



STORIES OF HOPE...

Associated for
Our Lasallian Mission

Bulletin N°254

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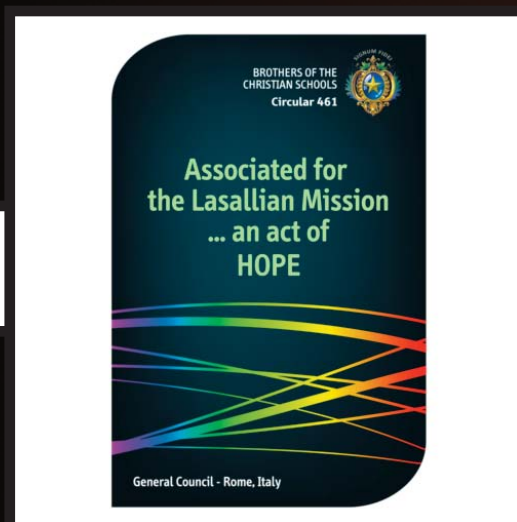
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Reference Key

CIL	International Lasallian Center
FSC	De La Salle Brother
HGS	Guadalupe Sister of de La Salle
ICYL	International Council of Young Lasallians
LS.S	Lasallian Sister
M	Lasallian Man
PARC	Pacific-Asia Regional Conference
RELAF	Lasallian Region - Africa
RELAL	Lasallian Region - Latin America
RELAN	Lasallian Region - North America
RELEM	Lasallian Region - Europe and Mediterranean
W	Lasallian Woman

“ All Lasallians can find themselves in Circular #461 ”

Greg Kopra – RELAN



Preface



The Lasallian world's response to the Superior General and General Council's Circular #461 – *Associated for the Lasallian Mission ... an act of HOPE*, could be characterized as both enthusiastic and, at the same time, cautious. For some it went “too far,” and for others it did not go “far enough.” The topic of Lasallian Family and Association, because of the Spirit that breathes life into it, is still a work “in progress.” Trying to capture this dynamic process in words was the challenge taken up by Brother Álvaro and his Council in 2010.

Having said that, it is important to note that more than 14,000 copies of Circular #461 were sent out from the FSC Generalate, innumerable copies have been downloaded from the Institute web page, and the Circular has been translated into Arabic, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Italian, Tamil, Thai, Bahasa ...to name only a few of the languages not covered by the standard French, Spanish and English translations. The Circular has been used extensively as a guide for District/Community/School retreats; as a formation tool for teachers, staff and governing boards; as a guidebook- resource for Lasallian association groups; and also as part of Brothers' initial and continuing formation programs.

Soon after the publication of Circular #461, the Superior General and General Council petitioned the Secretariat for the Lasallian Family and Association to compose an Institute Bulletin that would put a human face on the document through a series of personal testimonies from Lasallians around the world. Thus the document you are now holding in your hands (or reading on your screen!) was created.



If we really believed that “all Lasallians [could] find themselves in the Circular,” then it was incumbent on the Secretariat to go out and “find” these Lasallians and to listen to their unique stories of association. The first step was to partner with Brother Diego Muñoz, Coordinating Secretary of Lasallian Research and Resources, in the development of a survey that was sent to every District in the Institute. This investigative tool was distributed to five Brothers and five Lay Partners in each of the Districts. Close to two hundred personal testimonies were received witnessing to the blessings and challenges of our Lasallian vocation. Brother Diego’s research was crucial in providing the raw data for this publication. The International Council for the Lasallian Family and Association (ICLF&A) then examined all of the testimonies to see what content areas may be lacking in order to be able to incarnate Circular #461. This second phase of the study entailed soliciting testimonies from a broader spectrum of Lasallians. Once completed, all 230 testimonies were reconsidered, and 350 individual quotes were then selected for final evalua-



tion by the ICLF&A. The remaining quotes were then fine tuned to become the contents of this Bulletin. An effort was made to ensure that each of the five Regions of the Institute was properly reflected in this publication as well as fair ratios of Brothers to Lay Partners and men to women. We hope that *Stories of Hope* mirrors this reality.

Each chapter and sub-theme is introduced by quotes taken directly from Circular #461. They are identified by their number cited in the actual document (ex. 2.2.2. *Associated for mission supposes a participation in a collective Lasallian identity.*) These quotes are followed by selected personal testimonies, and then by a section marked, *Questions for Reflection and Discussion*. It is our hope that this Bulletin will be used as a formative tool for communities, schools/agencies and various other Lasallian programs. It can be reflected upon by individuals and groups alike and can be processed chapter by chapter or sub-theme by sub-theme. It was written with the “adult learner” in mind and recognizes that true formation begins by bringing one’s own life experience to any reflection on Lasallian themes. The Bulletin, although addressed to all Lasallians, might be of more interest to those who have journeyed with us for a period of time, and also to those responsible for the formation of others, rather than to those taking their first steps among us. However, we do believe that all Lasallians can “find” themselves in this Bulletin.

We would also like to offer you another way of reflecting on *Stories of Hope*. The three overarching questions that follow *might* be appropriate to consider before processing the questions appearing at the end of each chapter/sub-theme. This would free you to

make personal observations prior to answering the more pointed and directed questions that follow. At any rate, we hope that you will adapt the Bulletin to suit your local needs and find it a useful addition to your formation “tool-kit.”

Overarching questions:

1. *What struck me so personally that I stopped to highlight it and perhaps even scribbled a note or two in the margin? What was it about that statement that was so important to me?*
2. *What gives me the most hope in this chapter/sub-theme?*
3. *What challenges me the most in this chapter/sub-theme?*

Finally, you will find a DVD at the end of this Bulletin. It was produced during the International Lasallian Center (CIL) sponsored program of 2010 entitled “Understanding and Living Lasallian Association Today.” A group of over 80 international Lasallians gathered - some for one and others for two months - to study, reflect upon and experience Lasallian association in a profound way. We captured their reactions to various questions on camera and now present them to you as yet another “tool” to be used in formation settings.

The Institute Bulletin, *Stories of Hope...associated for the Lasallian Mission* awaits you. May it be a guidepost on your journey and a blessing for those whom you serve. See if you can “find yourself” in its pages!

Brother Charles Kitson – Editor
Coordinating Secretary for Lasallian Family & Association



Kaleidoscope

~ Kaleidoscope ~



KALEIDOSCOPE: (noun: composite Greek word meaning “observer of beautiful forms”) a cylinder with mirrors containing loose, colored objects such as beads or pebbles and bits of glass. As the viewer looks into one end, light entering the other end creates a colorful pattern due to the reflection off the mirrors.... The tumbling of the colored objects presents varying colors and patterns. Arbitrary patterns show up as beautiful symmetrical designs. Wikipedia (adapted)



3.10. The story of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in association has a long history and tradition. The same is not true for others who are now also involved

in Lasallian educational ministry. Their movement toward association has been gradually developing. At the present time, no universal model or system of association exists for colleagues in Lasallian educational ministries. What does exist is a **kaleidoscope of experiences** lived out in various countries and cultures pointing to new directions for the future. *Circular #461.*





Introduction



Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God...

Circular #461 begins...

“ So they went out, got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. When it was already dawn, Jesus, was standing on the shore; but the disciples did not recognize Him. Jesus said to them, “Children, have you caught anything to eat?” They answered Him, “No.” So He said, “Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something.” So they cast it, and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish. John 21: 3-6 ”

Dear Lasallians,

...but the disciples did not recognize Him. Why? What prevented them that dawn from gazing upon the face of their beloved friend and identifying him as the one who once made their hearts burn and their souls long for something more? For the disciples, returning to their nets was a logical response to a traumatic event. Seek out the “known” and do it quickly lest you be tempted to cross into the same land that Jesus trod and there find yourself in an unrecognizable place; unable to see what lies ahead. The disciples filled their spiritual void by trying to recapture the comfortableness of a former calling – a former mission. Jesus had called and sent them to catch so much more than fish. Yet here we find them back in the boat of the “known.” They were afraid. Fear and doubt can make us blind. Blindness, in this context, prevents us from seeing, from really see-



ing, the new face of Christ and the life to which He calls us.

This Institute Bulletin is an attempt to incarnate, through personal testimonies, the lived experience of Circular #461, *Associated for the Lasallian Mission...an act of HOPE* (2010). It is all about “seeing.” It is about new lenses, reflections, perceptions and ways of envisioning our collective Lasallian present and future. Think of it as looking through a **kaleidoscope** where a twist of the cylinder brings a rainbow of unexpected beauty and allows us to “recognize” and embrace the holy presence of God in our midst...in our Mission...in the faces of all those entrusted to our care. Yes, let this be an experience of seeing, recognizing, visioning and discerning. Are we bold enough to give the cylinder a twist? Beware! The landscape will change. We may see things differently. Our Lasallian multi-cultural and multi-religious reality will take on a new focus if we take a deeper look ...go beyond borders ...welcome all.

Notice that the kaleidoscope only works if there is a “seer” on one end who twists the cylinder and “light” entering from the other end to illuminate the emerging image. Light alone or viewing alone will not create the colorful patterns; both are essential to



Introduction

turn arbitrary random shapes into beautifully symmetrical ones. Also think for a moment about the “colored objects” that are carefully tumbled and reflected by the kaleidoscope’s mirrors. For us Lasallians they are *beads* that capture the spirit of the children, the young and the adults for whom we care; *pebbles* that symbolize all Lasallians – Brothers and Lay Partners alike – with whom we serve; *bits of glass* that shed light upon the face of the God whom we seek. Caring, serving and seeking are all hallmarks of our Lasallian vocation.

As Lasallians we are being invited through this Bulletin to not only be “observers of the beautiful forms” of association that



enrich our family globally, but also to become catalysts who promote contemporary and creative ways of living this out. Each chapter

will be a new twist of the kaleidoscope. Each chapter will provide you with a unique lens through which the light of “unity in diversity” will come streaming in. See for yourself!

...but the disciples did not recognize Him. Will we 21st century Lasallians join those who returned to fishing, heads bowed, seeing not only an empty net, but also the somber reflection of a face once on fire with passion for His mission? No. Let us pray that we will look up, heads held high, eager to see a new face of God. Let us take the risk of looking through this contemporary kaleidoscope of images from our Lasallian world together and by association! Dare to twist the cylinder and behold the holy movement of hearts tumbling into place for the sake of the young. However, be prepared, because yet another twist will bring into focus a brand new pattern; a pattern that will not only reflect but will also celebrate our unity in diversity.

We are one family. We are one La Salle!

Secretariat and International Council for the
Lasallian Family & Association



“ **2.5.2.** Because the Founder and the first Brothers viewed their surrounding reality with the eyes of faith, they observed current events from this point of view and discovered God’s call in the faces of the urban poor children and young people excluded from advancement in society. Open, available, and increasingly capable of answering this call, these teachers in the revolutionary Christian Schools consecrated their life “together and by association” for the education of the children of working people and poor families.

3.1. The original experience of together and by association that begins with John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers now continues in eighty countries on five continents. The Lasallian charism appears to have a new dynamism because of its presence in a variety of ethnic, cultural, and religious settings. Educators throughout the world find in De La Salle and the Lasallian educational mission an inspiring element to integrate into their daily lives. ”



Chapter One — “



Together & by Association™

1.A. Identity

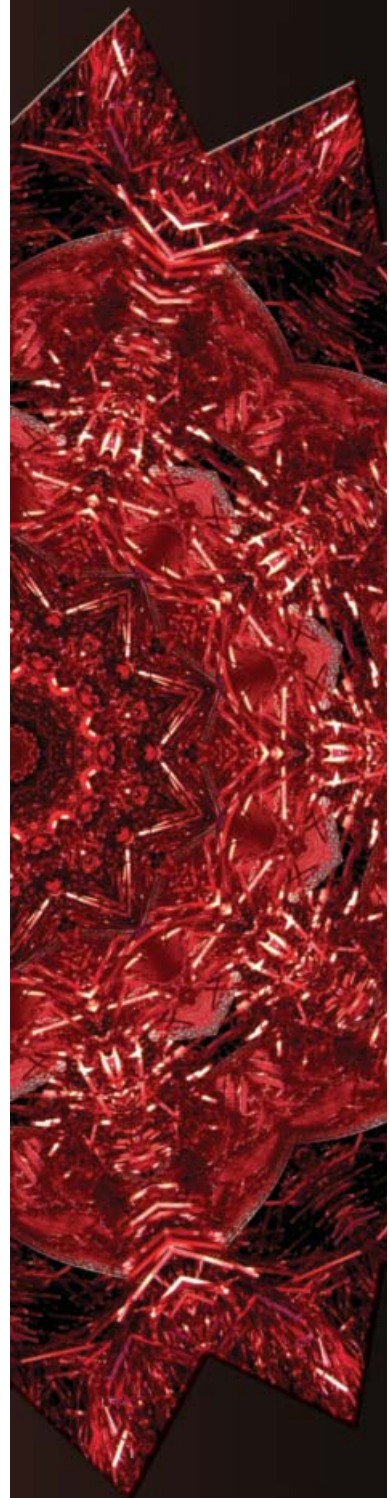
“ 2.2.2. Associated for mission supposes a participation in a collective Lasallian identity. ”

- “Being Lasallian is my spiritual home. It is where I live. For me, being a Lasallian Associate has become a natural and foundational part of my whole life- personal, social, work and spiritual- because it has become an integral part of who I am. I am Lasallian. I am Lasallian 24 hours a day- in my work, with my family and when I pray. The values I hold, the person I try to be, the work I do and the relationships I have are all lived within this context. Being Lasallian is where I find God and it is where I am called to try to live as faithfully as I can the values of the gospel.” (W – PARC)
- “All of these aspects of Lasallian association are part of my personal life, my relationships, my work, and my family. For me it is all inter-connected. There is no separation of me as a ‘Lasallian’ and me as a ‘Non-Lasallian’.” (W – RELAN)
- “Associating with others is first of all recognising them and accepting them as they are (whether Brothers or Lay Lasallians), living with them and fostering an atmosphere of dialogue and listening, far removed from personal agendas.” (M – RELEM)
- “Truth be told I cannot separate my personal life from my professional life as a Lasallian educator. I was drawn in as a young teacher to a new school that was being run by young men called

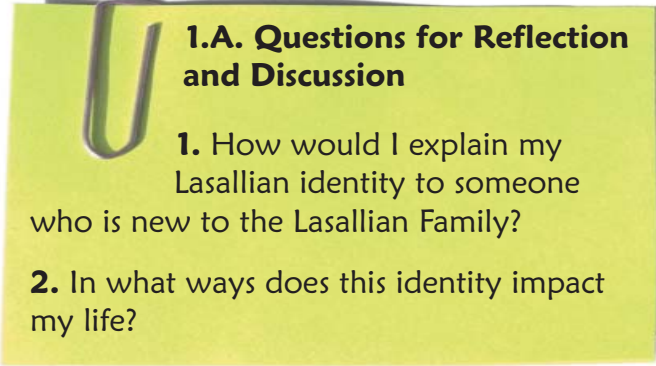


‘Brothers.’ ... I have spent the last 34 years in association with the Brothers and their lasting commitment to the lives of young people. It has touched every part of my human experience and I will continue to associate myself with it as long as I am able.” (M – RELAN)

- “What motivates me is the desire to live our identity consistently and thus to make real the spirit that permeates the Rule, that is to say, the Gospel. Currently I cannot conceive of any other way of being a Brother, except by knowing that I am associated with others as part of the Institute and sent by the District to carry out the mission entrusted to me by the Church; and to do this with the conviction of being called and consecrated by Him, along with others, in association.” (FSC – RELAL)
- “For me association is a plan of life, something that is totally



embedded in me; something that goes beyond the area of work, professionalism, and vocation almost even before you begin. It is my identity. This is my response to God's call, in the Lasallian mission, and I want to do it with my Lasallian brothers and sisters. That is how I have felt and lived with Brothers and Lay Lasallians with whom I have journeyed. They have seen to it that there is a need for me to associate in order to journey together in community. I want to build up God's Kingdom with all of them.” (W – RELEM)



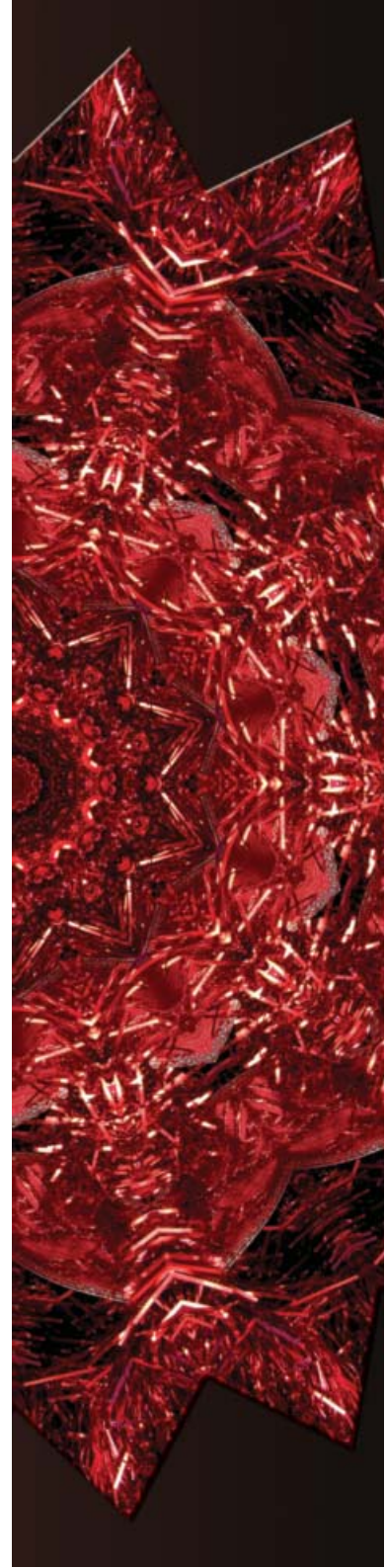
1.A. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How would I explain my Lasallian identity to someone who is new to the Lasallian Family?
2. In what ways does this identity impact my life?

1.B. Belonging

“ **2.2.2.** *Belonging...signifies assuring cohesion among the members of the educational mission. It is important to state here that this sense of Lasallian belonging transcends any local educational center or small circle of people known. It is an invitation to feel part of a common adventure and of a salvation history that supersedes any one project in which one may be involved.* ”

- “In my experience as a Brother, I understand Lasallian association as a life of shared activity with the Brothers of my District, my Region and the Institute. I also see it as my collaboration with others who are working in the Lasallian spirit in one of our Lasallian ministries.” (FSC – RELAF)
- “I thank the Lord for having introduced into my life journey Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, the Brothers, and all those lay men and women who see themselves as being inheritors of this charism. Lasallian gatherings (regional, national, international), and Chapters in which I have had the joy of participating, have been a breath of fresh air that has fanned into flame my dedication to the mission of Christian education ‘in the Lasallian way’. When I felt I was called to commit myself openly to association with the Brothers, I felt it necessary at that moment in my life to ask the Brother Visitor if he would receive me as a Lay Associate. During the mass celebrated on that occasion, in the company of my husband, my children, my friends (Brothers and lay people), my commitment, my “yes” to the Lord to be associated for the




Chapter One

mission of the Institute, was no longer just a flame but a fire.”
(W – RELEM)

- “Life in community, the sense of belonging, and working as a team, are all things inherent in the duties and the mission of the Lasallian teacher.” (W – RELAL)
- “I am discovering that the Lasallian bonds I create with people are the most significant ones because they are aimed at a common objective – education. I have been enriched to a large extent by the witness, knowledge and presence of many people (Brothers and Lay Partners) who provide fundamental support in the mission and who have left their ‘mark’ on me.” (FSC – RELAL)

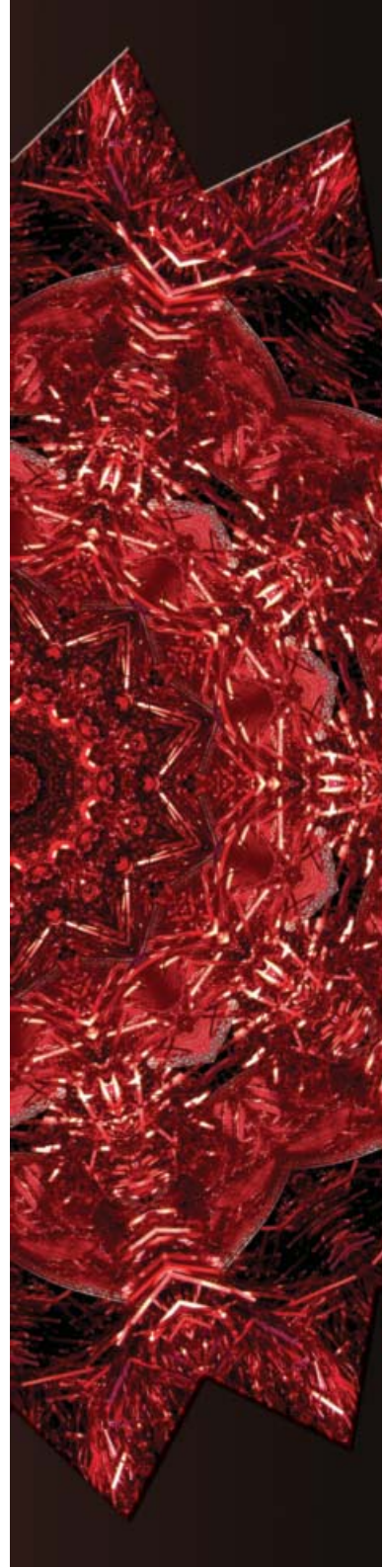


- “The fact that we are part of a greater world in the Lasallian association is amazing. We are one with so many others, even if we have never met. We are one, all pulling together, trying to achieve the same thing. This is very encouraging and makes us strive to achieve great things.” (W – RELEM)
- “The last time I tried to plan my life, God had a really good laugh. I try to remain aware of God’s presence and His plan for my life and I believe that it is deeply rooted in my Lasallian spirituality. As I get older I would like to remain active and deeply involved in the Lasallian charism. I’d like to be able to pass on my own Lasallian experiences as a lay person to those coming up through the ranks. I feel our sense of Lasallian association is much deeper than just words, meetings, gatherings, etc... Lasallian association is a way of life. It’s a commitment.” (M - RELAN)



1.B. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- 1.** What does it mean for me to belong to the Lasallian community? What are the aspects that give me a sense of belonging?
- 2.** Who do I feel most connected to as we carry out the Lasallian mission? How do I communicate this sense of belonging?
- 3.** In what ways is association more than simply working together?



1.C. Formation Experiences

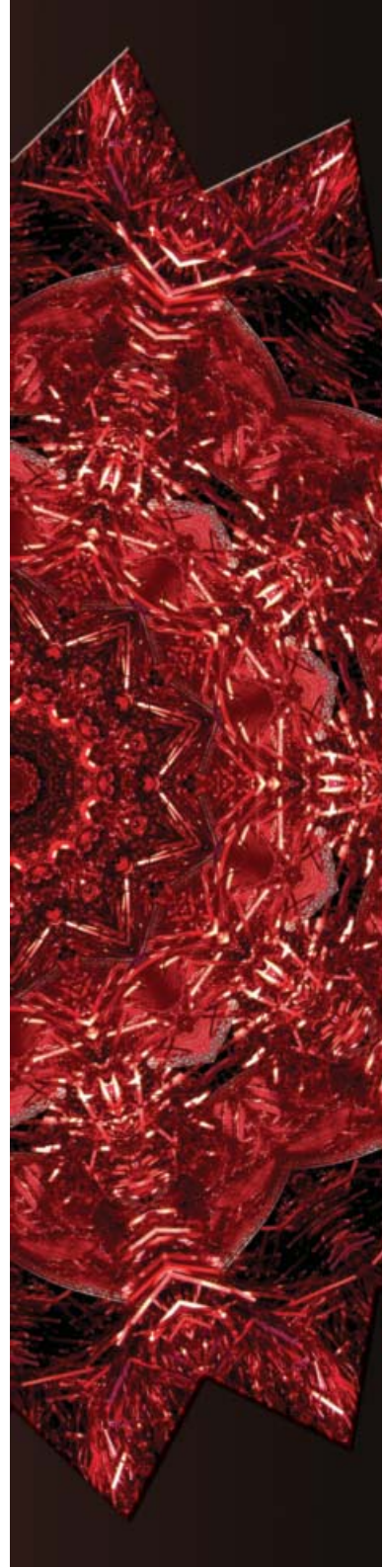
“ **6.12.** *The principal themes of Lasallian formation include community, commitment, charism, the founding story, spirituality, pedagogy, and mission. Formation presupposes a free decision that participants base their commitment on their personal vocational call. Quality Lasallian formation is essential to keep alive the Lasallian charism as a gift for the universal Church.* ”

- “It was when I was hired in 2002, at a day treatment center in Philadelphia (USA) to work with juvenile delinquents. I was sent to the Lasallian Leadership Institute the following year, where I became pretty well immersed in the values, the principles, the heritage and the history, and came back filled with enthusiasm. I wanted to do all the things that I had learned and share it with everyone. But I didn’t quite feel comfortable. But there was a moment, when I then could call myself ‘Lasallian’: opening a staff -meeting or gathering teachers together, when I opened with, ‘Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God’.” (W – RELAN)
- “I once had the chance to go to Ivory Coast for one year to teach. A little flame of interest in education was ignited in me; it filled me with hope. I found I had entered by accident into a network I had no idea existed. I was a young teacher full of ‘zeal’ so I took seriously my mission as an educator but I also took seriously my mission as a baptized Christian and became involved in the religious program of my school. And this is how



I got to know some of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.”
(W – RELEM)

- “The first time I called myself ‘Lasallian’ was upon my return from a month of service in the Philippines, at Bacolod, where I worked with teachers who taught young children through the university. We spent time in supervised schools, and as a community, with the children. I returned to my university on fire with the Lasallian charism and sharing it with my colleagues, telling them that they are part of something much bigger than our small institution.” (W – RELAN)
- “Even though we have accomplished much, I believe that we still need to work together to understand better our Shared Mission, formation, personal development, and the strengthening



Chapter One


of being 'heart, memory... of the Lasallian charism.' This is absolutely necessary." (M – RELEM)

- “In my first years of formation I almost never heard the word 'Association.' Only when I read my formula of vows; little by little, thanks to meetings in RELAL from 1980 onwards, I grew to appreciate the depth, energy and strength of this word in the Brother's consecration similar to the way De La Salle discovered it when he associated himself with the first Brothers.” (FSC – RELAL)
- “We are formed and we form one another, Brothers and Lay Partners; each offers his or her own uniqueness of their voca-



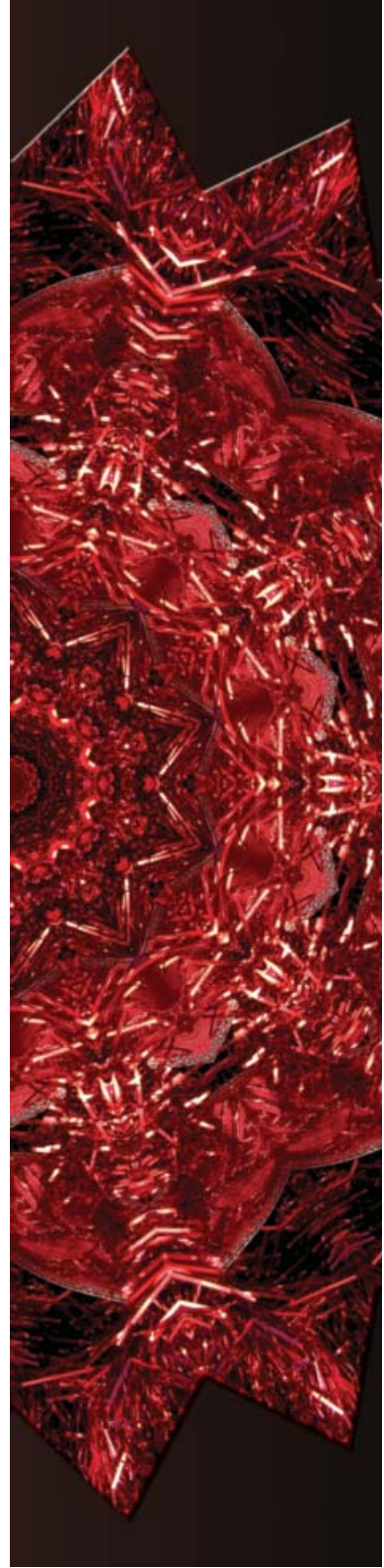
tional response. Let us not reject those who chose not to participate in formation programs. Rather let us recall that in God’s plan we do not all have to be engineers. Let us invite others to the ‘journey’ according to each one’s situation.” (W – RELEM)

- “Practically all of the Brothers in my community belong to the Lasallian Mission and Association Team that we have in the school. We meet each month to deal with particular topics based on our monthly plan. On Mondays we pray together and once per quarter we have spiritual reading, followed by supper. Together we also attend Mass at the school on Sundays.” (W – RELEM)



1.C. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- 1.** What was the “entry point(s)” to my Lasallian vocation? How did this vocational realization grow in me?
- 2.** If I had the opportunity to be responsible for the formation of persons new to the Lasallian mission, with what experiences of formation would I begin?
- 3.** What innovation would I bring to the formation process?



“ **2.6.1.** Association also implies a process – a spiritual path that takes one where he or she might never have chosen to go. This graced journey is evident in De La Salle’s own words, “God who conducts all things with wisdom and gentleness...wishing to draw me into undertaking entirely the care of the schools, has done so in a quiet imperceptible way...so that one commitment lead me into another without my having foreseen it in the beginning.” ”



Chapter Two – A



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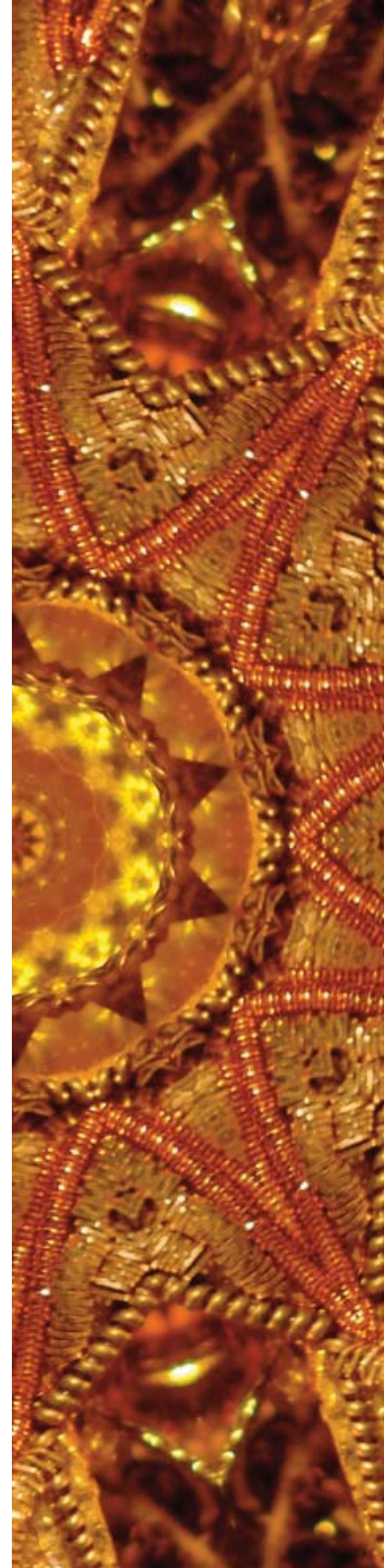
2. A. Association as Vocation

“ 2.5. Association stems from the awareness through faith of receiving a vocation that combines personal and social aspects of the individual’s own life. ”

- “Even though there is a need to define the official, institutional and legal terms of association, I understand how much more a life stance can shape one’s identity. This identity is a vocation and a mission to be lived out in community and aimed at educating those who need our help. I would say, without pretense, but with my all heart, that I understand this as a partner with the God of Life and as a Lasallian Partner. As such, I place my life (with all its potential and limitations) in the service of building up a fraternal community and in promoting an educational style in which I firmly believe.” (M – RELAL)
- “When I began working in a Lasallian school I could not have imagined that God was preparing a new path for me. I was introduced to De La Salle’s life story. As I was doing catechetical work in a poor area, I found an ideal response for those who need our help through education. I discovered that this response was well within my reach.” (W – RELAL)
- “I now know that I am a Lasallian deep down inside. The fibers of my being are Lasallian, and no matter where I may be, whether in a Lasallian context or not, I know that the concern for the human and Christian education of young people will always be part of me. I also know that my family (my wife and

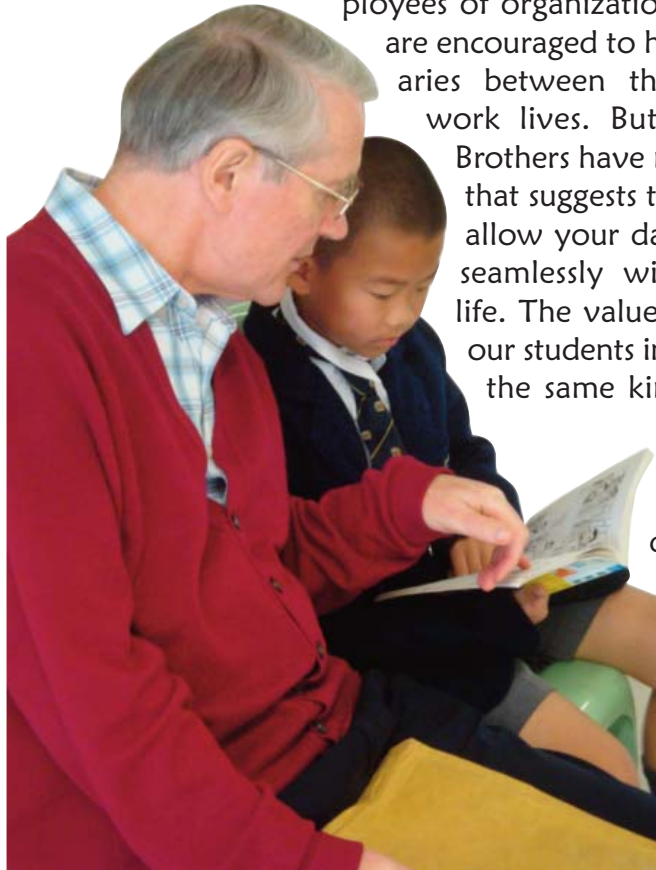
children) are welcome within the network. I know that my being married is of considerable benefit to the network in these times when vocations are so scarce! I know that I can and should be a beacon for those who are following me in this adventure. It is an honour for me to be able to give back to the Brothers something of what I received from them”. (M – RELAN)

- “I have the feeling that I belong to a large family and network: the Lasallians!” (M – RELEM)
- “In my own case I try to witness to those clear calls of faith through which God invites me to deepen my commitment to the ‘Lasallian Mission’. My personal life plan is carried out within the Signum Fidei experience. If I were to leave the Fraternity it would be a clear sign that I have abandoned my faith in CHRIST JESUS.” (M – RELAL)
- “Living in association means sharing in a thousand ways the daily building up of a consciousness centered in social justice from a Christian perspective. We do this together with people we know; people rooted in this issue and who chose it before we did; people who continue to do so day by day. The possibility always exists that we may be called at any time to help out in a particular situation, and because of this, we can never abandon our neighborhood. It means we are called to make, sustain and commit ourselves to relationships among the people we serve. It means making an enormous number of decisions, big ones and small ones, which will lead us to walk with them (and to really want to be with them) more and more. It entails responding to the needs of the needy in the way we think is most appropriate

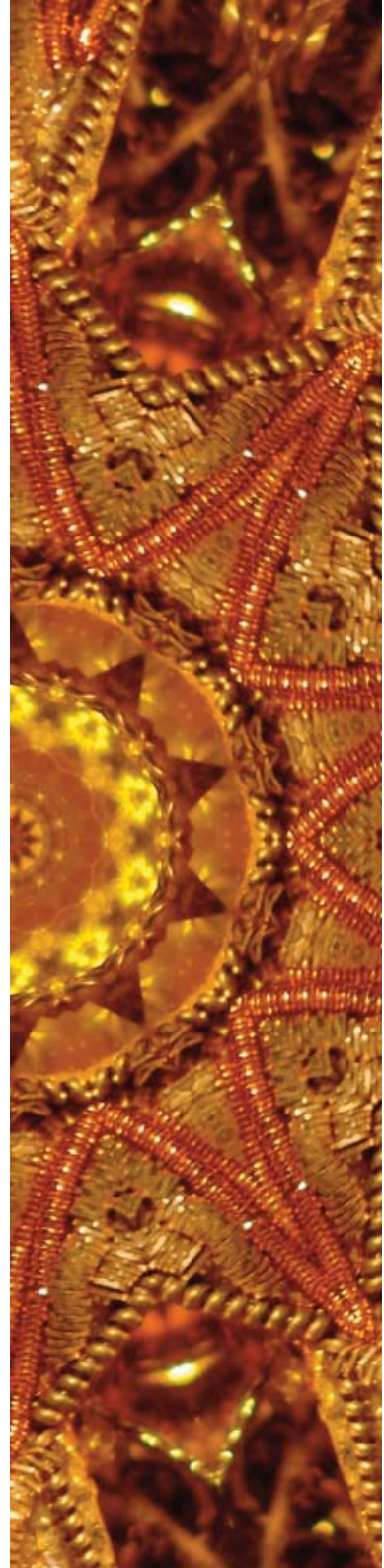


and also trying to encourage others to do likewise.” (Married couple – RELAL)

- “I knew that my work was becoming more than simply a job – I began to see it as a vocation. One thing that this realization has meant for me is that there isn’t always a clear separation between my work life and my personal life. In our society, employees of organizations and companies are encouraged to have strong boundaries between their personal and work lives. But the De La Salle Brothers have modeled a lifestyle that suggests that it is possible to allow your daily work to blend seamlessly with your personal life. The values that we instill in our students in the classroom are the same kinds of values that we should model outside the classroom. They have demonstrated that knowing the students outside the classroom is just as important as knowing them inside the classroom.” (M – RELAN)



- “I see myself a Lasallian for the rest of my life. I remain a teacher in a Lasallian school forever. Wherever the Lord places me, I serve Him as He wills. My family, my personal life, my dreams and everything that I am are all engulfed in my belonging to the Lasallian Family. Structures, systems, policies and responsibilities may change in the coming years; but the spirit of Lasallian Association and communion in mission remain. Whatever lies ahead in the future, I don’t see myself disengaging from Lasallian association. I dream that my own children receive a Lasallian education and that they too may experience the core values espoused by every Lasallian institution.” (W – PARC)
- “Let me start by saying that I describe vocation as something that fits a person like a hand fits into a glove – a glove that was made just for that hand! That is what my vocation as a Lasallian feels like. Some are now calling me a ‘lifer’ – someone who is as committed as he can be to the Lasallian Mission, someone who isn’t going anywhere, someone who is in it for the long haul. And they are right. I have stopped trying to get out of education. And I feel as though the Lasallian educational mission is my home. I have made no public profession or promise, and I have attached no time limits on my commitment – but I am deeply committed to this mission.” (M – RELAN)
- “We have been trained and formed to be a part of the mission, and we consider being a Young Lasallian to be a vocation, which is why we have a desire to be in dialogue with each other and the Institute. We feel we share this calling with all members of the Lasallian Family who live the essence of the dream of St. John Baptist de La Salle, working with and for the youth and



those most in need. Because we all share and believe in the Lasallian charism, we feel that we can significantly contribute to the future of the Institute by dedicating ourselves to the Mission.” (ICYL)

- “Through the connections I’ve developed over the years with the Brothers and other Partners it makes me increasingly excited for the future and proud to say that I plan to be a life-long Lasallian. I want to see our mission come alive everyday and I know this can only be done ‘together and by association.’ I feel so blessed that the Brothers welcome this partnership and that I am able to be a part of this Lasallian association.” (W – RELAN)

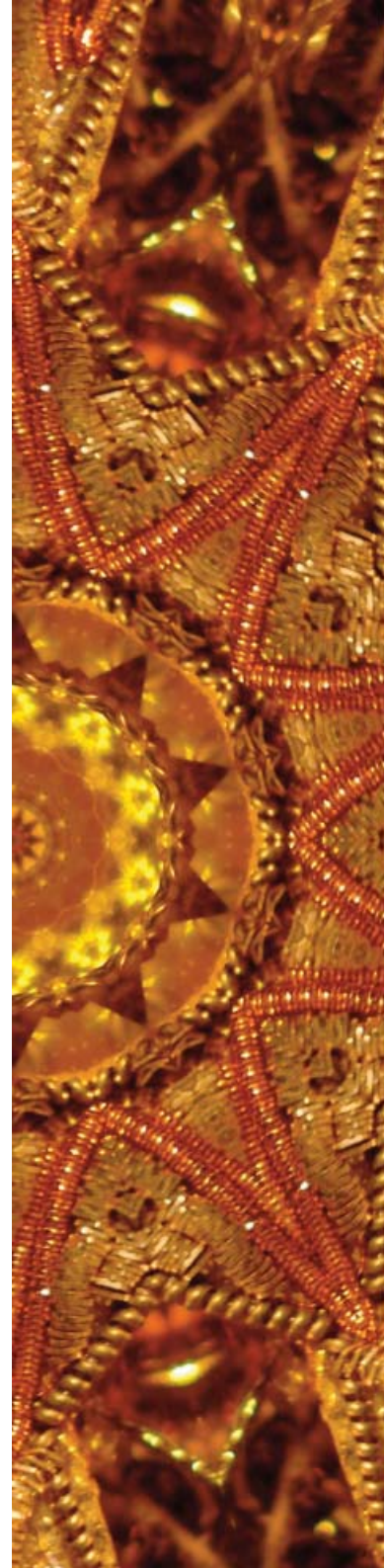
2.A. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- 1.** To what extent do I see my participation in the Lasallian mission as a vocation - a call from God?
- 2.** How do I live this Lasallian vocation from my particular lifestyle (Single, Married, Religious)?

2.B. Lasallian Communities

“**1.1.** *The dynamic of association, that is, of associating for a common purpose, is an essential component of the Lasallian adventure that appears in the Institute’s first decade. The initial group of would-be teachers in 1680 gradually forms a community as Brothers who in turn create the Society of the Christian Schools, which the Church in 1725 approves as the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.*”

- “My personal life project as a Brother goes hand in hand with Lasallian association. Indeed, I want to be Brother to everyone, a Brother whose heart opens out and offers room for everybody. I truly believe that education must show a more human face to our world. ... if only those involved in it could be moved to show compassion.” (FSC – RELAF)
- “For me, community meetings are a source of strength, conviction and confidence in my mission, because I know I can count on others in faith and prayer. The fundamental elements of these meetings are mutual respect, faithfulness in attending, joyfulness, sharing, and above all the confidential nature of whatever is said.” (M – RELEM)
- “The ‘connectedness’ I feel within the larger Lasallian world is something that I strive to continue into the future. It is difficult to see my work in education without being associated to a community of people committed to the Lasallian mission.” (M – RELAN)





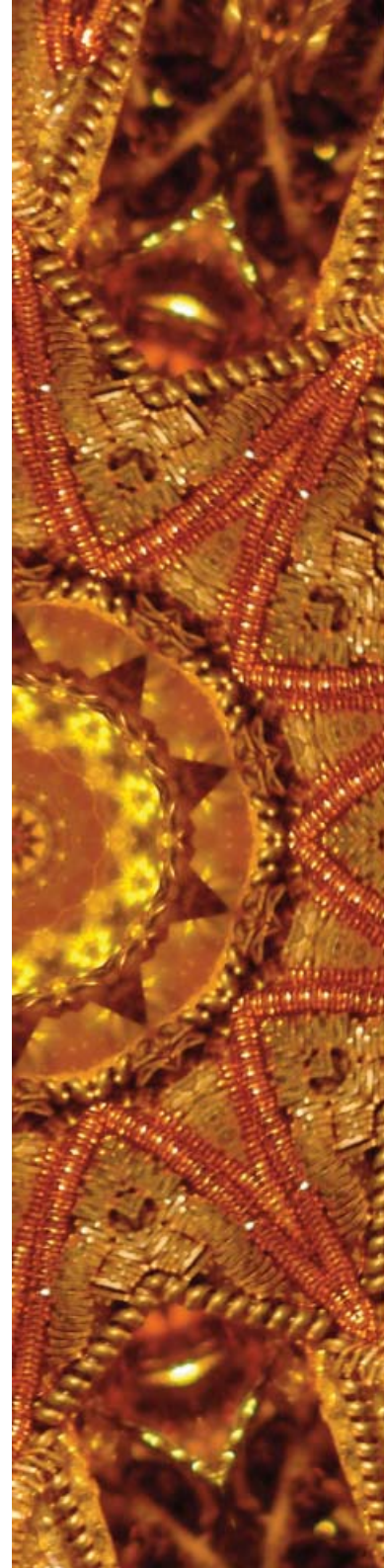
- “Being associated to the Mission means to be in a position to brave the challenges of change, to learn how to see the unpredictable future of God through a new lens, grow together but always in the light of Christ who called us.” (FSC – RELEM)
- “For me community is the basis for growth and formation in faith. It is my community that supports me in my daily life and encourages and strengthens my faith. Community is the place where the Gospel and Lasallian values of faith, fraternity and service are lived out. ...I think that without community the work one does would not make much sense, because it is the community that sends us out to evangelize, teach, catechize and to make

God's kingdom present in the world, especially to De La Salle's chosen ones - the poor." (M – RELAL)

- “What has changed in my life since I became an associate? I would say that basically nothing has changed. I continue to be the person I always was; committed to something I feel is mine. For me it is something worth fighting for. Perhaps I could say that my way of living as a Lasallian has changed, because now I belong to a community that grows in the light of the Gospel. I think that the community enriches us and makes us feel more like a brother or sister day by day. It is in community that our journey is made easier.” (M – RELEM)

2.B. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What role does community play in my understanding of being Lasallian?
2. With what community (School, District, Region, Institute) do I identify most as a Lasallian?
3. What do I contribute to the growth of my community?
4. What kind of personal and faith accompaniment do I need from my local Lasallian communities?
5. How do I help young people understand the real meaning of Lasallian community?



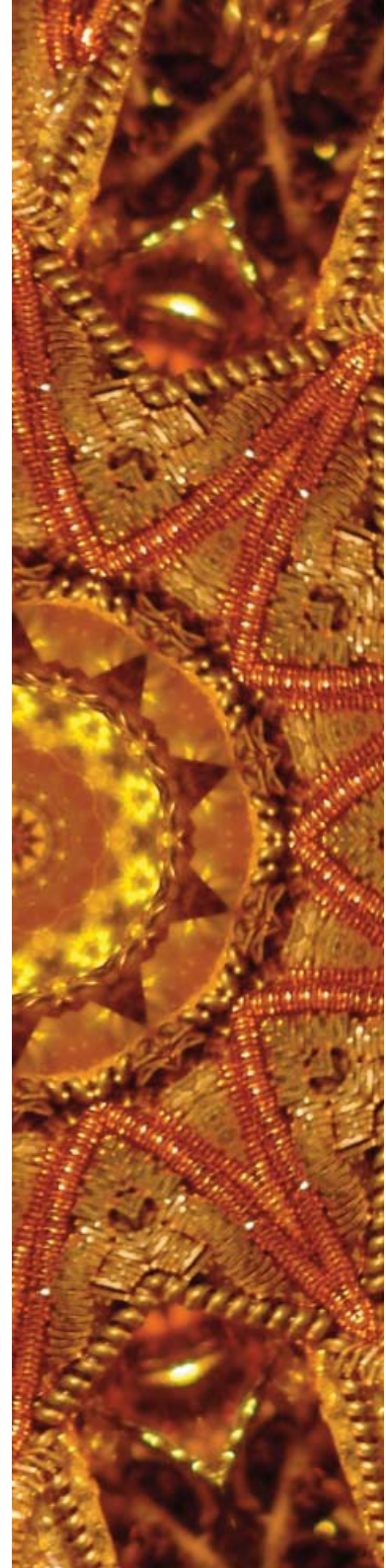
2.C. Lasallian Discernment

“ 7.3. *The image of a God who welcomes, who walks alongside of us, who asks us to trust in the unimaginable, is the daily act of faith that has sustained the Brothers of the Christian Schools for more than three centuries. This image also symbolizes the vocational call of all Lasallians to confide in a God who calls “in a quiet imperceptible way...so that one commitment lead[s]...into another without... having foreseen it in the beginning.” This was De La Salle’s miraculous adventure with a God who always welcomed him.* ”

- “Embrace the ‘new’ as something exciting; something that is being born. Assume that it is a call from the Spirit to leave behind our old ways and to accept with joy whatever awaits us. See it as a challenge to our normal way of living. Have an open heart. Expand our brother/sisterhood to welcome other ways of doing the ‘usual’; other ways of ‘functioning’ that until now were unknown.” (M – RELEM)
- “The convergence of my early years of socialization, my study of psychology, my conversion to the Catholic Church, and my choice of serving at a Lasallian university, have evolved into a vocational calling, which accounts for the integration of my spiritual development with my professional life. (W – RELAN)
- “It is my personal conviction that the best answer to the sicknesses of society is still to be found in the love of our faith through personal witness and in the education of young people

at risk or marginalized, and that the Brothers have much to contribute in this respect”. (W – RELAF)

- “From one commitment to another, my professional life and my life as a baptized Catholic have developed in the service of young people, of my colleagues and of God. I realise that the Lasallian charism can be shared, and that Brothers and Lay Partners, each in our own walks of life, need to be «ambassadors of God» to young people, especially the underprivileged. Just like the Founder and the Brothers with whom I have lived, this priority becomes a daily reality in the way in which we teach, encourage class councils and accompany young people in their faith journeys. When we are acting as a Lasallian team or when we come together in various meetings as Brothers and Lay Partners who reflect on their lives and commitments - sharing our convictions and also our doubts and our difficulties - we become more and



more aware that we have been called together in association and fraternity to live out this educational mission.” (W – RELEM)

- “Prayer, community, and apostolic life have supported me and made me realize that my calling to be a La Salle Sister is meaningful every day. For the past 20 years in the Congregation, I’ve had opportunities to work with juvenile delinquents, the elderly, Asian-Americans, and students ages 3 and up. When I look back, I realize that God has led me from one commitment to another.” (LS.S – PARC)

U 2.C. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

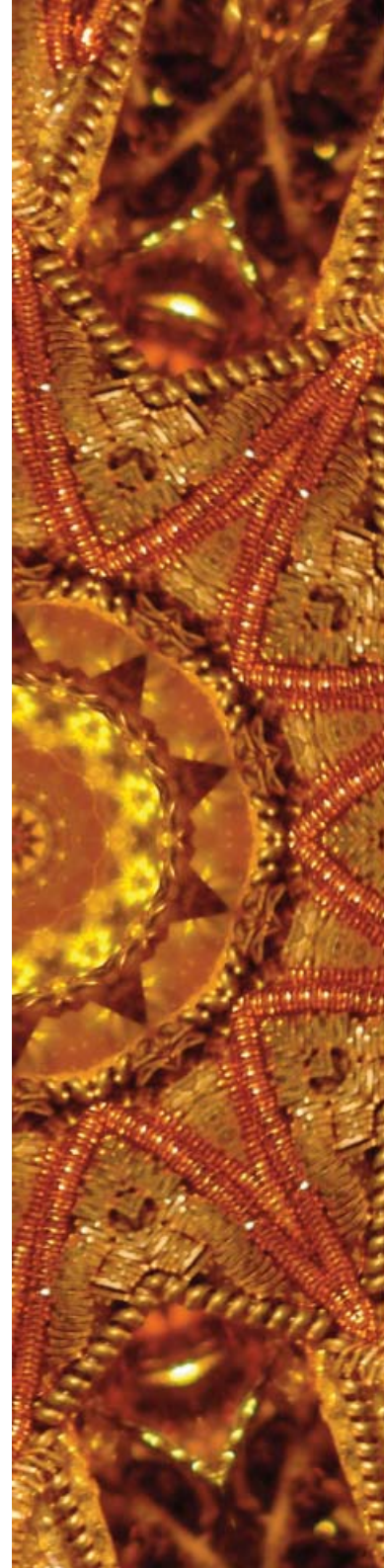
1. How difficult is it to holistically integrate my spiritual development on a personal, family, social and professional level?
2. “One commitment leading to another...” How does this resonate with my own life experience?

2.D. Association Challenges

“ **5.5.** ...when we speak of Lasallian Family we do not see its members as interlocking gears that drive “the Lasallian Machine.” ...we see the Lasallian Family as a human community – a living dynamic system that experiences life in all of its difficult and wonderful phases.

5.17. All human families share joys and sorrows; quarrel and make truces; reach moments when decisions must be made. The Lasallian Family is no different. ”

- “...extraordinary vigilance needs to be exercised to guard against the danger of a caste system in which gradations of association inhibit some who serve from finding a place of welcome and acceptance as laborers in the vineyard.” (FSC – RELAN)
- “We find a preoccupation with the sense of superiority in religious institutes between religious and lay people. Each group wants to keep the other at a distance so as to preserve, as far as possible, its own power and protect its own interests. This is just my own personal observation, limited to myself.” (M – RELAF)
- “Brothers cannot look upon Lay Partners as unnecessary, and Lay



Chapter Two


Partners cannot look upon the Brothers as unnecessary. I would not want to be a Brother in a world where there were only Brothers or only Partners; this would not be Lasallian education.” (FSC – RELAN)

- “The relationships with Lasallian Partners have been wonderfully reciprocal in what we bring to the students and all with whom we come in contact. Others benefit greatly from the complementary nature of our Lasallian vocations. It has not been a journey without its tensions, disagreements, hurts and setbacks. But like all relationships, the manner in which these challenges are



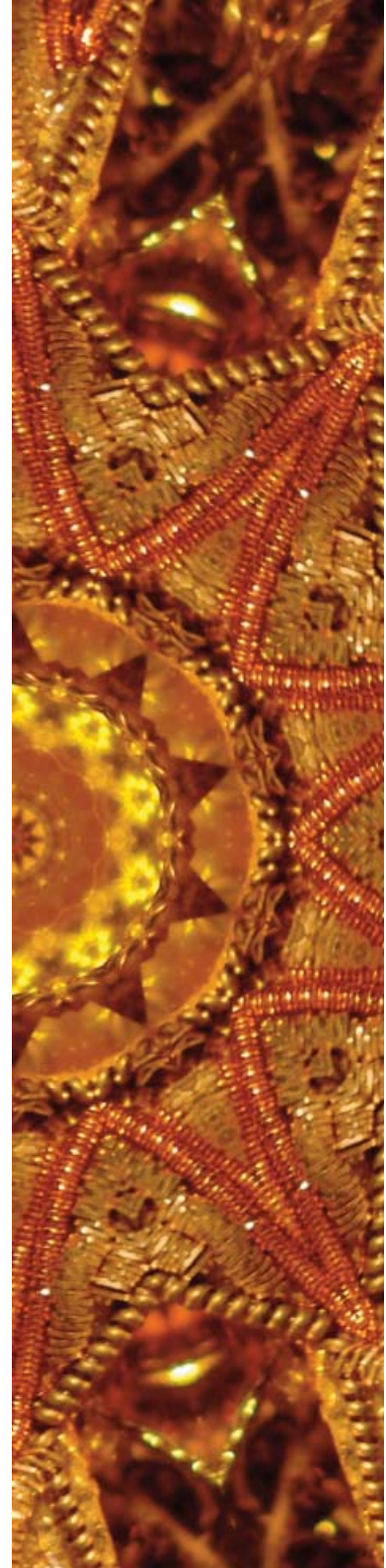
met and resolved gives real credibility to a genuine “association” that is rooted in the gospel and inspired by the charisma of La Salle. (FSC – PARC)

- “I am deeply saddened when I hear my Brothers say that we are the only associates and that the lay people are not really as committed as we are because they ‘pick up a pay check’ at the end of the month. I am not sure if working gratuitously is any parameter for determining whether one is an associate or not, since at the end of the day, we Brothers have all our needs taken care of whether we are working or not.” (FSC – RELAL)

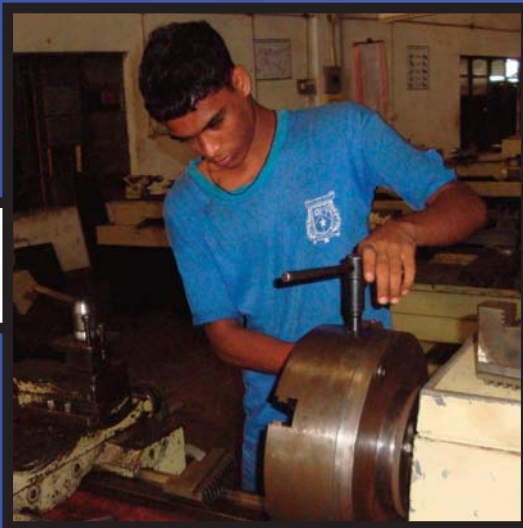


2.D. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Along my Lasallian journey, how do I deal with disillusionment, tensions, disagreements, hurts and setbacks?
2. How can I make sure that we do not develop a Lasallian “caste system”?
3. How do I cope with my personal struggles in living the Lasallian charisma?
4. How can I, through my example, constructively address some of these challenges and struggles?



“ **5.1.** *Just as that huge miraculous blanket was lowered from the heavens and St. Peter was invited to break with traditional norms and partake of food that was once seen as forbidden (Acts 10: 9-16), so too Lasallians today are being invited to reformulate previous ways of association and to join in the bounty of multi-cultural, multi-religious and innovative ways of belonging to the Lasallian Family. The new blanket is wide. It is a bit mysterious, challenging and stretches to cover five continents. Spread out before us is a feast of opportunity. Willingness to approach the blanket and “eat” is the vitality that will identify 21st century Lasallians.* ”



Chapter Three –



- Lasallian Family

3.A. Unity in Diversity

“ **2.3.2.** *Lasallian educational centers must be places where welcome, peace and respect are lived out in communities characterized by the acceptance of each human person. They must be places where cultural diversity is not an occasion for conflict, exclusion, or destructive tension but rather where being different is an enriching component of community life. In so doing these centers incarnate what “together” means in “together and by association.”*

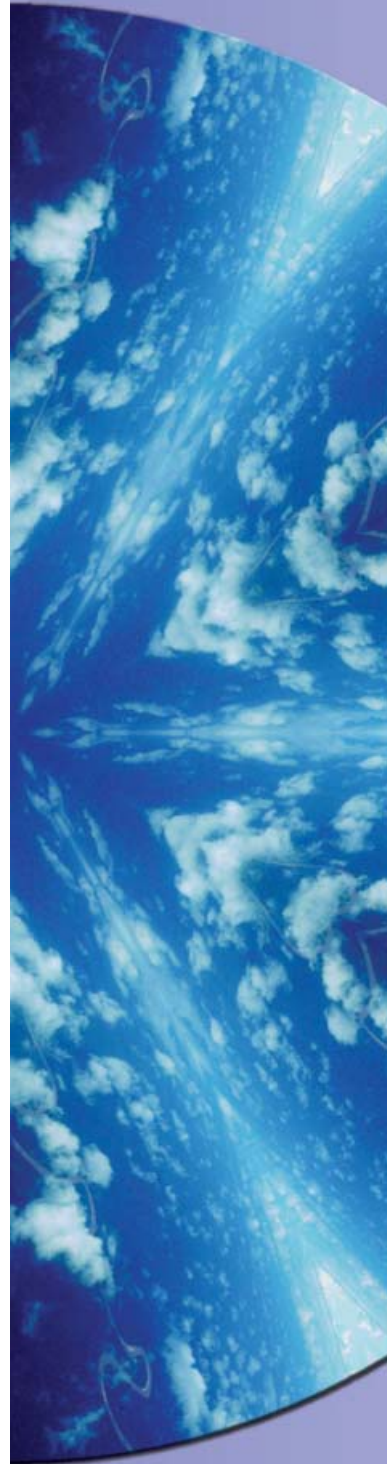
3.3. *The anthropological view of human nature that motivates Lasallians recognizes and dignifies every human being as being unique, unrepeatable and educable. Discrimination based on gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation has no place in the Lasallian educational mission.* ”

- “There are many more educators, lay and Brother, on the journey like myself. Some of them really impress me with their own particular styles and with a kind of inner richness that has an impact on me. I meet them in cafes, on walks, on trips, in the corridors, during conferences and also in group discussions. ...They are persons with whom I share the journey and in whom I place my trust and affection, not just as a friend, but I place in them my fraternal affection as a brother in Jesus whom I love.” (M – RELEM)
- “...there is a great joy in seeing people light up with the sense of discovering that they fit within the Lasallian Family; they love the story and the values and they feel they belong. Many be-



come really passionate about it and many become lifelong friends” (W –PARC)

- “Without a doubt, by means of Lasallian formation, and because of our vow of Association, I believe that we should reach out to all Lay Partners. We need to invite them to become more aware of the significance of their Christian vocation within an educational ministry and also to be committed to making effective the character proper to a Lasallian school, i.e. a ‘Christian school’ open to all.” (FSC – RELEM)
- “The Signum Fidei in particular has literally and figuratively opened the world to me. It is a constant source of inspiration



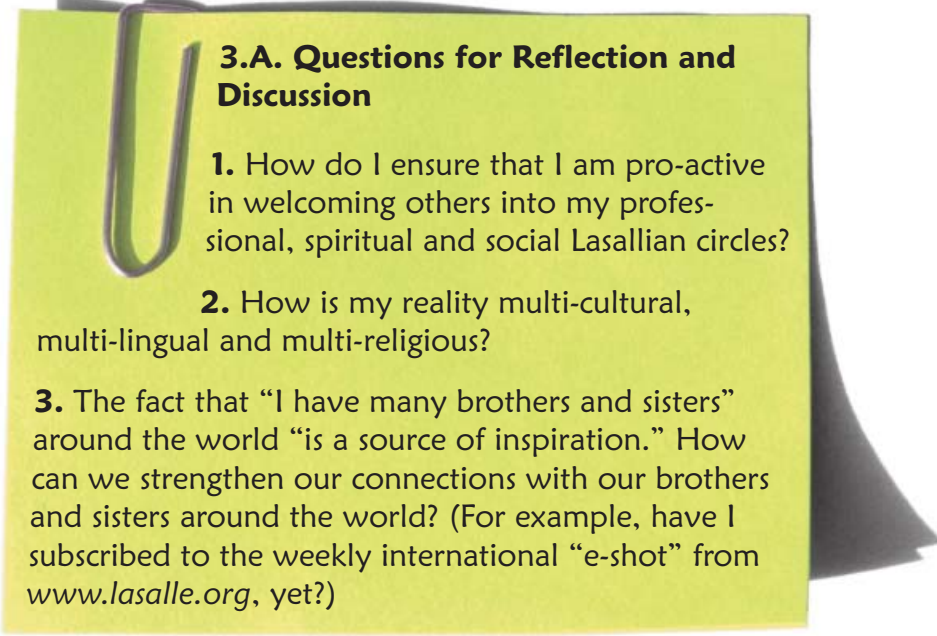
to know that in many parts of the country and of the world, I have brothers and sisters who drink from the same fountain of Lasallian spirituality.” (W – PARC)

■ “We have to open ourselves more and more. No one should give the excuse that they are too old. Our communities must mirror trust, joy and hope-filled care towards all those we are called to educate. We must be agents of change more because of who we are, than by what we say. We should not be afraid that our communities are becoming places of generous and wholehearted welcome. We have to learn how to share our life together, our food, free time, and prayer with all those committed to our mission. And we should do all this with no barriers of any kind.” (FSC – RELEM)

■ “Lasallian Association for me is twofold. One is my Association with the Brothers - which forms the foundation of my life. The second, Lasallian Association is wider with all other members of the Lasallian Family which is very unique. It is multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious. Lasallian association, in its modern outlook, radiates its spirit in the above said dimensions. For me to experience this association is, indeed a special one.” (FSC – PARC)

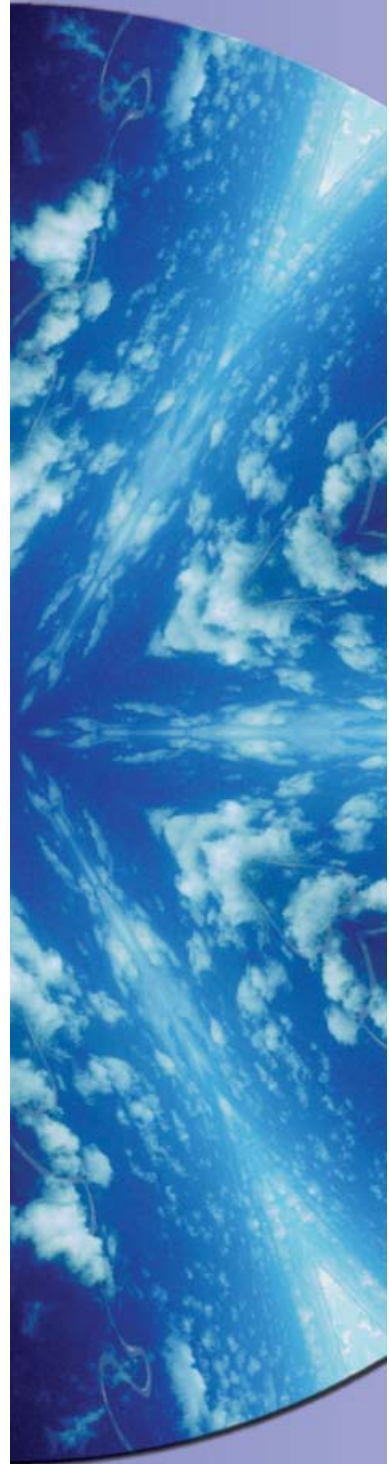


- “I really want to thank all those (Brothers and Lay Partners) who have provided me with sessions of formation, and have entrusted me with missions within the network. I have the feeling that I belong to a large family and network: the Lasallians!” (M – RELEM)



3.A. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How do I ensure that I am pro-active in welcoming others into my professional, spiritual and social Lasallian circles?
2. How is my reality multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious?
3. The fact that “I have many brothers and sisters” around the world “is a source of inspiration.” How can we strengthen our connections with our brothers and sisters around the world? (For example, have I subscribed to the weekly international “e-shot” from www.lasalle.org, yet?)



3.B. Invitation

“ **5.24.** *As has been clear throughout this Circular, calling oneself Lasallian is an invitation to respond to God as a person “called and sent.” It means living a dynamic process that finds all of us on a journey into the unknown. It is an adventure much like the one that inspired St. John Baptist de La Salle over 325 years ago.* ”

- “Association is the result of a vivid understanding of the full commitment to a mission that is required for all who take it up with dedication and without limit. In association, a religious discovers that lay partners are essentially companions on the journey. This insight requires that we invite them to feel that they are more than just a worker, but also a cooperator in the saving mission that God has entrusted to us all. Following the journey of SJB-DLS, means to open the doors for them to ‘discover their role’, to live it and integrate it in their daily lives. I can say that without association the figure and the role of the Brother in the Church and in the world cannot be understood. It is to be a witness of fraternity for the students and other professionals in our schools.” (FSC – RELAL)
- “My life in the Lasallian mission has not been just one special moment. Rather my life’s journey has been marked by many special moments – events that bring meaning to my everyday life. They were events that eventually charted my future course and were significant to me personally because they were *mine.*” (W - RELEM)

- “I began to call myself Lasallian and to feel like one when I received the invitation to work in a school in the Lasallian Network. From that moment on my life had new meaning on both personal and family levels.” (W – RELAL)
- “All my life, since the age of six when I began as a Lasallian student and from that time on, I see myself as a Lasallian. Perhaps I discovered what being Lasallian really meant when I began to teach catechetics in small Christian groups. Later on, as a teacher, I discovered that being Lasallian was something much bigger. I felt united to many other persons and places all over the world.” (M – RELEM)



- “We are in a new era, a new stage in our Lasallian Family. It is an exciting time, but a time when we must extend invitations to all people, of all colors, races, creeds and religions.” (M – PARC)
- “I have been a Catholic since birth, but I had never been around any religious other than Priests and Sisters. I was immediately struck by the Brothers’ true sense of being a big brother to their students rather than the authority figure that I was so familiar with in my church and educational experiences. This truly different model of education resonated with me, drew me close and has become an integral part of me.” (M – RELAN)

3.B. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. At what point in my life did I experience the invitation to become part of the Lasallian Family and Lasallian mission?
2. What experience in my daily life within the Lasallian Family invites me to stay?
3. “Everyone’s participation is important because everyone has a unique contribution to make” (Circular 461, 3.8). What role can I play in inviting others?

3.C. Multi-Religious

“**3.13.** The 43rd Chapter also urges the Institute to take into account the situation of the women and men who participate in the Lasallian mission but do not share the Christian faith. “We should note that in the composition of these groups one can meet Brothers, other Christians, members of other religions, and persons of goodwill whose point of reference, as the 42nd General Chapter indicates, is the human and spiritual values recognized and pursued by all Lasallians (meditation, service of the poor, the family, the rights of children). Let it be stated clearly and unambiguously that calling oneself Lasallian is not relegated only to those of the Christian faith. Many faith-filled people professing other creeds participate daily in the Lasallian educational mission. They are a valued part of this community.”

- “To see several of the lay collaborators giving their time to the students and to the school is a great inspiration for me. And I must keep in mind that they are not Christians! I admire God at work in them! Many who share the Lasallian charism are really committed to their work. They are ‘associates’ without the name!” (FSC – PARC)
- “In Lasallian education we value the concept of solidarity as an act of personal involvement that affects not only our daily work but our life style. This is the cutting ‘edge’ of a quality education we can provide. I have discovered this “edge” since I became a Lasallian educator. I am not a Christian but a Buddhist, however



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a believer of any religion must keep in mind how important it is ‘to save the heart’ of the people entrusted to us. I hope this is the faith I have found here and I hope this faith will continue to run through my heart. I am particularly sympathetic to this pathway to consolidate the mission to ‘provide education to the poor’.” (M – PARC)

- “In Malaysia, ‘Unity in Diversity’ aptly sums up what we practise. What unites us and establishes a sense of belonging amongst us is our Lasallian heritage and values. Regardless of whether we are Chinese, Malays, Indians, Kadazans, Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists or Hindus, we are proud to be Lasallians. We endeavor to cultivate a strong school ethos characterized by ‘Faith, Service



and Community’. As part of the curriculum, Muslims students study Islamic Studies taught by Ustaz - Muslim religious teachers - Christians and others of different beliefs study Moral Education. Our Catholics are given religious instruction. We not only have chapels, we also have suraus - Muslim prayer rooms. The Feast Day of St John Baptist De La Salle is a Day of Prayer and Reflection for all; while the Catholics and Christians go for mass, the Muslims will have their own Muslim prayers and the Buddhists and others will listen to religious talks or watch movies with moral values. What we do is to focus on what unites us.” (W – PARC)



- “As a Muslim I cannot forget my Islamic History...Yet, we are branches of the same tree. I now know God made me go to a Lasallian school and I will always be thankful for that. Although I have no blood brother of my own, Our Lord has now given me over a thousand Brothers... I hope lots of dialogue and bridge building takes place between the leaders of our two great religions. I pray and I am extremely proud I am a Lasallian for the rest of my life and will always cherish all the good memories of De La Salle.” (M – PARC)



- “Respect: we know that the Lasallian world is pluri-religious and multi-cultural and therefore we know the importance of respecting the thoughts and ideas of all students, teachers, parents, and administrators. We do this in order to promote understanding among all peoples and to work together in achieving our goals through dialogue and determination.” (W – RELAL)

3.C. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How does the multi-religious dimension of the Lasallian Family affect me?
2. How am I contributing to an inter-religious dialogue within my local context?
3. “Let it be stated clearly and unambiguously that calling oneself Lasallian is not relegated only to those of the Christian faith” (Circular 461, 3.13). What is my reaction to this statement?
4. How are “people of goodwill” (those members of Lasallian communities who do not identify themselves with any particular faith tradition) seen as valued members of the community?
5. “This new reality of Lasallian association in a multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and global context has common elements, even though Lasallians experience them in different ways” (Circular 461, 3.2). What are some of these common elements?

3.D. Lasallian Women

“ **1.14.** ...Just as more recently the education of both young men and women became the focus of the Mission so has the participation of women in the Lasallian educational network become essential. Their presence, undoubtedly, will help to construct a more humane and community-centered society; help to reexamine ways of thinking; help to situate the entire Lasallian world a bit differently in history and help to organize social, political, economic and religious life in a way that can be more intuitive and relational. Once again the founding story continues to be lived out anew...continues to move from crisis to crossroads; from discouragement to hope. ”

- “I feel privileged, and I have expressed this on many occasions, to have received a great gift from God in becoming part of the Lasallian mission in various roles in the school: student, teacher, mother, catechist, directress, member of the Administrative Board of Parents, leader in the District Lasallian Family, affiliated to the Institute, lay representative at RELAL meetings and at District Chapters. This is why I am part of this Institute that inspires my life, my relationship with God and my commitment to others in the style of our Founder.” (W – RELAL)
- “Consequently, as a mother of a teenage son, my own personal life plan is to nurture him and watch him become a more humane and sensible adult. At the same time, I would like to be a dedicated teacher who cares for young people, especially those



who are entrusted to my care at our Lasallian Center. God willing, I hope I can serve the Lasallian association more in the future through education since I am proud to be a Lasallian Partner.”
(W – PARC)

- “To be part of the Lasallian Family as an Associate has meant that my life has a clear horizon which stems from my identity as a lay woman, mother and wife. Today I cannot speak as if these different aspects of my life were separate from one another.”
(W – RELAL)
- “I was very happy to read in Circular 461 (1.14) that the Lasallian Family is publicly recognizing the contribution of our talented Lasallian women around the world. Their passion for justice, their commitment to young people and their ‘intuitive and relational’ skills will help us all to build a more ‘humane and community-centered’ Lasallian Family. It’s time that we ‘situate the entire Lasallian world a bit differently in history’.”
(FSC – RELAN)
- “In speaking about association, I want to go back to my lived experience. When I joined the community of the Guadalupe Sisters of De La Salle, my initial teaching role was limited to simple professional efforts of being someone who dealt with content. However this soon changed as my personal experience of association within this community deepened. I began by changing the way I viewed children. Now I was their older sister and I was concerned about the events that were happening in their lives; their poverty, joys and sorrows. I learned to give without receiving anything in return, but above all, I was able to provide

an integrated education that corresponded to the Lasallian charism...” (HGS – RELAL)

- “I think that my personal life program has been rooted in this charism of Lasallian association. I experienced it first in the area of faith, and secondly in the way it has given me guidelines on how to be a better human being; a mother who tries to teach by example; a committed and responsible teacher looking for consistency between what I say and what I do. I know that I still have a lot to do and that formation is the primary element for my accompanying and guiding those whom God has entrusted to me.” (W – RELAL)
- “As a lay woman in the Church, association invites me into a community in which my personal relationship with God and my ministry can flourish. Association is ‘organic’; it is created from the ground up; it is born out of relationship and community; and it is a vital gift to the larger Church community.” (W – RELAN)
- “Having attended the inaugural Lasallian Women’s Symposium, I am all fired up to live my Lasallian commitment as a female educator. My role as a Lasallian educator has moved from directly touching the lives of the students to that of



touching the students' lives through the teachers. I am responsible for the professional learning of my staff. With more than half of my staff being females and with the dwindling number of De La Salle Brothers, I can see the important role that we have, as female educators, in continuing with and propagating the Lasallian education in a multi-racial and multi-religious Singapore.”
(W – PARC)

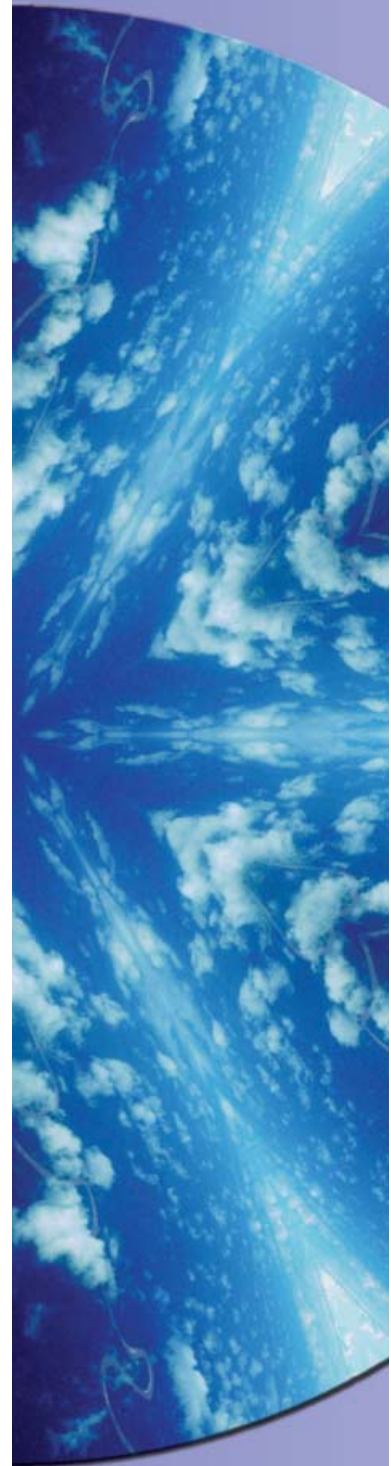
3.D. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Circular 461 states, “we would like to specifically note the contribution of Lasallian women who now compose over half of the total personnel involved in the Mission” (1.14). How do I characterize the contribution of women to the Lasallian educational mission, both now and for the future?
2. What unique challenges might a woman experience in living the Lasallian mission? What creative responses to these challenges have I experienced or observed?
3. What would the Lasallian world look like today without the presence of women?
4. In my experience, is Lasallian formation meeting the needs of women in the Lasallian Family? If not, what would I change?

3.E. Pace & Process

“ **5.6.** ...The Lasallian Family designates all those who participate in the Lasallian educational enterprise, especially those who are moving toward a sharing of the spirit and the mission of St. John Baptist de La Salle. It is clear that the definition allows for great flexibility in the way a person belongs to the Family. It is all inclusive by allowing for levels of depth ranging from profound to cursory. The word “especially” is significant in the definition. It refers to a more specific group who sees its belonging to the Family as a process...a journey. As in the case of membership in any family, there may be an ebb and flow to this process. Belonging is never static. It presumes movement in the areas of personal, relational, intellectual and spiritual growth, all of which affect one’s incorporation into the Family. ”

- “Unconsciously, we used to understand that it was a Brother’s role to lead other Lasallians. Today we know that not to be the case. The Lasallian vocation includes a variety of expressions. Rather than following a leader, what we need to do is to mentor and discern together – Lay Partners and Brothers – concerning ways of being faithful to De La Salle.” (FSC – RELEM)
- “I can’t think of a particular moment when I began to call myself ‘Lasallian’ – I believe, just like the Founder, that God has led me, step by step, on a journey of faith. My vocation to the Lasallian charism really has been a partnership between the Brothers and



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the Lay Partners that I work with as we, together and by association, live out the Mission.” (W – RELAN)

- “The Brothers help us to have a better relationship with God through conversation, retreats, days of recollection and especially through mentoring.” (M – RELAL)
- “I understand my Lasallian vocation as a process. It is a process in which personal and community options are in play, and also a process of personalizing my faith.” (M – RELEM)
- “I first experienced being Lasallian the first time I heard the words, ‘Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of

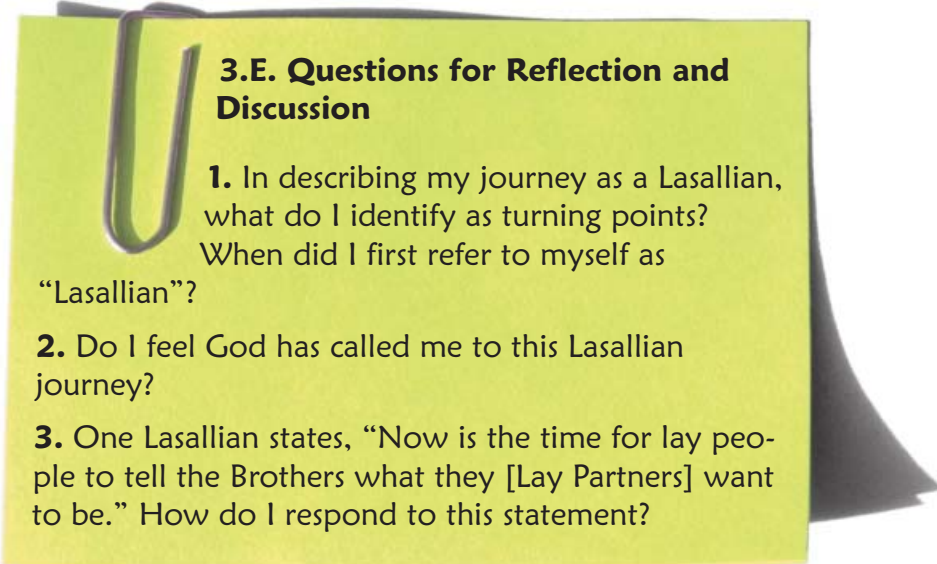
God.’ It was a transformative moment; a sacred moment ... It was also eight years before I started working in a Lasallian school. When I began working in a Lasallian school and began to hear the story of John Baptist de La Salle and Lasallian education, I immediately resonated with the story and began to happily call myself ‘Lasallian’.” (M – RELAN)

- “I can’t put an exact date on when I started seeing myself as Lasallian. I have always been very proud to call myself a De La Salle Brother. But I



think it was a growing awareness, and probably because I heard other people calling themselves ‘Lasallian,’ and they would refer to De La Salle as ‘our Founder,’ whereas I had always thought of De La Salle as the Founder of the Brothers. So, it was by hearing these other people calling themselves ‘Lasallian’ and claiming La Salle as their Founder and claiming the charisma that really made me realize that I was a member of a much wider family. (FSC – PARC)

- “This is not the time when Brothers need to tell Lay Partners what they have to do. This is the time when Lay Partners need to tell the Brothers what they want to be.” (FSC – RELEM)



3.E. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. In describing my journey as a Lasallian, what do I identify as turning points? When did I first refer to myself as “Lasallian”?
2. Do I feel God has called me to this Lasallian journey?
3. One Lasallian states, “Now is the time for lay people to tell the Brothers what they [Lay Partners] want to be.” How do I respond to this statement?



“ **1.25.** *The Lasallian mission, the human and Christian education of young people “far from salvation,” has no future unless built upon the fundamental traits of Lasallian association, both among the Brothers, and among all other Lasallians, who commit themselves in various forms to the Lasallian educational mission.* ”



Chapter Four – I



Lasallian Shared Mission

4.A. Co-responsibility

“**3.7.** By valuing the charisms of the founders of religious communities, the Church establishes new relationships of communion and participation among the baptized. A most significant innovation is the request by people who are not members to take part in the charismatic ideals of an institute. The request involves more than sharing the mission or carrying on specific professional tasks, important as they are. The request means, among other things, committing the person’s life to a specific way of living God’s call through an institute’s charism. These new forms of communion and cooperation enrich both members and non-members, especially in mission, community life, and spirituality.”

- “The thing that strengthens my vocation as a Brother today is the mutual support between two groups which contribute to the successful development of my state as a religious and an educator. These two groups, the religious and the lay, are encouraged to come together for the common mission of education. There is also great benefit from the witness and solidarity which I would emphasize as being significant for the mission of educating children and young people.” (FSC – RELAF)
- “We all must humbly do our part in terms of leadership because we all play special roles in the mission. Families do not have members that are more or less important than the other members. It is about LOVE. This is the trend. Love translates into action. If we are going to have an educational community or a

Christian community, can I do this without knowing how my community members feel, or what bothers or concerns them, or what they dream about?” (M – RELEM)

- “I absolutely believe in the sacredness of the vocation of the lay Lasallian. I absolutely believe that lay Lasallians are part of the future of the Mission, not by necessity, but as a grace.” (W – PARC)
- “...this (co-responsibility) is only possible if association is carried out radically, with conviction, and with the certainty that we cannot do it alone. It is not only because as consecrated persons we are fewer in number each day, but because we need other hands, other dreams and ideals, by which we can become like leaven in the dough. Otherwise, we would be opting for an association obliged by circumstance and not by the conviction of working together to continue strengthening our charism as ministers of Jesus Christ.” (HGS – RELAL)
- “The lay Lasallians should be equal partners of the Brothers in the mission. They should become involved in the planning, decision making and implementation of Lasallian projects and programmes.” (FSC – PARC)
- “In my view, the Lasallian charism can be seen in terms of a vocation (Med. 33). It can also be seen as a gift granted by the Holy Spirit. The charism is something that makes me aware of the fact that God is acting in me in view of a mission. In professional terms, it can show itself as a charism of ‘brotherliness’. It is a question of teaching; of giving witness; of listening to young people; of loving them; of accompanying their development as



adults filled with hope and faith; of evangelizing them. It is made manifest through the richness of the teacher-pupil relationship and by seeing Christ in each of the young people entrusted to us. The Lasallian charism embodies the right way to educate (in the fullest sense of the word).” (M – RELEM)

- “The thing that frightens me as a future obstacle is the diminishing number of Brothers. It is essential (even if we do have Lay Partners already associated) that every member of the educational community be a bearer of the heritage left to us by the Founder. Moreover, the Brothers receive a mission from the Church, and it would be good if the committed Lay Partners were to receive a similar ecclesial recognition.” (M – RELEM)
- “In education we have identical gifts to offer. Perhaps it is pretentious of me to think that we can associate with them (Lay Partners), when in reality we are partnering on a par. One difference could be that since we own our schools, we might be seen as “bosses” even though we may not exercise administrative tasks within a school.” (FSC – RELAL)
- “One of the major convictions that I hold about Lasallian education is that both Brothers and Lay Partners are necessary to this endeavor. Documents not only from the Institute, but also from the Vatican, have spoken of how both religious and lay members are integral participants in the apostolate of Catholic Education.” (FSC – RELAN)
- “As a Papuan New Guinean, I grew up in an era that held the attitude that anything to do with faith development for young people, and especially anything to do with mission work, was

strictly for those who consecrated their lives to being a Priest, Brother or Sister. My attitude has now been transformed and uplifted to seeing my vocation as walking side by side with the Brothers (and all religious). The mission now is every baptized Christian's mission. We are the Church, and we are to build that kingdom in our society. I have been chosen by God, just like he did with De La Salle to bring the salvation of God to young people and all persons that cross my path, which is a great challenge. The way in which I bring salvation is unique and how God leads me through the Holy Spirit, who is present in my heart, is different.” (W – PARC)



- “It is important to make a distinction between association as the Brothers view it and Lasallian association that includes committed lay colleagues. That does not diminish either. The invitation to others to be associated for mission is critical to the future of the Lasallian mission. If our association as Brothers is real, we must recognize the need to include others. Indeed, our lay colleagues have a right to be full partners in the mission. I see the continued development of Lasallian association as energizing for the future of the Institute. The basis for each, Brother and lay, may be different, but they join together to grow the mission of the Institute. (FSC – RELAN)

4.A. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. In what ways do I exercise responsibility for the Lasallian mission?
2. One Lasallian describes co-responsibility in this way: “I absolutely believe that lay Lasallians are part of the future of the mission not by necessity, but as a grace.” Do I see co-responsibility as a grace, or do I see it solely as a practical response to the declining number of Brothers?
3. In what ways do I experience Brothers and Lay Partners “traveling together for the common educational mission”?

4.B. Commitment

“ **5.22.** *We wish to emphasize that participation in the Lasallian Family must contribute to the building up of one’s own family and/or community life. It should never be seen as a hindrance or as an obstacle to family unity...much less put family life “at risk.” Those, whose vocation calls them to marriage, and perhaps parenthood, are to celebrate the fact that their primary community is their family. Belonging to the Lasallian Family should be a source of strength and balance that nourishes all Lasallian vocations.* ”

- “In this process of association, even though it has been an individual one for me, I also need to take into account my wife. As I talk about my commitment I know she has a great role to play in this area, and all the more so, when I consider my responsibility as a parent. Familiarity and involvement with the Mission is indispensable for any married couple when commitment goes way beyond the classroom and is no longer a mere contractual agreement in the school. I also believe that only mutual support ensures family unity. In my personal understanding, and also because I am a Christian, I need to admit that my marriage commitment comes before my commitment to be an Associate.”
(M – RELEM)
- “My time, many significant friendships and life style are dedicated to promoting the Lasallian mission when I serve on boards, task forces, and committees or create programs for our students and Lasallian colleagues. All of these Lasallian commitments in-





volve sacrifice of family and friends, who support and accommodate my work life that includes evenings, weekends and sustained time away from home.” (W – RELAN)

■ “My experience of Lasallian Association

has enabled me to enrich my religious life, both in community and at work. ‘Doing well whatever I have to do for the love of God and of my neighbour’.” (W – RELAF)

■ “Association is much more important today than in the past because the nature of lived Lasallian mission has developed to include a great variety of individuals and vocations, many of whom are drawn to embrace dimensions of life similar to those represented by the ‘constitutive elements’ that define the vocation of the Brothers, but appropriated in ways proper to their own lived experience and vocation. The role of Lasallian association in their lives is a difference in kind, not degree, and this should be respected.” (FSC – RELAN)

■ “I am also very much aware that I have a responsibility to look after my aging mother and young adopted son. As a single woman this comes with challenges which I try to balance. Prayer has been the tool that helps me through all sorts of challenges I

face being a Papua New Guinean with added extended family responsibilities.” (W – PARC)

- “A family and a small community are experiences that have prepared me for association. My current life experience with my wife and children enriches my Lasallian vocation. It strengthens it, even though my wife is not a Lasallian. Is it possible to integrate my family? Is this compatible? Conclusion: It is impossible to separate one from the other. It is something that walks together in harmony and you have to achieve a balance.” (M – RELEM)
- “My husband and my children only ask of me that our home never stop being the center of our lives. This for me, of course, will always be the priority. They see that I am happy and that is enough for them. There is no obstacle to my family life even though at times I need to share time and space.” (W – RELEM)
- “The role that Lasallian association plays in my personal life is one that is central to my core values as a person, husband, father, and grandfather. The connection to the charism of St. John Baptist de La Salle is strong and really ever-present. As a principal of a Lasallian school, my personal and professional lives are really strongly intertwined. I can’t be Lasallian at school and then ignore or deny the values of what it is to be Lasallian within my personal life and relationships. This connection transcends work and professional practices and imbeds itself, hopefully, within my personal interactions.” (M – PARC)
- “Association is part of my personal life. My husband, my children, my parents, my brother, all of them knew from the very



beginning that the school was what made me happy. Just as love and mutual respect is the greatest thing to which we as persons can aspire, those who love us and desire our happiness, will share our hopes, dreams and, of course, our sorrows and failures as well. They can offer us advice but they always have to let us “fly” on our own. My family is one of my biggest supports, just as God and the Lasallian mission are as well. At home it is perfectly understood that education requires a great commitment and that it requires time. I am very fortunate that the Lasallian mission is a support for my family too.” (W – RELEM)

4.B. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. At times, my commitment to the Lasallian mission may conflict with my commitment to community life or family life. When this happens, how do I resolve this conflict?
2. What influence does my lifestyle (single, married, religious) have on my contribution to the Lasallian Mission?
3. One Lasallian states, “I am lucky that being Lasallian is one of the main supports for my family.” How does “being Lasallian” support the other areas of my life?

4.C. Heart, Memory, Guarantor...

“ **3.9** ... This new context also means that the Brothers live their religious consecration alongside other people who share the same Lasallian charism, becoming “for them and with them, heart, memory, and guarantor of the Lasallian charism.”

6.6 ...The Mission, the role and the identity of the Brothers remain clear. During most of the history of the Institute, the Brothers have been guarantors of the Mission, serving as the heart and the memory of the Christian Schools and the local communities. Community continues today in service of the Mission; however, a shift has occurred in the Brothers’ role as guardians of the Lasallian charism. “We have become more aware of our responsibility to be heart, memory, and guarantors of the Lasallian charism for all Lasallians. At the same time, we rejoice when other Lasallians take on this responsibility.”


- “I think that sharing the Mission and spirituality with lay Lasallians who are excited and committed is a great treasure. I believe that the Lasallian school, lived as it was in “yesteryear” where there were only Brothers, no longer has meaning, even though – I have to be honest – I wish that we had a small community of Brothers in each Lasallian work. I believe in the value of the prophetic witness of consecrated life. It is hard for me to think about our western world where there are no young people who



are attracted to a life choice that for me is something about which I am passionate.” (FSC – RELEM)

- “I used to think of myself as a representative of a community in an educational ministry. Today, my dreams of really serving the poor as a Lasallian who is sent continue to ring true. In addition, I can do this in company with many Lay Associates who are involved in the transformation of a society that privileges the few and excludes the majority. I dedicate myself to the latter despite the fact that age makes one more cautious.” (FSC – RELAL)
- “I cannot conceive of the idea of ‘turning back’ where the Brothers still feel like they are the owners of the Institute. The Lasallian Institute exists for the world and it should be shared in all its richness in order to enrich that world.” (FSC – RELAL)
- “We are aware of the great ‘co-responsibility’ entrusted to us to be the ‘heart, memory and guarantor’ of the Lasallian charism, but we have De La Salle’s assurance that as St. Paul says, “The Lord who has begun the work, will see it to its successful completion.” (Philippians 1:6)” (CIL ‘10)
- “We members of the Signum Fidei community, the teachers, parents, former students and many other Lasallians in Alexandria, Egypt, are more aware, day by day, of the responsibility that we have to be also the heart, memory and guarantors of the Lasallian charism in our city, and not just ‘contracted workers.’ We have assumed the leadership of many educational and pastoral ministry activities that used to be carried out before by the Brothers. We believe that association is the soul of the Lasallian vision of living the mission.” (W – RELEM)

- “Increasingly, as numbers of Brothers diminish, lay Lasallians are becoming the ‘heart and memory’ in many places. Lay Lasallians are 97% of the workforce, and increasingly part of the leadership. We are talking about a reality that is very much alive and animating the Mission today. What a great blessing! It is God’s work - it does not matter whether it is a lay person or a Brother who is doing it; our focus should always be outward not inward, on those young people who need us.” (W – PARC)



4.C. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. One Lasallian states, “Increasingly, as numbers of Brothers diminish, lay Lasallians are becoming the ‘heart and memory’ in many places.” Who are the members of my Lasallian community who are the “heart, memory and guarantor” of the Mission?
2. A Brother notes, “I cannot conceive the idea of going back where the Brothers still feel like the owners of the Institute.” In my current context, what do I think would be a step backwards? What would be a step forward?
3. What qualifies a person to be “heart, memory and guarantor” of the Lasallian mission?



“ **1.1.** *After centuries of communal life rooted in stability in the Institute and after decades of renewal in fidelity to our founding charism, we find ourselves now ... living a time of both personal and institutional transition and transformation. These are indeed exciting times...times that invite us once again to a faith-filled act of HOPE in our collective future!* ”



Chapter Five – A



A Future Vision

5.A. New Horizons

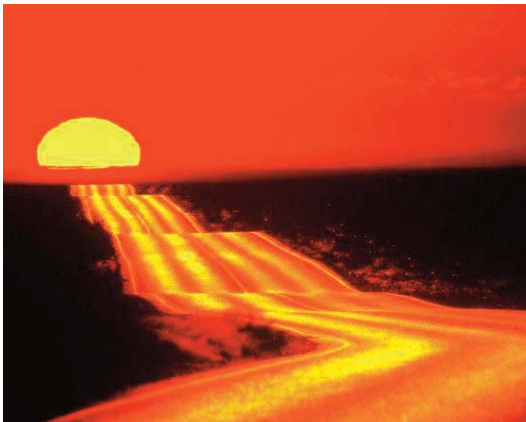
“ **I.17.** *This is a new moment in our history. It is one that is calling forth a fresh response from each of us. Much like St. Peter’s “trance” in the Acts of the Apostles (10: 9-16) when a new “blanket” of possibilities was stretched out before him, and what was unthinkable before was now presented as an inspired path to grow and unite the young Christian community...we also are invited to see that what was true in the past must be nuanced today for the vitality of our Lasallian mission.* ”

- “It is clear that a Lasallian apostolate can thrive very well without a numeric dominance of Brothers. The dynamic richness of our network is ever growing and strengthening with fewer Brothers involved. However, the appreciation of and desire for the unique contribution our presence brings remains quite strong and our presence is quite necessary for the whole Lasallian movement to continue within the Church. Will we possess the vision and courage to make the transformations necessary to allow the growth of the Lasallian movement to continue before it extinguishes because of lacking commitment?” (FSC – RELAN)
- “The Brothers have entrusted lay people with a shared mission for a long time now. I see this as an act of trust and confidence in the future and in our ability as lay people to respond to their calls.” (W – RELEM)
- “Association is clear sign of the times that has reemerged in the Institute at key moments in its history. We cannot think about

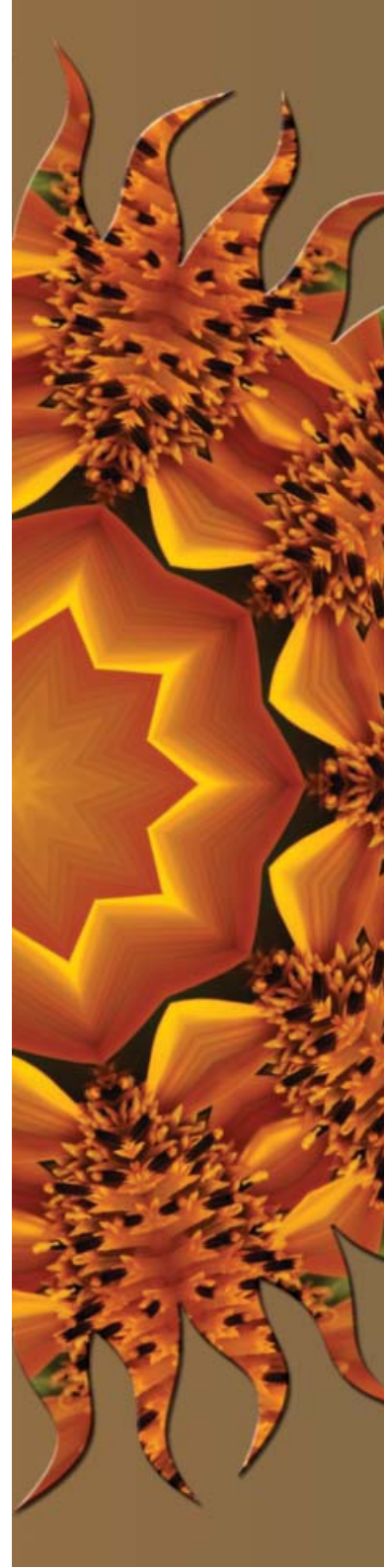
our future if association is not the key. Together – this is how we will build the Institute of today and tomorrow.” (FSC – RELAL)

- “There is a real challenge for us to accept; let us have confidence and work together”. (W – RELEM)
- “Today I cannot imagine how we as Brothers can operate any of our educational institutions without collaborating with our lay colleagues. They have opened vistas hitherto unthinkable and, more importantly, have now allowed us to dream our dreams and bring these dreams to reality. We have been able to increase our institutions in direct service to the poor and disenfranchised because our numbers have allowed us achieve these new works. So I truly believe that new visions open up for us and that all things are now possible and achievable with Lasallian association.” (FSC – RELAN)

- “One of the most enduring aspects of Lasallian education is its ability to innovate, ‘together and by association’. Our work must be directed toward new forms of poverty and current ways of dealing with family life. This is a fundamental option that provides a significant reason for our very existence.” (M – RELAL)

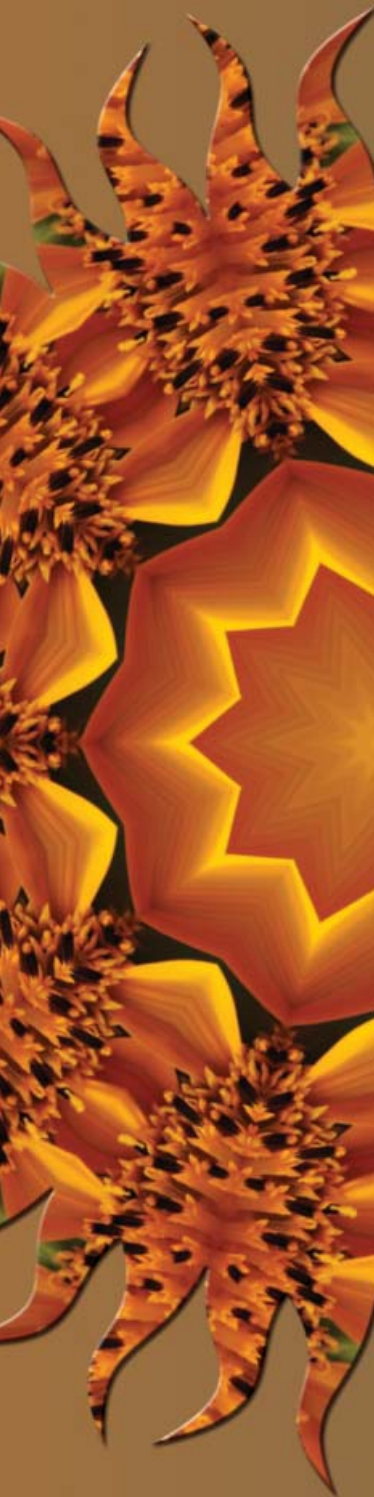


- “In today’s society it is still important and necessary to spread the mes-




sage of Jesus. To fight for the building up of a better world means to procure the extension of God's Kingdom of justice and equality in everyday life. It involves the promotion of Gospel values by committing oneself to the disadvantaged of our society. It implies that we become visible signs of community as we confront a society that promotes individualism over and above the common good. We need to promote interiority in a world that is clearly keen on the material and on the abandonment of the spiritual." (M – RELEM)

- "As a community, we need to live fraternity, support one another in the faith, and make ourselves "credible" ...this is what gives hope. It also makes present the voice of Jesus in our schools and brings God's love to so many children in our institutions who are suffering. This hope can encourage parents to carry out their role as teachers and for them to trust in this calling. ...Brothers, allow us to be your partners. Let us form true communities of love and support. Titles or appointments are not that important – trust us – since we also want to contribute our charism to enrich this work of the Church." (W – RELAL)
- "I appreciate the wisdom of the senior Brothers who have a great perspective on the future. They know how to scan the horizon to see the changing signs of the times and the new needs arising from them. They have developed a kind of precious, creative fidelity that calls me to grow. This is not the time to retreat back to the trenches; we have to go forward and continue to be light, inspiration, and hope. We have to get others involved, spread enthusiasm, and help others to discover La Salle. Let us be witnesses wherever we go...Lay Partners and Brothers to-



gether. Let us rediscover our energies and commitment to serve others. Let us be lighted lamps and let us inspire others to join us. I am nothing but the hopeful fruit of the planter. Let us sow in hope. Let us renew the earth and do so enthusiastically. Let us recover the joy of the one who hopes for a good harvest and waits patiently for it. There are lands that lie fallow for many years but the new fruit is worth the wait.” (W – RELEM)



5.A. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What do I identify as some of the next steps necessary to assure a vibrant future for the Lasallian mission?
2. In what ways does my vision for the future of the Lasallian mission include justice for the poor, promotion of community, and the value of deepening my interior life?
3. If you are a Lay Partner, complete this statement: “Brothers, allow us to ...”
4. If you are a Brother, complete this statement: “Lay Partners, allow us to ...”
5. How will I live out my passion for the Lasallian mission in the next few years?

“ **1.25.** *The Lasallian mission, the human and Christian education of young people “far from salvation,” has no future unless built upon the fundamental traits of Lasallian association, both among the Brothers, and among all other Lasallians, who commit themselves in various forms to the Lasallian educational mission.*

7.3 ...All you who serve the Lasallian mission remember what God has promised us. As He spoke to the prophet Jeremiah so He speaks to us today: “I know what my plans are for you, plans to save you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future and to give you hope...When you call on me I will listen...I will gather you up from among all the nations... I will bring you home”

Jeremiah 29: 11-14

”



Chapter Six – Co



Conclusion

Chapter Six

The disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish... . And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said, “Come and eat!” John 21:7-12

Were you able to “find” yourself in *Stories of Hope*? Were there moments of clarity when you recognized yourself – and maybe also your companions on the journey – just as John recognized Jesus anew after His resurrection? Did you clothe yourself with any new insights as you once again jumped into the sea of “Lasallian Mission” remembering all the while that you were anchored by the holy presence of God? What did you catch? Or better yet, what “fish” did God place in your net... “fish” that nourish?... “fish” that transform?

Before Jesus invited His friends to “come and eat,” there appears one short phrase that normally goes unnoticed. John tells us that “the net was not torn.” Why not? The catch was enormous and the net was ready to burst, but it did not. All of those fish found a place in that net. All were included in the catch. None was lost. Perhaps that was the real miracle of the day. This metaphor carries over into our Lasallian world as our unity makes room for diver-

sity; embraces, sustains, and celebrates it; transforms it into the “fish” that nourish the whole family. We trust that *Stories of Hope* reflected a kaleidoscope of experiences inviting you to promote “unity in diversity” as a gift bestowed on us for the vitality of the Lasallian Family.

FAITH: We began this Bulletin just as we began Circular #461. We met the disciples - people working hard to make a living and at the same time unaware that what they were about was so much more than catching fish. Sound familiar? This is the story of Lasallian vocation. We begin the journey at one point and then travel to a much deeper one, almost imperceptibly, where we are transformed into guardian angels for those whom we serve... especially the poor. It’s the miracle that happens every time we listen to the Lord as He encourages us to cast our nets in a new direction.

SERVICE: Immediately after resting in Jesus’ presence and eating the meal He had prepared, the disciples, through Peter, received their commission to “feed lambs” and to “shepherd sheep.” De La Salle knew very well the parable of the Good Shepherd and instructed his first Brothers to feed, shepherd and even to give their very lives for those entrusted to their care. The disciples, our first Brothers, and now we, all Lasallians, are invited to live an association for mission that brings “salvation” to the poor, and in turn sanctifies the bearer of this Good News.

COMMUNITY: Notice that Jesus, after welcoming His friends ashore, proceeded to feed them with a meal He himself was preparing. All were fed. None went hungry. They sat on the beach and celebrated communion. His promise not to leave them or-



phaned was being fulfilled in their presence. They needed Him... they needed each other. “Together and by association” they formed a community for mission. Courage! Fishing from the other side of the boat can yield a catch difficult to drag in when attempted alone. In the company of our brothers and sisters, it can be accomplished with “all the affection of our hearts”.

Much like Circular #461, *Stories of Hope*, does not pretend to be a definitive statement on Lasallian association. Attempting to do this, converting a dynamic process into a *truth*, might stifle our search and quell the Spirit’s movement among us. Rather we hope that by praying and reflecting your way through these pages you have had an experience of renewed hope in your vocation...in your community life...in your commitment to the Lasallian educational mission. These three elements are in essence signs of association. Faith – Service – Community.

Let us end this segment of our journey with the words of our own Brother, San Miguel Febres Cordero, FSC:

***I must close my eyes once and for all and hurl
myself towards my God with trust.
...the children have won my heart.***

Live Jesus in our Hearts...FOREVER!





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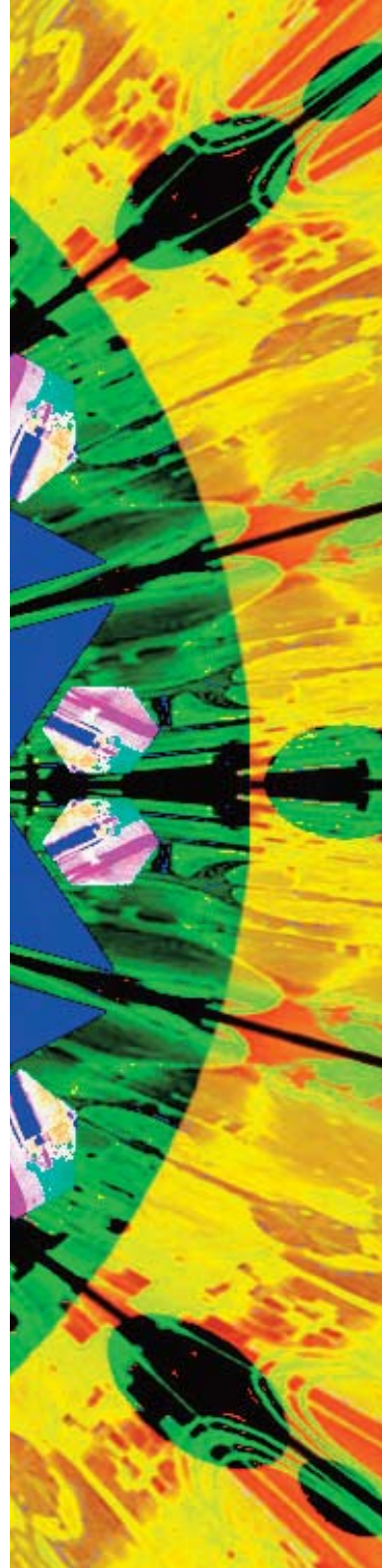
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...and to all of you who told your *Story of Hope*.
Thank you so very much!



My Personal Journal / Notes...



