



Lasallian Family magazine

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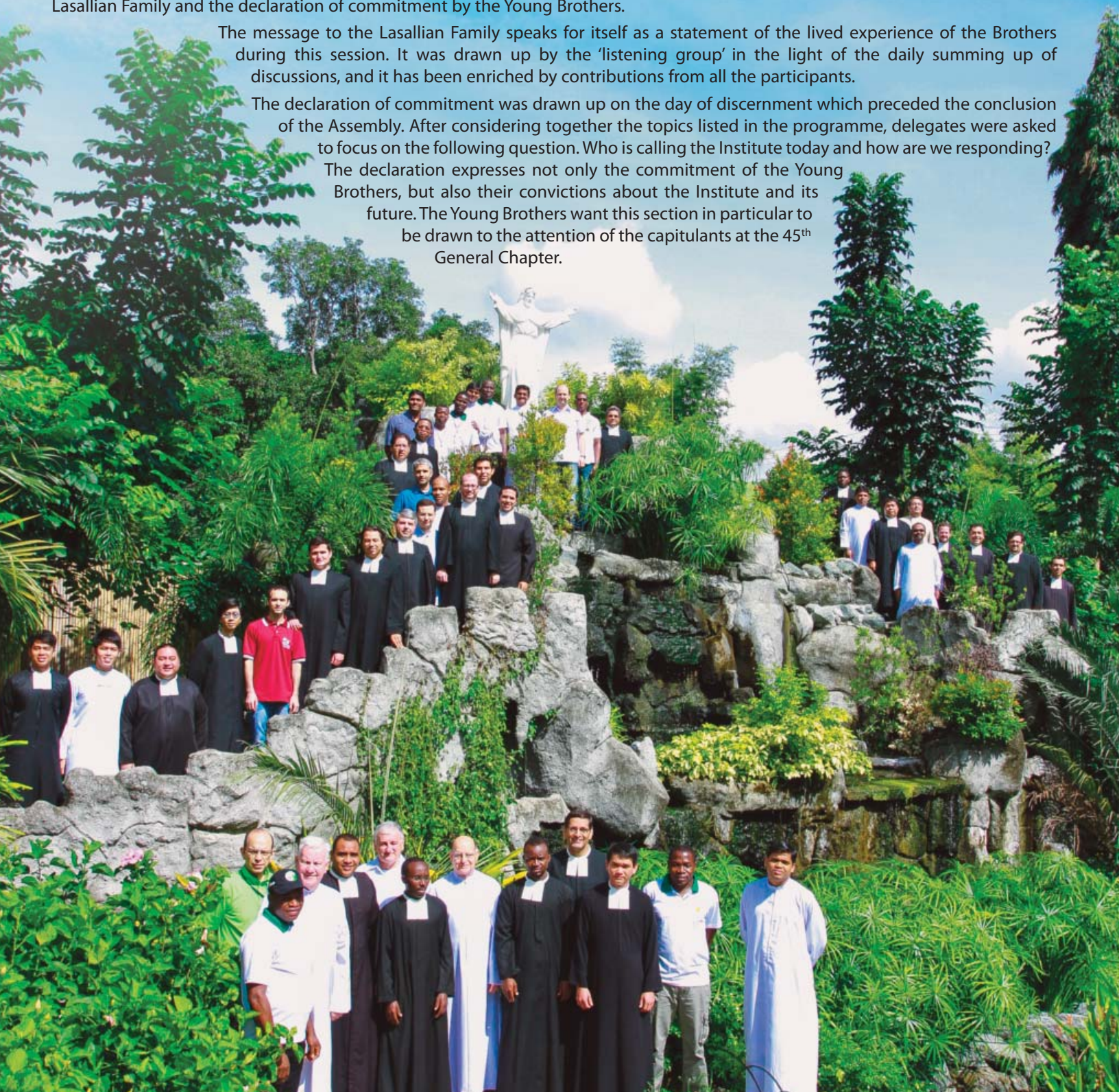
International Young Brothers Assembly: An event of grace and hope for all Lasallians

Intercom takes this opportunity to share with you two outcomes of the Young Brothers Assembly, namely the message to the whole Lasallian Family and the declaration of commitment by the Young Brothers.

The message to the Lasallian Family speaks for itself as a statement of the lived experience of the Brothers during this session. It was drawn up by the 'listening group' in the light of the daily summing up of discussions, and it has been enriched by contributions from all the participants.

The declaration of commitment was drawn up on the day of discernment which preceded the conclusion of the Assembly. After considering together the topics listed in the programme, delegates were asked to focus on the following question. Who is calling the Institute today and how are we responding?

The declaration expresses not only the commitment of the Young Brothers, but also their convictions about the Institute and its future. The Young Brothers want this section in particular to be drawn to the attention of the capitulants at the 45th General Chapter.





Final Message from the Internat

"...I came that they may have life"
(John 1:9)



Dear Lasallians,

With the above words of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, we recognize that only he can give us abundant life that proceeds from the Father through the Spirit. Our Holy Founder situated the mission of the Brothers in this Trinitarian movement: introduce the children and young people we educate to a life of grace.

Young Brothers from each Region of the Institute, 34 delegates in all, gathered from July 29 through August 7, 2013 at DLSU Dasmariñas, Cavite (Philippines), in an unprecedented assembly, carrying out the mandate of the 44th General Chapter: "...one year before the next General Chapter there will be an international gathering of representatives of young Brothers from the different Regions, with the objective of expressing their hopes and dreams for the coming year."

During these ten days all Lasallians from around the world were very present both in our hearts and in our work. We especially remembered all Young Brothers who, in one way or another, participated in the preparation of the Assembly. We direct these words of hope to all of you.

The mandate of the 44th General Chapter specified the themes to be addressed and oriented the methodology we followed. We dealt with one theme per day with the help of a facilitator: community life, formation and accompaniment, association for the educational service of the poor, consecrated and spiritual life, and pastoral ministry of vocations. Through personal reflection

and dialogue, both in small groups as well as in general assembly, we shared our dreams, concerns, and proposals.

The diversity of languages, cultures, and origins (more than 30 countries), has made us aware of the plurality of the Institute and the unity of the Lasallian vocation. We thank God for our call to be De La Salle Brothers, a vocation that fills our lives with meaning. We are saddened by the lack of understanding of the Brother's vocation within the Church, but we believe that this vocation continues to be necessary. We cannot keep this "treasure" to ourselves; we must make it known. In this sense, we share a common concern for the pastoral ministry of vocations that this ministry needs to be bolstered in all the Regions of the Institute. We all agree to commit and actively involve ourselves in the promotion of vocations.

When we look around us, we discover a rich Lasallian heritage that we must receive, re-create, and continue. This heritage is visible in our elder Brothers; we live it with a spirituality that moves us to look at all things through the eyes of faith, and it is realized by educational works that respond to the needs of youth. We Young Brothers feel and know that we are part of this heritage.

As happened with John Baptist de La Salle, we, too, are challenged by the abandonment of children and young people today. His response to the needs of the poor inspires us and reaffirms that the Institute continues to be "of great need." Specifically, we were able to experience this on the day dedicated to apostolic service. The delegates dedicated one day during the assembly to get to



International Young Brothers Assembly

Life, and have it in abundance."
(10" 10)

Dasmariñas, Cavite, July 29 – August 7, 2013



know works dedicated to the service to the poor rendered by Lasallians in the Philippines. The joyful faces of the children remind us that work in favor of the poor and with the poor is the meaning and strength of our charism.

We also feel a powerful call to be with young people. They need *prophets for new times*, companions who give witness to the value of giving their lives for others. We experienced this during a visit to Manila when we were accompanied by Young Lasallians, including aspirants, from the Philippines who gave us a lesson in hospitality, availability, and love for the Institute. In this regard, we are grateful for the words of support that we received from the International Council of Young Lasallians. We want to work shoulder to shoulder with Young Lasallians for the Mission.

Although we are concerned about the survival of the Mission in some sectors of the Institute, we welcome with admiration and gratitude the increasing number of those who participate in the Mission. Sharing this vocation with lay partners and associates deepens our sense of being Brothers and gives greater efficacy to the Mission.

As young people of our time, we run the risk of focusing on ourselves too much, our development, well-being, and realization, at times forgetting that the center of our lives is Christ incarnated in children and young people, especially the poor. For this reason we recognize that we need to make progress in living an integrated spirituality like that of De La Salle. The following of Jesus consists of this type of decentralized spirituality.

Leisure times, led by each Region, along with informal times of dialogue helped break down language barriers and opened the way to the joy of living together as Brothers. During these days we have discovered even more that we are *Brothers without Borders*. New technologies, so dear to us, will continue to help us close the gap of the distance between one another and allow us to be in greater communion with all Brothers of the Institute.

After seven days of sharing our dreams and concerns, and achieving consensus about our proposals, we spent a day in retreat to listen more attentively to the movement of the Spirit. On this same day, we set aside time to dialogue with the Superior General. This proved to be a rich and hopeful moment. Finally, in an attitude of discernment and fraternal unity, we developed a set of commitments that will be part of the assembly report for the 45th General Chapter.

We would like to thank the attentiveness of all Lasallians in the Lasallian East Asia District, especially those in the Philippines. Without their support we could not have lived such a rich experience here. De La Salle University, Dasmariñas welcomed us and made many of their resources available to us. Many students and collaborators accompanied us at all times and we are very grateful to each of them.

We are thankful to God for the opportunity to share in this unique and fraternal experience and hope that its fruits are abundant.

Live, Jesus, in our hearts.

Statement of commitment

We are all convinced that...

1. Despite many challenges and difficulties, we look to the future with hope, recognizing that “the need for this Institute is very great,” and that God calls us to address new and emerging forms of poverty.
2. Our identity as Brothers is rooted in the Gospel and in the following of Christ through the Lasallian charism.
3. Our Trinitarian consecration calls us to be men of community who accompany one another, discern together, and share faith, fraternity, and mission.
4. The vocation of the Brother is a sign of hope for the world, the Church, and all members within the Institute.
5. God acts through our ministry of education, changing the lives of the young, especially the poor, in whom God is made visible to us.
6. The future of the Institute and Mission is intimately linked to Brothers and lay partners working “together and by association.”

Therefore, we commit ourselves to...

1. Witnessing the actuality of the Gospel and the following of Christ for the service of the young, especially those with most difficulties, in creative, visible, and communal ways.
2. Be true prophets who both announce hope and transmit it by assuming a conviction at all levels (personal-District-Regional) that is creative, takes risks, and responds to the challenges that arise from present-day realities.
3. Live as men consecrated in faith, deepening our personal relationship with Jesus Christ through personal and communal prayer, fidelity to our charism and tradition, and by means of diligent work in the apostolate of education.
4. Generously promote Lasallian vocations, especially the Brother's vocation, and be prepared to move beyond our boundaries in a spirit of abandonment to divine providence.
5. Be the accelerator of the Lasallian mission and seek new ways to make human and Christian education accessible to and inclusive of the poor, either bringing the school to the poor or making our traditional apostolates more accessible (financially and culturally) to them.

Other Outcomes from the Assembly

In addition to the message and the declaration of commitment, the discussions of the Assembly produced two other results, namely some ideas about the concerns of the Young Brothers and some propositions. The document, with all these results, will be sent to the Capitulants, to the delegates at the Assembly, to Brothers Visitors, to people in charge of formation and to all those who would like to learn more about it. The web page of the Assembly will be active up until the General Chapter.
<http://iyba.lasalle.org>

6. Further develop the existing and new processes for both Brother and Lay Partner formation for Lasallian tradition, spirituality, and professional ministry, and live association based on Gospel values in order to provide a meaningful presence for those who are near us.



From the Secretary's Desk...



Well, I am not Brother Charles Kitson who usually writes in this place. As you may remember, in the last Intercom, Brother Charles mentioned that he was going back to his home District of Eastern North America where he will be Auxiliary Visitor.

Brother Charles' assignment to the Eastern North America District (DENA) is a very positive development for the District, but we will miss him here in Rome, not only for what he has done, but also for his personal presence here in the Generalate.

In these past five years, Brother Charles created with the help of Co-Secretary Montse Nieto Alvarez and Young Lasallian Coordinator Joseph Gilson, a new Secretariat for the Lasallian Family and Association. He was instrumental in the development of Circular 461 *Associated for Mission...an act of HOPE* along with the General Council and Bulletin 254 *Stories of Hope*. Both of these major publications are indeed hopeful, something reflective of Brother Charles' own spirit.

I know I join with the members of the Secretariat of the Lasallian Family and Association and the International Council in thanking Brother Charles for his presence among us.

In these last months before the General Chapter, we did not choose a new Secretary for the Lasallian Family and Association. Instead, we have divided the tasks among people in the Generalate who have worked alongside Brother Charles. Here is how we will carry out the work of the Secretariat for this year:

Management and Coordination of the Secretariat – Brother Thomas Johnson, Vicar General

International Councils of the Lasallian Family and Association and the International Council of Young Lasallians – Brother Thomas Johnson, Montse Nieto Alvarez and Joseph Gilson.

UMAEL – Brother Claude Reinhardt

Signum Fidei – Brother Alberto Gómez will continue with Signum Fidei

Young Lasallian Symposium – Joseph Gilson will be the coordinator. Brother Charles Kitson will be return for the Symposium. Brother Thomas will assist with the planning.

Hiring and transition of new Young Lasallian Coordinator (with Superior General and General Council approval) - Brother Thomas with assistance of Joseph Gilson and Montse Nieto Alvarez.

Intercom articles – Brother Thomas will manage this and Brother Claude, Brother Alberto, Joseph Gilson and Montse Nieto Alvarez will contribute according to their areas of responsibility.

Joseph Gilson will continue to work part-time with the District of Great Britain and Malta.

We look forward to being of service to the worldwide Lasallian Family.

Brother Thomas Johnson, FSC

3rd International Symposium of Young Lasallians: We are recruiting volunteers!

The 3rd International Symposium of Young Lasallians is seeking assistance with off-site services. Namely:

- translation across the three official languages of the Institute,
- fund raising,
- media support including
 - video editing and
 - graphic design,
 - as well as social media administration.

This help is mostly precious during the actual dates of the Symposium (February, 10th-14th), but also prior to and after the activity.

Additionally, we are looking for volunteers who live, or can find residence, in Rome to assist with the on-site logistical and media requirements for the duration (February 10th – 14th, 2014) of this important Institute international event. If you are able and willing to support with any of the above tasks, please contact us at icyl@lasalle.org.



International Meeting of Young Lasallians during the World Youth Days

Brother Roberto Medina

«Lasallians: Disciples and missionaries of Jesus in the world of education»

This was the motto of the International Meeting of Young Lasallians, which brought together almost 460 young people from diverse cultures in the College La Salle ABEL de Niteroi, in Brazil, prior to the World Youth Days.

The meeting was co-ordinated by a team of Brothers and Lay Lasallians, led by Brother Paulo Petry, and it was attended by Young Lasallians from Brazil, the host country, and other nations including Canada, the USA, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, France, Malta, Egypt, the Philippines and Vietnam. We should also make special mention of the presence of the De La Salle Guadalupana Sisters, of the Lasallian Sisters of Vietnam and of 64 Brothers, mostly young, who all shared in the different activities with great enthusiasm.

During the three days of the meeting, the young people joined in a variety of activities, among which we can single out the conferences given by Brother Álvaro Rodríguez, Superior General, and those given by Joseph Gilson and Anny Lutz, from the International Council of Young Lasallians, by Cilene Bride and Leonardo Borba of the pastoral education leadership team and by other Brothers of international standing: Charles Kitson (Rome), Michael French (USA) and Roberto Medina L. (Mexico). Brothers Edgar Nicodem and Claude Reinhart were also there to represent the General Council of the Institute.

In addition to the conferences, various liturgical ceremonies took place, as well as times of prayer, which were especially meaningful. The programme included times for getting to know one another through lively cultural activities and walks around the city.

In his message, Brother Álvaro Rodríguez spoke of the relevance of this event from two points of view. «Firstly the young people have come together from many parts of the world to join together as Lasallians; and secondly they have come to meet Pope Francis, the first Pope from Latin America. From the beginning, he has given us an example of how to live the Gospel by being close to people, with love and tenderness which turn us towards others and make us specially attentive to the poor.»

We congratulate the young people who participated in this meeting, and we ask them to be open to the Spirit, ready to follow Jesus as authentic disciples and missionaries in the world of education. No doubt the experience of this meeting and the sharing during these days will enable them to return home to their schools with a determination to work for a better world.



We go to World Youth Days to make noise!

Joseph Gilson

A friend this summer asked me, "What are World Youth Days for? Why spend all that money to go to a place where one knows he will not be able to sleep well, eat healthy food, and maybe not even shower properly? Wouldn't it be smarter to use that money on a refreshing holiday somewhere away from all those crowds?"

At that point I found myself reflecting on the many experiences and moments that touched me profoundly at this summer's WYD, and during the two previous ones in Sydney '08 and Madrid '11. Then it dawned on me. To answer him I found refuge in Pope Francis' words. "We go to WYDs to make noise!"

This is what the Pope said in Rio last July:

"Let me tell you what I hope will be the outcome of World Youth Day: I hope there will be noise... I want you to make yourselves heard in your Dioceses, I want the noise to go out, I want the Church to go out onto the streets, I want us to resist everything worldly, everything static, everything comfortable, everything to do with clericalism, everything that might make us closed in on ourselves. The parishes, the schools, the institutions are made for going out ... if they don't, they become an NGO, and the Church cannot be an NGO. ... That's my advice. Thanks for whatever you can do."

On reflecting about it, I realized that in making all that noise we end up, or should end up, waking each other up. Yes, because where else would one get lost in a sea of millions of people committed to the Gospel message? Where else would one feel the joy of being united in spirit and vision with such a multitude, in spite of all the cultural, linguistic, socio-economic borders that ought to keep us divided and fragmented? Where else do so many, willing to bring forth a world ruled by love, freedom, truth, prayer and justice, gather with so many other like-minded people? It is for sure a life-giving experience that leaves an indelible mark of hope that can last a lifetime. We should be thankful towards those who make such opportunities possible.

On this note, while Pope Francis is thanking young people in advance for what we will do for our parishes, schools and institutions, I would like to look back and thank some key players that made the WYD in Brazil a special experience for Lasallians from all over the world. On behalf of the almost 500 Young Lasallians from around the globe they hosted prior and during the WYDs, I would like to thank the educational community at Colegio La Salle Abel in Niteroi and the District of Brazil-Chile for their hospitality. In particular, I'd like to thank Br. Paulo Petry who led a

great team of local and international Brothers and lay people who animated the International Lasallian Youth Gathering (ILYG), which was held between July 20-22 prior to the actual WYD. Thank you for having invited us to become familiar with the universal language of our Lasallian commitment to other young people, especially the poor. Thank you for having invited us to be disciples in the world of education; to make noise on behalf of those on the periphery of society.

(ILYG, Niteroi and WYD, Rio – July 2013)



II International Assembly SIGNUM FIDEI



The Second International Assembly of Signum Fidei began in our Generalate on July 1st and concluded on the 12th. Brother Álvaro Rodríguez, Superior General, declared the Assembly open with words of greeting. Participants included 22 lay persons and 5 Brothers from 15 Districts of the various Regions of the Institute in addition to Brother Charles Kitson, Coordinating Secretary for the Lasallian Family and Brother Alberto Gómez, the International Advisor for the Fraternity.

The theme proposed for this Second International Assembly was: *“Being Signs of Faith today. Builders of Community. Ambassadors of God’s Love.”* Its priority objective was the revision and definitive approval of the “Style of Life” document that is to become the Rule of Life for all members of Signum Fidei. This document has been lived “ad experimentum” since it was drawn up in the 2006 First Assembly.

Before getting into the central work, the delegates undertook a period of recollection guided by Br. Álvaro on the theme: *“The spirit of faith: a family emblem.”* Led by him we learned how to discern the presence of God in the Gospel, the individual, the poor, nature, history and within ourselves.

After the recollection, the delegates devoted time to studying the lines of action of the 2nd International Mission Assembly and the theme of formation. Once the work on the Style of Life was completed, time was spent on sharing ideas and good practices on educational, apostolic and social commitment, as well as community dynamics, twinning, self-sufficiency, communication and new vocations, among other topics.

Beyond these objectives however, delegates lived an experience of international fellowship and a formation program intended to help delegates feel that they exercise key roles in the Lasallian mission.

The Central Commission comprised Mrs. Myra Patambang from the Philippines as President, with Mr. Martin Francalanza from Malta, Mr. Claudio Andreoli from Italy and Mr. Fouad Safi from Lebanon, as chairpersons. Mrs. Gloria from Peru and Mr. Francisco Bayeme from Equatorial Guinea acted as secretaries. Their work, as also that of the preparatory commission, was deeply appreciated by everyone.

On July 3rd, feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, a special prayer service was held in the De La Salle sanctuary, in which Delegates felt themselves united to the whole world and to the members of Signum Fidei who during these days had been invited likewise to pray for one another.

Delegates marked Saturday the 6th day of the Year of Faith with a Eucharistic liturgy within the Catacomb of Saint Domitilla, followed by a pilgrimage to the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls. There we prayed for all those who over the centuries have passed on to us the faith especially our own relatives and Brothers. We called to mind also our Lasallian martyrs.



Afterwards there was an opportunity to visit the city of Rome. On Sunday, July 7th, delegates attended the Angelus prayer with the Pope in Saint Peter's Square. In his address Pope Francis, commenting on the gospel of the day referring to the choice and commissioning of his disciples, offered us a beautiful message: *"Jesus is not on his own as a missionary ... He does not wish to act alone. He came into the world to bring the love of God and seeks to spread it through communion and fraternity."*

To bring the day to an end the delegates were hosted by Signum Fidei members from all of Italy for a supper of welcome at San Giuseppe College, located near the Spanish Steps. It was a pleasant time of prayer and socializing in a fraternal get-together.

The "Style of Life" document was approved unanimously to the great satisfaction of all. Actually it is a document with almost forty years of history that has changed and gradually improved over the years. During the study of its 80 articles moments of intense debate were not lacking, given the diversity of realities that exists throughout the Institute, but in the end there was harmony and a good fraternal spirit among all. We hope this document will be translated into as many languages as possible so that it can be used by all fraternities and serve as a reference for new Associates.

During the final days of the Assembly those in charge of Communications Services presented the resources for Lasallian formation available on our website. Brothers Amilcare and Craig Franz spoke to us about projects of solidarity. Two of our fraternities (Malta and Peru) are also NGOs that finance and carry out projects. Delegates expressed interest in following up the development of different types of twinning among world Signum Fidei communities. The International Coordinator for Young Lasallians, Mr. Joseph Gilson, presented his work and invited us to make it possible for young Signum Fidei members to be in contact with the Council that he coordinates.

We cannot forget the presentations made by each delegate regarding the functioning of Signum Fidei in their communities or in their districts/sectors, as well as the times of socializing in the CIL living-room or on the terrace of the Generalate as we shared sweets or drinks brought by the delegates.

Delegates drafted two letters: one for all Signum Fidei members throughout the world and another one to all the Brothers and particularly those attending the 45th General Chapter.

The closing ceremony of the Assembly, prepared by Brother Charles Kitson and Joseph Gilson, was held in the Church of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. Brother Thomas Johnson, Vicar General, presided over the ceremony and commissioned the delegates by saying: *"Go on your way singing, a song of hope on your lips and your heart burning within you with Faith and Zeal. Set out on the road. Be true Signs of Faith, and may peace be with you forever."*

The testimony reflected in the final evaluation revealed what the Assembly meant for most of the participants: *"It was an experience of communion with my brothers and sisters, transcending barriers of language and race. This assembly has been an amazing GRACE." I've been able to achieve a better understanding of our identity and I could see how people live their lives as Signum Fidei members. It's great. "I value the opportunity to share prayer, training and meeting other communities around the world. This has deepened my commitment to work for the Lasallian cause."*



The life and the dedication of the more than 1,400 Signum Fidei members constitute a gift of priceless value for the Lasallian mission and for the Church. Signum Fidei was a pioneer in the area of Lasallian Association and we wish to continue journeying together and sharing with everyone, "together and by association," the charism, spirituality and mission of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

May the work of this Assembly produce the results that God and the Lasallian Family are hoping for.

Br. Alberto Gómez / Gloria Oblitas /
Francisco Bayeme

Interview with Brother Vincent Pelletier

1. Could you tell us something about your experience in the Lasallian mission and formation?

Most of my life as a Brother has been spent as a missionary in Ethiopia. During the thirty five years that I was in Ethiopia I was always involved in some level of formation with our Brothers and with other Religious and priests. Over the years I served as director of postulants, director of novices and director of ongoing formation. In addition, I did spiritual direction with the Brothers and with other Religious and priests, as will as retreat work.



2. According to you, what are the most important challenges of formation for all Lasallians, Brothers and Lay partners?

Clearly, I think the two most important areas of formation are firstly, well organized programs of ongoing formation for Brothers who have finished formation and been actively involved in the apostolate for a few years. I think these are the years when Brothers begin to face new challenges and often do not have the necessary support available to them. Secondly, I think there is a need for well-organized programs of formation and ongoing formation for our lay partners. Often they have initial Lasallian formation but when those programs are finished there often is not a clear program of follow-up.

3. How do you perceive the entire Institute from your experience in Ethiopia and the United States? What are the most relevant signs of hope in the Institute from these perspectives.

For me there is a "North-South divide;" aging Brothers in the North and young Brothers in the South. Among older Brothers is their commitment to communal and personal prayer; they live the life. In the "South" I see hope in younger men of good will and dedication, who are facing the new challenges of consumerism and secularization with a seriousness about their Religious life when others around them do not have the same commitment.

4. What do the opportunity and commitment of being part of the CIL staff mean to you?

Firstly, I feel honored to have been asked to serve on the CIL staff. CIL is a place of potential for formative influence throughout the Institute. I hope to be able use the experience that I have gained over the years that I have lived in Africa and North America to be part of CIL's effort to be of service to the international Institute.

Initial Formation – Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand

"The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sail."

William Arthur

My first formation visits to Vietnam and Thailand gave the Institute not only optimistic changes but realistic hope. The future of our Institute belongs to God. Experiencing the Lasallian Spirit of the PARC region in these two countries, one would join with William Arthur and posit that realist adjusts the sail in the pastoral ministry of vocations. It has been very encouraging to see many young men join us. The legacy left by our Holy founder continues on.

PARC Novitiate – LIPA – Philippines

On Sunday 4 August Br. Álvaro Rodríguez, Superior General, accompanied by Brother David Hawke, PARC General Councillor visited the PARC Novitiate at Lipa. During a one hour meeting with the novices and staff he shared information on novitiates throughout the world, reflected on the importance of the novitiate in the life of the Brother and engaged in a dialogue with the Brothers.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Br. Superior presented each novice with a copy of the Rule. He took the opportunity to reflect with them on the richness of the Rule and commented also on the Revision of the Rule to be discussed at the 45th General Chapter.



Thailand

The 61 year-old Sector of Thailand is part of the Lasallian East Asia District. The Sector with 16 Brothers, 8 pre-postulants, two novices and one Scholastic and four young Brothers, continues the LASALLIAN mission. Brothers' Educational mission is the reason for Brothers' new vocations. The Bamboo School is the talk of the country. Brothers Simon and Sebastian accompany young men with enthusiasm. May the Spirit of Lasalle continue to inspire many good vocations.

Vietnam

The 148-year-old District of Vietnam is one of the traditional Districts in the Institute. There are 88 Brothers in the District. Having lost all well-reputed schools in the country in 1975, Brothers continue to be accelerators of the Lasallian mission in the country. The senior Brothers and young Brothers have a good relationship with each other. The Brothers, young and old, happily encourage new vocations. They welcome new vocations. The signs of hope for the Institute are nine Scholastics, six Postulants and three new Brothers. Brother Joseph Phuong, Director of Scholastics, along with missionary Brother Patrick Bradley, continue to nurture the Lasallian Spirit in the Scholasticate.

The Institute congratulates all Vocations Directors and formators who are in Initial Formation. Let us continue to be accelerators of hope for the Institute.

Brother Felix Joseph FSC
Secretary for Initial Formation.



Lessons from a Visit to the Philippines



Normally, my duties take me on visits to countries where people speak Spanish, Portuguese or French. My attendance at the international Assembly of Young Brothers, enabled me to become better acquainted with the Brothers in the Philippines and with their formation system. The Filipino Brothers have managed to unite aspects of formation

which other Regions of the Institute appear to find contradictory. Below, I list some of the lessons that I learned from my visit.

1. The work being done jointly in close association with Lay Lasallians raises the profile of the Brothers. In many other places I have visited, these two elements which need to be integrated seem to be acting habitually as two opposite poles. I often hear Brothers expressing the concern that, in their eyes, too much attention is being given to Lay Lasallians to the detriment of the image of the Brother's vocation. On the other hand, I also sometimes hear the concern expressed that the desire on the part of some Brothers to highlight their profile is interpreted as a lack of sensitivity and care for the Lay Lasallians with whom we are working. In the Philippines, however, I saw the two elements present together, without being in conflict. People thought that the normal, healthy and in fact the only authentic way to face the future was for Brothers and lay people to work in close relationship; and that this enhanced the visibility of the Brothers and of their vocation.

2. The connection between associating for the service of the poor and running schools for the well-off. The Brothers and Lay Lasallians speak sincerely about their service of the poor. Both in the District and in each school or university, there is an obvious effort to work with the poor, inside and outside the establishments. At the same time, a good number of the establishments of the District are situated in upper middle-class areas. This combination is seen not only as something possible but also as something desirable. The Brothers and lay people have found that this is the best way for them to be able to serve the poor through education. They have neither complexes nor guilt feelings, but there is a clear effort to direct their educational activity to the poor.

3. The link between all the District's activities and the ministry of vocations. In practice, all the District activities have a vocational dimension in which the vocation of the Brother is highlighted. The vocational message, implicit or explicit, forms a part of every celebration and event. Various means of communication are used: the visibility of the Brothers in their habits, references to aspirants who are present for the occasion, photographs relating to vocations placed in various locations around the campus, prayers for vocations during Mass, activities designed to give information about vocations organised in the schools and universities, the readiness of Communities to welcome and support aspirants, etc.

I am sure that a knowledge of what is being done in Lasallian terms in the Philippines can give us all many ideas about possible ways forward.

Brother Jesús Rubio
jrubio@lasalle.org

Answering the Call of his Brothers

Monsieur de La Salle in Parménie

M. de La Salle's time in Parménie, on two occasions in quick succession, came at the end of a very painful period in his life. It is inseparably linked to the many months he spent in the community in Grenoble, from August 1713 to June 1714.

The night of the soul

Canon Blain was writing 14 years after the death of De La Salle who was his friend. Blain was a regular visitor to Saint-Yon, and from 1715 to 1719 he would have been able to draw on private conversations with M. de La Salle. He also benefited from the statements of Brothers who were still active in the Institute and who had lived through that troubled period. But does he not insist too much on the desertion of De La Salle by his disciples? A desertion which was the cause of the Founder's distress?

It is true that the Brothers in Paris sent him without comment the insulting verdict of his condemnation in the Clément affair.

It is true that, by their complaints, the two Brothers in Marseille stirred up the ill-will of his enemies.

It is perhaps also true that a Brother in Mende did not give him the welcoming hospitality he deserved, although he did remain two months in that town all the same.

However, it is also true that he received a warm welcome from the Brothers in Avignon, Alès and Vans.

Above all, it is true that, in relation to the ten months in the Grenoble Community, Blain cannot but write that he experienced there "a new heaven and a new earth, where he found a deep calm." And he adds "The Brothers there recognised the treasure that they had and knew how to enjoy it."

As for the idea that he broke off all connection and left without any forwarding address, we can note that the reports of the Clément law suit were able to reach him, and the messenger from the Brothers in Paris was able to deliver the letter of April 14, 1714.

The dawn after the night

It was in July 1713 that M. de La Salle made the long, winding journey from Mende to Grenoble. Barely one month after his arrival, he was able to enjoy the long school holiday, and he took the opportunity to go to the Grande Chartreuse in September, in the company of a Brother. We would like to know what his reason was for going there. Perhaps it was to venerate Saint Bruno, who was once a Canon of Rheims before founding the Carthusians? Or perhaps it was to find a place to settle that was in keeping with his state of mind? One thing is certain: the three days he spent there were days of prayer. Since he insisted on remaining *incognito*, it is not likely that he went to seek advice from the Prior, even though the latter was a master in wisdom, religious prudence and the understanding of the human heart. He returned to Grenoble, to the Community where life was governed by the routines of teaching and prayers.

Various activities were added to this daily life with his disciples. He does not forget his administrative work and sends the Brother Director away on business and replaces him in the classroom. He prepares a new edition of his book *The Duties of a Christian*. The cruel winter in the foothills of the Alps makes his chronic rheumatism more painful, and once again he undergoes 'the torture of the grill,'





which helps, but which calls for a period of convalescence.

It was at that moment, towards the end of the winter of 1714, that his friend Jean d'Yse de Saléon, canon of the collegiate church of Saint André in Grenoble, suggested a stay on the charming hill of Parménie where he owned a property called *Malesnes* with a house and not far away a modest hermitage which welcomed guests for spiritual retreats. M. de La Salle met the 'guestmistress' of the place, Sister Louise Hours, who was also personally unsettled, doubtful of her vocation, criticised and misunderstood by many, aware of her limitations but recognised for her uncanny gift of discernment. For his part, M. de La Salle began to wonder if his place was not here, to be available to give spiritual direction to the retreatants. Enlightenment came from their conversations. Sister Louise remained in Parménie where she died in 1727, while M. de La Salle, after a retreat lasting probably two weeks, returned to Grenoble to the regular life of the small Community. But it was only a for short time.

M. d'Ize de Saléon, the director of the Parménie retreat, had to travel to the Midi, so he asked De La Salle to go back there to replace him temporarily. This second stay was to last until the following June and it gave him the chance to have further conversations with Sister Louise. It was very probably in this period that he received the letter from Paris reminding him of his vow of obedience. In their book *Proclaiming the Gospel to the poor*, Brothers Michel Sauvage and Miguel Campos present this event as "a gently commanding communication, which begged him to resume the direction of the Institute and even ordered him in the name of the vow of association which he had

once pronounced promising obedience to the body of the Society."

Informed no doubt by M. de La Salle himself, or by the bearer of the letter, Canon Blain wrote: *"Unable to have any doubt about the authenticity of the letter, he was taken aback as he read it, not sure whether to reprove the boldness of those who had written it or to praise the zeal that inspired it."*

As he recognised the signatures of those who were his close associates and with whom he had shared his life, he could not but see in this the sign from God that he was looking for. In the words and expressions he was reading, he found an echo of his own words in the formula of vows and in the meditations he had written for the Brothers. It meant that his work and his teaching had not been in vain. Far from perishing, the Institute he had founded was alive and well, thanks to the cohesion of its members. *The greater glory of God... The work of God is also your own... The good of the Church ... God has given you the grace and the talents which are needed.*

On a previous occasion, his first disciples had repeated to him his lessons about trust in Providence, and this had led him to sacrifice everything for the service of the poor. Now once again, his disciples used his own words to tear away the darkness that surrounded him. Through them, God was speaking to him once more, and he had no more doubts. To those who wanted him to stay in Grenoble, he declared firmly: *"I will obey the Brothers; they are commanding me to return to Paris."* (Blain II, 119)

TO READ OR RE-READ: *Cahiers lasalliens* 57 (1994)
 PARMÉNIE. La crise de Jean-Baptiste de La Salle et de son Institut (1712-1714)

LETTER 1st April 1714

"Monsieur, our very dear father,

we, the principal Brothers of the Christian Schools, having in view the greater glory of God, the greater good of the Church and of our Society, recognize that it is of the utmost importance that you should again take up the care and general government of the holy work of God, which is also yours, since it has pleased the Lord to make use of you to establish it and to direct it for such a long time. Everyone is convinced that God gave you and still gives you the graces and talents needed to govern properly this new Company which is so useful to the Church, and it is only just for us to acknowledge that you have always governed it with much success and edification.

This is why, Monsieur, we very humbly beseech you and command you in the name and on behalf of the body of this Society to which you have promised obedience to take up permanently the responsibility for the government of our Society.

In testimony of which, we have signed, done at Paris this first day of April 1714.

We are, with most profound respect, Monsieur, our dear father, your humble and obedient inferiors..."

Blain, Book Three, p. 657

A new training initiative in RELAF

RELAF, together with the Secretariat for Solidarity and Development on behalf of the Institute, has undertaken a training scheme with the specific purpose of encouraging a progressive development in the Districts and Delegations of competent human resources to launch projects which will generate finances for the mission with a view to becoming economically independent.

There are already some tangible results of this commitment. Starting with the academic year of 2013-14, the University of Christ The Teacher in Nairobi will offer the courses listed below as part of its training programme. CELAF (The African Lasallian Centre) in Abidjan will be doing the same. In addition, the Secretariat for Solidarity and Development and PROYDE, in cooperation with the NGOs SED and PROCLADE, are in the process of developing an online platform for these training programmes, which will give access via distance learning.

Training in *The Development and Management of Projects*

The District of Douala has launched a training session on "The Development and Management of Projects." The programme is organised by RELAF under the supervision of the Catholic University Institute of Douala, in collaboration with the Secretariat for Solidarity and Development, and with financial support from the Lasallian International Children's Fund, from the James Miller Foundation and from Misan Cara.

In fact, from July 22 to August 02, 2013, the District Bursars of French-speaking RELAF and their colleagues (29 participants in all) followed the programme with enthusiasm and active interest. They were also joined by a small group from the Sisters of the Sacred Heart Missionaries (MSC) and another from the Claretians.



The session was run by two experts who were bilingual in French and English, and their goals were:

- to convey the knowledge which would be useful and sufficient for devising and organising the running of projects;
- to enable participants to develop operational schemes for pilot projects based on planning for project operation and partnerships with other parties;
- to give the participants the analytical and logical tools needed to carry out initial and subsequent analyses of the outcomes of a project and of its impact;
- to train the participants in the effective use of simple tools that will enable them to optimize their arrangements and their analysis of projects.

The training was very work-based, and an important role was given to case studies and to the development of information acquired through experience in the field.

The first week dealt mainly with the management cycle of projects, their preparation and realisation and their evaluation. The second week was devoted to project analysis in terms of finance, economics, and institutional organisation.

The reactions of participants and trainers in the course of the sessions were very positive. Brothers and lay colleagues found the training session to be very enriching.

Brother DIRETENADJI Anatole, RELAF.

Training in Child Protection

From July 29th to August 3rd in Okola, on the hills surrounding Yaoundé, the Training in Child Protection Policy took place. Forty-two participants, seven Brothers and 35 lay partners among whom were 16 women, participated. Each and every Lasallian Institution of Cameroon and Chad were represented. To attend they traveled by road and those coming from Chad



General information about C.L.I.M.A.

spent two full days traveling by bus. The traveling hardships did not dampen their spirit. Their enthusiasm, the perfect organization, the beauty of the place and the high quality of the presenters created immediately a very positive and conducive environment and good synergy between trainers and trainees.

Childrens' rights, child abuse, common problems at school and in families, adults' positive and negative behavior, development of a child protection policy, its effective implementation... were the main topics covered during the course.

The formation has been an eye-opener for many participants. They not only discovered laws and customs of their own country of which they were not aware of, but they publically expressed the need to act immediately in order to address some urgent issues at their own family level and in their institutions. Everybody agreed on the urgent need to continue their formation especially on this delicate topic.

This week was for the participant like walking through an unknown territory where at every turn the path would open into new scenery. The end the path brought them to the elaboration of an action plan to promote child protection awareness and to develop child protection policies in each Lasallian Institution of the District of Doula.

It was a vibrant experience of community where any distinction between Brothers and partners vanished. A strong sense of belonging, ownership and pride of Lasallian family was palpable. Everybody treasured this experience and expressed the hope and wish for similar enriching opportunities. It is clear that there is a clear need and thirst for human, Lasallian formation at the root level that cannot be reserved only to a small elite, but has to be brought within the reach of many and this can be done only if realized at the local level where it will be better contextualized and inculturated.

From the Solidarity and Development Secretariat we thank Br. Anatole, Br. Marek and all the people that contributed to the realization of this project.

Lasallian Centre for Initial Training in Agriculture	Situated in the south-east of Burkina Faso, in the Camoé region, 2 km from Berekadougou, a town of 8,000 inhabitants, half way between the cities of Banfora and Bobo-Dioulasso
Courses offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of herds and flocks • Sewing • Domestic Economy • Marketing of produce and Management of a small-scale cattle farm • Health and Sanitation • Childcare.
Course duration	2 Years
Number of families benefiting from each course	24 married couples plus children
Mode of attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training is residential and every family lives for the whole period in a house provided by C.L.I.M.A. • The children attend the nursery or primary school attached to the Centre. • The older children attend school in Berekadougou every day.
Follow-up measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments and tools are given to each family. • Small loans to launch production in agriculture or stock-raising. • Technical assistance.
Programmes other than those provided in the Centre	<p>C.L.I.M.A. is a reference centre for the farmers of the region, who can consult the C.L.I.M.A. staff and receive technical support, improved seed, fertilizers, hiring of services and machinery.</p> <p>C.L.I.M.A. also actively promotes teaching schemes attended by former students on topics relating to natural science and eco-sustainability.</p>
Number of families that have benefited from C.L.I.M.A. activity since 2007/08	60



The C.L.I.M.A. project – A summer experience for a group of Italian volunteers

A Step Forward

During the school year of 2012-2013, the NGO *Bambini+Diritti* [Children + Rights] collaborated with the ConSidera Federation and the Italian Province of the Brothers in school programme entitled “*La mia scuola gira il mondo*” [My school encircles the world], and then in August 2013 they organized a journey of solidarity to Burkina Faso to collaborate in the CLIMA project.

The Lasallian Centre for Initial Training in Agriculture (CLIMA) received 8 volunteers to work in various activities. With the agreement of the Director, Brother Cyrille Kondombo, we worked chiefly on the production of a video report on the CLIMA project, plus a series of shots for video use in the teaching of agriculture and stock-rearing.

The video report aimed to communicate the objectives of CLIMA in a lively way that could be enjoyed via the web: Great attention was paid to the results of the project, especially to following up with families that had completed the two-year training course and were given access to small-scale credit schemes. The results that we saw were truly remarkable. Small nuclear families were organising productive enterprises with development plans covering several years, and the results were evident in terms of finance, social living and health sanitation.

In this way, the report tries to present CLIMA precisely through these stories of individuals who are working to make the project ever more competitive and solid.

Another activity focused on making short films which would be the basis for the video lessons given in the school of agriculture and stock-raising, thus providing an up-to-date tool for teaching the knowledge and skills required to develop an agricultural enterprise. As a result, technology will really serve to close the opportunity gap, because it is based on a product which can be “exported” beyond the school and which places a substantial training tool at the disposal of the villages.

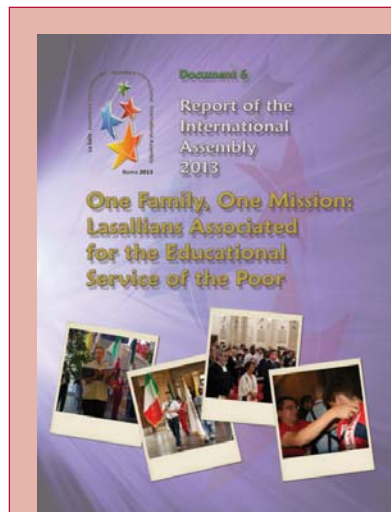
For the remaining time, the activity of the volunteers was built around the life of the Centre, working in the infants’ school, working in the fields and in the small workshops. The presence of two psychologists in the group made it possible to organise meetings with the families in order to discuss family relationships with the parents and learning activities with the children.

“A step forward,” these are the right words to describe our experience: both for CLIMA, which has improved its communications and teaching resources, and for our association and for us volunteers, who have walked part of the way with people who are remarkable in their determination to build the future.

Matteo Mennini

“The best images I brought back from Africa are those of the commitment to work that I saw in CLIMA, the determination to improve oneself that was visible in the faces of the participants, and above all in the dignity acquired by those who graduated and their solid hope for the future.”

Patrizio De Juliis, a Volunteer who took part in the experience.



Lasallian Educational Mission

The International Mission Assembly took place in Rome from May 6 to May 16, 2013. The Writing Committee of the Assembly and the Communication Service of the Generalate in Rome have concluded their work and the Report of the Assembly ***One Family, One Mission: Lasallians Associated for the Educational Service of the Poor***, is now available on the Institute website at: www.lasalle.org.

intercom n° 143 - October 2013

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