



EDUCATING IN JUSTICE

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General Introduction

Educating in justice

To educate in justice and for justice is something which is at the heart of the Lasallian education mission. It springs from the very ministry of Christian education in the service of the poor.

When we speak of the poor we are speaking of the impoverished. And the impoverished lead us to question ourselves about the causes, diverse and varied, which have led to this situation. They lead us to speak of justice. For this reason it is not surprising that in the Rule of the Brothers we read: "The Brothers have always in view the promotion of justice in the light of the gospel and either the direct or indirect service of the poor as the preferred aspect of their ministry of education" (n. 40). And what is said of the Brother is applicable, without any shadow of doubt, to every Lasallian educator.

Educating in and for justice pre-supposes, as a result, bringing ourselves and our young charges close to the concrete realities of the poor. It also involves getting to know these, studying and reflecting around them and acting both in an individual and collective way in works of assistance as well as in social activities.

The reader of the Bulletin can come across in this issue a small reflection on how, in fact, this reality is lived in various educational projects of the Lasallian world. The very varied geographical, cultural and socio-economic contexts from which these experiences are shared and reflected on, is emphasized.

These pages open with the presentation of **convictions** and plans involving educating in justice, in solidarity, and in peace from Spain and the United States and in the context of Religious Congregations.

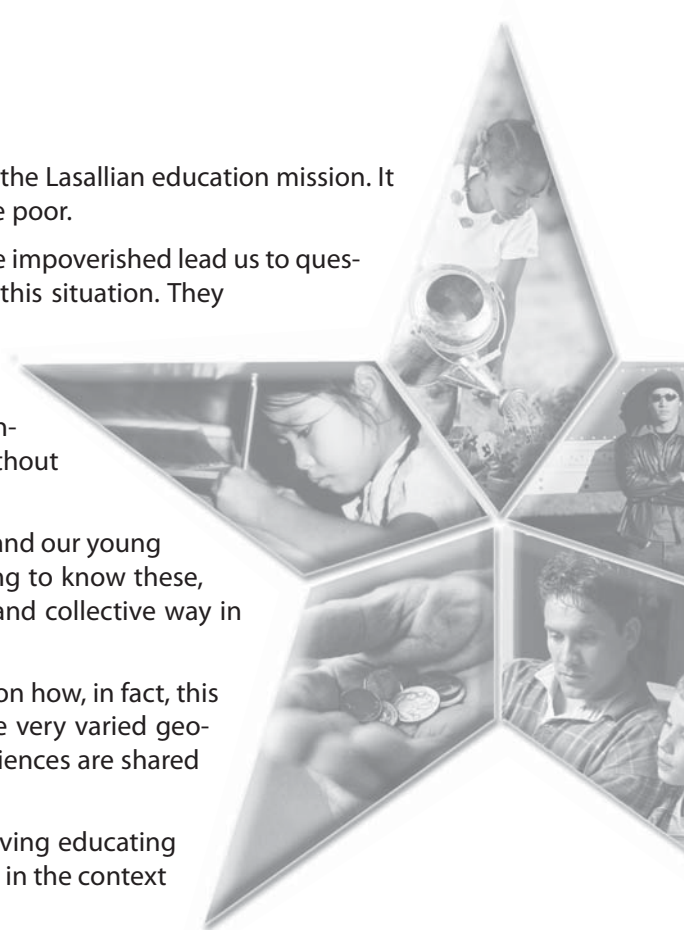
Next follow accounts of a series of **achievements** which have taken place in different continents such as Africa, America, Asia and Australia. There are accounts of projects with street children or children with mental disabilities, of students who are linking up with groups of marginalized people, of groups of Brothers and lay Lasallians who are becoming involved with the economically poor and projects to help environments at risk... It has been the dynamism of the Lasallian school which has led to these commitments, which are carried out in this same school institution, and which have transformed the internal relations of the education community.

Thirdly, there is a presentation of **programs** and plans for educating in justice, which are taking place in education centers in Australia, Spain and the United States.

The bulletin ends with the presentation of the **commitments** of various groups which have been set up in different countries, for the educational service and the advancement of the poor, whether in their own countries or in countries of the Third World.

As the reader can see, the inter-relation between education for justice and educational service of the poor is a constant in the pages of this Bulletin. It could not be any other way, since both are situated at the heart of the single Lasallian education mission.

Br. José Manuel Agirrezabalaga
Director of SECOLI



Educating in Justice and Solidarity



“Love for others and in the first place love for the poor, is made concrete in the *promotion of justice*. This can never be fully attained unless people see in the poor person, who is asking for help in order to survive, not an annoyance or a burden, but an opportunity for showing kindness and a chance for greater enrichment. Only such awareness can give the courage needed to face the risk and the change involved in every authentic attempt to come to the aid of another. It is not merely a matter of ‘giving from one’s surplus’, but of helping entire peoples who are at present excluded or marginalized to enter into the sphere of economic and human development. For this to happen it is not enough to draw on the surplus goods which our world abundantly produces; it requires above all a change of lifestyles, of models of production and consumption, and of the established structures of power which today govern societies.” (*Centesimus Annus*, N° 58, 1991)

“In fact there are many needs in our time which question Christian sensitivity. Our world is beginning this new millennium weighed down with the contradictions of an economic, cultural and technological growth which offers great opportunities to a fortunate few, while leaving millions and millions of persons not just on the margins of progress but in living conditions well below the minimum required by human dignity. How is it possible that in our times, there are still people dying of hunger; there are still

people condemned to be illiterate; there are people lacking the most elementary medical care; there are those with no roof over their heads? Now is the hour for a new ‘*creativity in charity*’, which will ensure not only the efficacy of the aid given, but the capacity for being close and in solidarity with those who suffer, so that the gesture of help will not be seen as a humiliating hand-out, but as a fraternal sharing”. (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, N° 50. Enero 2001)

“These are some of the characteristics which allow us to identify a centre as Lasallian in reference to the educational service of the poor: to have a plan of education for Justice and Solidarity which directs the activities which are being carried out, the experiences which are being proposed to the young and the style of relationships which are being established”. (*43rd General Chapter*)

“Education for justice should not be merely a specific subject area but a common thread which runs through the whole curriculum. This common thread should be reinforced by daily practice within the school. It is important to create a kind of micro-climate which offers an alternative, miniature model that does not support the anti-values which society often presents to us... It is important that within the school there exists an experience of justice in which values such as solidarity, communion and participation are top priorities. Otherwise the school runs the risk of duplicating the system and preparing students for a society of privileges, training them in the competitive struggle where there is no solidarity”. (*Pastoral Letter of Bro. Álvaro to the Brothers*, December 2003)

Our World

a. The 21st Century

We live in a society of rapid changes. We are watching the ‘planetarisation’ of our culture, which generates uniformity and threatens our local culture. As a counterpoint to this we have the rise of intolerance, the fear of the new, seeing “the other” as dangerous. We are in a vulnerable society which is full of risks rather than dangers: the risk of contamination, of accidents, of illnesses... We are continually on the defensive, we’re afraid, we have a dispro-

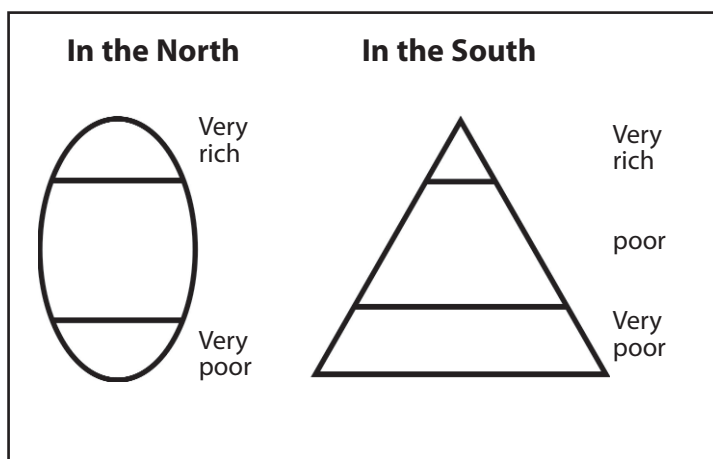
portionate eagerness for insuring our lives. We are afraid of changes. We are becoming all the time more competitive.

At the planetary level we are meeting a very difficult situation, the result of the economic system and of individualism which produces constant injustices. We are 6,000 million inhabitants where only 20% of the population enjoys more than 80% of the goods. Of the present 6,000 million inhabitants, 3,000 million subsist on less than 2 dollars a day and 1,300 million on less than 1 dollar a day. If we continue in this way,

“it is possible that the number of conflicts will multiply, that the quality of the environment will deteriorate and that the differences between the rich and the poor will increase.” (Information from PNUD 1998). The rich become richer every day in contrast to the poor who become poorer every day. In the north there are 200 million poor people, that is to say 16% of the population. In Chicago every day 10,000 persons queue to receive a free plate of soup. In the south, on the other hand, there are rich areas. Brazil, for example, is the country with the largest number of private jets.

There exist 400 million persons living a life of luxury (we include ourselves), of whom 50 million live in extreme luxury, while 1,800 million live in conditions of not only poverty but of extreme poverty. Children are the principal victims of our socio-economic problems and few governments carry out policies which face up to this situation. There are in the world 150 million street children, aged between three and eighteen. 40% of them have nowhere to live. The remaining 60% work in the streets to support their families. They cannot go to school. Millions of children are victims of sexual abuse, which, in many cases, is caused by members of their own families or close friends. Twelve million children of less than five years of age die each year in developing countries as a result of health problems: hunger, malnutrition, AIDS, malaria, common infections, lack of immunization, unhealthy water and generalized poverty. It is calculated that some 250 million children of less than 10 years of age serve in the armed forces or in armed opposition groups. Young people aged between 12 and 16 constitute 85% of the rebel forces of some countries. Many young people are not motivated and remain in school against their will. The official police force is taking over normal security and discipline functions in some schools. There is a growing problem of youth violence. In some countries the average child spends 900 hours per year in school and 1,500 hours

watching TV. Many parents have given up supervising what their children look at.



As can be seen in the graphics on this page the north takes the shape of an egg, with the top part showing the very rich, the bottom part the very poor and with the middle class in the middle. The south has the form of a pyramid where the very rich are situated at the top and coming down from there the poor and the very poor. In Brazil the 10% richest own 53% of the country's wealth and the 50% poorest have to make do with 3% of the country's wealth. These are just some statistics. Why? How does this situation come about? What is the fundamental cause?

b. Why is the world the way it is?

When we ask ourselves why this has happened or what are the causes which have led to this situation, the answer is simple: **injustice**.

That is to say, already from the year 1600, a Dutch company was making 1,000% profit on cargoes of tea which it was transporting to Europe. 70 years ago the merchants of the north took over for themselves, in an almost gratuitous manner, the raw materials of the south by military force. In the south people are paid little and work a lot. The exploitation of workers and children, apart from being evident and bloody, is of the order of the day. In Europe a worker is paid a minimum of 15 euro an hour; in Vietnam or in India he gets one euro. In the case of children it is much less. With this wage they can pay for only 20% of the basic needs of themselves and their families. And the rest?

Another factor which has generated this situation has been, and continues to be, the External Debt. For this there is no human or reasonable solution other than immediate cancellation. The IMF, the only body which has got through with policies of structural adjustment, has made the situa-



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tion worse. This has led to unjust work, unjust wages and sub-human working conditions; since it is a question of working a lot and earning little with a view to reducing the Debt. And here, as earlier, we could continue adding to the list of reasons.

c. What can be done at school level?

We quote here the words of Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Former Director-General of UNESCO: *“These days more than ever we need values, points of reference, and it is necessary and urgent to have an educational plan of action based on three great pillars: non-violence, equality and liberty. These should be the basis of education in all countries, whatever their beliefs, religious principles or cultural sensibilities. The aim, therefore, is to create a new humanism for the 21st Century”*. We would assert that the educational plan should revolve around Justice and Solidarity. The school ought to plan itself clearly as the place for this type of education, developed with three great objectives: to arouse the hope of living and struggling for justice; to form students in attitudes favoring the improvement of the person and succeeding in renewing much more human, free and supportive relations. Or what comes to the same thing, to educate for Utopia, for consistency of life and for a fraternal society.

These three objectives are, it is true, very general, but we need to be very clear about them. They become clearer with time in aspects which are visible and can be evaluated. The school which calls itself Christian and even more so Lasallian must not contribute to reproducing injustice. Justice is a constituent element of the Gospel. To announce the Gospel is to announce the justice of God.

Therefore, educating in and for Justice starting from the school is *“to expect a new type of person and of society in which each person has the opportunity to be fully human and each one accepts the responsibility of promoting the human development of the rest”* (Javier Garcia Forcada).

The concept of justice and solidarity

It is important in this section that we make very clear what we understand by Justice and Solidarity, since there are many ways of understanding it, one as different as the other. You need only look around you to notice them. The mass media sell us an idea of solidarity very remote from what we mean here. For that reason, we need to begin with what it is not, with a view to unmasking false concepts which could even exist among us and in our education centers.

a. It is not

When we speak of justice we do not mean a justice which reduces itself to the field of personal ethics, to what my conscience dictates. Educating for justice, in this context, is synonymous with forming persons for faithfully fulfilling the existing legal order. This order must be maintained and not questioned. There is no concept of a questioning of anything anterior to the established order, that is to say a questioning of the basis on which the criteria of justice of this established order rest.

Neither do we understand by justice the faithful fulfilling of the law... this justice in which *“each one does what is his to do”* or in which *“each one is given what is his”* (Vidal, Marciano, *Diccionario de Etica Teologica*, pp.329-330). This is the source of the traditional understanding of justice which entails excessive insistence on a subjective attitude; strict equality between what is given and what is received and the prevalence of commutative justice over distributive. If this were the case, everything would continue exactly the same. And justice is precisely the opposite... it is that things change. It is not giving alms but rather that no one has to ask for them.

b. It is

Rather justice has to be understood as a virtue proper to man, which implies the formation of attitudes in the person favorable to improving himself and others. We can also understand it as loving and respecting persons, that is to say, living on the basis of the Utopian ideal of equality. We understand Justice as the direction and the force for making change dynamic. We find ourselves in sympathy

thy with the definition of Ildefonso Camacho: *“The creation and maintenance of a social order where every person can, as both subject and protagonist, develop his own dignity”*. This definition takes into account a series of important aspects which we must not forget:

The social order.

- Cannot be reduced to momentary actions.
- Goes way beyond the sphere of personal comportment.
- is related to the social order where structures and relations etc.

Subject and protagonist.

- This social order is not discharged by government structures or in the law of responsibility.
- It must arise from the concrete situations in which each subject lives.
- It is achieved through direct steps and participation.

Every person.

- According to the principle of equality.

Human dignity.

- This means that the person builds himself and for this there must be means for all persons. Dignity means having all the primary and basic needs covered... not just economic but those involving family, love, affective life...
- The concept of maintenance - this is related to something dynamic and not static.
- There must be a justice continually being revised and brought up to date...

c. Solidarity

When we speak of Solidarity we must understand this as the personal and group development of a

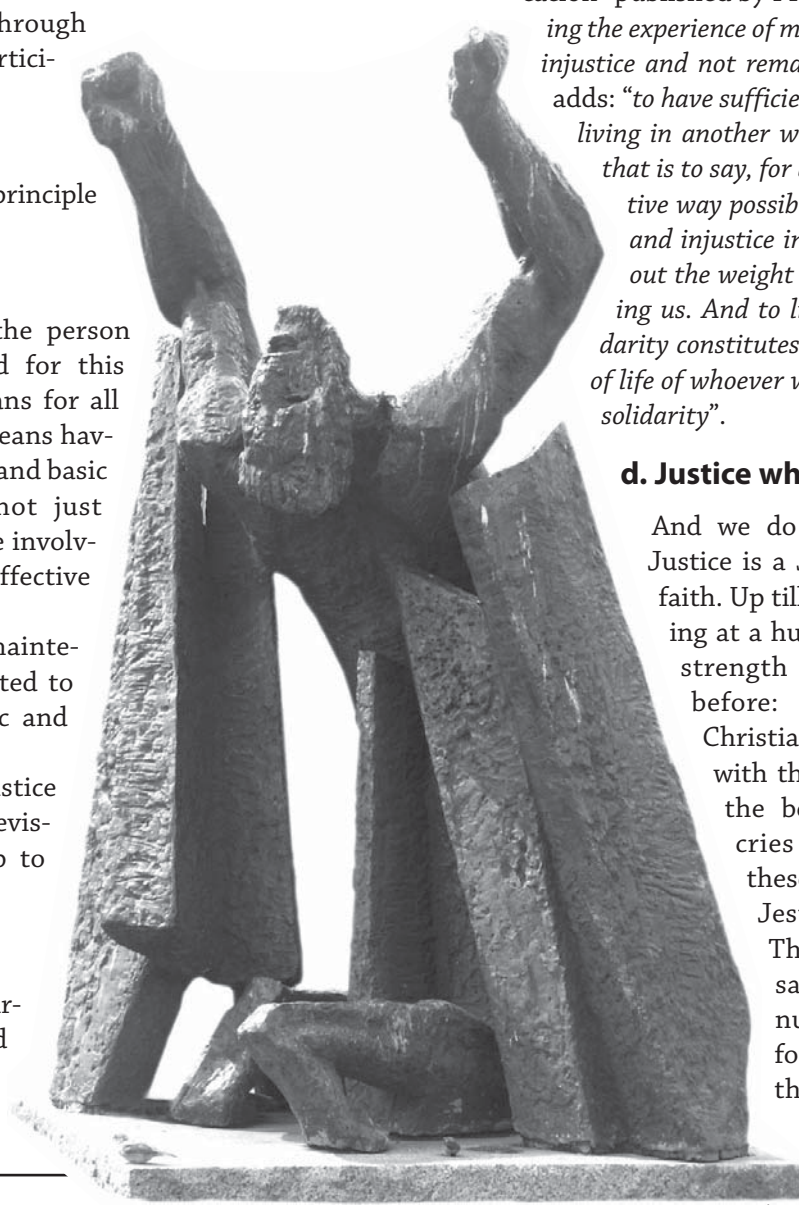
series of values, which make a person approach disadvantaged human situations with the aim of helping to overcome them. Therefore Solidarity is not mere benevolence, but attacking the very roots of injustice. It is not just volunteering for the sake of volunteering, but rather carrying out well-planned projects. It is not individual but rather in groups, associations, in community.

We are left with the definition of John Paul II, in *‘Sollicitudo Rei Socialis’* which defines solidarity as *“the firm and persevering determination to become involved in the common good: that is to say, for the good of one and all, so that we can all be truly responsible for everybody”* (John Paul II, SRS).

We are also left with the concept of solidarity as an encounter, proposed by Luis A. Aranguren Gonzalo in his book *“Reinventar la Solidaridad - Voluntariado y educación”* published by PPC. Solidarity implies *“having the experience of meeting the world of pain and injustice and not remaining indifferent”*. Also he adds: *“to have sufficient capacity for thinking and living in another way, a capacity for thinking, that is to say, for analyzing in the most objective way possible the reality of inhumanity and injustice in which we are living, without the weight of this analysis overwhelming us. And to live in such a way that solidarity constitutes a basic pillar in the project of life of whoever we take to ourselves through solidarity”*.

d. Justice which arises from faith

And we do not stop here, but our Justice is a Justice which arises from faith. Up till now we have been speaking at a human level, but faith gives strength to all which has gone before: there should be no Christian who does not vibrate with the theme of Justice. From the beginning God hears the cries of the oppressed, and these cries reach the heart of Jesus, and have an effect. Throughout the history of salvation we have had a number of prophets who fought for widows, the poor, the sick; prophets who strongly criticized the

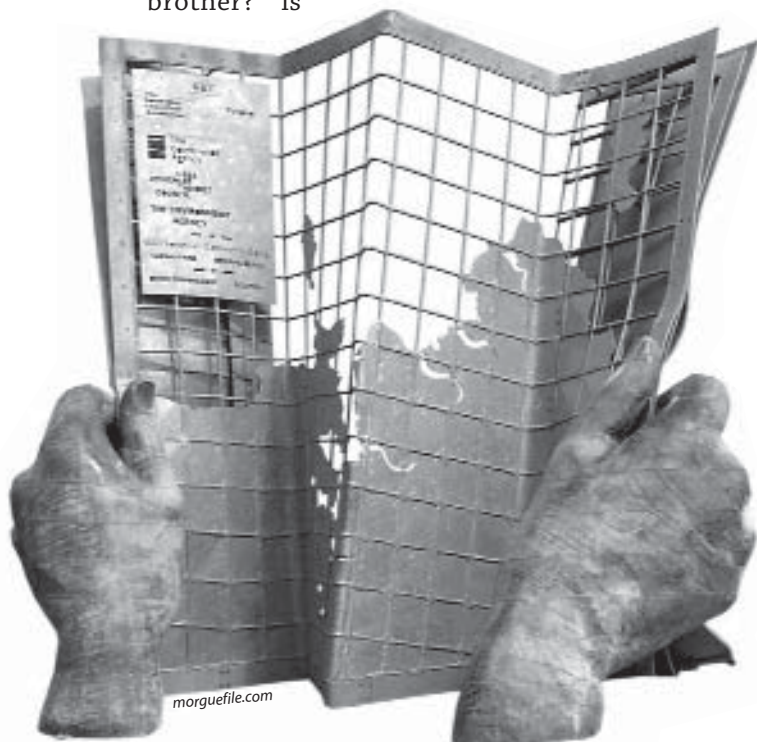


rich, the dominant class. As a significant example of the fight for justice by the prophets we could take Amos. He presents to us a God who demands that justice be done. He had heard the call of God precisely when he was “herding his cows”. He was a southern farmer who was going to sell the products of his land in the capital of the north. He sold them at the houses of the capital and at the gates of the national sanctuary of Siquen. Since he was a keen observer, he knew well the customs and the religiousness of the upper classes of Samaria. He frequently went into the houses to sell his products and he observed with amazement at the gate of the temple how his wealthy customers showed off their pious actions. It was natural that he, an honest peasant believer, would be scandalized and angered faced with such hypocrisy. In his anger he felt that God was present, which obliged him to denounce what he saw. For this purpose he rejected with great force the “insolent luxuries” of a few at the expense of the misery of the majority.

“Lying on ivory beds... they drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest oil for anointing themselves but about the ruin of my people they do not care at all” (6, 4-6). The God of Amos wants justice and honesty.

“But let justice flow like water and integrity like an unfailing stream.” (5, 24)

In short, we have a God-Mother, with a merciful and tender heart who listens to the cries of man. Where is your brother? is



the question of the Christian, the question of a supportive God. This question is very well answered by Jesus; we could say it is answered with distinction. Jesus opted for the poor, the crippled, the marginalized, the sick, the lame, the blind ...and he took their part for life. Jesus asks the same of us. Jesus is the great champion of Justice.

Also in the earliest communities it was understood that faith in Jesus was linked to opting for the poor. So we find Peter curing a paralytic and the many actions of the first followers of Jesus. Also in the tradition of the Church it has been understood that faith in Jesus cannot be separated from the struggle for justice. There are many Fathers of the Church, many saints ...who made Justice the motive for their struggle and for their hope.

St.Paul had hard words about meals which were not shared and at which the first places were for the richest... St.James says *“God has chosen the poor”* and *“faith without works is dead”*.

St.Jerome affirms that *“the rich person is so because he is a robber and the heir of a robber”*. Saint Benedict says: *“Tell me, What things are yours? It’s as if someone, after taking his seat in the theatre in order to see, were then to prevent those who came in from seeing, thinking that what is put there for the use of all belongs to him. It is the same with the rich. Why do they go on picking up the things which belong to all and appropriating them?”* For the Holy Fathers, Justice consists in restoring to the poor what has been stolen from them.

For the believer who contemplates the action of God, this justice is *“the type of love which seeks to effectively humanize, give life and give it in plenty to all the poor and oppressed of humanity”*. (Jon Sobrino). It is the justice of Jesus who comes to announce the face of God to the poor through his own life and the signs of love, the miracles which are his acts of salvation.

e. Justice which is the expression of charity

At times charity has been contrasted with justice. They have even gone so far as to say “what will the Christians do with charity when the non-believers have invented justice”. I don’t think the claim is true. Justice and charity both belong to the patrimony of the Christian faith; and at no time has charity been a substitute for justice. Charity is not outside justice but within it. Justice is a form of charity, its political form. The opposite of justice is not charity but injustice. And where there is injustice it is a sign there is not charity. Charity refers to the nature of motivation and relation, justice refers to structural

reality and political practice. Charity is the touchstone for overcoming the legalistic conception of justice, its dynamism of the minimum when it is interpreted in a purely legal way.

The Lasallian school today

A very important text for us such as the Declaration, says *“The preferred orientation of the Institute towards the education of the poor does not exclude the Brothers from involvement with other social classes... but it is important that they nonetheless be identified with concern for the poor and the work of the Institute in their favor. Whatever the circumstances, the Brothers will strive to awaken consciences by giving suitable doctrinal and social teaching to stimulate effective participation in the struggle in favor of justice and peace to which we are called by the Church.”* (D 32,1) Likewise the former Superior General comments that, *“if our centers devoted to children from well-to-do backgrounds do not form them in a commitment to Justice, they will have no reason to exist”* (Br. John).

If the Lasallian school is characterized by anything it is by its diversity, the quality of its structures and the interest of its educators. All for the service of the poor. *“This Institute (and its educational and religious structures) being concerned above all with the educational needs of the poor as they strive to become aware of and to live their dignity as human beings and children of God, creates, renews and diversifies its works according to the needs of the Kingdom of God.”* (R, 11)

We must be open to Justice and to make the centers structures of justice and solidarity. For this, we need not only good intentions but also the brains to ask ourselves what we have to do and in what we need to educate. We need heart so that we like what we are doing, so that it will be vocational, so that we can vibrate and be in tune with what we are doing. We need the capacity to imagine preparation, experience, knowledge, formation. We need a risk-taking disposition, that is to say being ready to run the risks which the plans demand; and above all we need to see the poor as a “theological place.” By means of them God talks to us.

The Lasallian school has as its aim that the one being educated should know, interpret and transform the world, that is to say be a responsible person and a responsible citizen of the world and an active member of the Church. For this purpose the Lasallian school invites the pupils to formulate questions and above all questions of solidarity. It



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invites the pupil to be in search of answers. The answer for justice comes in developing a conscience, an awareness, offering channels for commitments of solidarity, and learning to know the roots of injustice.

Many schools do not educate in Justice because they have a Plan for Education in Justice, without Justice being converted into an element of identity and ‘backbone’. The latter means making Justice the axis on which is constructed the thought, the values, the knowledge. To build the centre around Justice means that the educator, in the first place, lives justice and truly creates it, and, in the second place, that all activities are pervaded with this concept.

The educational capacity of a centre is related intimately to the ‘climate’ and internal context of the centre. If the values of Justice and Solidarity are not lived in the Centre, it will be difficult to pass these on. These values are often transmitted by osmosis, because they are in the environment, because they are preached and lived, because the Centre is run in this way and not in another, because there are attitudes proper to “our way of doing things” and others which do not belong to this style of functioning and being. This “humus” of the running of the Centre is created by and among all. It is not just the task of the teacher

Educating in justice and solidarity

To succeed in producing a school which looks after most needs and educates in Justice and Solidarity the educational community needs to question itself about the **purpose** of its task and **reorientate** its activity in order to reach the ends which it proposes.

a. Points to be taken into account

1. The first is one we take from Ignacio Ellacuria, who reminds us that we need to “*place solidarity in its historic context*”. This does not mean telling the history of a concept but putting it in relation with its concrete history, that is to say, situating it from a social, economic, political and cultural point of view. The truth of the concept of solidarity will be given by its practical fulfillment and not by its theoretical structure. In educational terms, putting solidarity in its historical context implies following four steps. These steps have been carefully studied by Luis A. Aranguren Gonzalo. The first is the ‘unmasking’ of the false methods of achieving solidarity, throwing light on the contradictions of the ‘fashion’ of solidarity and discovering the mechanisms which promote this solidarity. The second is to ‘verify’ the proposed value of solidarity, to investigate where, when, how and by what means the value of solidarity in our days can be verified. The third is to “esteem” the value of solidarity. Something is “estimable” in the measure in which it is presented to us as a valued reality. The fourth is the “fulfillment”. Esteem is followed by the personal necessity of fulfilling the value of solidarity. Solidarity becomes a possibility more or less to be valued, from the moment in which each one opts for and appropriates this humanizing possibility which constitutes solidarity.

2. Another important point to keep in mind is the change of viewpoint in education... not to think of the individual good but of the collective. This presupposes carrying out an integral education starting out from the problems

which affect people today: family, work, the economy, politics, religion... from human rights, individual and collective; from an education based on collaboration, understanding and peace.

3. A third point will be to change the structures: an education which reads history from the viewpoint of “those at the bottom”; developing capacities for criticism, creativity and risk-taking; making the school a place in harmony with life; participating in structures which are committed to the promotion of justice.

4. The fourth step will be to analyze and reflect on unjust realities; on our own individual mechanisms for resisting change; to learn to live in peace in the midst of conflict.

5. The fifth will be to bring about an education in values involving all the school subjects; to develop transversal themes, specifically in Justice; to introduce concrete and efficient plans which will cover the whole school environment. In any case Education in Justice presupposes living in such a way as to be capable of communicating our worries about Justice. In education the first verb is “to live” not “to teach”.

b. Difficulties in educating in Justice and Solidarity

A first difficulty is the present style of life, the “new way of life” which “post modernism” presents to us, and with which, without wanting it, the school is being contaminated: the *fragmentation* of the global sense of existence; *the coming-out of history* without attaching any importance to what went before or imagining what might come after, the only things that matter being the present moment and the *individualism* which is pre-occupied with narcissistic pleasure as the ultimate criterion of existence.

Another difficulty is the idea that the social conscience is projected onto the school. The school continues to be the place where you go for the certificate which allows you to live in the best possible way. It doesn’t matter what values it teaches, all that matters is the quality of the teaching and the seriousness of the education process. Social competition is also giving rise to competition between schools, which have to share out, especially in some countries, the number of pupils which each year is getting smaller. This frequently causes the school to give in to pressure and resign itself to not reaching its ideals in educating in values, in the name of better academic results.

The Synod of Bishops of 1971 speaking on the subject of Justice in the world said: “*The education method still cur-*



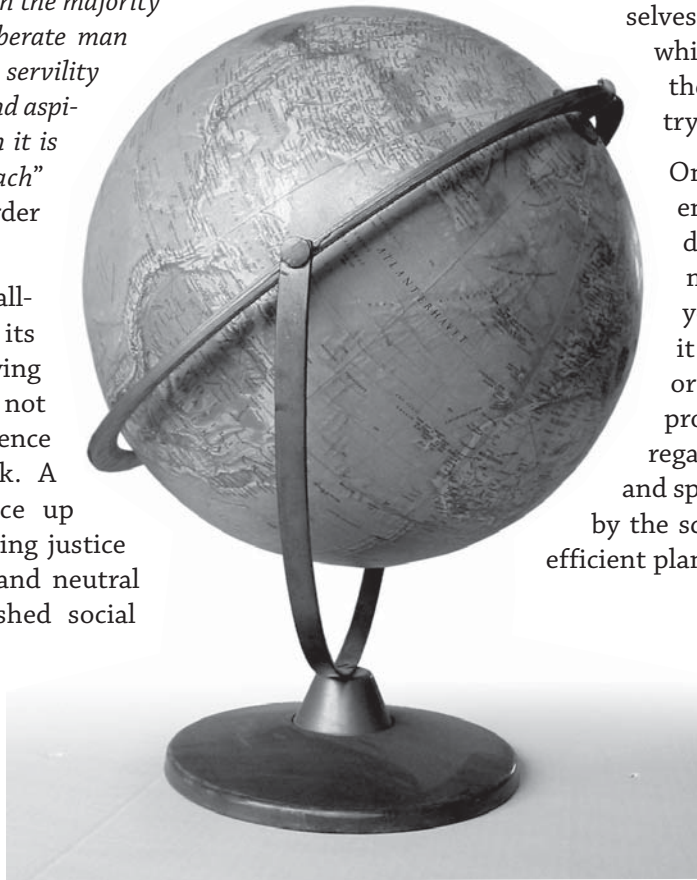
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rently in force very often in our times encourages a closed individualism. One part of the human family lives as if submerged in a mentality which exalts possessions. The school and the mass media, hindered frequently by the established order, allow for the forming of the kind of human beings which that established order wishes, that is to say, a person in their image; not a new man but the reproduction of man as he was."

And along the same lines, Adam Curle says:

"Education as it is carried out in the majority of cases, does not so much liberate man from ignorance, tradition and servility as it chains him to the values and aspirations of a middle class which it is probable many never reach" ("Educación liberadora", Herder 1977, p.13)

Certainly, the school is a small-scale model of society where its tensions and ways of behaving are reproduced and if we are not very careful, these will influence the whole educational task. A school which does not face up openly to its aim of promoting justice will be out of the running and neutral with regard to the established social order in society. It will be, in



Helle Clemmensen

reality, the major contribution to the state of injustice deeply rooted in our world.

Another difficulty is the limitation that the school has in space and time for its educative action. The school without walls is still to come. It is true that there is a constant aspiration towards the school opening up, but it is also

true that it is very centered on the transmission of contents. Therefore the educators themselves, with the multiplicity of tasks which the school asks of them, see themselves overwhelmed as they try to get nearer to reality.

On the other hand, the school ends when the person is able to develop his life project. At that moment, at the beginning of youth, the school hands on those it is educating to the university or to work and cuts off the whole process of direct action in their regard. Both aspects, lack of time and space, must be taken into account by the school if it really wants to make efficient plans.

*Bro. Jorge Meneses
Valladolid Distr., ARLEP*

Justice: a Characteristic of Lasallian Education



“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice.” This blessed passion for justice can and should characterize every aspect of a Lasallian school’s culture, and when it does, the school community is transformed. When a living and dynamic tradition responds to a genuine human need, life and hope are born for the people of our world. The inclusion of justice education in all Lasallian schools and institutes of higher learning is the right response at the right time. The tradition inaugurated by St. La Salle established service to the poor as a constituent element of the Lasallian charism. Education for justice grows out of this privileged ministry and is a completion of it.

The Lasallian concern for justice responds to the most basic of Catholic Christian beliefs and principles: a radical, unconditional respect for the dignity of every person, from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. It was that same radical respect that led St. John Baptist de La Salle to sell his property to feed the hungry and to make the education of the poor not only a priority, but a life’s work, a ministry.

Catholic and especially Lasallian educators have always

been tremendously successful teaching students to both value and live the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Our students collect canned food for the hungry, or visit with and pray for the imprisoned and the sick, or adopt families during the Christmas season, or volunteer at soup kitchens, or tutor disadvantaged youngsters. In reality, however, doesn’t an authentic respect for the dignity of the human person also require, and this is one definition of justice, changing relationships and social patterns characterized by dominance and oppression? Isn’t human dignity often threatened not only by individuals who need a change of heart, but also by cultural, political and economic patterns which need transformation?

As this definition of justice suggests, and as Catholic Social Teaching maintains, an active respect for human dignity demands not only short term solutions to human needs - food, water, clothing, shelter for today, i.e. works of mercy. It also requires that in prophetic fashion the hard questions be asked, and long term solutions be sought. Why are people hungry, naked, homeless, poor, jobless or underpaid, or marginalized? Our response to the gospel proclamation that each and every human life is sacred most certainly requires that we who follow Jesus Christ engage in works of mercy. A full response also requires that we engage in social action, that we seek long term social change, that social patterns characterized by dominance and oppression are transformed so they promote respect, equality, and even intercommunion. By addressing the root causes of suffering, such social action leads to change which can reduce the very need for works of mercy.

The whole school community can be regenerated by the pursuit of justice education. The community’s prayer - morning, classroom, liturgical - no longer merely prays for the poor and needy, but with them. The religious studies program plays a central role, helping students discover the Hebrew and Christian scripture’s core themes of mercy and justice, and teaching the rich tradition of Catholic social teaching. But education for justice cannot be the responsibility of the religious studies department alone. Everywhere in the curriculum are opportunities to infuse

justice education, in history and social studies courses, in language and cultural studies, and in drama and the arts, to name just a few. Justice can become a theme of retreats and days of recollection for faculty and students alike. And then there are the institution's financial decisions.

The passion for justice that Jesus so warmly praised in the beatitudes must influence where the institution's monies are invested and the choice of merchants with which the school does business. Where are the school and athletic uniforms manufactured, and by whom? When a passion for justice and justice education infuses the life of the school community, the role of women and minorities within it receive a kind of attention that may be long overdue. And as opportunities to honor alumni present themselves, new criteria arise about who should be held up as role models, who should be honored, and why.

In the context of the Lasallian focus on formation of the whole person, justice education aids students in developing authentically Christ-like social consciences. It shapes their awareness of the world and society around them, and offers them role models who are both counter-cultural and authentically Christian. Students are challenged to respond rather than react to social issues. And hands-on experiences of works of mercy can become a bridge for them to ask the appropriate questions about social action.

Since it is so central to the gospel, not an addendum but an integral component of Jesus' proclamation of the Reign of God, education for justice is a necessary component of all Catholic education, and all the more so for schools founded to carry on the Lasallian mission and charism. Indeed, St. La Salle himself understood that education in itself is a long term solution, at least for the individuals involved. The founder knew the truth of the old maxim, "Give a person a fish and you feed her for a day; teach a person to fish, and you've fed her for a lifetime." In the Catholic understanding of the term, justice stands on two feet: corporal and spiritual works of mercy on the one hand, and social action seeking structural change

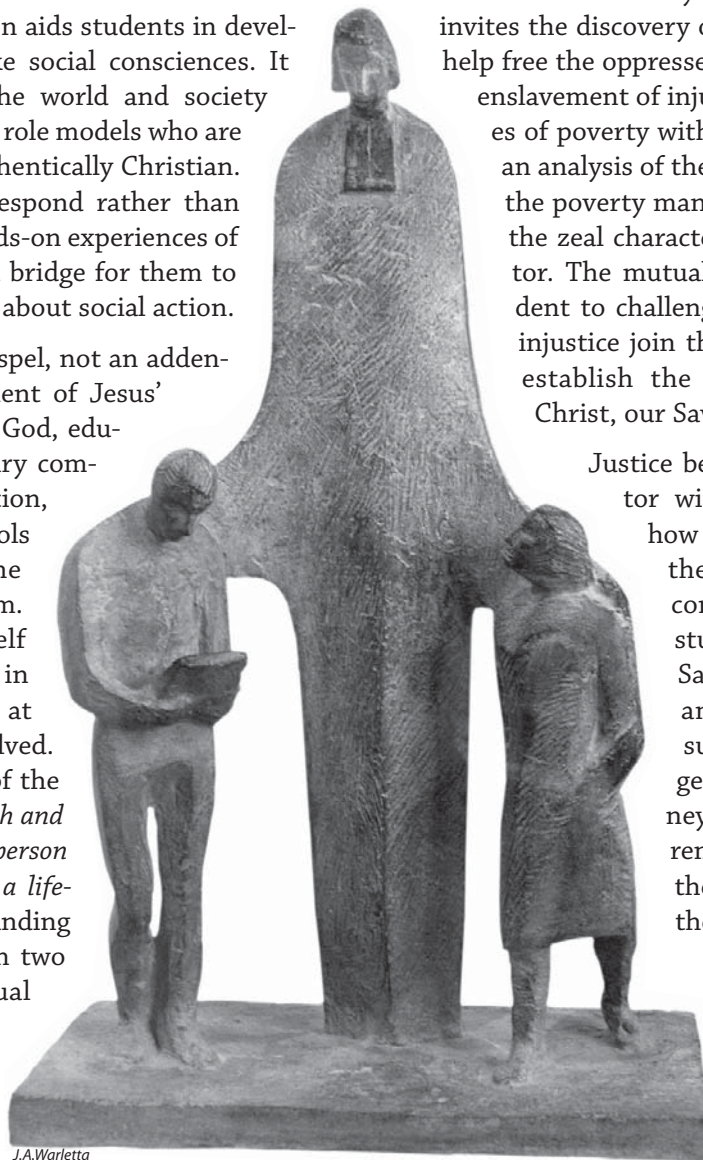
on the other. Each is unique, both are equally important and mutually complimentary. This is a case of "both/and" and not "either/or".

Lasallians respond to the cry of the poor by their witness to the gospel of Christ and their participation in the Institute and in the faith community. Education for justice is an affirmation of their witness to the prophetic Christ who came to liberate captives and bring good news to the afflicted. Service to the poor leads Lasallians through a human and Christian education to meet basic human needs in both short and long term. Education for justice builds solidarity with the poor in their struggle to overcome the forces that oppress them.

The prophetic and liberating power of the gospel is at work in the lives of both teacher and student through their shared struggle to discover the ways of justice. In a world characterized by injustice, service to the poor invites the discovery of methods of acting that will help free the oppressed and the oppressor from the enslavement of injustice. Searching out the causes of poverty with the young or aiding them in an analysis of the systems that institutionalize the poverty many endure is one expression of the zeal characteristic of the Lasallian educator. The mutual efforts of teacher with student to challenge the forces that perpetuate injustice join them in the shared mission to establish the Reign of God initiated by Christ, our Savior.

Justice begins for the Lasallian educator with prayer and reflection on how best to live passionately in the Lasallian tradition in the concrete circumstances of the students being taught. St. La Salle reminds us that we are ambassadors of Christ. This sublime truth leads us to walk gently and humbly on our journey with the poor. Always we remember that we are sent to the poor to be evangelized by them.

Our students are searching in many different ways and in various places for God. Our witness to the gospel



J.A. Warletta



Tarsicio Larios

can help them to discover that the God who calls out to them is a God of justice. Without the awakening justice education provides, we may inadvertently support economic, cultural or political systems that oppress those to whom we are sent to teach. Our zeal to bring students to an awe of God may then lead our students to the conclusion that God is not on the side of the oppressed but of the oppressors!

The teacher-student relationship is for most Lasallians the primary way we witness to gospel values. Before many of our students know who God is, before they know what it means to follow Christ, they know their teachers. The Incarnation is real for them because of the teacher who stands at their side.

Justice education encourages the teacher to enter more completely into the lives of those she/he teaches. It invites a sharing of stories and a revealing of struggles. Awareness of poverty and its causes can help the teacher to encourage students to bring their pain out of hiding. Pain that can paralyze, distract and enrage the young, can now be shared in a compassionate community. Through prayer, suffering may be transformed into a force for justice, into evidence that God's grace is greater than the evil

of oppression, a sign of the Resurrection for those suffering injustice in their daily lives.

Many Lasallian educators are not solely and directly involved with the lives of the poor. Through justice education those involved with the education of the more fortunate have a unique opportunity to nurture in those students an acute sensitivity to the needs of the suffering, the oppressed and the marginalized. Any failure to present the gospel message of justice and peace and the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching frankly and clearly could imply a Christian endorsement of oppression, could be interpreted as support for the status quo, for those individuals and social systems most responsible for withholding from the poor the means necessary for their full development in human dignity.

We are Lasallians because St. La Salle's story is ours. In April of 1714, one significant episode of that story unfolded. Troubles in the schools in Paris led the Br. Directors and Principals to recall St. La Salle to the city. Upon his arrival in August, St. La Salle responded to the call. "Well, here I am. What are your wishes?" This is a response full of faith in God's holy presence, "Here I am." It is a response full of zeal and a readiness to respond to the real needs at hand, "What are your wishes?"

In a world that often doubts that truth can be known, and in a time when the poor long to find signs of God's holy presence while hungering for prophets of authentic justice and lasting peace, the tradition of St. La Salle is our guide. Education for justice - both works of mercy in service to the poor and social action leading to long term change - are two expressions of our shared ministry. With the presence of Jesus in our hearts we can with confidence follow in the footsteps of St. La Salle to respond with confidence, "Here I am. What are your wishes?"

*Kevin Regan & Edward Sirois
La Salle Academy, Providence, Rhode Island*

Education for Justice and Peace.

The religious Institutes in the world.

Religious Congregations and the demands of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

The mission of the Church in the world is tailored at any time to the perceived needs of the human family. The tripling of the human population over the last 60 years has been accompanied by the relative shrinking of the globe as the means of communication and travel have continued to become ever more efficient. Technology has replaced much of the unpredictability of magic so that 'success' is now to be achieved by personal strife. Access to resources is competitive, and power and privilege are at a premium. In this theatre the Church is called upon to witness to justice, and to assert itself in the defense of the downtrodden and marginalized. And with its informed and disinterested membership it is uniquely placed to promote the protection of natural resources from over-exploitation. Hundreds of thousands of dedicated religious men and women are organizing to bear this witness and respond to the demands of this promotion. This mission in favor of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation is becoming the visible face of the Church in the world.

Cooperation among Religious Institutes.

Between them, the Union of Superiors General (USG, Institutes of men) and the International Union of Superiors General (UISG, Institutes of women) represent the interests and concerns of roughly 1,200,000 religious. A moment's consideration of the pool of expertise commanded by these men and women and of the focus of their commitment leads one to realise the power for good that they represent. Following the Synod on Justice, 1971, the Unions each established a Justice and Peace Commission. They now work in collaboration with each other, helping Generalates to understand better the aims and objectives of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace so assisting it more effectively in the implementing of its programmes. In 1974 the two Unions structured their collab-

oration by forming a Joint Working Group.

A short history of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

A Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace was set up following the Motu Proprio of Paul VI, *Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam*, (6 January 1967). The commission structure was reviewed and its functions redefined in accordance with the 1976 Motu Proprio *Iustitiam et Pacem* of the same Supreme Pontiff. Towards the implementation of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, of His Holiness John Paul II, (1988), the dicastery was reaffirmed and renamed the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

At the time of the publication of *Iustitiam et Pacem* the structural relationship between the Pontifical Commission and the Joint Working Group no longer seemed an appropriate one. The Joint Working Group became more formalised as the Justice and Peace Commission of the USG/UISG in 1982. The Pontifical Commission was promoted and renamed Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Since that time, in addition to its producing documentation and contributions from



Gravin Whitmore

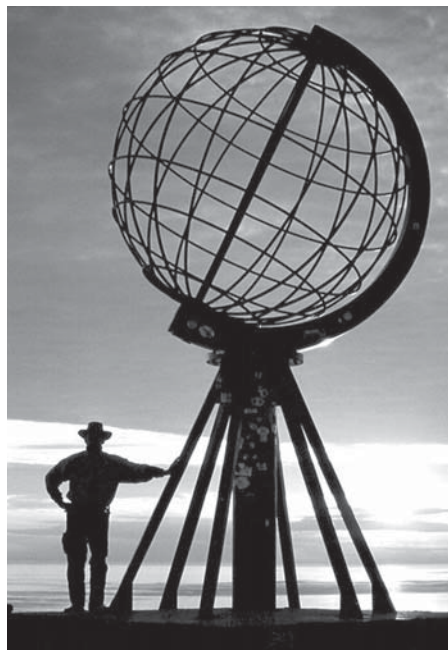
experts, the Pontifical Council has continued to offer its services to the Institutes through the presence of a non-voting member on the USG/UISG Commission. Expressing the growing awareness of the importance of environmental protection and the just sharing of the resources of the earth, the title of the Commission was later extended to *Commission for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation* (JPIC), USG/UISG.

JPIC Commission Secretariat.

As the calls on the commitment of the Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation became more pressing in the period from 1980 it became apparent that something more permanent than voluntarism was needed to coordinate the activities of the Generalates with regard to the justice and peace and environment issues. In 1993 after consultation with the Executive Councils of the USG the UISG and with the Generalates, a formal request was made for a full-time executive secretary. Approval was given for an experimental period. This arrangement became permanent eventually. The secretariat is maintained by generous contributions from the Unions and located in a rented office in the Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, via Aurelia 476.

The 'Promoters'

In their promoting of Justice and Peace, most Institutes nominate animators or promoters to coordinate and inform the action within their Institutes. At first the Commission set up formation programmes to prepare 'Promoters' who had been charged by their Institutes to be liaison persons with the Pontifical Council. The relationship between the Commission and the Promoters is based on a common commitment to mobilise the Institutes to work to change structures that underpin injustices. As an organism of the Unions of Superiors General, the Commission speaks for the member Institutes and has to observe due discretion when acting in controversial international political matters. But the Commission is not responsible for the activities and documents coming from the Promoters. The Promoters, not being officially constituted, answer to them-



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selves and to their respective General Councils.

The relationship between the JPIC Promoters and the JPIC Commission is constantly under review. The Commission extends the service of its secretariat to the Promoters. Those persons who are not Superiors General yet who are invited to become members of the Commission are usually chosen from among the Promoters. It is largely through the combined action of the Promoters that the Commission effects its mission. The mission is seen as directed principally to the formation of Institute leadership teams in what pertains to justice, peace and integrity of creation and to advocacy in association with other organisations which are focused on these issues. Formation is approached through an information service. The JPIC secretariat is in daily receipt of a heavy e-mail bag from individuals and organisations. After brief sorting and editing this material is sent out to all the promoters. The office then serves, if needed, as a centre for coordinating action.

Working groups form in response to perceived needs. Individuals from different Institutes are moved to work together and pool resources around topics that have a particular importance for them.

The Working Groups.

- The Rights of the Child (familiarisation with and concerted promotion of the Convention).
- Trafficking in People.
- Sharing and Caring for the Environment (global warming, access to quality water, defence of and access to food).
- Economic Justice (working for the cancellation of debts of 'HIP' countries and promoting fair trading relations).
- Catholic NGOs: strengthening the voice of the Church through cooperation in questions of justice peace and integrity of creation. Several Institutes have long had their own NGOs in Europe and in the USA. This experience is shared within the group.
- Catholic Questions Forum (justice concerns and human rights within the Church).
- The Cultural Audit (examining our sensitivity to cultural differences within our own Institutes).

- Spirituality Group (arranges inter-congregational days of recollection for the Promoters; re-readings and modifications of texts in view of setting up new paradigms of the theology of a "just war").
- The Working Group for Latin America.

Formative meetings.

Three times in the year the Commission holds 'Public Education Meetings'. Two of these are centred on presentations, either by a single recognised expert or by a panel. These usually open up issues that concern Justice and Peace. Recent titles have been:

- *Inter-religious Dialogue and Formation for Justice and Peace* (Prof. Jacques Dupuis, S.J.)
- *Religious Communities living in contact with Islamic Fundamentalism.* (Maurice Borrmans M.Afr.)
- *Right of Access to Water for All and Global Sharing in Justice and Solidarity.* (Prof. Ricardo Petrella)
- *War is Peace. In and Around the Conflict in Iraq.* (Prof/essa. Giuliana Martirani)

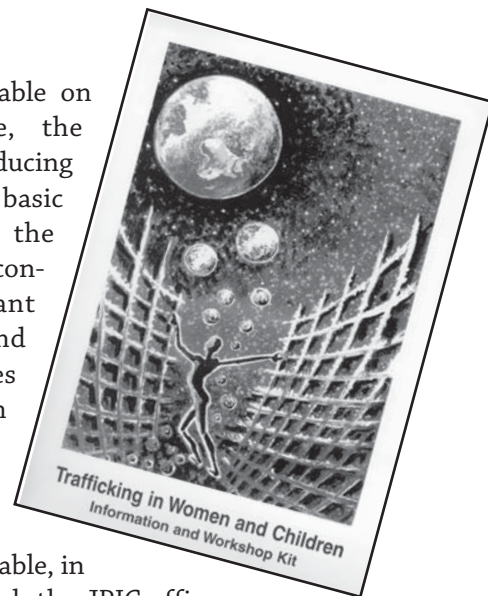
The third meeting has recently come to take the form of a prolonged two day seminar led by an invited personality and having a strongly formative quality. A recent example led by R. Schreiter, CPPS., focused on reconciliation. The seminar in preparation for November 1904 will be led by Eric Law, Episcopalian Priest, Chinese American, who is an acknowledged authority on the special call for cultural justice in community relations. Working groups are often formed as a result of these meetings.

Publications.

An instructive handbook has been produced containing an outline of the issues calling for action in the promotion of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation and giving helpful suggestions for the setting up of programmes of work to this end. It has been translated into several languages. The first print runs are exhausted. The publications committee has decided to wait before producing a new edition.

The text is freely available on Internet. Furthermore, the Working Groups are producing booklets covering the basic information regarding the areas of their particular concern, outlining relevant works in progress and opening up possibilities for networking with other organisations similarly engaged.

The following publications are at present available, in several languages, through the JPIC office at via Aurelia, 476; "Global Warming" "In Defense of Sister Water" "Trafficking in Women and Children, Information and workshop kit." (In partnership with Caritas Internationalis)



Mutual encouragement among Promoters and association with other organisations in promoting Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

Links are forged with other organisations; the Sant'Egidio Community, the CIPAX (Interconfessional Centre for Peace), the International Catholic Childhood Bureau, Oikocredit, SEDOS (Service IDOC Documentation and Information), AEFJN (Africa and Europe Faith and Justice Network), the OMI (International Organisation for Migrants). Contact is kept with the project for immigrant street girls run by the University of North London, Finchley. Through the offices of USMI (the Italian Union of Major Superiors) and Caritas Italiana, friendship and hope are proffered to young, illegal immigrants taken from the streets and held by the police in detention centres.

*Brother Anton de Roeper,
Executive Secretary, JPIC*



Courtesy FEMA

“Working for a culture of solidarity involves the creation of a mentality, that is to say, of a form of supportive thinking.

This covers two principal directions: first, including solidarity in one’s understanding of man, in the self-image, in the anthropological practice which forms part of every living human being. It consists of ‘carrying out’ , in the sense of discovering and putting into practice, the ethical dimension of solidarity. We will not be just, we will not live a worthy human life, if we are not supportive persons.

And in the second place, we will not be supportive if we stop being so with someone and especially with those most excluded from all the systems – economic, social, cultural, political, and religious – which we create as conditions for living our lives. If we are not supportive of others we deprive ourselves of the right to speak of a just life, which is the same as saying we are not entitled to speak of human life”.

(Juan de Dios Martín Velasco,
Challenges which poverty presents to the evangelizing activity of the Church)



PROJECTS

Kenya

Contact: Bro. Michael Mwangi (stmary@africaonline.co.ke)

Our program is called St. Mary's juniors program. Formally, it was called St. Mary's street children program. We decided to drop the word 'Street' as no kid belongs to the street. The word 'junior' was adopted to instill in the children's mind a sense of 'belonging' and 'acceptance' in the society. In addition, the word 'street' could be 'dehumanizing' and would make the child feel as if he is an 'outcast'.

The program started in 1998 as an ideal shared by the Brothers over a meal. The Brothers were wrestling with the idea on how they can come up with a program that can reach the poor. This very idea was actualized in 1999 where children of all ages (both boys and girls) came. These children basically came from the streets of Nyeri and a nearby Majengo slum. We started to be more restrictive only to boys at this stage.



Our target was to those boys who were roaming in the streets and those who have never been to school for a period of two years and more. We could only accept those not going to school and could come to our program from Monday to Saturday. We singled out accepting children of ages 8-15 as these were considered advanced in age and rehabilitation would be an uphill task. We had an intensive program running. To facilitate this we hired a retired woman teacher who took care of the children from eight in the morning to four in the evening.

St. Mary's Boys Secondary School serves as a Center for rehabilitating Street Children from the local town in which the school is situated. The school has both a resident and

day programs for these children. The object is that these children will experience a controlled, well discipline but caring environment that will be suitable for their being helped. Working and living with those who live 'on campus' are older students enrolled at the Secondary School who serve, under direction of an adult Supervisor, as "older brothers" to these young children. Other Secondary students in addition to a qualified teacher work closely with the 'Day' students. Most of the street children are enrolled in three primary schools neighboring our school after they receive several months of "preparatory" lessons to get them "up to speed" with the intended classes. (We have 69 students enrolled in the three schools).

The Day students come each day for breakfast and continue in the school with a teacher for the whole day whereas the "live-in" children eat, sleep and study in their new "home" with their older "brothers" who offer not only a good model for them to follow but also give them important "peer counseling". The resident program lasts for about 2 year for any individual child, by which time it would be hoped that he could be returned to the regular family and operate, with some assistance however, on a good level. The age of the children initially admitted to this program is approximately 8-10 years old since it is generally felt that the earlier intervention predicts greater success and long-term results than later interventions. As experience is gained in "mainstreaming" these children, it might be possible to than extend the program to older children, but in a different way.

The aim of this initiative is to curb anti-social behavior among these children. In a nutshell our program is meant to change behavior and 'mainstream' these children to the right path. Our common problem in doing this is the difficulty in detaching these children from glue sniffing, smoking and abusive language.

The acceptance was based on the following criteria: performance on interview (written test), child's observable behavior, attendance at all activities and participation in the program, parental response and willingness to take responsibilities, age of the child, time spent out of school or none of the above (depending on the situation of the child as the criteria were flexible).

Our initiative has a great impact on those involved. There are those people who have given both financial and material support to these children. They have also cultivated a sense of 'ownership'. They feel that the program is 'theirs' and would like it to continue. They feel obliged to support the program wherever possible. Some professional counselors have volunteered on several occasions to give their service to these kids free of charge.

On the social level, the initiative has created awareness of the need to take care of the children. Most of the parents have been coming to visit them in the program. They have assumed responsibility, which they neglected earlier on. Educationally, most of our local primary schools have accepted the children and are continuing with the formation that we have begun. Teachers in these schools offer extra time especially for the slow learners and this is a major boost to what we are trying to do. There are minimal conditions for such an initiative to function. Some of these are obvious. For example, one has to use local resources. (There is no one so poor that he/she has nothing to give or so rich that he/she has nothing to receive). Local funding is everything as the local people can see clearly what is going on. Outside funding is also important, as the local resources at times are not adequate. The other condition is to involve the parents/guardian and relatives of these children (Street boys have parents too!) They play a very vital role, as all are responsible for the transformation of the child (Teachers cannot do it alone). Through interaction with the parents informally one is able to know the 'root' cause of some the problems which will assist in the rehabilitation of the child.

Supervision is the key to this kind of program. (You get what you check). Children of this nature require constant vigilance. (Being present to the children will deter negative choices the children may make). It is also advisable to get to know people who are in different fields of work that may contribute to the smooth flow of events in the program. These include doctors, police people, heads of schools, politicians etc. (you may need them as need arises). Finally, one needs to be firm and fair in decision making.

One of the risks to avoid in this type of initiative is assuming things. One need not sit in the office and assume all is well with the information given by those who visit the office. One needs to go where the action is. The other risk to avoid is detaching these children from their relatives. The program is there to form or mainstream the boy and after that the boy goes back to society. During the rehabilitation process, the parents or guardians need to be present. For example, we have a wash up program whereby parents come every Saturday not only to wash but also to talk with their children. During these times I take the opportunity to prepare or rather communicate the idea that the child will be absorbed back home. Otherwise the parents may take for granted that the children belong to the program after the street experience.

Another risk to avoid is that whoever is running the program need not to think that the program cannot run without him. Proper structures need to be put in place such that whether one is there or not the program will still continue. Therefore, it is wise to consult other people on very important decisions to be made.



A "Life Centre" in Alexandria

1. We call ourselves a Life Centre. Our department is fully integrated into St Mark's College and makes up its sixth division... a "Special Department" which manages a human educational - but not medical - programme adapted to each handicapped child, according to their needs and abilities.

God created man in His own image and gave him life by offering him the right to enjoy His gifts... He makes no distinction between a genius, a "normal" person or one in need.

It was in this spirit that the Life Centre was founded in the College. It was begun on 4th November 1986 in several locations in the Brothers' Community, bringing together 18 children, boys and girls with their 5 monitors. This first stage lasted 7 months. The mixed group, unique in this department of the College, was to be one of its characteristics!

2. Four new locations were inaugurated during the 1987-1988 scholastic year, and were built of prefabricated material and sited along the boundary of the College garden. The group then consisted of 27 children accompanied by 8 monitors and a speech therapist. Three years later the Centre numbered 36 children, 9 monitors and... a great number on the waiting lists! We have already added a small workshop for manual work, music, motivity, puppets, and... a hairdressing salon!

3. When the Centre opened, children, with various degrees of mental incapacity and often with physical handicaps, were admitted without too great a distinction of age. After several years, the nature of the handicap and the age of the child were taken into greater consideration in order to help them better. Accordingly children and young people aged 5 to 18 were accepted. The Life Centre now numbers 50 children and young people.

We soon asked ourselves: How are we going to continue? What should we do to improve the educational programme of the Centre? Which are the real needs? How do we open new classes allowing us to answer the requests which daily swell the waiting lists? What should we do and how should we do it?

The children who come to us have a mental handicap with, often, a physical handicap. There are two autistic youngsters. Their stay at the Centre is that of a normal schooling, that is 5-18. It is advisable that

we are assured at the beginning of a minimum of guarantees of independence and of progress in training.

Christian and Muslims live together without distinction.

In 1990 we had the joy of receiving Jean VANIER, the apostle of the handicapped.

A new room was built to bring together the whole group at the beginning of the day and for different activities: music, psychomobility, etc... The first woodwork shop was built at that time.

It became more and more necessary to enlarge the Centre and to diversify our activities in order to support the youngsters up to the age of 15. Thus arose the urgency of adapting new sites to develop



certain artistic aspects, as well as corporal aspects favouring motivity. Then it was considered keeping these young people until they were 18. From that time on we have had to draw up programmes of pre-professional training, adapted to their age, and differentiating between boys and girls. We also visit workshops in town to let those in charge know that one day our children could follow a trade.

In 1997-1998 a room was opened for apprenticeship in computers and serving also as a library and music room.

A classroom, a sewing room, a woodwork shop, a drawing and DIY room, a cookery-learning kitchen and a pottery and ceramic workshop were later installed. They were also taught how to use money. A programme adapted to the abilities of each child aims at helping a person to be more independent.

4. That is how a large family of helpers has now been built up: 23 people, monitors engaged in different spheres and deeply motivated. They have all finished their studies but have taken up specialised studies thanks to the SETI (*Support Education Training Integration for Advice, training Studies On Mental Retardation*) Centre, dependent on CARITAS-EGYPT. There they have pedagogical training adapted to the different handicaps and taking account of the different IQs (from 40 to 90). Noteworthy changes take place even in daily life.

The Life Centre suggested discovering the country: camps were organised, at the College or at the sea-side... Changes of place and journeys were opportunities for training in a certain kind of independence. The fact that these children used the College coaches alongside other children raised questions and made people reflect on their attitudes towards them.

5. Children and young people of the College sometimes visit the Centre and realise what it represents. A sports day is organised every year for the children of the Centre by pupils from the Secondary classes.

For the past 6 years, Japanese volunteers have shared in helping in sports, drawing and pottery. World Day for handicapped children is celebrated in December. The intense preparation for it every year reveals funds of unsuspected expression in games, mime and theatre. A street procession followed by festivity is organised, bringing together the 43 schools and centres of the town working in this field.

An Association of Parents - "St Mark's Association for the mentally handicapped" has been set up. It was able to share in the starting of a club for the handicapped. We must not forget "Sister Akiko", a Japanese Franciscan of Mary, who has helped in running the Centre with so much love and faith for 15 years.

We have noticed a growing interest in Alexandria and nationally for service to the handicapped. This service answers a clear need: an important proportion of the "handicaps" arise from marriages between relations, the result of firmly established family traditions. It also answers a praiseworthy social policy to promote the rights of the child to health, education, basic instruction for the illiterate and people who have special needs.



The Life Centre helps us to change the mental attitudes of the families of these children. The visits made to these families by the monitors, meeting with parents, mother's day organised by the Centre each year or the end of year festival are so many occasions which often cause a change in the way of seeing these children. Further, by telephone contacts or conferences organised by those in charge of the Centre, the parents learn how to manage better their relationship with their children.



The experience gained during the 16 years of the Centre's existence allows us to affirm with conviction that the essential condition for a first step, as for the whole journey, is the **"trust"** to be established with the parents, and with the children themselves. It also seems important to us to offer a well adapted programme and to recruit monitors who are well-motivated and who make their service a "mission". However it is necessary and important to join competence in various spheres linked to the specialised formation of these children, to affection and the gift of oneself.

imagine that you have to answer every demand, and straight away, from the outset of the foundation. Without the encouragement and the benefits from the College Administration and without some financial help, no matter how small, from outside, we would certainly never have dared to develop the different services to this extent.

We want the world to welcome these children and young people for what they are and what they have the right to be. In this way, society will discover the true treasure which is **love**... and the world will change by finding **real life**.

During meetings, the monitors - with those in charge - regularly evaluate, deepen and program their work.

6. We believe our Centre has a real impact on the neighbourhood: in the beginning many parents though it shameful to have a "handicapped" child and considered it inappropriate to bring them into society. Today, the parents come to the College to meet those in charge, join in the festivities, applaud what their children have achieved and the exhibition of their work... Mother's Day, "iftars" meals during Ramadan, are privileged occasions. College pupils sometimes visit them.

The Centre has links with other Centres and the Authorities are very interested in it. Some young people who have attended the "Life Centre" are put on the job market, but finding employment remains difficult.

7. What are the risks to avoid? We think that first of all it would be to "have too great a vision" at the beginning of such an undertaking. Experience has taught us the importance of the "step-by-step approach" of which St John Baptist de la Salle has given such a wonderful example, as he founded numerous schools, by responding on each occasion to a need and a precise request. To "have too great a vision" would also be to

Mlle Mervet Tewfik, Sister Akiko, Brother Didier drew up this report. 2003

Australia

Adelaide - the St. Michael's experience

The Societal Context: pervasive consumer culture in Australia - most challenging aspect of societal/youth culture to penetrate, as it turns people into objects/competitors -> *consumerism/individualism* the universal challenge for religious/justice education in the West (cf. James DiGiacomo's studies).

The Lasallian Context: De La Salle responded to the stark needs of "the children of the artisans and

the poor” (17th Century France) - to “touch their hearts” with the love of God; seen in terms of a holistic “salvation” from all that afflicted them -> formation of “The Brothers of the Christian Schools”. Still the aim today; “poor”/oppressed defined broadly - economically, emotionally, socially etc.

The Curriculum: specific social justice units in 9RE (issue - research based) & 11RE (youth homelessness, prisons, drug use);

PES Religion option (stage 2) - liberation theology follows “Reign of God”; and PAS Studies of Societies option (stage 2) - “justice issues” focus in; especially asylum seekers.

Year 11 (Stage 1) core - “Values of Catholic Schools” unit (use *Coral Island; Son of God*). Explores hedonism, consumerism, materialism especially in media (“Reality TV”)

Social justice theme explored in many other RE topics eg “The Australian Church” (Year 10) - “Church Awareness Day”; “The Gospels” (Year 10) - the portrayals of Jesus and his values; “Media and Christian Values” (Year 9).

Also some coverage across the curriculum: e.g. English *Rabbit Proof Fence; Frontline*; Civics - Australian society; Australian Studies (strong focus on Indigenous issues).

Social Justice initiatives at SMC: annual MAD day (Mission Action Day) - raises \$40,000 for a developing country’s Lasallian sister schools (recent years Sri Lanka, PNG) - (education process for all students; College leaders run the appeal). Also annual appeals: Project Compassion; Catholic Charities (Year 10 focus); Vinnies (St Vincent de Paul) Winter Appeal/Xmas hampers; Red Cross Badge Day (Year 11 focus)

Social Justice Groups - F4J (Forward for Justice) - on-campus justice group leads specific initiatives and involved in action/formation e.g. *Kids Helpline; Bowling for Columbine* (50 members in 2004); Camp LaSalle; Fish LaSalle; Surf LaSalle - led by old scholars (approx 15 actively involved).

ASSPA (Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness) Group - seven indigenous students at SMC in 2004; local support group for these students; runs camps and cultural activities.

Personal Counselling support for students now 2.5 FTE; Adaptive Education and ESL each have full time and support workers; Indigenous students have an on-campus tutor.

Building empathy is the key to justice education -> requires an experiential approach so students can transcend the barriers of apathy, individualism and scapegoating (media); crucial to provide opportunities for students to imagine the reality/ life situations of the marginalised/excluded; guest speakers (eg Kathy and Joe Yr 11; Hussain Razait Yr 10 & 12); A/V (eg Somebody Now); first-hand accounts particularly important, in whatever format. This can also develop a sense that “something can be done about this” (hope) and “doing something about this is not an optional extra for a Christian” (action)...

*Greg Bowyer
In Charge Pastoral Ministry*

Ongoing challenges in the area of justice for St. Michael’s College:

Who has access to our school and who is excluded? Are we charity-oriented or justice-oriented? How do we allocate scarce resources within the school? How do we manage “difficult” students? How do we support “struggling” parents/families in our community? How can we increase our numbers of indigenous students? How do we form/educate staff in the justice ethos (mission of Jesus) -> prioritising the marginalised as a core value? Translating vision/policy into reality? Doing justice to all members of the school community? Being a “Catholic” as opposed to a “private” school? Impact of western suburbs demographic changes on our enrolment profile?

Philippines

Lasallian Institute for the environment (life)

Contact: Teresa Yasa (*prvsrteresa@lsg.edu.ph*)

Aims of initiative and public targeted:

To mobilize the Lasallian network in the protection and preservation of the environment. It seeks to educate and inspire people to action by awakening in them an awareness of the integral role of a healthy planet in bringing about genuine and total human development.

La Salle alumnus Bienvenido Eusebio, who is also the director of the Natural Resources Management Program of Universitas Katolik de la Salle University-Manado in Indonesia, heads LIFE. In its initial phase, LIFE will tap the support of volunteer faculty members and researchers of the various La Salle institutions. Alumni and friends here and abroad who are experts in the field of environmental management as well as those from other disciplines are welcome to extend assistance. The institute will seek the help of, among others, agriculturists, foresters, soil and ground water experts, economists, legal experts, sociologists, and communication specialists. It will also require the support of its partner community and the local government.

How it began.

Initially, it began with Br. Armin Luistro's meeting with Bienvenido Eusebio, a La Salle alumnus, in Manado, Indonesia where the latter has been Director of the Natural Resources Management Program of the Universitas Katolik de la Salle-Manado, Indonesia, and where the possibilities for initiating responses to environmental concerns in the Philippine District dawned. The same concerns were synonymous with a search for a more meaningful life and commitment by a group of La Salle alumni, in collaboration with Br. Armin Luistro FSC, the District Justice and Peace Commission and the Federation of Lasallian Institutions through involvement in worthwhile endeavors or projects initiated by the District. The group made up to 13 participants in a brainstorm meeting on March 6-7, 2002. The mixed group was composed of Br. Armin Luistro FSC, Bienvenido Eusebio, Mr. Michael Gamon, Mr. Michael Estaniel, Engr. Delfin Warren, Ms. Belinda Villavicencio, Atty. Antonio Oposa, Mr. Alexander Ramos, Engr. Isidro Frio, Dr. Minda, Follosco-Edmiston, Mr. Carlos Antonio Marali, Warren Joseph Dollente, and Sr. Teresa Yasa, F.I.

The Lasallian Institute for the Environment (LIFE) became an output of the brainstorm meeting. It was conceived as an independent educational resource center to complement school environmental management programs and curriculum under the Office of the Brother Visitor. It is to challenge schools to become environment conscious in line with the Ministry Action Plan Number 7, which is "To fulfill our role as stewards of God's creation through an integral ecological program for all Lasallian Institutions and Communities." It will serve as a dynamo of the whole District that would push environment responses such as education and advocacy, research, and trigger environment-related activities. It will be a physical center composed of a 3-4 staff. It will establish a specific project cutting across students, parents, alumni, communities, etc. tapping resources of Lasallian Institutions. It will encourage schools to have their respective pet projects and attain environmental quality standards. It will serve as a coordinating center and would serve as a think-tank, catalyst, and facilitator.

Precise role played by lasallians.

What better role could Lasallians play in this initiative than be leaders in providing the schools and communities and the country with opportunities for becoming stewards of God's creation and cultivating a culture of life? The holistic approach to LIFE would require establishing linkages with government and non-government organization in the country and with partner communities. Through LIFE, Lasallians eventually become lead players in building God's kingdom of justice and peace in the land and participate in the struggle to improve the quality of life of the Filipinos especially that of the poor. In addition, Lasallians will be good examples of Christians whose lives exemplify St. La Salle's dream of seeing his followers collaborate in the mission of healing and saving human beings in the example of Jesus Himself.

Description of development and key moments.

The development of the Lasallian Institute for the Environment was rather fast. As of date, it has become a legal entity and is registered in the Securities and Exchange Commission. It has a Board of Trustees headed by Engr, Delfin Warren. Bienvenido Eusebio has been designated as Executive Director. He works with a staff of two, and in collaboration with the District Justice and Peace Commission and the Federation of Lasallian Institutions.

For its flagship project, LIFE has chosen the large and complex watershed, which contains the rivers and streams discharging into Laguna de Bay and the Pasig River. Life will partner with the residents of communities and NGOs in the sub-basins surrounding Laguna de Bay, Pasig River, and the areas proximate to where the Pasig River discharges into Manila Bay. It will collaborate with government agencies such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Laguna Lake Development Authority, academic institutions, and private organizations. With the hope of protecting and promoting the biodiversity in the area, LIFE aims to tap various Lasallian institutions, organizations and individuals. This project is expected to identify and raise many environmental concerns, from watershed management to area development. The Institute hopes to integrate these various concerns with the La Salle school's curriculum development, research thrust, and values formation programs.

But the flagship watershed management project is just the start of LIFE's long line of anticipated short, medium, and long-term environmental and natural resources management projects. By 2011, the centenary of Lasallian education in the country, LIFE hopes to find all La Salle schools having made significant contributions to environmental education and the improvement of sub-basins and watersheds in the country.

Impact of the initiative on those involved and for the lasallian network.

As of date, LIFE gets all the support it needs from academic institutes, government and non-government organizations. People seem to want to help out one way or the other. People are enthusiastic about it and want to get involved in its development. There is a re-awakening of life itself in people and environmental concerns are not in conflict with their own interests. For example, the Graduate School of Business Alumni Association has made pledges amounting to PHP 140,000.00



for LIFE. A group of volunteer faculty from De La Salle University has started to work on the La Salle Green Hills High School campus towards turning it into a model campus of Biodiversity and Greening Program.

Impact of the initiative on the social, educational, political, cultural, or ecclesial environment.

As LIFE begins to establish linkages with different groups and organizations that are Lasallian or otherwise, it creates a sense of hope in people given the deteriorating status of the environment. Different sectoral groups in Luzon such as the Confederation of Fisher Folk looks forward to working closely with LIFE. Actually, LIFE's holistic approach to watershed management would essentially have an impact on the social, educational, political, cultural and/or ecclesial environment.

Minimal conditions for such an initiative to function.

There are a few minimal conditions for such an initiative to function. First, the passion and commitment of the people involved are remarkable and marked with a high sense of volunteerism. Second, La Salle Green Hills High School provides the financial support in its initial phase. Third, the growing and strong network being established inside and outside of the Lasallian Family. Finally, the growing faith life of the Lasallian Family.

Risks to avoid in this type of initiative.

It is impossible not to link up with government agencies such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The possibility of being used by government officials for their own personal, political, and other interests can happen in the process.

The initiative, in its holistic approach, cannot but get involved in community organizing and development. This has social, legal, and institutional implications, which, if not dealt with properly, can be obstacles to the implementation of LIFE's projects and put the Institute into jeopardy.

Medellin

1a. Description of the plant

The "Colegio San José-La Salle de Medellín" (Colombia) was founded on the 19th of March, 1890 and graduated its first promotion in 1907. Since the 19th of March, 1955, it has been moved to the "Boston" neighborhood where it operates to the present day. It has therefore offered educational service to the City of Medellín for 112 years. Today it has 2,400 students with an additional 180 among board members, administrators, teachers and support staff.

The students of Colegio San José still belong to the upper middle and upper social strata (4, 5, 6), which fact permits them to aspire to a fairly easy, comfortable life. A high percentage of them plan to be professional people; many of them wish to exchange with youngsters of other countries.

With regard to their family situations, the majority are children of professionally active parents who are separated so that the offspring live with one or the other, attempting to maintain an adequate relationship with both.

1b. Title of the Experience

“A spark of love against indifference”.
Experiences of encounter between two blind worlds.

1c. Directors

Brother **Álvaro Llano Ruiz**, Rector.
Zulay Arango Morales, Coordinator of Human Development.

1d. History

The Pastoral Social Project of Colegio San José came about due to the need to strengthen the social services in such a way that the students from the fifth to the eleventh grades could be introduced to a social dimension that was previously uncharted territory for them. The basic idea



J.A.Warletta

was to take advantage of the privileged social class that these young persons enjoyed in order to place them at the service of society and sensitize them through these means to other realities of the City. At the same time the purpose was to apply this experience to the institutional mission of “Procuring a human and Christian education in the educational community” and with the five fundamental principles clearly stated in the Overall Program of Education of the Institution:

- “To accept the person with his integrity, dignity and on-going development”.
- “To state that the process of education is a task of and through culture, the new evangelization and values”.
- “To recognize that the formation of the human person receives its impetus through participation, responsibility, social contacts and civic engagement.”
- “To value the Lasallian pedagogical experience as the foundation of the institutional mission”.
- “To assume the work of pedagogy as essential strategy for the proper construction of the Overall Educational Program of the Institution”.

After four years of work we have managed to consolidate a Pastoral Social Project which permits us to articulate the existing relation between education and society, through the formation of young persons with a social awareness and a greater sense of responsibility, showing that, even though they are from different worlds, they can bring about encounters for the construction of a more just and fraternal country.

2. Diagnostic

2a. Description of the Reality

To carry out the project, six groups of populations were chosen:

The first group was made up of four settlements of country people that have been displaced by the violence: Hand of God, Efforts for Peace, the Swallows and Villa Fátima. Their inhabitants come from different regions of the country-Chocó, Urabá and some town of Antioquía. In their places of origin they had a life of dignity; today, as a consequence of the armed struggle, they have had to uproot themselves and move to the outskirts of the City to live by charity and begging.

The second group consists of pre-school children selected from the low income barrios close to Colegio San José, such as the 13th of November Barrio, Colinas de Enciso and Caicedo. These pre-schoolers are



J.A.Warletta

being tutored by the children of the displaced persons who are getting assistance from some institutions or foundations by helping them and supplying them with certain necessities.

The third group is formed by older adults (grandparents) of the El Salvador, El Pinal, Las Miras Enciso and 13th of November Barrios. These elderly folk have organized and come up with the ideas to create a space that will permit them to age with a certain "Quality of Life".

The "Wholesale Plazas" is another of the chosen scenarios, a place where 700 children are working practically as beasts of burden in transporting goods. They have neither social security nor any support for their education and recreation.

For a work in the rural area the region of Amagá was chosen. It is characterized by a disenchantment with country life or by sites which are hard to reach which makes the development of the inhabitants of the region so difficult.

The last sector selected was the Mining Zone of Amagá. The vast majority of the inhabitants of the area live from this industry but in conditions of extreme poverty.

2b. Statement of the Problem

Considerations:

"De La Salle gave witness with his very life of his exodus from riches to the ministry with the abandoned and helpless. Upon devoting himself without reserve to the poor he broke with a world too stratified into classes and provided access to culture to the sons of artisans and of the poor."

In our Colegio, De La Salle can no longer be a matter of words without deeds. He, by his example, has given us the best lesson. He never turned his back on poverty, hunger, violence or anything that would threaten or deny human life.

Today, as in his time, we find ourselves in confrontation with a world replete with problems, a world scourged by the violence of hunger, sicknesses, lack of work, wars and repression. The culture of death is extending its borders every day, reaching into the deepest mindsets and hearts. The very existence of the life of peoples faces extermination, their cultures being wiped out.

3. Objective of the Study

3a. Principal Question

What strategies can be employed to bring about a dialogue between the school and the social reality?

3b. Specific Questions

- What new creative ideas might emerge in this dialogue with the social reality?
- What mechanisms from outside the school can facilitate other learning experiences?
- What new subjectivities will make their presence felt?
- How to bring the curriculum into accord with the strategy decided upon?
- How to make the new evangelization more effective through the dialogue school/social reality?

3c. Rationale for the experiences

The life of the cosmos is gravely wounded because of the mindless activity that sees everything through

the utilitarian prism of profit and self-interest. “We need a quality education, one that is new, capable of responding efficaciously to the adventure of learning through the inquisitive mind, through astonishment and discovery. It is an education that engenders new values lived out by a citizenry and the Constitution of a democratic and pacifist society.”

3e. Proposal for a solution

The student starts on his process of social service as indicated by the project provided by the Pastoral Social program from fifth grade up to the eleventh grade in which they have the opportunity to have fun while serving. It is a constant pleasure, fully enjoyed by what they are accomplishing, which helps them to feel that their work is done with love, commitment, respect and autonomy.

The project provides a different experience at each level in this manner:

Youngsters of Grade 5:

Guiding principle: We approach the world of older adults (the grandparents) who are growing old in a joyful way, with quality and meaning in their lives.

Youngsters of Grade 6:

Guiding principle: We experience what it means to be a teacher whose life is touched with joy, solidarity and tenderness for children.

Youngsters of Grade 7:

Guiding principle: We develop a sense of admiration and wonder at the working child and his indomitable spirit of struggle.

Youngsters of Grade 8:

Guiding principle: We live in solidarity, brotherhood and service through our contact with the inhabitants of the displaced campesinos of the settlements.

Youngsters of Grade 9:

Guiding principle: We attempt to understand the urban armed conflict and the hopeful reintegration of the personages involved in that conflict.

Youngsters of Grade 10:

Guiding principle: We take part in agricultural work, experiencing the values of the campesinos and marveling at their wisdom and fortitude.

Youngsters of Grade 11:

Guiding principle: We come into contact with men and women who live each day with courage, perseverance and tenacity. The setting is a coal mine and the work is that of private organizations and Non Governmental Organizations that are carrying out projects of Social Development.

3d. Objectives

General Objectives

- Facilitate the evangelization of youth, their growth in maturity in the faith and their historic commitment to the context of their reality as citizens of the city.
- Effect a change from the materialist slant that has been sold to our youngsters, to a life with a social conscience, love, solidarity and respect for the neighbor, especially for the ones most in need.

Specific Objectives

- To discover the hidden riches of each person of the community in order to strengthen the fraternal relationships of living together in solidarity with the diverse sectors of our society.
- To help in the formation of a critical awareness so that with responsibility and the sense of building up, they will be able to broach the different problems, look for the necessary information, analyze it and formulate possible alternative solutions while actively participating in the decision process.
- To form a citizenry that will promote experiences in the social realm in more participatory, democratic and collective terms, demonstrating Lasallian values that lead to the ideal of a society open to all.
- Encouraging interdisciplinary action and integration as pedagogical instruments that bring together the processes of learning and instruction based on the Pastoral Social Project as the common theme of the Overall Program of Education of the Institution.

Practice	Breakdowns	Challenges	New meanings of institution	Building meaning Changing the imaginative
Pedagogical	A 'closed' institution	Opening up the classroom	Including proposal across curricular network	Being part of a curriculum which truly responds to the needs of today's society
	Knowledge which is 'pre-packed'	Getting teachers away from teaching which is out of context	An education reconciled with life	Finding ways of building a new anthropology of education
	Chalk and blackboard	Reading the context	Stimulating research and arousing thought	A real vision of social problems
	The teacher seen along the lines of power and knowledge	From traditional evaluation to co-evaluation with the community	Overcoming the gap between reality and the gospel	Educating ourselves together in horizontal relationships
	Truth is in the institution and the individuals	Getting out of the classroom	Confronting fear in order to live renewed hope	Education put in context
	Leadership in order to maintain present status	Leadership focused on service to marginalised	Qualifying Lasallian leadership	Getting rid of selfishness. The individual as creator of possibilities for himself and others
Anthropological	Clearly academic culture	Openness to other cultures	Dialogue and interaction with other worlds	Demolishing physical and psychological barriers to make political commitment possible
	Young people who are dispersed, superficial, pragmatic and hedonistic	From emotional coldness in class to brotherly joy between equals and the poor of the Lord	Living a healthy emotional life, transparent and brotherly and expressed in service	Living a full emotional life
	Social prejudice	From dispersed and superficial young people to those who are transcendental and committed	To attend to reality To be less self-centered To be well-grounded	To transcend, evangelise and personalise
Pastoral	A catechesis which is verbalised in classrooms	Catechesis lived in 'front-line' scenarios	Overcoming the gap between reality and the gospel	Living the spirit of solidarity, fraternity and commitment
	A faith without works	A faith celebrated through service	Living the faith in a festive way	Becoming mature in the faith way

4. New Educational Reading of the situation

The reading framework is formed from an analysis of: **BREAKDOWNS / CHALLENGES / MEANINGS OF THE NEW EDUCATIONAL SCENARIOS** and according to pedagogical, anthropological and pastoral practice.

“John Baptist de La Salle was deeply moved by the way in which ‘the children of the artisans and the poor’ were abandoned and left to themselves. As a practical response to his prayerful consideration of this fact in relation to God’s plan of salvation, he came to discern, in faith, what God wanted the mission of the Institute to be.”

(see table, pag. 32)

5. Results obtained

- 41 groups have travelled around, which is an average of 1,640 students, reaching different places across Antioqueña.
- Various groups have held meetings with 200 working children of the minority enclave and street sellers in a cultural and sporting exchange.
- Courses were held (service of prevention measures in health/ recreation) in the settlements of displaced people: Hand of God, Efforts for Peace, Villa Fatima, the Swallows; up to 1,000 persons from different communities.
- We travel around to work with the farmers and miners of Amaga, letting ourselves be influenced by their values, attitudes and wisdom: 100 farmer families and 120 miner families reached.
- We have had sharing sessions with 350 old people by means of cultural meetings and personalized dialogues.
- 400 poor children in pre-school classes have benefited from our pedagogical activities.
- St.Pierre Fourier shows that education ought to touch the **hearts** of the young.
- It is possible to draw up an integral curriculum as is demonstrated by many of the initiatives taken by the teachers of art, Spanish, maths and social studies among others.
- The young people in San José College believe in a school open to the social context, from which knowledge takes its origin. They showed this when from the classroom they learned in order to take this knowledge outside or on the contrary, when they brought information in from outside in order to take it up again, analyse it and re-create it from the perspective of a specific piece of knowledge.
- The Gospel comes to life.
- We have confirmed that the process of pastoral ministry generates awareness, which can, even if it doesn’t close the gap between rich and poor, at least leave the door open for future changes, since the fact of recognising that the poor are neither bad nor thugs, leads to looking with different eyes at this other society “which is at my side” and when it is necessary will produce a greater disposition to help in socio-political changes which will close the breach.
- In conclusion: The Pastoral Ministry of Human Development is working in a serious and concrete manner in evangelising and spreading the word of God, which is converted into reality when one of the members of our community responds with enthusiasm

Scott Gibbs

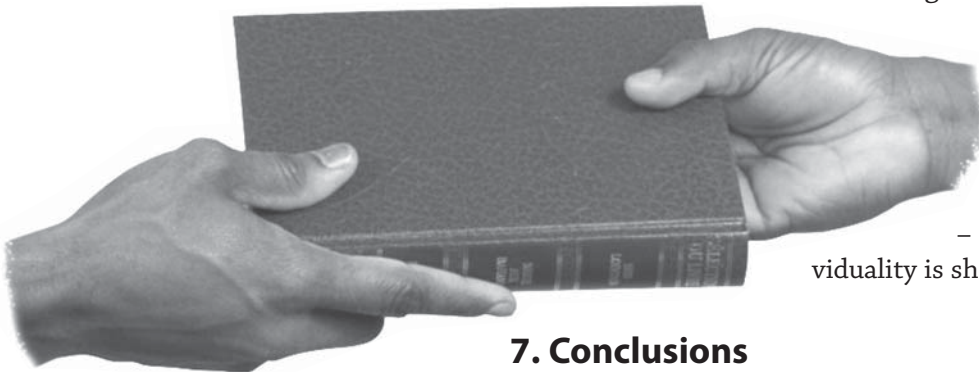


and love at the moment of SERVING. Furthermore we are beginning to put in place and weave the first threads of a new social fabric, ensuring that the Kingdom of God will advance at least a few meters on this earth.

6. Evaluation

Measures which can be transformed into lines of institutional force

- The Space: a space which confronts and gives evidence of the struggle for power. A space where the horizontal (democratic) reigns and allows for people to look at each other.
- The Curriculum: the region and its problems as the transversal axis of the proposed curriculum.
- The Scenario: rich in auditory, visual, verbal, physical and emotional stimulus and open to the unexpected.
- The Conflict: not to moralise but to focus on being a transforming force.
- The Sanction: to make oneself conscious and responsible for the consequences of the act. "Chance" disappears.
- Learning about life in life: reading faces, bodies, landscapes, and organisations and asking oneself: What do they express? What do they communicate? What are they keeping to themselves?
- Ethical position: psychological mistreatment disappears. The origins of the conflict are investigated and responsibility for its solution is taken on.
- The Word: developing new forms of expression, freeing the word, constructing concepts, building meaning.
- School organisation: removing fear from the institution and allowing for simple language.
 - Promoting a democratic environment and dialogue.
 - Confronting school organisation with other forms of youth and adult organisation.
 - The individual and individuality: outside the school, facilitating the emergence of other forms of individuality.
 - Socialising: what is discovered from individuality is shared to enrich collectivity.



7. Conclusions

The management of knowledge in the experiences of Social Pastoral Ministry is not confined exclusively to the distribution of knowledge; in this we are dealing with learning it, feeling it, perceiving it with an additional ingredient; for each individual it holds levels of meaning in so far as that it is he himself who determines what is interesting to learn.

"Taking as frame of reference the basic functions of the school: the distribution of knowledge, the creation of citizenship knowledge and formation", we come close to being able to say how Social Pastoral Ministry focuses on picking up again two basic functions of education: creating knowledge and forming citizens.

To speak of a quality school is to speak of creating and facilitating the conditions for integration between the Theory (Lasallian values preached and verbalised inside the classroom) and the practice represented by the actions of the Social Pastoral Ministry in San José College in each 'front-line' scenario. The latter has as another vital consequence that it improves the quality of the education, its academic relevance and its social importance.

“Lasallian Partners for the Economically Poor”

This document is written for any Lasallian interested in the achievements and activities of **Lasallian Partners for the Economically Poor**, from Regional or District Administrators to teachers to social workers and volunteers.

Mission

Rooted in John Baptist de La Salle’s founding mission of association for the educational service of the poor, the Lasallian Partners for the Economically Poor:

- Coordinate and share information and activities involving those entrusted to their care;
- Advocate globally for justice and peace concerns;
- Issue an invitation to others to experience Lasallian programs in service with the poor;
- And encourage any activities that build relationships to improve the lives of economically disadvantaged youth and families through the United State of America and the rest of the world.

History

In April of 1998, after spending months “organizing” a list of persons concerned with Lasallian educational service to the poor, Brothers Ed Phelan and John Lindhardt invited any Brothers, Lasallian colleagues, and Lasallian Volunteers who were animated by the Church’s option for the poor and Lasallian educational service of the poor to gather in Goshen, NY. During that weekend, many stories and experiences were shared of the journeys traveled since the General Chapter of 1966 that called Brothers to “return to the poor.”

In addition to the mutual support, prayerful reflection, and renewing community experienced that weekend, the group of about 60 men and women established several priorities related to Lasallian activities in support of service to the poor and elected a Steering Committee to pursue those priorities.

LPEP steering committee method

Over the past five years, the LPEP Steering committee developed a particular method of promoting these priorities and of relating to the formal decision-making structures of Districts and the Region. “Refounding the Flame” is the motto of LPEP, and points to the method of the Steering Committee. The LPEP Steering Committee attempts to provide a “spark” to help ignite the flame of the Lasallian charism while enabling other Lasallians to fuel and tend the fire within themselves and their educational faith communities. The LPEP Steering Committee does not involve itself in the on-going administration of any single program. The LPEP Steering Committee does not oper-



A. Carlos Herrera

ate as a committee of the RCCB, nor is it a legal entity with any easily definable administrative role or structure.

The role of the LPEP steering committee in lasallian activities

1. Participated and impacted the **Planning Committees for the Huether Workshops** in **1999** (To Love Tenderly, To Act Justly, and To Walk Humbly with God) and in **2001** (The Rights of the Child).
2. Convened and facilitated the **San Miguel School Administrators' Roundtable** in the fall of **2000** at which the **Lasallian Association of Miguel Schools (LAMS)** was formed.
3. Published the **Directory of Short Term Lasallian Service Opportunities, 2001**.
4. Supported **Lasallians for Peace and Justice**, a group of Lasallians in Rhode Island who **participate in the annual protest to close the School of the Americas**.
5. Published *The Spark*, an occasional newsletter sharing information and insights into Lasallian educational service of the poor.
6. Organized and implemented **Spoke-N-Word 2001**, a cross-country bike ride to raise awareness and funds for family literacy programs for Miguel Schools and other Lasallian urban learning centers. (raised almost \$10,000 for each SM School).
7. Supported Brother Louis Rodemann, FSC, a peace activist with a particular emphasis on UN Sanctions on Iraq.
8. Planned, organized, lobbied and **submitted the proposal to the RCCB for the Lasallian Social Justice Institute (Fall 2002)**, the region's newest national formation program. (Beginning July 17-23, 2004)
9. Organized and facilitated a **Forum on Community and Association** at the Spring Gathering of LAMS **2003**.

A time to reflect and imagine:

After five years, the Steering Committee entered a process of 1) reflecting on **the role of the LPEP Steering Committee** in promoting Lasallian activities in service of the poor, 2) articulating the **method by which the LPEP Steering Committee** acts within the Lasallian landscape, 3) naming **new threads in the Lasallian world** that impact Lasallian association for the educational service of the poor, and 4) creating a **process to gather new insights and priorities for LPEP** over the next five years.

New threads in the lasallian world:

The items listed below are "threads" the LPEP Steering Committee identified as significant movements whose flames must be fanned within the current context of Lasallian association for the educational service of the poor. They are potential new priorities for LPEP as we continue to imagine together our Lasallian future.

1. The promotion of the Rights of the Child.
2. The promotion of new forms of Lasallian communities within the broader context of Lasallian Association.



3. The strengthening of Service Learning Programs with a particular emphasis on tools for action and advocacy.
4. The examination of the impact of lifestyle choices on national and international politics and the economy.
5. The promotion of nonviolence and social peace-making within the Lasallian vocation.

Gathering to Imagine:

The LPEP Steering Committee responded to and acted on the prophetic vision of the founding members that gathered in Goshen in 1998. It is time to gather again, to discern the movement of the Spirit on the horizon of our lives and our ministries, and to imagine association for the educational service of the poor for the future.

To this end, the LPEP Steering Committee is planning a second gathering September 23-26, 2004 in New York City. If you would like more information about this gathering, please email us at LPEPUSA@aol.com.

Togoville, Togo

Togoville College has enrolled partially-sighted students for almost 15 years. What follows is the personal story of Joseph Gbeoundji who is completing his time at school there.

What a good thing it is to give and to receive. But the most symbolic and nicest act is to be thankful. So it is that I have nothing to give back to my benefactor, if not my simple thanks.

Here is the background to my life: blindness is the characteristic of my physical diminishment. Its limitations inflict a humiliating necessity on me. Were it not for the intervention of a generous person of good will, I would have been a victim of illiteracy.

All of a sudden, while I was going on my pilgrim way, one fine day I was offered a meeting with a wise and generous person by the name of Louis Braille. So that I could appreciate something of his background, he told me that he had practical experience of the same condition as myself and that he became its victim at the age of three while playing with the tools of his father who was a leatherworker and he lost an eye. The trouble quickly spread to the other eye and then his whole world was plunged into darkness.

Despite this accident, Louis was scarcely impeded from running about and doing errands for his mother. He started school in Paris. He could neither read nor write but he memorized the teacher's lessons. He began reading letters printed in relief. At the age of sixteen he invented the script which, these days, is the intellectual pride of those visually handicapped.

To my delight he uttered these words: "Be confident, my little friend. Providence will make of you, too, something useful and beautiful!"

By means of the Silo centre in Djanglanmé, Louis started singing the refrain of my literacy, the continuation of which would be assured by the Togoville Institute for the Blind (IAT). Oh, what a marvelous thing took place at the Braille school! In





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the Braille school a miracle happened, viz. the conversion of sight into touch. Within the secrecy of the Braille school, six simple dots suffice to form the 26 letters of the alphabet, punctuation marks, signs and symbols, all taken together. So, I learned to read and write the dot letters which bear the name of my friend and teacher. Now I am freed from the despair which would have engulfed my life forever.

That is the same task that the NDL-CSA educational complex has taken in hand for my secondary education. I admire the way the teachers give the best of themselves for the students of this establishment and the favorable facilities set up for the well-being of the future chosen students who we are. The De La Salle Brothers, true disciples of their master, placed no obstacles in the way of the request of the Directress of the IAT at that time to integrate some sightless persons.

So it was that in 1989 NDL College opened its doors to the first four visually handicapped collegians. At the rate of the rapid yearly increase in the number of students attacked by blindness, the Notre Dame du Lac and Saint-Augustine educational complex at present heartily welcomes thirty-six persons from Yr.6 to the Final Year, compared with thirty-three last year. This determination to help us who are in need has won the kind hearts of the teachers and the sighted students. So you have to believe that the relationships between the sighted and sightless students have not been wrecked on the prejudice circulating on the false idea that blindness is contagious. Through the emphasis the Brothers insistently place on the special feature of this establishment, on accepting differences in others, all are aware of it and act according to their ability with the intention of helping handicapped people.

I am grateful for the support certain friends give by being at our side and dictating to us what the teacher is writing carefully on the blackboard. In these friends I admire their generosity nourished by the Lasallian spirit. The critical stage of this task which they have voluntarily taken on becomes apparent during limited-time tests. When time is running out, these desk friends are faced with a double job. Actually they have to go for their lives and also satisfy the one who is hanging on their lips. In spite of all that, these neighbors, faced with this assignment, summon up their patience and courage. For doing this we owe them gratitude, for they deserve it. Finally, because of this charitable act I can shout for all the world to hear: "Having the love of a neighbor is sharing with him his lot in life, and sharing his lot in life is helping the other to escape the yoke which the limits of his handicap inflict on him".

Only heaven can reward the good acts of our friends who love us.



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PROGRAMS

ARLEP

Educational plan to educate in Justice and Solidarity

1. Structures

By structures we mean those elements, supports and concrete aspects which support the basic option for Justice and Solidarity. They can be of two types: Formation structures and District structures.

1.1 Formation structures

One of the main elements to be taken into account at the time of drawing up a Plan of Education in Justice and Solidarity is the formation of the members of the Education Community. The plan should foresee the contents and the means to be used in the formation of the different strata of the education community:



Courtesy FEMA

Brothers:

- Community meetings on the themes of Justice and Solidarity.
- Days of prayer on the themes of Justice and Solidarity.
- Retreats with the theme "Educating in Justice and Solidarity".

Educators - Teachers:

- Staff-meetings for formation in the themes of Justice and Solidarity.
- Reflection groups on Justice and Solidarity.
- Formation of new teachers.

Parents:

- Themes on Justice and Solidarity in the Parent Schools.
- Formative talks on the themes of Justice and Solidarity.
- Reflection groups on Justice and Solidarity.

Pupils:

- The common thread of Justice and Solidarity.
- Justice and Solidarity as a study subject choice (where possible).

- Themes on Justice and Solidarity introduced into the Tutorial Plan.
- Reflection themes on Justice and Solidarity for Deepening of the Faith Groups.
- Themes on Justice and Solidarity in the morning reflections.

Past-Pupils:

- Formative talks on the themes of Justice and Solidarity.
- Reflection groups on Justice and Solidarity.

Christian Communities:

- Reflection themes on Justice and Solidarity.

1.2 District Structures

Another of the principal elements to be taken into account at the time of drawing up the Plan of Education in Justice and Solidarity is the priority and importance given to it by the District. The District must guarantee that this is a very fundamental aspect of its evangelizing work.

Both the District Animation Team and all the District Commissions have fundamental work from this point of view. Justice and Solidarity effect community life,

finances, pastoral work, the Formation Commission... in a word, it is, as our Superior-General says, something which globalizes the life of the District.

In some places there already exists a District Justice Commission or some similar Commission. This is very important if we want this theme to have a resonance among us. But it is also certain that we must not leave all the work to this Commission, since, as we have already said, it is a matter which concerns us all.

2. Curricular elements

2.1 Justice and Solidarity as the Common Thread

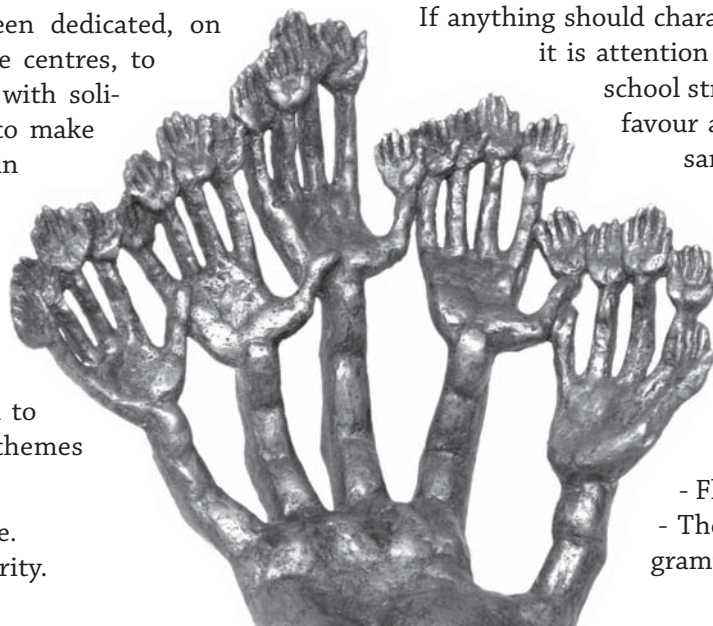
The transversal axis or common thread is based on all the subjects and all the actions which are carried out in the Centre. It is of fundamental importance to include Justice and solidarity in the planning of the different subjects. For this purpose and to ensure that Justice and Solidarity will be something more visible, we ought to base our planning on the following values: equality, tolerance, life, liberty, respect, health and peace... values which embody the profound significance of Justice and Solidarity and which have to be adapted to the age of each pupil. All these values should go through all the subjects and activities of the Centre, like a spear.

2.2 A possible subject

In many places the possibility exists of adding another subject (more or less extensive) or an extra period, to the school timetable, in the course of the week, to continue and reinforce the educational work of the Centre.

This possibility has not been dedicated, on some occasions and in some centres, to activities which have to do with solidarity. Here we would like to make up for this and give a lead in making a reality this opportunity. We ought to offer subjects which allow us the power of planning and encouraging voluntary service among our pupils. This period/subject will lead to sensitizing our pupils in themes such as:

- The Meaning of Justice.
- The Meaning of Solidarity.



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- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The Declaration of the Rights of the Child.
- The National Constitution and Justice.
- Other Declarations: the rights of women, of the handicapped, of the old...
- The Third World.
- The Fourth World.
- The Christian foundations of Justice and Solidarity: the Gospels, the Epistles...
- The Social Doctrine of the Church:

- *Pacem in Terris*
- *Gaudium et Spes*
- *Redemptor Hominis*
- *Laborem Exercens*
- *Centesimus Annus*

- The World of the Worker
 - Justice and Solidarity
 - The distribution of work
 - Unemployment
 - Absenteeism
 - A just wage
- Socio-economic and political structures and Justice and Solidarity
- Marginalisation
- Racism
- Study of the environment
- The NGOs
- Voluntary Service

2.3 A Plan for attention to diversity

If anything should characterize our Lasallian Centres, it is attention to the most needy. From the school structure we ought to empower, favour and take all the means necessary to make this become a reality. The same thing applies when we are talking about the pupils themselves... we must educate them in the service of the most needy. For this purpose we should include activities such as:

- Flexible groups.
- The application of concrete programmes.



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- Activities of Educational Reinforcement
- Planning educational support.
- Drawing up Individualized Curricular Adaptations.

2.4 Tutorship

In many parts of the world stress has been put on the them of Tutorship and, in fact, a weekly period has been introduced into the time-table for this. At the time of planning tutorial activity some thought should be given to adding, as a line of action more for the administration, "teaching how to be just and in solidarity".

3. High Points

By this expression we refer to a series of actions carried out with the following characteristics: short periods of time, so as not to cause tiredness, involving the whole college and which have a bearing on all the educational areas. The following would enter into this field:

3.1 Days of planning and scheduling

These are periods which use the Directing team to present the new course to the staff and to the rest of the educators of the Centre. In many places two or three days are used during which the fundamental work is planning and scheduling. It is therefore the period when the Directing Team presents the concrete proposals of the Plan for Education in Justice and Solidarity which will be developed in the course of the Annual Programme.

3.2 Days for raising awareness

On these days the pupils are presented with the offers

which the Centre is making for educating them in all areas and especially in that of Justice. This usually takes place at the beginning of the year so that all the pupils can be aware of the character and the offers of the Centre.

3.3 Parent meetings

This is when the tutors give a presentation of the most significant elements of the Annual Plan to the parents of the pupils. It is important that the actions directed towards developing the Plan for Education in Justice should occupy an important place in these meetings.

3.4 The Campaigns

They are already a tradition in the majority of our Centres (Domund., Proyde etc.). It is necessary to make a critical examination to see if the campaigns are a genuine reading of reality which help us to discover the causes of injustice, or if they have merely an economic dimension (collecting money).

3.5 Celebration of the school day of...

They aim to be days of reflection and awareness on very concrete themes such as:

- The Day of Non-violence and Peace (Jan. 30th).
- Women's Day (March 8th).
- Day for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (March 21st).
- Environment Day (June 5th).
- United Nations Day (October 24th).
- Children's Rights Day (Nov. 20th).
- Volunteer Service Day (Dec. 5th).
- Human Rights (Dec. 10th).
- AIDS Day.
- The Tree.

The Centre will decide which days to celebrate in the course of the year and establish the methods to be used: creating an atmosphere in the premises used, morning prayer and reflection, drawings, parades, celebrations...

3.6 Days of human realities

They take place over a week and have as their focal-point a theme related to social problems. The theme is treated in all the educative areas as well as in the prayer and reflection of the morning and in the tutorials.

The success of these weeks is in relation to the witness character that is given to them. During this time the centre needs to be open to receiving testimony from people who are narrating their own experiences and from social

action groups or Christian or Religious communities which are involved with them.

Some interesting themes are: the handicapped, the blind, unemployment, poverty, immigrants, the old, shanty towns, abandoned children, juvenile delinquency, drug dependency, alcoholism, the Latin-American world...

Care must be taken that the themes are not dealt with as a defense for the pupils against these problems but as solidarity with those who suffer from them.

3.7 Supporting and participating in Solidarity Campaigns.

In the course of the school year there will be various initiatives which will arise at national level which will help create awareness in the area of Justice and Solidarity. The Education Community ought to pay attention to all these Campaigns and decide the degree of support and participation which the Centre will give to them.

4. The orientation of the school departments

It is important that we give the pupils some mechanisms and some knowledge adapted to their age. We should not forget certain themes when we are dealing with the different school subjects. The contents proper to each age group will give rise to opportunities for speaking of these and other themes.

In Primary School:

- Lack of housing.
- Destruction of the environment.
- Food problems.
- Lack of education.
- Lack of equality between regions and countries.
- Unemployment.
- Marginalised groups.

In Secondary School:

- Progress.
- Development.
- Hunger.
- Health.
- National Budget.
- External Debt.
- Armaments.

- Fundamental liberties.
- Multinationals.

Upper Secondary School:

- Energy control.
- New Technologies.
- Trade-unionism.
- Economic systems.
- The New Social Order.
- Imperialism and Colonialism.
- Social Utopias
- The Arms Race

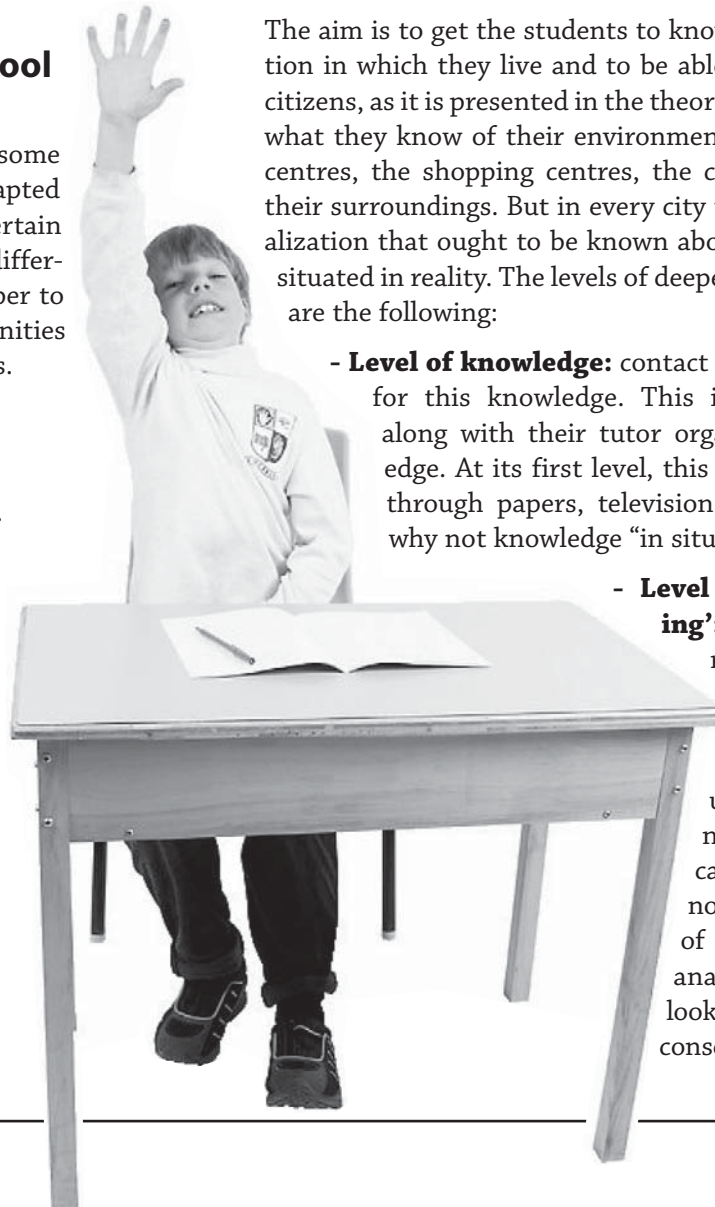
This aspect supports and reinforces the educational work of the common thread of Education in Justice and Solidarity.

5. Plan for getting closer to the real-life situation (P.A.R.)

The aim is to get the students to know the real-life situation in which they live and to be able to feel themselves citizens, as it is presented in the theoretical plans. Perhaps what they know of their environment are the recreation centres, the shopping centres, the city services or only their surroundings. But in every city there exists marginalization that ought to be known about, if we wish to be situated in reality. The levels of deepening (of awareness) are the following:

- **Level of knowledge:** contact is the starting point for this knowledge. This involves the pupils along with their tutor organizing this knowledge. At its first level, this knowledge could be through papers, television, magazines... Also, why not knowledge "in situ".

- **Level of critical 'reading':** there needs to be a response to these question of causes and consequences of this observed situation. The tutor needs to take great care, because we must not remain at the level of seeing but we must analyse the situation looking for causes and consequences.





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- **Level of commitment:** the implication of concrete actions in line with the known reality is of supreme importance. We need to empower the commitment of the pupils to the real-life situation. Furthermore, we need to put the question and to question ourselves on which aspects of our personal lives we need to change so that we will be more authentic.

Each of these levels could correspond to a part of the school year. Three months per level would be ideal.

The possible realities to get to know, adapted for age-groups, could be:

Primary school

- The blind.
- Farm school.
- The handicapped.
- Senior citizens.

Secondary school

- Old Folks homes.
- Refugee centres.
- Residential homes (for handicapped children etc.).
- Occupational workshops.
- Caritas 'soup kitchens'.
- Rehabilitation of alcoholics.
- Drug-addicts.
- Centres for mentally handicapped.

Upper secondary school

- Rehabilitation of alcoholics.
- People living in shanty towns.
- Movements of solidarity.
- Prisons.
- Centres for mentally handicapped.
- Movements of solidarity.
- Volunteer Service

6. Plan of Social Action (P.A.S.)

The objectives of this plan are to help both students and educators to mature; to grow in freedom and the critical capacity and to open up to the world. This plan consists of a concrete weekly action of voluntary service. It involves dedicating part of one's personal time to carrying out a service for the most needy people in the neighbourhood. The beneficiaries of this voluntary service are persons who have a different vision of life, quite distinct from our own: gypsies, old people, handicapped, terminally ill people, etc.

The pupils are asked to live some values which society does not give us, such as love, simplicity, gratitude, unity, sensitivity...

Australia

“Awareness... analysis... action: a social justice program for senior students”

Trish Carroll, *Lasallian Education Services*

De La Salle, in one of his Christmas Meditations, asks:

“How long has Jesus been presenting himself to you and knocking at the door of your heart in order to make his dwelling within you?”

Many, if not most, young people in our postmodern Australian society have little or no sense of God. The Catholic culture of my childhood- Sunday Mass, fish on Fridays, scapulars and rosaries- is a subculture as alien to them as life on Mars. Young people no longer rebel against the Church. They are too indifferent to bother.

The challenge for us as Lasallian educators is this:

How do we help young people to recognize this “knocking at the door” of their hearts? How can we help young people to come to know God? Are we teaching our young people the values of compassion and love? Are we welcoming and open hearted towards the marginalised in our school communities? Do we provide a true model of right relationships between teachers, students and families? Do we encourage our young people as stewards of their environment? Are we conscientizing them about the injustices which oppress them, and others? Are we providing ways for them to take action? Do we give young people hope that there is something more for them than materialism, technology, self centredness and cynicism? Do we free them to dream, to challenge, to create?

Young people have a great passion for justice. Even though our students may seem to be rejecting formalised religion, this does not mean that they are not altruistic or idealistic. Especially as young people become increasingly disillusioned by our consumer-orientated society with its associated shallow and unfulfilling values, their hunger for meaning can increase exponentially.

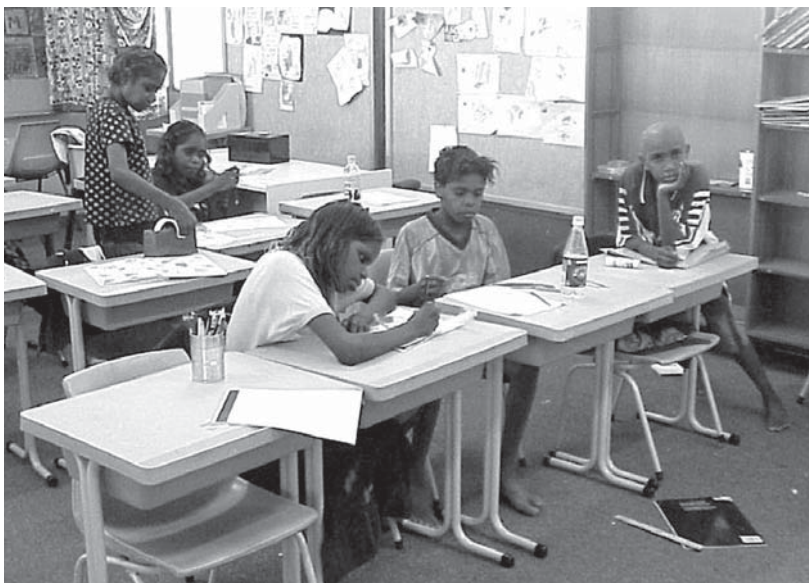
The story of Jesus presented as a call to action, a call for justice, is one that young people can connect with in terms



Courtesy/FEMA

of their own spirituality- more so than they connect with what they perceive to be “religion” or “piety”. Jesus was a person of action. He broke the rules, attacked the economic power of the Temple and argued with religious authorities. Jesus was passionate about justice, about right relationships. Jesus was a person of heart. He called each person to conversion through his healing love and compassion.

We need to introduce our young people to this Jesus. The knocking on the doors of our hearts is loud and clear- it comes from people living under the oppressions of poverty, sickness, illiteracy, unemployment, violence, substance abuse, exploitation, discrimination, or who are in any way marginalised. We can respond to the call by helping make our students aware of human suffering, and engendering in them a sensitivity to the person on the “outside”. We can teach our students to become aware of the causes of injustice, and the structures in society that support them. We can make them believe in their own power to do good, to change what seems impossible to change. It is embedded within these “gospel values” that we, as Lasallian edu-



catators, will touch their hearts.

However, all of these good intentions cannot remain at the level of ideas- if they are not translated into action in the lives of young people, nothing is changed. Our attempt to put “education for justice and peace” into practice was done in the following way:

Our District is fortunate to have a Formation Centre located in Narooma on the south coast of New South Wales. Our “Narooma Program” for educating young people for justice attracted a large response. Many of the young people who attended were not “official” school leaders, but had been nominated because of their interest in social justice issues. We targeted young people in Year 11, their second last year of school. This was to allow these young people time to consider options for service after they graduated from secondary school. There were 50 representatives from the three countries that comprise our District- Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. These young people represented a wide diversity of cultures and backgrounds- an education in tolerance and understanding in itself!

The facilitating team consisted of myself (Lasallian Education Services), the Youth Ministry team, three Brothers, four lay persons (from Australia, New Zealand and PNG) and two young people from St Michael’s College, Adelaide.

The program spanned four days.

Day One (evening) was spent outlining the objectives of the course and discussing what the young people, themselves, hoped to gain. Some “getting to know you activi-

ties” followed this, which encouraged the young people present to become more comfortable with each other, and the facilitators.

Each of the following three days began with a session on the story and life of De La Salle. We wanted to introduce young people to their Lasallian heritage, and to encourage them to feel that they are an important part of the worldwide Lasallian family. We emphasized three aspects of De La Salle’s life in particular:

- commitment to the “*poor*” (with various definitions of poverty);
- taking the risk to move beyond the comfort zone of what is familiar and safe;
- being responsive to the calls God presents to us in our lives- the ways in which we are led “gradually and imperceptibly”.

There were also times allocated each day for prayer and reflection.

The focus of each of the three days was then divided into “*global*”, “*our District*” and “*local*”.

Global

The workshops on “global” issues targeted areas where children’s rights are being violated within our PARC region. We used the “Convention on the Rights of the Child” as a reference point. With the additional use of various video clips, newspaper articles, song lyrics, games and role plays, statistics and personal stories, the young people were made aware of, and discussed, issues such as child labour, child soldiers, refugees and the grinding poverty and lack of educational opportunity that many children endure. We sometimes assume, as adults, that young people are aware of all these things. Often, they are not.

However, conscientizing is only part of the process. Our aim was to empower our young people to action, not to have them feel overwhelmed and powerless in the face of so many injustices. With the words “Who will act if you don’t?” the young people were challenged to devise strategies that they could realistically adopt. These ranged from educating their peers (and teachers) at school, to fund raising, to joining groups like Caritas or Amnesty. We encouraged the young people to see that systems and structures are essentially made by people, and can be changed- or, at least, radically challenged- by people.

Our district

The workshops based on “our District” looked at issues of children's rights violations within our three countries. The cultural differences became evident as we heard of children in Papua New Guinea who could not afford the bus fare to get to school; who did not have suitable clothes or shoes; who could not afford food, much less books or pens. We heard of the treatment of indigenous children in Australia and New Zealand, and the third world statistics of infant mortality, health problems, unemployment and lack of educational opportunities. We heard of young people in our supposedly affluent countries who are affected by mental illness, substance abuse, unemployment, loneliness, illiteracy and so on.

The Youth Ministry Team presented a range of volunteer programs that young people could choose to participate in after they graduate from secondary school. These included:

- Camp La Salle (an activity-based holiday camp and recreational experience in a uniquely Lasallian environment for students aged between 12-15 years).
- Fish La Salle (similar to Camp La Salle, but based on “big brother” fishing trips).
- Youth groups and retreats.
- After school homework classes and tutoring (for students who may find it difficult to do their homework or study at home for whatever reason).
- Big Brother outings.
- Teaching English to refugee children.
- Working as teacher's aides and running after-school programs.
- Working on building/maintenance projects.
- Volunteer work in Papua New Guinea and Balgo Hills with Aboriginal children.
- Volunteer work in India and the Philippines.
- Volunteer work in BoysTown welfare services.

Local

Sometimes, it can be easier to identify large “global” problems than problems in our own families or schools. We have to begin with justice in our own environments. For instance, we asked the young people:

Who are the disadvantaged in your school? Are they in this position due to health issues/lack of money/cultural barriers/physical appearance/drugs/poor social skills? Lack of family support?



In what ways is life difficult for these marginalised students?

What does your school do to help these students?

What do you do to help these students?

Strategies for action were, again, discussed.

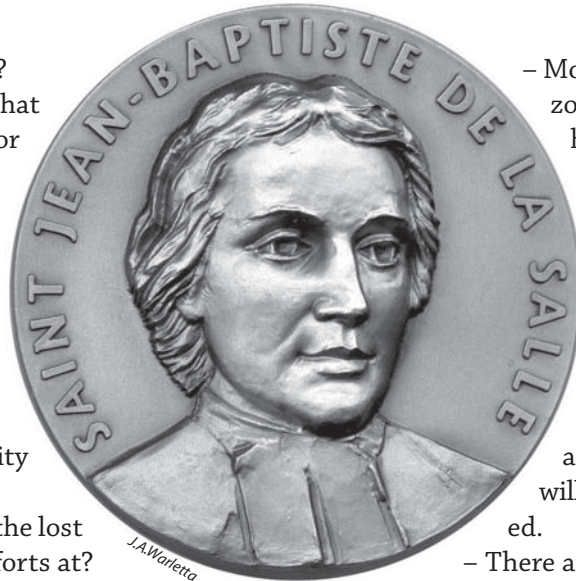
The young people were given an “action plan” template for beginning a social action group in their own school based on four key questions:

- What is the injustice to tackle?
- Why is the present situation unacceptable?
- Who do I need to approach? Influence?
- How do I plan to go about this?

Steps for forming a social action group are:

- What will be the aim / objective of the group?
- Who do you want to be in the group?

- When and where will you meet?
- What will you call the group? What will you use as your symbol or logo?
- How will you get the message out about your group? How will you inspire, involve and educate others?
- Are there any schools rules or procedures that you need to be aware of?
- Can you enlist any community support?
- How can you identify "the last, the lost and the least" to target your efforts at?
- How will you allocate group roles e.g. newsletter, speaking at assemblies etc.



- Move outside the 'walls' of our comfort zone (like De La Salle) and see what is happening around us.
 - The Lasallian spirit is all over the world and we hold a lot of power.
 - Being Lasallian is more than just going to a school with that name - it continues throughout your life.
 - There are people without enough food and money to survive. It only really hit me while I was at the Narooma gathering and now I will not take as many things for granted.
 - There are many young people who really do care about 'social justice'.

The success of the course can be gauged by the feedback from the participants, and the actions that eventuated.

Some of the students' comments included:

- No matter how small the things I may achieve, they will make a difference.
- A life with no reflection is a life with no direction.
- Analysis, Awareness, Action.
- Faith without action is not enough.
- Lord, the work is Yours. (St John Baptist De La Salle)

Perhaps the most encouraging sign is that a significant number of young people who attended the program have subsequently either set up social justice groups within their own schools, or signed up for volunteer programs.

So- let those of us who are privileged enough to work with young people, trust in their creativity, passion and courage. Let us give them opportunities to articulate their own goodness. Let us invite them to join a Lasallian family of which they will feel proud. Let us help them to know God.

USA

Lasallian Social Justice Institute

Nature & Purpose

The Lasallian Social Justice Institute (LSJI) is a formation program for Partners and Brothers from the US/Toronto Region based on the Gospel and our Lasallian vocation seeking justice and service to the poor. Developed by Brothers and Partners, it is a response to the call from both grassroots Lasallians and General Chapters for more formation programs that strengthen “association for the educational service of the poor.”

The purpose of the LSJI is to promote the continuing process of conversion to solidarity with persons in poverty as an authentic response to the Gospel and the Lasallian vocation. It is designed to be experiential, educational, creatively practical, formative and reflective. The LSJI seeks to help participants draw closer to the world of the poor in order to be evangelized by them.

Goals

The goals of the LSJI are:

- To examine theological, sociological and Lasallian insights into poverty, justice and peace in order to recognize more fully the scope of the struggle for human dignity.
- To provide a cross-cultural experience and a face-to-face encounter with persons in poverty.
- To create opportunities that will allow for a change of head and heart by examining societal and global trends in light of our experience and the Gospel.
- To examine and understand the rights of children and how these rights have direct bearing on our Lasallian vocations.
- To provide participants with tools to create and sustain programs of social justice in Lasallian ministries.



Philosophy

The LSJI seeks to embody the Lasallian commitment to association for the educational service of the poor and to the rights of children. It consists of three integrated components: first, a relational encounter with persons living in poverty; second, a place to study and examine the Lasallian tradition and Church teachings on poverty, justice and peace; third, a community of Lasallians with whom to prayerfully integrate our experiences and discern the path of our Lasallian vocation. The LSJI seeks partnerships with individuals and organizations active in justice and peace movements. This new formation opportunity welcomes and encourages the participation of individuals and their families.

Themes for Lasallian Social Justice Institute

Summer #1

Global Economic Justice: The theme for this first week is based on the understanding of “Justice” in scripture and the life of Jesus. The situation of the maquiladores across the border from El Paso, Texas will provide the focus for this theme. Child labor, the effects of globalization, the

Church's call to solidarity, and the Lasallian theme of association will be highlighted during this week.

Summer #2

Social Peace-Making: Participants will examine the concept of “Peace” in scripture and the life of Jesus. They will address the issues of the war on terrorism, militarization, the plight of child soldiers, the Church’s call to non-violence especially as it relates to the mission of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

Summer #3

Human Dignity and Giving Life: The Beatitudes will be the central theme of this week of the Institute. Called by the Church to make a preferential option for the poor and to value human dignity, Institute participants will examine the movement of peoples, the life of child refugees and the issues surrounding migration. De La Salle’s theme of “Adoring God in Them: Recognizing Jesus in the faces of the Poor”, will provide a context for this week’s prayer and study.

In the Summer of 2004 The Lasallian Social Justice Institute took place in El Paso, Texas with Theme 1, “Global Economic Justice.” Summers of 2005 and 2006 are not yet confirmed. The Lasallian Social Justice Institute is open to all engaged in Lasallian ministries.





COMMITMENTS

USA - Lasallian volunteers

Contact: David Kasievich (dkasievich@cbconf.org) et Alisa Macksey (amacksey@cbconf.org)

1. Name, starting date of initiative, public targeted.

Start Date: Recognized as a Movement within the Institute in 1989. Small groups of volunteers were living and working with Brothers during the late 1970's and early 1980's.

Public Targeted: Volunteers: People with a college degree, or related work experience. Volunteers need to be interested in living with an organized, faith-based community, able to make a yearlong commitment to the program, attendance at an 8-day orientation in August, a midyear retreat and in-services during the year. Volunteers need to be flexible, enthusiastic, have a good sense of humor, openness to people who are different from themselves. Volunteers who are reliable, willing to learn, concerned for social justice and ability to live simply.

What does the Volunteer receive: Room, board, and a small stipend, medical insurance, college loan deferment or forbearance, AmeriCorps education awards, spiritual growth and reflection, meaningful career experience.

Students/Clients: Lasallian Volunteers work mostly with young people. A small number of Lasallian Volunteers minister to adults and senior citizens.

2. Aims of Initiative.

Lasallian Volunteers serve in varied educational and social service settings. Students are from varied races, cultures and religious traditions. More than half of the students and clients served by Lasallian Volunteers are the working poor. These students/clients are educated and mentored by Lasallian Volunteers to assist them to break the cycle of poverty that can prevent them from becoming productive and responsible citizens.

Lasallian Volunteer Mission Statement: The Lasallian Volunteer movement offers a unique opportunity for an individual to respond to Christ's call to the service of others, especially the poor. The response is a one to three year experience in the field of Christian education or related human development services. During this period of service,

Lasallian Volunteers affiliate themselves with the ministry of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, sharing fully in the apostolic and community life of the Brothers and their Lasallian Partners.

3. How it began

Brief Lasallian Volunteer History: To respond to the needs of the poor in 17th Century France, St. John Baptist de La Salle gave up his wealth and social prestige to develop Christian schools capable of freeing them for positive, productive living in society. He gathered teachers and formed them into a supportive community where they could develop religiously and professionally to continue this mission. The work of these



first Christian Brothers has spread throughout the world, conducted enthusiastically by both Brothers and Lasallian colleagues. In 1989 the Lasallian Volunteer Movement began. Today these women and men are an integral part in the Lasallian mission of providing a quality Christian education and human development to others, especially the poor.

More Extensive History: The Lasallian Volunteer Program was officially recognized by the Institute of the De La Salle Christian Brothers as a movement in 1989. Before this date, two other movements took place in the United States that created the Volunteer Movement we have today.

First Movement: New York District

In 1981, the Brothers at La Salle Academy in New York City invited a young man by the name Charlie Brown to live and work with the Brothers. Charlie Brown and the Brothers at La Salle Academy probably did not realize that as Charlie worked and lived side by side with the Brothers that they were doing something that would become contagious.

The success at La Salle Academy was noticed by the Brothers in the New York District. They met and planned on how they were going to spread the work of the volunteers throughout the District. By 1983, the New York District had formed a program called the Christian Volunteer Workers. Around the same time in the Midwest District (St. Louis/Chicago Districts) volunteers were invited by Brothers in Toronto, Canada and St. Paul, MN to work and share community with them on St. Vincent Island in the West Indies and in Africa. Volunteers also worked at a Christian Brothers Retreat Center in Plano, IL and plans were made for Volunteers to work in schools in Mississippi with help from the Brothers in the St. Louis District.

With these two movements, the creation of a unified, national Lasallian Volunteer Program was formed in 1989. The Lasallian Volunteer Program continues to experience growth, mostly from the San Miguel School Movement and other Lasallian Educational efforts. The volunteers provide energy, creativity and spirit to the schools and agencies where they work. There are over 300 former Volunteers. Currently, for the 2002-2003 service year we have 37 volunteers serving all over the country in 23 different schools and agencies and living in 14 different communities, sharing their meals, prayers and work with Christian Brothers and other members of the Lasallian Family.

5. Description of development and key moments:

In the past three years many opportunities have presented themselves for the Lasallian Volunteer program to grow in participants and in responsibilities. *The following are a few examples:*



4. Precise Role Played By Lasallians

What sort of service do the Volunteers do?

- Teach/tutor in elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, alternative schools, adult education programs, outdoor education centers and after school programs.
- Adventure?based Recreation Leaders.
- Case Managers/Social Workers.
- Campus Ministry/Retreat Work/Organizing Service Projects.
- Development: Public Relations/Grant Writing/Fundraising.
- Coaching Sports Teams.
- Support Staff at Homeless Shelters and Soup Kitchens.



– **In January 2001** the Visitors asked the Lasallian Volunteer Program to develop a plan to open new communities in locations where there were none or in places where the Lasallian Volunteers were not welcomed in the local Christian Brothers Community. A series of meetings were held in 2000-2001 resulting in a “think tank” under the direction of Brother Jeff Calligan, held the day before the Huether Workshop in Chicago. One or two such communities were proposed to open in September 2002.

– **From September 2000 to September 2001** the number of San Miguel Schools staffed by Lasallian Volunteers increased from three to seven. In September 2002 five more are expected to be staffed by Lasallian Volunteers. Prior to September 2001, 35% or eight Lasallian Volunteers were assigned to San Miguel Schools where they represented approximately 40% of the staff at those schools. Assuming the same percent will be needed in September 2002 then 26 Lasallian Volunteers will be needed just to

staff the expanded San Miguel Schools. When adding the 18 Lasallian Volunteers who traditionally work at child care institutions, high schools, and Catholic Worker then the total needed in September 2002 is 44, an increase of 33% over 2001-2002 total of 33 volunteers. Additionally, the Director to Lasallian Volunteer ratio will have doubled from 11.5 to 1 in school year 2000 to a projected 22 to 1 in school year 2002. Also, San Miguel Schools staffed by Lasallian Volunteers will have increased from 3 to a projected 12 since school year 2000. Furthermore, the total number sites staffed by Lasallian Volunteers will have increased from 18 to approximately 30 since the school year of 2000.

– Many districts in the U.S. are considering in their Chapters the expanded understanding of Association, especially ways in which lay partners and Brothers can come together in service to the poor. Fifteen years of their lay members living with the Brothers places the Lasallian Volunteers at the center of this national discussion.

– **The Advent of the Lasallian Association of Miguel Schools (LAMS)** and the growing interest of Lasallian Colleges and Universities in training high quality teachers for Lasallian schools have forced the Lasallian Volunteer Program to reexamine the questions of quality and retention of volunteers. Retention has improved because the number and percentage of the Lasallian Volunteers who renew for a second year or more has steadily increased since 1990. In that year, 15% renewed, in 1994, 20% renewed, in 1998, 35% renewed and this year, 50% or 11 renewed. The value in all ministries is greatly enhanced by the possibility of the volunteer(s) being present for more than one year. In regards to quality, some Lasallian Colleges/Universities are considering teaching training programs before and during the volunteer period. These schools are also creating programs for graduating volunteers who hold promise as teachers and staff in Lasallian Schools throughout the United States. Today, a good number of former volunteers are holding full-time positions in Lasallian Institutions.

Lasallian Volunteer Possibilities-Vision

– As genuine cooperation and collaboration between districts builds among all the various Lasallian works, more people are suggesting an exchange of staff across school types and across district boundaries. For example, a high school teacher on sabbatical might provide the teaching experience needed in a staff position at a San Miguel School. This would be an entirely new spin on the Lasallian Volunteer Program and support an even more cooperative relationship among Lasallians.

– For the past several years Lasallians across the country have suggested that we initiate a group of older, perhaps

retired, volunteers that would share the FSC ministry and be in association with the Brothers. This group could be a part time sharing of prayer and community life similar to the Lasallian Volunteers.

Fall 2002: A Lasallian Volunteer Lay Pilot Community opened in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Under the direction of two former Lasallian Volunteers, a new pilot community which includes a married couple (two former Lasallian Volunteers), their two-year-old son, a former volunteer, and two Lasallian Volunteers. These two volunteers serve in two different Lasallian Ministries (San Miguel Middle School and De La Salle High School, both of Minneapolis, Minnesota). This new community is supported by the local communities of Brothers, former volunteers and other Lasallian Ministries.

Fall 2002: A Coordinator of Development and Recruitment was hired as a result of a three-year grant from Cassin Educational Initiatives.

– Each of the above involves the spread of the Lasallian Mission by expanding our investment in the Lasallian Volunteer Program. They are about building Lasallian assets for the mission-assets of having more and better-qualified ministers to the poor-assets of volunteer retention-assets of greater collaboration between and among districts and between our region and the international institute.

6. Impact of the initiative on those involved and for the Lasallian Network.

The Lasallian Volunteer Movement is a continuation today of two integral dimensions of St. John Baptist de La Salle's work.

1° Lasallian Volunteers help to make possible creative, new educational outreach to the economically poor of our country.

2° Through their Association with the Brothers these young men and women, most of whom are fresh out of college, are formed in the Mission and Spirituality of the Founder. Their lives are transformed for continued service in the Church, for many, in Lasallian Schools.



Impact of the Volunteers: The Lasallian Association Continues.

In addition to the ministry and education to impoverished students (and others) during years of service, Lasallian Volunteers use their experience to continue in Association with the Brothers and for the Lasallian Mission.

- A significant number of volunteers renew their commitment for a second or third year.
- Former LV's have stayed at their respective ministries after completing their year(s) of service.
- Some returned home and sought out Lasallian Institutions to continue their teaching careers.
- Many teach in Catholic schools and participate in other forms of Catholic leadership, conveying the Lasallian values they absorbed as a volunteer.
- Former LV's assist regularly in recruiting potential volunteers for the future and in the LV training programs.
- Most LV's pursue teaching and human service careers to continue on the path they began as volunteers.

Education is the

7. Minimal conditions for such an initiative to function:

- Lasallian Volunteers;
- Brother Communities to sponsor volunteers;
- Lasallian Ministries to host volunteers;
- Lasallian Volunteer Staff (Director, Associate Director and Coordinator of Development and Recruitment);
- Office Resources (Christian Brothers Conference);
- Non-District representation (Christian Brothers Conference);
- District financial contributions.



Lasallian Volunteer Numbers: 1998-2003

	Total	1 st year	Returning	Communities	Service Sites
2002-2003	37	27	10	18	22
2001-2002	34	23	11	15	22
2000-2001	24	17	7	12	16
1999-2000	38	22	16	16	20
1998-1999	34	26	8	16	18

France

Education in justice, with deeds

Contact: Bro. Pierre Brétilot (*edde.semil@wanadoo.fr*)

1. SEMIL (F.S.C. Lasallian Missionary Secretariat)

Date of the beginning of the initiative :

1990 - This initiative, though, has its roots in the continuation of earlier initiatives which had adopted different formulae in view of the contribution of the Districts of France to the Lasallian works in the developing countries, particularly in Black Africa, the Near East and Madagascar.

For about ten years with CODIAM, especially under different forms: supporting the French volunteers, proposals for training for African teachers and financial aid given by the Districts of France to the Lasallian undertakings.

For about another dozen years, up to 1989, SEMIL took as its main missions:

- the support of French Missionary Brothers;
- the recruiting of new volunteer Brothers for the Missions and following them in the communities where they were working;
- the sending out of a group of young French people each year; these young people were chosen by the Districts of France at the rate of 1 or 2 per District, and they went to live in a village in the living conditions of the inhabitants and to fulfil some work.

From 1990, the public targeted: mainly the older students of Lasallian Establishments in France, and through them all pupils of the Establishments and all those in educational communities and beyond.

2. Aims of the initiative

From 1990:

The main aim, while asking SEMIL to afford the Missionary Brothers all available assistance, would always be to make the young people of the Lasallian Establishments aware of and open-minded to other cultures and solidarity with Third World Countries, while also holding out possible ways of approach on the spiritual level.

Our ambitions: **“Plans for growth”**.

Young people are saying they want to give their time and energy to short-term humanitarian projects. Each project has a double desire: on the one hand, to allow each participant to grow and develop, and, on the other hand, to bring about the success of a real project. This double aim is undoubtedly the originality of the SEMIL projects.

Projects by young people, for young people, with young people...





a. Educational concern for young French people

To give young people a sense of responsibility

This represents the basis of the “SEMIL pedagogy”. Each team includes adults who have an important role and who have been trained to accompany in a way which encourages the young people themselves to take charge of the project and to bring it to fulfilment.

To write the projects into the life of the educational establishments

The teams are concerned systematically to inform and mobilise the educational communities, and especially the other students, so that the establishments often realise through the team of young people that they have the SEMIL project.

To discover socio-economic realities

No matter how modest a project is in its realisations, it nevertheless provides the possibility of discovering the opportunities and problems in a developing country. It allows them to measure the disparity between the levels of living and invites young French people to reorganise their own standards of values.

To undergo a humanitarian experience

Whatever the differences they come up against, a project often allows everyone to discover their own humanity and their solidarity with others (within the team, with strangers, and even in France with people whose difficulties might at one time have left them indifferent).

To encounter the gospel invitations

A project also allows one to live the concept of “active tolerance” within the team: each one is aware of his beliefs being respected, but differences also encourage dialogue and sharing of convictions. The project is a privileged time for broaching spiritual topics and questions. Each young person and each adult, because of his/her expectations and development, can also find a place in a project of this kind.

b. The concern to follow through a successful development project

Target projects, based on exchange...

We encourage the teams to concentrate first of all on projects which target the young people in difficulty in the country. Works and undertakings to improve living conditions are important, but most of all they allow collaboration and a real exchange with the local people.

...and supported by the international Lasallian network

The presence in many countries of missionary Brothers or partners who have been known for a long time, facilitates the setting up of projects aimed at real local needs. Furthermore, people responsible in SEMIL make regular visits (Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Togo...) to determine the conditions for receiving groups (actions to take, lodging, transport...).

3. The origins

Until 1990, our relationships with the Third World were mainly confined to the network of Brothers (Missionary Brothers - Native Brothers).

Since the unification of the eight districts of France, our policy has changed and it was thought that the educational establishments (the young people and adults present in them) could be more involved in our relationships with the Third World. Proposals were made for well-prepared groups to stay and become aware. The success of these proposals has been growing: two to three groups a year for the first years - 15 to 22 groups for the past four years, making a total of 150 groups to date, 2002. It should be noted that about ten of the groups have been older adults: teachers, parents or friends of young people who had been out.

At the outset, the request made to SEMIL was the following:

- to make young people aware of realities other than those of their everyday life - to be aware of the human meaning, of the universal;
- to develop kinship, tolerance, understanding of other people;
- to tie links and to share in actions of solidarity;
- to discover the Church under other aspects than those seen in the context here.

What is to be done to attempt to approach, if not attain, these aims? Should “workshops” be suggested, should we begin with situations rather similar in our own environment to those in the Third World, etc.? The conclusion reached after almost a year of reflection, in the light of some experience lived through beforehand, is that to understand other people and share with them, the simplest and most natural way is undoubtedly to meet them in their own environment.

The question then to be answered was, under what conditions should the meeting take place in order to be beneficial and to bear the hoped-for results? That was the occasion to develop, gradually, a definite way of acting.

This took place in three phases:

A long period of preparation (from one to three years depending on the age of the young people when starting the awareness stage) during which there had to be supervision:

- to encourage maximum awareness of young people and adults by the young people;
- to encourage the young people by insisting on “the membership of a network” (the SEMIL network and the Lasallian network in France);
- to create small ‘support structures’ (associations of Law of 1901 kind) parallel to the Lasallian Establishments, or totally autonomous with regard to them, to allow the young people to continue their commitment beyond their student days and also to accept young people from other Establishments or Universities as well as the families. These structures also offer the SEMIL groups the possibility of signing on during the period and of starting off new groups in conjunction with the older members and benefiting from their experience.

During this preparation time, games based on Third World themes are suggested to the youngest and then weekends - camps of 8 to 10 days, actions and small workshops in France are organised to strengthen the life of the group and to





allow the young people to earn some money necessary to finance their journey, stay and the buying of materials needed to set up work-sites over there.

A relatively short time: a stay in a Developing Country (between three weeks and a month) for young people of Years 12 and 13, University and Professionals.

Upon their return another quite long period to express, deepen, and share their experience and maintain the convictions and commitments which flow from it. Thanks to the Associations and the local Committees, this period might extend over many years.

4. The precise role of Lasallians

The SEMIL groups are not defined explicitly as “Lasallian” groups. Groups of “young Lasallians” existed with their own kinds of references and commitments. On the other hand it often happens that SEMIL answers requests from Young Lasallians to suggest places when they want to fulfil a project in a Developing Country and to help them a little with their preparation.

On the other hand, the aim of the SEMIL groups is to bring awareness to the whole educational group from the Lasallian Establishments that they come from. To involve everyone in the project (young people, teachers, families, ex-students) and then share their experience with them. The crowning achievement of the enterprise would be for the SEMIL projects to become an integral part of the ‘educational projects’ of the Establishments.

The projects are often linked to a missionary Brother or with Lasallian works in the Third World, but not exclusively - with local N.G.O.s as well. In every case, the groups must do their utmost to discover the Lasallian fulfilment in the sectors where they go to live in a village and bring about their work.

These different ways are explained by the fact that SEMIL wants to let all young people, whatever their development with regard to the faith and Lasallians, at least to live the humanitarian and solidarity experience - and let them share with the young people and the population all dimensions of life under all its human, social, economic, cultural and religious aspects.

5. The evolution and key moments

The main stages have been the following:

1. In the beginning, the sending of some groups each year, particularly developing:

- the life of the group;
- the ability to share with others there;
- learning the value of money by actions to finance the projects, journeys, and stay over there. There was a whole pedagogy about money to be developed;
- while insisting that the groups be accompanied by older people especially for health and safety, be careful that it is the young people who ensure the preparation and conduct of the projects;
- the uprooting from the young people of all that binds them to their everyday life in order to give them the possibility of discovering and welcoming other people, etc...

2. After three years’ experience, the setting-up of the Law of 1901 kind of associations in parallel with educational establishments, in order to give the young people the possibility of continuing to reflect on their lived experiences, to assure a follow-up and concrete commitments after their return. This allows the possibility of new projects being

launched by the young people themselves, through which they could also continue self-help actions, commit themselves and gather others around them.

3. Then the organisation each year and in each of the three Sectors of the District of France, of local “before and after trips” meetings to allow the young people the opportunity of discussing their actual experiences and to share information.

4. Setting-up of “young people meetings” by Sectors with the responsibility of organising an annual weekend by Sector and of visiting the groups to be certain that they are working in “the spirit of SEMIL” and eventually of being lavish with advice.

5. Proposal of training weekends for guides (adults first of all, then young adults).

6. Setting-up of a national meeting in which all the Sectors are represented, which will evaluate and fix the main tendencies. The success of the “stay” and the length of follow-up depends on the seriousness of this preparation.

7. Creation of EDDE - Education and Development: is a Law of 1901 kind of Association started 9 years ago to ensure the legal security of the groups (especially the civil responsibility aspect for the guides). Since it has no denominational character like SEMIL, it wanted to be able to obtain help from lay organisations and ‘eventually’ from the European Community for more important projects in the FSC missionary areas in partnership with other European Lasallian missionary services and in accordance with the European Conference of the Brother Visitors of Europe.

Fortunately two projects in particular saw the light of day:

- Creation of the Agricultural Centre for young rural people and adult peasants in HAGAZ (Eritrea).
- Creation of a boarding school for young Pakistani Christians in KHUSHPUR (Pakistan).

These projects were not continued because of insufficient personnel to ensure the leading and managing of new centres.

8. Participation in national and local meetings of Pastoral Ministry.

SEMIL is, naturally, following its specific route, but it is no stranger to the efforts of Pastoral work by other teams. It wishes to remain wide open to the older young people, especially from technical Establishments, who, in real numbers rather than symbolically, join the chaplaincies or the Pastoral ministry suggestions of service. To reveal the Church remains, however, a major concern, and another approach is offered by the meetings of more believing groups in the Developing Countries.

That is why SEMIL is happy to bring its own vision to FSC Pastoral Ministry national and local meetings and its participation in Lasallian Gatherings organised in France or in the J.M.J.

6. Impact of the initiative for those who have had the experience and for the Lasallian network.

Statements of young people who have been on summer projects.

Opening - New outlook on things:

“This stay lets me see our style of living in another way... Such a journey makes us think again”.

“Faced with poverty, I also took stock of my privileged position”.

“This project changed my outlook on things... It is a starting point for my life in the future”.

“To go... means above all to become richer through the difference with regard to the people and situations one comes across”.



Brian Alexander

Knowing oneself:

"There, everything made us realise what we really are: human beings who need only water, rice, fruits of the earth to live - in a couple of words, nature and reason. Everything there is done to tell you that you really exist, that you are not a mirage..."

"Full of discoveries of others, but also of ourselves, of our possibilities and our limits..."

Witness of two volunteers (in India and Mexico).

"It allowed me to obtain a better knowledge of the country (population, ways of living, regions...) than by staying for a 3 or 4 weeks holiday."

"I was able to give up my world and live elsewhere in other conditions far from my usual haunts... During your stay it allows you to realise what you are attached to in your life in France and to surprise yourself by the privations you experience."

"Personal and interior enrichment, but I am also aware that the tiny work done there has not been in vain. It was a real help because I accomplished things that nobody had the time to do and which were nevertheless important."

"A reality: to discover, adapt, enrich oneself."

"I was capable of living and move around in a country which was unlike France and where nothing is simple for a Cartesian mind."

"I came to teach and gradually discovered the reality of my pupils and their families, very different from what I had known in France, and to which I had to adapt."

"The greatest richness I discovered during the 2 years in this area besides the magnificent country and a great faith, was the welcoming spirit of these people. I came across many people like the old widow in the parable who had only a penny and gave it away."

"I also believe that the people are grateful to the Brothers and the volunteers for what they do for them, and that they want to give something back. It is a worthwhile exchange."

"I finally understand the importance of the education that the Brothers give, particularly the education in service and I thank them for giving me the opportunity to do this voluntary work."

7. Impact of the initiative on the social, educational, political, cultural and ecclesial (depending on the cases) environment.

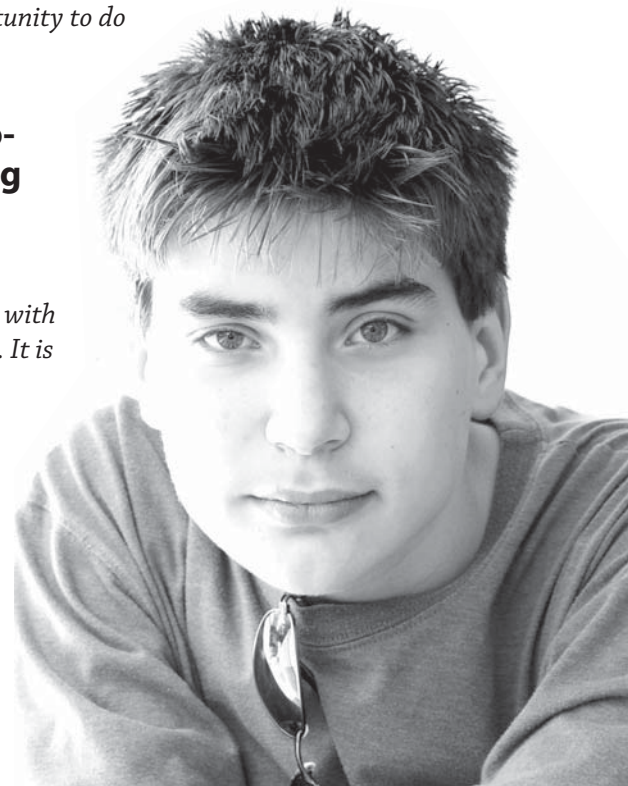
"It let me rethink my idea of the world."

"To set off for a foreign country desiring to integrate is synonymous with openness of spirit, tolerance and respect for others and their differences. It is a lesson in humanity..."

"Openness to new cultures teaches us to open ourselves to others, teaches us humility, respect..."

"In Abidjan (with the street children) it was to experience fraternity in action, contact with cultures and minds. It was the apprenticeship in tolerance which is not indifference but respect for and interest in others..."

"On arrival, the shock is so violent in the face of so much misery that the first feeling is one of anger, a feeling of revolt. How can there be so much inequality, so much injustice on the same planet..."



Bobbie Osborne

“The hardest thing is to accept this reality as it is presented to us and then be able to try to understand it. It is not a matter of giving in before such misery but of opening one’s eyes to see things as they are and be able to go beyond that feeling of compassion which very often prevents us from really sharing and discovering.”

“Faith, fraternity and service were words which were lived every day and truly, and so making real the message left by Saint John Baptist de La Salle...”

“From this project I will retain the experience of life in a group...”

8. Minimum conditions for such an initiative to work.

– Third World trips are addressed to **groups** of young French people, who are going to meet other groups. They are accompanied, but the initiative of the operations for the activities out there are the responsibility of those in charge of the projects and the local helpers.

– Priority is given to the encounter, the work is a means of facilitating it. During preparation, the young people must be given to understand that the essential thing is sharing with the young and people concerned.

– The young people must be prepared to be open to discovering different types of culture, social, economic and religious traditions. The fact of belonging to SEMIL groups and being welcomed as such, commits them not to neglect the discovery of the spiritual dimensions of the human groups encountered.

– The **choice of projects** is made on the proposals of the future partners, proposals that are then kept by SEMIL. These projects are of an educational kind and answer the expectation of a community. Villages, schools, parishes, are all helped.

– The group itself ensures the financing of the journey, the stay, and it shares in the buying of materials needed for the fulfilment of the project.

The project can mean participation by the whole establishment. The ways of collecting money must be carefully chosen so that they are educational and in harmony with the philosophy of the project. It is desirable that the young people themselves should earn this money, mainly by group actions.

– Necessity of a **preparation of the group**: so that they can be informed and made aware of the real situation of the country. The optimum time seems to be 1 to 3 years.

– For accompanied groups, the desirable **number** is between 6 and 12 - never more than 15.

– At the time of the trip, the young people will be **Sixth Formers, Students** or professional people.

9. Risks to avoid in this kind of initiative.

– Going there as a tourist and uninterested in the reality of the project or in giving the time to fulfil it.

– Preparing a project which is not suited to the needs of the people.

– Not sharing the life of the youngsters and people of the under classes and belonging to another culture - and therefore not receiving their witness of faith and love, not believing with them and not establishing strong links of solidarity.

– Transposing Western ways of life to another culture.

– Seeing oneself as a saviour.

– Thinking that the fact of being European gives some superiority. The opposite attitude is particularly appreciated according to this statement by a person from Burkina-Faso: “Now there seems to be a ‘new race of whites’ who work in the fields with us and work on sites under the direction of village workers.”

– On site, concentrating on the miserable state of affairs without insisting on mutual enrichment.

– Remaining with the view that we are there to “help” forgetting that it is rather for mutual enrichment.

– Thinking the job is the most important whereas it is life with the people and responding to their needs.



Luis Alves

- During the stay, independently of the work which allows encounter, **stress the discovery** of economic, social, political, religious, educational realities, and also of local personalities - in view of a better knowledge and understanding of the country.
- The “**instructions**” on hygiene and safety given by the SEMIL guides must be absolutely respected.
- **On returning, be careful:**
 - to deepen the experience and share it with others (especially in the Lasallian network),
 - to make other young people aware,
 - to commit themselves locally in solidarity actions,
 - to keep in touch with the group encountered over there.

Before setting off:

- Be aware that if the members are too young they will not draw all the benefits from such a stay.
- Set off with the idea of actively sharing with the local volunteers.
- Prepare activities for human improvement for the children, young people or adults.
- Set off with a mind disposed and open to the unexpected needs of the people and the missions.
- Communicate with the people out there in preparing the project.
- Be able to live in community.



Finally it can be said that, unlike former, possibly more ambitious initiatives, which often greatly disappointed, the SEMIL projects are distinguished by their modesty. They aim more at changing minds and hearts, in accordance with the SEMIL motto which is repeated each year on the first page of the Bulletin and which has even been taken as the name of a local Association, the “**3 Bs**”:

*Many small things
Done by many small people
In many small places
Can change the world*

Daniel VI

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-	1999	Raport of Br. Superior General to 43 rd General Chapter
246	2000	43rd General Chapter. Rome, 2000
247	2002	The Rights of the Child
248	2003	Educational innovations