



a publication
by and for
Young Lasallians

Lumen

You are the *light* of the world (Mt 5:13)

November 2009

International Council of Young Lasallians (ICYL)

Fellow Young Lasallians!

Let's introduce ourselves... We are writing to you in this inaugural issue of LUMEN to say **Welcome, Benvenuti, Bienvenus and Bienvenidos!** We are your International Council representing all five Regions of the FSC Institute: RELEM (Europe/Middle East), RELAF (Africa), RELAL (Latin America), PARC (Asia/Pacific), USA/Toronto and also the Francophone Canada Sector.

Since you are reading this, it's obvious that being a Young Lasallian (YL) is an important part of your life. Like you, each of us began our journey on the local level and in the "typical" Lasallian style, one step lead to another and... well you know the rest of the story. You get "hooked" in some mysterious way to this great international family. We are sure that St. John Baptist De La Salle, our Founder, never dreamed of electronic newsletters to communicate with his "family" but we are sure that his spirit lives on today in our hearts. We also believe that LUMEN will be an instrument to ensure that we, the young, help to keep the Lasallian Mission vibrant in the 21st century.

Enjoy this first edition of LUMEN and please forward it to your Young Lasallian friends. For our readers from Regions that may have some difficulty in accessing and/or forwarding this newsletter, please feel free to download and print it. Our hope is to reach as many YLs as possible.

We would love to hear from you! Send your Regional representative a quick e-mail to let him/her know you're alive and give your reactions to our latest initiative – LUMEN.

Live Jesus in Our Hearts...Forever!

What's VEGA? Why VEGA? Who's VEGA?

Whenever the Organising Team approached someone to help us for VEGA, we always encountered the same question:

"What's VEGA?"

A pragmatic person might have promptly answered that question by saying, "It's a pilot Regional Formation Programme for Young Lasallian Leaders!"



However, had you asked us that question we would have most probably answered you in a different way. For us, VEGA has been the launching of a dream. VEGA is a Lasallian gear that spins in our minds. VEGA is the star that lights up our journey in the Lasallian world. VEGA is a way of life.

Besides being the name of one of the brightest stars in the sky, VEGA is also an acronym of three Italian verbs: **Vedere** (to see); **Giudicare** (to judge); **Agire** (to act). They represent the story of De La Salle...and perhaps our story too if we choose to follow in his footsteps. As Young Lasallians we are called to be people

totally immersed in the daily reality of all that surrounds us: to see, to judge and to act.

This predisposition allows us to be "listeners" to the problems of those most in need. But we are "active listeners" who allow our hearts to be touched by those whose lives speak to us and we in turn are challenged to make a difference in our world! We find in these three actions a deep sense of the Founder's charism which encourages us to answer creatively the questions that God presents to us every day.

The initial proposal of a formation programme for Young Lasallians leaders, transcending national and Districts' borders, was driven by the conviction that the more realities Young Lasallians are ex-





posed to, the more meaningful and long-lasting their formation experience will be. The project was mainly meant to be a response to the fervent calls made by the Delegates of the International Symposium for Young Lasallians held in 2006, who had clearly asked for **meaningful formation programmes** and **more effective networking** among the various YL movements.

The enriching presence of the Brothers

The following participants' reflections best capture the sentiments of many:

"Perhaps one of the most enriching aspects of VEGA was that of being able to meet and interact with Brothers of various ages and Districts who, despite their positions of responsibility within the Institute, are actively engaged with the world of the young – identifying their needs and responding in effective and creative ways to these needs. Besides being an inspiration to us all, these Brothers are a living testimony to the fact that the vocation of the Brother of the Christian Schools is not only still relevant, but is needed more than ever in the contemporary world."

"With all their different characters, ages, and coming from different backgrounds, they showed us that they are people like us who have the same dream and share the same mission. Eating, talking and even dancing with them definitely built a strong bridge between us YLs and the Brothers' Community."

Discussing and sharing what unites us, despite the evident external differences in looks, customs and languages, triggered off a welcome and inspiring sense of universal belonging. This feeling is too complex to express in words but it gifted us with an unbelievable awakening to the fact that the Lasallian dream is possible. During VEGA, as Br. Alvaro, Superior General, so insightfully inspired us to do, we concretized and brought to life a number of dreams. One of these Lasallian dreams for RELEM was the setting up of a Regional Network of Young Lasallians - A project that finds its strength in the participants' own places of work or study; their individual talents and uniqueness; the goals and plans that they were able to share among themselves.

To try and list all the various presentations and unforgettable memories we shared on our program would not be faithful to the richness of the experience. Suffice to say that we shall treasure it all as we proceed on our individual and collective Lasallian journeys. Nevertheless, it is worth singling out the two most 'holy' and inspiring experiences of VEGA:

- 1) Throughout the whole programme, prayer time was so authentic and deep that we could hear our souls singing praise to a God whose ongoing presence touched us in profound ways. Incredible!
- 2) The day we spent in the "holy land" of Scampia (**top left picture**) at the Brother's CasArcobaleno Centre in Naples was a fantastic opportunity to be of service to others "together and by association." The Brothers' mission in Scampia provided us with a tangible example of the true meaning of VEGA. We were able to "see" a need and then to engage in serious "reflection and thought" regarding the best way forward. This was then followed by "acting" in concrete ways in response to that same need.

We are very excited and also grateful to Bro. Robert Schieler, Tina Bonacci, Michael Prat and the rest of their team, for already implementing the replication of a similar VEGA programme set for 2010 for the USA/Toronto Region.

To conclude this short article on VEGA we would like to quote an excerpt from Bro. Alvaro's keynote speech:

"Our dream, no doubt, will have inspiring elements inherited from our Founder and inspiring elements born from the reality in which we live today. Each dream is a personal one, but the Lasallian dream should also be a collective one. As someone once said,

The logo:

Our logo represents a star; the Lasallian symbol used all around the world. It is creatively formed by the letters "L" and "V" ... initials of La Salle Vega. Five distinct colors were chosen: black, yellow, red, blue and green. They represent the five different Lasallian Regions around the world. They also symbolize the

fact that this program will be replicated in US-Toronto, PARC, RELAL and RELAF – the other Regions that form the Institute. The colours used are fluorescent in nature to reflect the fact that Vega is one of the brightest and most luminous stars in the sky and the strokes are random, and not so well defined to express the pulsating nature and the heat of the light. The various parts of the logo seem to be reaching out, almost as if propelled by some mysterious source from within. This is the "force," the strength, the dynamism, which, at the end of gathering, will empower every participant, guided by the charisma of St. John Baptist de La Salle, to lead and inspire other Young Lasallians in their own District!



when one dreams alone, it remains only a dream, but when many people dream, their dream becomes reality."

We would like to thank the General Council and the Central Community at the Generalate for supporting VEGA. We hope VEGA has been, and will continue to be, another concrete step towards the transformation of our collective Lasallian dream into a living reality.

Finally!

The International Council of Young Lasallians (ICYL) is very proud to announce that after many years of waiting, EVERY Region of the Institute is now represented. At times it was a problem with securing Visas. Other times there were previous commitments locally that needed to be honored. Sometimes it was merely the "fates" that prevented us from having a full complement at our meetings... FINALLY the entire Young Lasallian World was heard from at our most recent gathering.

The nature of any International Council is to listen to, and in turn, serve the needs of all five Regions of the Institute. At our September (5-10) meeting in Rome the following members were present:



Top Row (left to right)

Bro. **Michel Zo Tolojanahary** – RELAF (Africa)

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Ms. **Vanessa Abella** – PARC (Asia/Pacific) prvvanes@lasallian.ph

Bro. **Moisés Matamoros** – RELAL (Latin America)

hermanommm@hotmail.com

Ms. **Tina Bonacci** – USA/Toronto tbonacci@cbmidwest.org

Bottom Row (left to right)

Mr. **Joseph Gilson** – RELEM (Europe/Middle East)

jcgilson@gmail.com

Bro. **Charles Kitson** – Brother Moderator

Mr. **Lucas de Villers** – Canada/Francophone

lucasdevillers@hotmail.com

Since the ICYL is seen as a vital and fast growing branch of the Lasallian Family, the Council is also accompanied by Bro. Charles Kitson, (ckitson@lasalle.org) the Coordinating Secretary of the

Lasallian Family & Association.

Each Regional representative is responsible to bring to the Council table the concerns, best practices, new ideas, opinions, faith and boundless energy that so characterizes the profile of today's Young Lasallian. Feel free to contact your representative so that your Lasallian voice is heard. Our next scheduled meeting will take place in early September of 2010. BUT, the ICYL is alive and working all year long and we would love to hear from you!

International Lasallian Days for Peace 2009



Violence, hostility and distress continue to afflict our world today. As we remember people who live in situations of conflict, we are moved to come together to better understand and appreciate their plight, their struggles and their hopes.

This is the spirit of the International Lasallian Days for Peace, a creative response to the call for solidarity and networking among our Lasallian Family across the globe. The International Council of Young Lasallians (ICYL) deemed it best to gather our sentiments and energies in upholding the primacy of peace starting on September 21, 2009 – the United Nations' sanctioned International Day of Peace. A culminating finale or a single experience happened on October 21, 2009 as we sent a strong message worldwide that we not only pray for peace but also take action in the name of peace!

A call...

PAX

...For PEACE

International Lasallian Days ★
for Peace

Sept. 21st - Oct. 21st 2009

Please feel free to send information about your local initiatives as well as relevant resources and materials to icyl@lasalle.org. We thank you for your creativity and vitality as we all became one in this endeavor.

Beyond Statues and Doors

Dave Collins and Tom McIlroy worked for three years as Lasallian Youth Ministers, teaching the life of the Founder to students in Lasallian schools. Many times they wished there was a documentary film on the life of St John Baptist De La Salle that they could show their students.

Finally, in the absence of anyone else making a De La Salle documentary – they decided to do it themselves. In December 2008, the two young Lasallians set about creating this new resource to help Lasallians teach the incredible story of the life of the Founder.

What followed was a pretty amazing European trip.

Filmed at the sites of his life around France, and the De La Salle Mother House in Rome, the result is *Beyond Statues and Doors*.

Often young people know some of the key moments in De La Salle's life, like him giving away his inheritance in favour of a life of poverty, but they are excited to discover some of the less well-known events and characters in the story.

The aim of the project was to create a teaching tool that would be interesting and engaging, and wouldn't put students to sleep.

After a number of months of research and planning, the pair began a month-long trip on a shoestring budget and arrived first at the De La Salle Mother House in Rome. Tempted by budget airfares, they began telling the story where it ended for De La Salle.

From Rome the two Australians travelled to De La Salle's beloved Parmenie, the retreat perched on top of a mountain outside Grenoble in south-eastern France.

Despite some language barriers, the Brothers at Parmenie were very accommodating to their guests - including providing snow boots for the unprepared Australians after a blizzard hit during the night.

Next stop was Reims, De La Salle's birthplace, and a visit to the Founder's family home, the famous Cathedral of Notre Dame and the winery where his grandparents lived.

Paris and Rouen, where the Founder's work took shape, were must-see and must-film points on their journey. Tom and Dave discovered the Founder's image everywhere: in stained-glass windows, statues and plaques dedicated to his memory.

The pair's daily routine was exactly the same as any number of backpackers in Europe that winter: from a cheap hostel to a train; a quick visit and countless photos at a famous monument; a quick bite to eat for lunch and a cheap restaurant and a glass of inexpensive wine for dinner.

The only difference was that



the whole experience was built around visiting the sites of De La Salle's life. They followed hand drawn maps, without any sense of direction and on more than one occasion found their destinations closed to visitors.

After the successful journey, they returned to Australia. Now having learned a great deal about De La Salle and his legacy they quickly began the editing process, fact checking and design work.

Seeing the sites of his life was a rare privilege for two people who had heard and spoken so much about De La Salle. Conscious that many others wouldn't have the same experience the task was to find how to recreate it on screen. The final product is a great resource for educators and young Lasallians which is already being shown in Lasallian schools in Europe, Asia, North America and of course Australia.

For more information on the documentary, and to order a copy, visit: www.beyond-statuesanddoors.com