



WORDS OF FAREWELL AND COMMISSIONING

Br. Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría

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With eyes opened and burning hearts

**Were not our hearts
burning (within us)
while he spoke to us
on the way and opened
the Scriptures to us?
They set out at once
and returned to...
(Luke 24)**

Dear Brothers,

Each of us, as Brother capitulants, had to leave our usual place of life and work in order to set out on the path that lead us to this 44th Chapter Assembly. Within a matter of hours, we will again be on the return journey to our countries in the Lasallian Regions of French-speaking Canada, USA/Toronto, RELAL, Europe, Africa, and PARC.

In a certain way, that road of "leaving from and returning to" our places of origin, recalls the experience of God's action at Easter as lived by the two disciples on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus with that mysterious companion who accompanied them, listened to them, explained to them, and who sat at table with them to share the bread, their brother Jesus, living and risen.

Like those two disillusioned disciples, we came to Rome, having left behind our communities, in some of which we may have found Brothers who, like many of the disciples in the community in Jerusalem, were living in doubt about recent events, were fearful of opposing forces, and who were uncertain about the future. We, together in this assembly, have shared those experiences, we have re-read them in light of Scripture, we have celebrated

them with wine and with bread. And our blind eyes were opened. Now, like the disciples of Emmaus, we also say to ourselves, were not our hearts burning?

We have set out on a journey, but not only the Brother capitulants present here in Rome participated in this revealing conversation with the risen Jesus. In fact, this 44th Chapter was different from other Chapters for various reasons.

First of all, because in the preparation phase many Brothers participated by responding to the preparatory documents, which were used in District Assemblies and other meetings.

But what really made this Chapter different was its openness to the participation of Brothers who were not present in Rome – by means of frequent communication via the Internet.

The great themes which we have identified by an intense process of community discernment in a certain way take up again the themes from the 43rd General Chapter of 2000, but from a different perspective: **that of brotherhood lived by the Brothers in community.**

In recent years I have been fond of saying many times that our brotherhood is our secret "in and for" the Church and the world, especially for those who suffer. Our "union to remain in the society and, together and by association as Brothers, to conduct the project which God has entrusted to us" is our most intimate secret, our "most precious stone," for which we are "willing to leave everything."

From that point of view, we reflected on the doubts, fears, and uncertainties of our Brothers and other Lasallians. We identified challenges and defined horizons. We have opted for lines of action that will allow us to journey together.

We return, then, to our continents, countries, Districts, and local communities with burning hearts and eyes opened.

It is my profound wish that, when you return, animated by you, all Lasallians who are living with eyes closed and waning hearts, will awaken. In that way, their eyes will be opened and they will be able to see, their hearts will burn and they will be able to rekindle their lives and ministries with a burning love for God and for those who suffer.

This is the principal task that waits for us as we return to our communities of origin. To encourage all Lasallians, especially the Brothers, to embrace "that which is of the utmost importance in this community" (Preface of the Rule, Chapter 2), as I said in my opening presentation to the Chapter" **to be "living members of this community": to be men of faith** (mystics with eyes wide open) **and zeal** (impassioned by the love of God and of the poor).

In summary, I would like to remind you that we began this Chapter by entering the Meeting Tent, on the path of Exodus, setting out on the high seas without sails or oars (cf. De La Salle Meditation 134.1).

In the tent, we recalled the Exodus experience of Joseph, a tortuous journey in which his original dreams were purified. Joseph learned to enter into the dream of his brothers and gradually, he came to understand that in the conflict of dreams an unexpected horizon opened

up in the dream of God (cf. Genesis 37 to 50).

This Exodus experience of Joseph and his brothers prepared and prefigured the Exodus experience of Moses and the people of God. In turn, this Exodus of Israel proclaimed prophetically the Exodus of Jesus with his disciples.

Strengthened in this Chapter on the Feast of Pentecost, like the disciples in Jerusalem, we embrace today all this Exodus experiences in the heart of the Exodus of the Church-Communion, the people of God in this new millennium.

Today we leave the Meeting Tent and we are ready to leave the camp, to journey with the high priest, our brother Jesus, to proclaim the year of grace to those who were in darkness, to announce the Gospel to the poor (cf. Luke 4: 18-19).

Together with the Brothers on the General Council, I urge you to embrace intensely with your Brothers this journey of a new Exodus.

In conclusion,

Brothers, this Feast of the Most Holy Trinity which all the communities of the Institute will celebrate throughout the world in 2007, can be the starting point for a worldwide process in all Districts, by which we actively commit ourselves to implement the Chapter resolutions, as a new Paschal Exodus.

That process should start from our deepest roots, from the consecration that De La Salle and his first Brother associates made to the Most Holy Trinity in 1694, and which formula I take up again:

**Prostrate with the most profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty
I consecrate myself entirely to you
to procure your glory as far as I shall be able
and as you will require of me,
For this purpose I promise and vow to unite myself,
and to remain in society with...to conduct, together and by association,
gratuitous schools...**

**Wherefore, I promise and vow obedience, both to the body of the society and its superiors...
The vows of association, stability in said society, obedience...I promise to keep...**