

The Associative Dimension as an Opportunity for Synodality at the Service of Fraternity

Between the end of the year 2024 and the beginning of 2025, we Lasallians are getting through, discreetly and quietly, an important Tercentenary. **It is that of the civil and ecclesiastical recognition of our entity, of our mission, of our identity.** In fact, the Royal Patents in France and the Bull *In apostolicae dignitatis solio*, by Pope Benedict XIII, conclude the process of the foundation of our Institute. It is a long journey from that morning in 1679 when Adrian Nyel met Monsieur De La Salle at the doorway of the house of the Sisters of the Child Jesus up to the General Chapter of August 1725 when our Brothers received the Bull and pronounced the new vows. It is the path of the mission carried out daily and of the awareness that emerges out of it.

This awareness was expressed in stammering words, in **a series of waves that showed ever new traits of an ecclesial and social identity proper to those modern times that were unfolding in France and would come to cover the whole world.** From the *Memoir on the Habit* to the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* and the *Rule of 1718*, the process that accompanied our Father. And, from the letter that Brother Timothy, Superior General, wrote to Father Vivant to entrust him with the proceedings of the Bull to the *Rule of 1725* with its Preface, the journey that the Brothers undertook already without him. It is a journey which continues up to the present day and continues to expand ever more inclusive and nuanced waves in what we call today the Lasallian Family.

A resolutely synodal way. A way which, at the heart of its development, contains that central value of our identity which is the Association to sustain the schools, Association for the mission, together and by association to procure the Glory of God in the daily work of education.

We have asked **Dr. Carolina Bacher Martínez**, an Argentinian theologian who currently works mainly in Chile, at the Universidad Silva Henríquez, to elaborate for us precisely this theme in which she has been involved for some time: **synodality and lay associations.** Carolina has worked for four years as a

lecturer for our Pastoral Institute of Adolescence in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in the formation of parish catechists in the centres that the Institute has in some of the city's working-class neighbourhoods. There, she has been able to contribute her professional competence, which constantly intersects the perspective of the Social Sciences with that of Pastoral Theology.

We thank her for this work and we hope that it can be inspiring for the entire Lasallian world. With it **we begin a series of Bulletins which, in the context of the Tercentenary, will focus on the fifth Pathway of Transformation** adopted by the latest General Chapter: Association for Mission.

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Office of Lasallian Heritage and Research

- Cuaderno MEL 60 (español)
- MEL Bulletin 60 (english)
- Cahier MEL 60 (français)