of you, exchanging ideas, and working together, inspired by La Salle, to be leaven at the service of the most vulnerable.

*Joseph C. Gilson*





# BRO. FADY SALAMA

"Allow me to answer the questions that several people have asked me: 'Why did you choose to become a Brother of the Christian Schools?', 'What helped you to make the decision to take perpetual vows?', or 'Are you ready to take this step?'"

## A "FOREVER" IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD



"Il faut qu'il grandisse et que moi, je diminue" (In 3,30)

My answer is expressed through the drawings: During my first profession of vows, following my novitiate in the Philippines, I felt - and still feel - a profound admiration for our founder, Saint John Baptist de La Salle. Wishing to express this sentiment through a drawing, I sketched De La Salle kneeling, thus showing his surrender and humility, in order to be grounded and closer to the needs of the child. Opposite, the student is depicted sitting on a stool, symbolizing that - through education: the book - the student grows. One notices that Saint John Baptist de La Salle's hand is raised towards the heavens, reminding us that in his meditations, De La Salle urges us to become aware of our role as intermediaries between the child and God.

After seven years of commitment within the Institute of the Brothers, I wished this time I didn't want to draw it alone, I wanted the people with whom I shared the mission to participate with me. Thus, a few months ago, I reached out via WhatsApp to educators, directors, Brothers, and movement leaders, asking them to share with me one to three values they like to transmit to young people. I received more than fifty-eight responses, which I faithfully transcribed (without redundancy) onto De La Salle's habit. I then sent a similar request to students and Young

Lasallians, inviting them to share one to three values they believe they have acquired within the Lasallian framework. More than sixty-four responses reached me, which I inscribed within the silhouette of the child, again without repetition.

I chose to place at the bottom of this drawing the famous phrase of our founder: 'Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God.' This phrase is particularly dear to me, for I am convinced that it is when we are truly 'Present' in an educational relationship, and conscious of the Lord's presence, that we can fully appreciate and enjoy all these values expressed in the drawing.

I conclude by affirming that if I have pronounced my 'YES' to the Lord today, it is thanks to all of you. I am grateful to you for giving meaning and value to my life. Please, Pray for me! Live Jesus in our hearts, forever."



Souvenons-nous que nous sommes en la Sainte Présence de Dieu



## **BR. BORJA AND BR. CRISTIAN: FIRST VOWS IN GRIÑÓN**

### **"WHEREVER I SEND YOU, YOU WILL FEEL ME NEAR YOU".**

Last August, on the 24th to be precise, Brother Cristian and I celebrated our first religious profession as De La Salle Brothers after two intense years of novitiate in Madrid. The celebration took place in the church of the La Salle Griñón school and we were accompanied by friends, family and Brothers from all over the district. We were also fortunate to be joined by Brothers Joël Palüd and Anatole Diretenadji, Brothers General Councillors.

Our motto for the communities for the 2023/24 school year was very simple and invited us to live in gratitude: Thank you! And it was this experience that was marked by fire during the celebration. First of all, thank you to our families who accompanied us in this special moment. The example of our parents has shaped each of us personally, making us Brothers in a very real way. Secondly, thank you to all the Brothers who have gone before us and also to all those who live in community and mission with us. In addition, we must also be grateful for the witness of the Lasallian story of our Founder and the first Brothers who came to us through the formation we have had during this time.

Today, we see that we can develop our life and our story in this Institute of the De La Salle Brothers, in which we have felt fully welcomed by all. We see that we can fulfil our lives and continue to grow in our relationship with God in the midst of this great worldwide community that is our Institute. We also ask you, as we do today and as John Baptist de La Salle did in his time, never to cease dreaming and hoping for an Institute that is always new and enlightened by the light of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Finally, and above all, we thank the Lord of our life and our history, who never ceases to call us despite our inconsistencies and our weaknesses. You have always been there for us, and we believe that today we can make our own the experience of the disciples of Emmaus: we felt our hearts burning with you and with our brothers, and how, in the breaking of the bread, you renewed your presence in our midst. And you gave us the strength to continue our journey. Here we are, Father, send us out and stay with us.





# FRATERNITY IN ACTION

"CREATED FOR UNCONDITIONAL LOVE".



**Fraternity in Action**, a project for Young Lasallians, took me to Italy in August. Although I have always loved this country, this trip also brought me out of my comfort zone.

Helping for 10 days at La Casa Arcobaleno brought a lot of mixed feelings. Going there as the only Young Lasallian was exciting and a little bit stressful. I had imagined it differently (with people I already knew), but on the 1st of August, I was the only one arriving in Italy. However, I was never alone. In Scampia (a suburb of Naples), you are always surrounded. Volunteers come and go at La Casa Arcobaleno, and you meet new children and youngsters there every day. I was pleasantly

surprised by the strong sense of community in this neighborhood. What touched me most was the effect Brother Enrico has on this community. Everyone knows and respects him. He lives for others and wants a better future for the youth of the neighborhood. He helps where he can. This help is not just material, but manifests itself mainly in the conversations he engages in and the love he gives.

He regularly goes to a Roma camp located not far from Scampia. Together with several scouts, I went there twice myself. It is a moving experience. You play there with the children and try to brighten their day a little or take their minds off things, but you are very aware that you will not be able to change much about their environment and future prospects. The realization that I grew up with more than I ever needed was growing. The only difference between us is luck.

Scampia is a neighborhood characterized by poverty and mafia. I knew that beforehand ... but for me it is a place of unconditional love. I am incredibly grateful that I was brought out of my comfort zone and I look forward to being there again.

**Mathilde Leysen, Belgium North**





# FRATERNITY IN ACTION

## "THE LASALLIAN FRATERNITY : BREAD BROKEN FOR THE POOR".

The experience in Egypt was an experience of fraternity and therefore of stripping. I certainly stripped myself of my beliefs and conventions about 'living well' in order to understand their way of living and living with what is there. I have certainly stripped myself of all the fears I had about a people whom, through prejudice, I simply believed to be poor and uncivilised, but whom I discovered to be rich in values and humiliated by uncivilised people. I was undoubtedly robbed when I thought I had the right answer, that I had to do things my way, but instead I made them happen, and I witnessed the creative intuitions of men and women who seemed sure that Providence would never leave them without some good idea.

J'ai réalisé que vivre en tant que Frère peut être une expérience de liberté et de libération. Un Frère ne peut pas rester enfermé dans la méfiance à l'égard d'un autre frère, quelles que soient son origine, sa religion ou sa culture. Une sœur ne peut pas se cacher dans la vie tranquille et tourner le dos à l'autre sœur qui vit l'enfer sur terre. Un Frère et une sœur peuvent au contraire se défaire des lourds ornements des convictions sociales, des bandes étroites de la loi du plus fort et de la tendance récente au « prestantisme » débridé. Il est pourtant presque naturel de dire que si l'on se dépouille de quelque chose, il faut se vêtir d'autre chose. Mais non. Quand on se sent Frère, on n'a pas besoin de se couvrir de quoi que ce soit, je le répète : c'est une expérience de liberté et de libération.



I could and I would like to talk about everything I experienced, from the serious and in-depth training we had before leaving for the different villages, to the meetings to share the impressions of the day and ask us what the children's needs were for the next day; I could talk about the beautiful landscapes of southern Egypt, from the monasteries carved out of the rock, where even the Holy Family stopped, to the fertile shores of the Nile which, in the arid desert by which they are surrounded, remind us that there is always hope for life, after all. I could tell you about the ordinary people I've met, the parents and grandparents who don't sleep and work tirelessly for two pennies so that their children understand the preciousness of a united family and self-sacrificing love. But all that would interest few and bore many. Instead, I'm sure that one gesture, just one, will be welcomed and cherished by all: the way the Egyptians break bread.

The table is round. We approach it together, each with a different food to share: a bit of cheese, a bit of beans, a bit of vegetables, a bit of bread. Then the one who is happy leads the thanksgiving for the food, either in song or in prayer.





Only then do we sit down. No-one has a plate, just a handkerchief to lean on or wipe their hands. Someone takes the bread. He breaks it. He shares it with everyone and so, in the celebration, we eat central dishes. At this apparently poor table, with little hygiene, little elegance and above all little food, I saw bread broken and love multiplied. This bread was transformed into each of the peacemakers I saw, full of hope, offering joy and confidence in a desperate country. These boys and girls who, like the bread each day, break it and give themselves to the children they meet. This God who brought us together and who one day said to us "do as I do".

Thank you Egypt, for everything, but above all because you taught me to break bread.

*Vincenzo Rosati, Italy*

## UNA EXPERIENCIA DE VOLUNTARIADO PARA LOS JÓVENES LASALIANOS

From 23 July to 5 August, I had the opportunity to take part in the "Fraternity in Action" project in Upper Egypt. Together with local volunteers and others from other countries, we set up a major programme for children in various villages in Upper Egypt. I had the honour of helping out in a small Orthodox village called Abu Hager. The time I spent there was very enriching for me and broadened my horizons. It was great to see what Lasallian projects are happening around the world. I am very grateful to be part of this mission and to have made many new friends during my time in Egypt. I also look forward to participating in other Lasallian missions in the future.

*Marlene Seitz, Central Europe*  
(Alumni, De La Salle Strebersdorf)





# CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN CATECHETICAL TEAM (EEC) CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA.

The congress theme of "Catechesis, liturgy and human experience" was developed from an ecumenical perspective, with speeches from more than six different churches, including Orthodox, Greek-Catholic, Catholic, Protestant and Lutheran, as well as experiences updating the relationship between catechesis and liturgy with more than 40 representatives from Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Romania, which hosted the event.

Brothers José Ma. Pérez and Javier Núñez, members of the San Pío X - La Salle Campus Madrid Institute, were present at the congress, and Brother José Ma. was a member of the coordinating committee and spoke in the final speech summarising the work of the congress.

During the congress, there was time for very enriching presentations, to get to know Romanian culture, as well as to share experiences and celebrations in catechesis and liturgy.

There were four parts, to deepen the theme from a historical approach, a contemporary approach, an ecumenical approach and another called "Christifideles laici". It was enriching to learn more about the realities of the Christian East. Dr Christian Barta's presentation on the Romanian Greek Catholic Church underlined the importance of not separating iconography, liturgy and spirituality from catechesis. Liviu Viducan's contribution on the liturgy and catechesis in the Orthodox Church was also of interest.

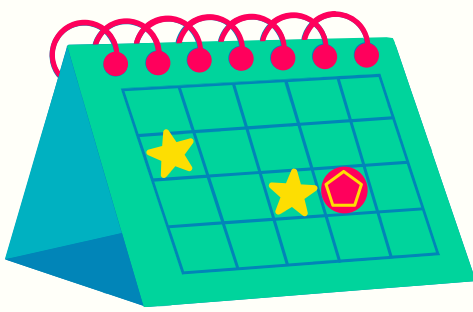
Joël Molinario and Angela Kaupp acknowledged that Françoise Derkenne and Hélène Lubienska de Lenval were pioneers of catechetical renewal in France. Dr Elena Massimi pointed out that liturgy and catechesis have not always gone hand in hand with human experience, "on the one hand theology, catechesis and liturgy, and on the other anthropology, forgetting that Revelation takes place in the flesh of man".

Dr Roland Lacroix recalled that the current Directory for Catechesis speaks of a kind of new return to the sources of catechesis in three respects. Firstly, the link between catechesis, liturgy and life experience, as catechumenal evidence; secondly, a catechesis inspired by the ritual itinerary of the Christian initiation of adults; and thirdly, the rediscovery of mystagogical action as a catechetical resource.

Angela Kaupp established a link between catechesis, liturgy and women, questioning the secondary role of women in the Church's mission. Carl-Maria Sultana, a former Lasallian student from Malta, made the link between liturgy, catechesis and the family, giving rise to an interesting dialogue on the types of family and the current difficulties that the family encounters in the transmission of the faith and the first proclamation.

The meeting with the Greek-Catholic community of the Andrei Muresanu parish in Cluj was a very moving and evocative moment that helped to bring to life many of the ideas put forward during the presentations of pastoral practice. It was a rich meeting that helped to strengthen the links between the Christian West and East, as well as ecumenism. The next congress of the European Catechetical Team is scheduled for 2026, but the IVth International Catechetical Congress will take place in Rome, at the Vatican, in 2025 as part of the Jubilee.

*fr. Javi Nunez*



# OUR REGIONAL JOURNEY TOGETHER 24 25

## VISITORS' COUNCIL

7 OCTOBER 2024  
9 DECEMBER 2024  
5 MAY 2025

## VISITORS' CONFERENCE

ROME: 10 - 14 MARCH 2025

## MEL COUNCIL

30 SEPTEMBER - 1  
OCTOBER 2024  
9-10 DECEMBER 2024  
10-11 MARCH 2025  
23-24 JUNE 2025

## RELEM TEAM

29-30 SEPTEMBER 2024  
13-14 JANUARY 2024  
7-8 APRIL 2025



2 OCTOBER 2024  
28 OCTOBER ONLINE  
26 NOVEMBER ON LINE  
11 DECEMBER 2024

*Created by the Regional Assembly in February 2024, the StAR Commission, which was set up in April at the Visitors' Conference in Iasi, is tasked with meeting all the Districts and the Delegation over the coming months, before December 2024, to "create a global governance model that fosters the desired collaboration" through a more personal and interactive approach. The results will be presented at the Visitors' Conference in March 2025. We entrust everyone with these meetings and this desire to create together bonds of fraternity for young people and the poor.*

## CULTURE OF VOCATIONS

11 NOVEMBER 24 ON LINE  
5-7 DECEMBER 2024  
19 FEBRUARY 2025 ON LINE  
3-5 MAY 2025

## ASSOCIATION

15 NOVEMBRE ON LINE  
13-15 FEBRUARY 2025  
10 APRIL 2025 ON LINE  
23-25 JUNE 2025

## ASSEDIL

6-11 OCTOBER 2024  
DIRCETORS' FORMATION - ROME  
23-26 APRIL 2025  
CONGRESS - MALTA

## FORMATION FOR FORMATORS IN ENGLISH

16-20 JUNE 2025 - MALTA