

First woman as archivist general of the Institute

Dr Maria Errico Agnello, following the appointment on 1 September 2024 by Brother Armin Luistro, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, as the new head of the Institute's Central Archives at the Generalate in Rome, expressed that she was surprised when she was offered the post of Brother Hilaire Raharilalao: *"I never thought I would be able to hold this position. I accepted the position knowing that, despite my skills, it will not be an easy job and that I still have a lot to learn. I hope I can live up to the commitment required and the trust that has been placed in me"*.



Maria shares her work with the other members of the Office of Lasallian Heritage and Research, which includes the library, the archives and the museum, made up of Br. Santiago Rodríguez Mancini, Director, Anna Cascone, in charge of the Library, Br. John Fernando, Assistant Archivist *"not forgetting the colleagues with whom I have worked so far such as: Brother Pierre Petitjean, who has been in charge of the photographic and audio-visual archives, Brother Diego Muñoz and Brother George Van Grieken, previous Directors of this Office, and dear Brother Hilaire Raharilalao, with whom I have shared the care of the archives over the years and whom I cannot help but thank. Collaboration that has helped me and helps me every day to face the old and new commitments of my work"*.

Maria Errico Agnello will also be the first laywoman to hold the position of General Archivist of the archives of the Institute's *"Maison Mère"*. *"The archives of the Institute, since its foundation, have always been entrusted to a Brother. The first rule for managing an archive is to know the history of the entity that produced it, and over these 300 years, several Brothers have lovingly cared for the Institute's archives, but many of them were not experienced archivists. I believe that the new administration of the Institute simply wanted to entrust the archives to a professional, showing the utmost care and attention to a place as complex as an archive"*.

The fact that a woman was appointed for Mary is only by chance, as she has been working at the Brothers' archive for almost seven years, although it is certainly a novelty in the history of Lasallian archive management.

"I would say that this choice is part of the path of openness started in recent years by the new administration of the Institute and which I hope will continue over time. However, the presence of women in the Institute is nothing new. There are many who work within the Generalate, just as there are many women in management roles in archives, libraries and museums in Lasallian Districts around the world. For me it is simply a great honour to work for and with an Institution whose historic mission is based on the education of children," Maria concludes.