

DATE: **January 26, 2026**

TO: **THE LASALLIAN COMMUNITY (USLS, SJS-LS, DLSASMC)**

FROM: **BR. IRWIN ANTHONY CLIMACO FSC**
Community Director De La Salle Brothers - Bacolod

SUBJECT: **Mentors as Companions in Mission**
Pastoral Letter # 6 : Pastoral Letter in commemoration of the Lasallian Mentors' Day 2026

"To be entrusted with the teaching of the young is a great gift and grace of God."
-Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Dear Brothers, Partners in Mission, Faculty, Staff, Parents, and Students,

With gratitude and reverence, we commemorate January 26, Lasallian Mentors' Day, a date deeply woven into our Lasallian history and identity. The words of Saint John Baptist de La Salle remind us that education is never merely a profession or institutional function, but a sacred trust rooted in grace and sustained by faith.

On this day in 1725, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools received the Papal Bull of Approbation, formally recognizing the Institute as a religious society within the Church. This moment affirmed a bold and faith-filled vision: that the education of the young, especially the poor, required not only competence and structure, but a community of educators bound together by faith, zeal, and a deep concern for persons.

We also remember January 26, 1937, when the relics of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, after years of displacement due to historical upheavals, were finally laid to rest in Rome. This event stands as a sign of continuity and fidelity, reminding us that the Lasallian mission endures through uncertainty, transition, and change.

In the Philippines, January 26 has long held special meaning. While once observed as Catholic Teachers' Day, many La Salle schools now mark this date as Lasallian Mentors' Day. This shift reflects a deeper understanding of formation in the Lasallian tradition: that **all adults in the community are mentors to the young, each in different ways and contexts of presence and service**. This year's theme, "Mentors as Companions in Mission," invites us to see mentorship not as a function or hierarchy, but as a shared journey of faith, service, and formation with the young entrusted to our care.

To our teachers, formators, administrators, staff, and parents, your daily presence, often unseen and uncelebrated, is a living testimony to the Lasallian mission. In classrooms and offices, in hallways and homes, in moments of patience and moments of quiet sacrifice, you give more than what is required and remain faithful even when appreciation is scarce. For the love you pour out, for the hope you sustain, and for the young lives you shape simply by showing up

day after day, we offer our heartfelt and enduring gratitude. You teach not only through lessons, policies, and structures, but through listening hearts, steady presence, and a care that reassures, uplifts, and gives life.

In a world shaped by the speed of the digital age and marked by experiences of being rushed, fragmented, and uncertain, your mentoring becomes a sacred act of hope, one that goes beyond institutional systems and bureaucratic demands, beyond what can be measured by workload, recognition, compensation, or accreditations. In this light, Pope Leo XIV, in his Apostolic Letter *Disegnare nuove mappe di speranza* ("Drawing New Maps of Hope")¹, issued on 27 October 2025, reminds educational communities that education becomes a privileged space for evangelization and a beacon of hope amid complexity and fragmentation. It is a ministry rooted in relationship, sustained by faith, and animated by the belief that what we do for the young participates not merely in something greater than ourselves, but in God's own work of teaching minds, touching hearts, and transforming lives.

In this light, our work is never neutral nor merely functional. As St. John Baptist de La Salle reminds us, "*Your work will be of little value if you do not have as your purpose the salvation of souls*" (Meditations 148.3). This sacred mission is ordered not only toward the formation and salvation of the young entrusted to us, but also toward our own ongoing conversion and salvation as mentors in this ministry. In accompanying others, we ourselves are continually formed, challenged, and drawn more deeply into God's saving work.

As we commemorate these events, may we renew our commitment to be signs of faith, *signum fidei*, for one another. May we continue to educate with hearts attuned to the realities of the young, especially those who are poor, vulnerable, and searching for meaning. In the spirit of Br. Armin Luistro FSC, Superior General, in his recent pastoral letter *Fratres in Unum: Bridging Connections Between Heaven and Earth*² (25 December 2025), may our life together reflect a fraternity rooted in relationship, where communion is lived, difference is embraced, and God's presence is made visible through genuine encounter. And may we always remember that to mentor is to trust that God is already at work in the lives of those entrusted to us.

May St. John Baptist de La Salle and all our Holy Brothers continue to intercede for our community, inspiring us to remain faithful mentors and true companions in mission.

Live Jesus in our hearts, forever.

¹ [DRAWING NEW MAPS OF HOPE \(*Disegnare nuove mappe di speranza*\): Apostolic Letter of Pope Leo XIV on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Conciliar Declaration *Gravissimum educationis*](#)

² [Fratres in Unum: Bridging Connections Between Heaven and Earth: Pastoral Letter of Br. Armin Luistro FSC, Superior General, Brothers of the Christian Schools](#)