

Joint RELEM Conference of Brother Visitors and Auxiliary Visitors with the RELEM MEL Council: Reflecting Together on the Future of the Region

During the week of **10 to 14 March 2025**, the Conference of Brother Visitors (including Auxiliary Visitors), the members of the Council of RELEM MEL and RELEM Commissions gathered together at the Generalate in Rome to approve the proposal of the StAR team, which had recently visited the Districts and the Delegation of North Belgium of the Region with a view to attempting their unification. The Conference in general wanted to reflect on the future of the Region, reaching unanimity on important decisions and renewing the mandate to the StAR Commission to accompany it until 2027.

The week opened with a spiritual moment animated by Brother Josean Villalabeitia, while each afternoon was devoted to listening to the reports of the various Regional Commissions on Pastoral Ministry of Vocations, Evangelisation, Association, Young Brothers as well as a presentation by the La Salle Foundation. All this with the aim of showing how the Region is active and seeks to collaborate: the Young Lasallians' *Fraternity in Action* project will help to take "their hearts to the peripheries" of the Region, particularly in Poland, Italy, Egypt, Morocco and Spain; the Commission on Association and the Commission on Evangelisation are planning a number of Regional meetings over the next two years and during the 2026-2027 school year, with the planning of a vocations campaign in the Region.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, 12 March, Brothers and Lasallians also made, in the "footsteps" of Brother Gabriel Drolin, sent to Rome by the Founder in 1702, the Jubilee pilgrimage by passing through the Holy Door of the Basilica of St Mary Major and celebrating the Eucharist at the *Collegio S. Giuseppe-Istituto de Merode* where the group of pilgrims was warmly welcomed.

Last week's meeting was also attended by **Br Armin Luistro, Superior General**,

who, on the afternoon of Thursday 13 March thanked the Lasallians of RELEM for making bold decisions, just when it would have been simpler and more natural to maintain the *status quo*. “In doing so, however, RELEM is responding to one of the Pathways of Transformation of the 46th General Chapter,” Br. Armin stressed with satisfaction.

Brother Sergio Leal, General Bursar, on the occasion of this joint meeting, felt the need to share the Institute’s project on the 7th Path of Transformation concerning the sharing of goods and the creation of funds for the benefit of the Mission and the elderly Brothers.

Brother Joel Palud, General Councillor for RELEM, said in his closing remarks: “During this week, ‘were not our hearts burning’? There is no doubt that on our road to Emmaus, Christ was present. Now we are returning to Jerusalem (our respective Districts), and He has asked us to proclaim to our brothers and sisters what really happened, the joy and hope that fill our hearts [...]”.

“The conviction,” continues Brother Joel, “is that what we have just decided is the choice of life.... We dream big because we are not resigned [...]. Our lay colleagues present here today can testify to that’.

In this regard, Prof. **Iwona Arolska**, Polish member of the MEL Council, pleased with her participation in this meeting, says: “We are happy to have taken part in the Joint Conference. During these days,” Iwona continues, “representatives of the De La Salle Brothers and members of the MEL Council were invited to take part in prayer, reflection, retreat, discussion and decision-making on the future of our Region. In the light of the work of the StAR Commission in the Region and the proposal for RELEM,” Professor Arolska continues and concludes, “the Conference was a key moment to share everyone’s fears and hopes, exchange views, analyse the various options, and make decisions for the implementation of the new strategic plan.

Iwona Arolska’s voice was joined by that of **Brother Julio González**, who said that this was the first time he had taken part in the RELEM Visitors’ Conference. “For me it was a gratifying experience of fraternity, I noticed that the Region has vitality and wants to face the challenges of the future with determination”. He continued, “I enthusiastically live the call to continue to make the Gospel of Jesus a reality through the ministry of the Christian school. As a Brother, I am ready,

together with all Lasallians, to lead a process that will bind us more and more in the future, which will help us to ensure the mission with solid district structures”.



