



Lasallian Family magazine

intercom

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There things
will be better



There things will be better

It may have been a dream thinking that “there” things will be better, but the truth is that for those who emigrate, the experience of travelling and the reality they find are another nightmare similar or worse than the one that forced them to leave their land. The nightmare of fleeing has several names: poverty, war, discrimination, insecurity, persecution, crime, drought, political instability, flooding, repression, or ... just hunger.

The nightmare they are now living far from their country, can be described with almost the same names given before: poverty, discrimination, insecurity, persecution and hunger do not change. What is new is the environment which

puts on their shoulders worse evils as exploitation and commodification. Without knowing the language or culture the immigrants are an easy victim for criminal organizations. It is estimated, for example, that the profits made by traffickers in the Strait of Sicily during the past year were more than one hundred fifty million euros, only for transportation. By September of this year the number of immigrants who had crossed the Mediterranean was twice 2014.¹

One person out of 122 people in the world lives in this situation. If these migrants were a country, it would occupy, for its population, a place in the top twenty larger “countries” like Colombia, Malaysia, Spain, Kenya and Canada. Half of this population are minors. It is no coincidence that Pope Francis has decided to make his first trip outside

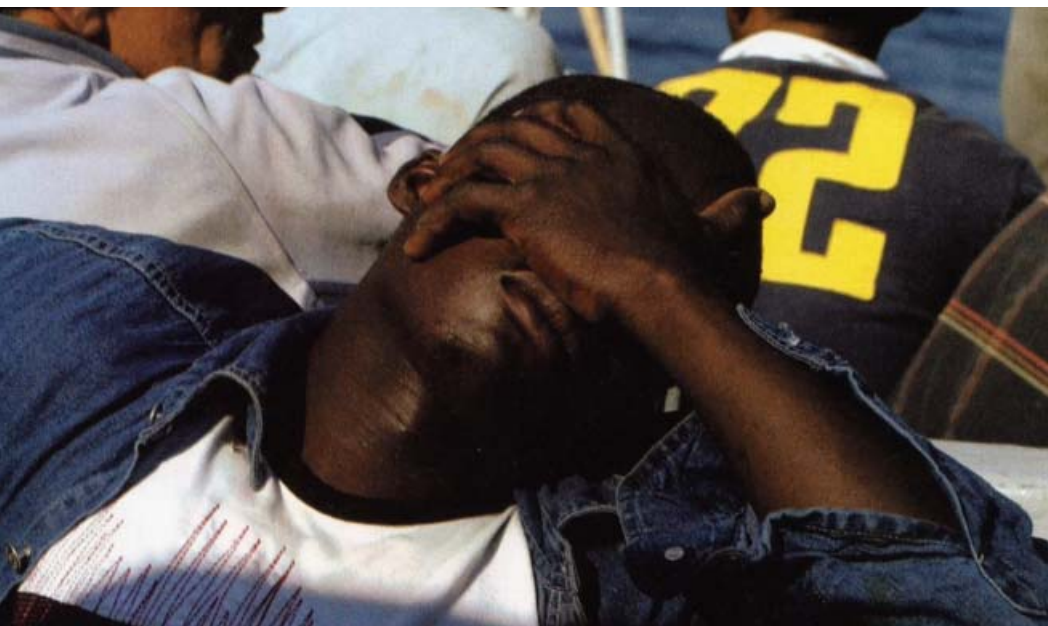
Rome to the island of Lampedusa. On July 8, 2013, Francis went to this small island in the Mediterranean sea, the Italian coast closest to Africa, to meet immigrants, denouncing the traffickers and encouraging the government and the local population of only six thousand, to continue welcoming those who come to Europe through the world's deadliest way. It is estimated that on this route at least twenty-five thousand people died in recent years; three hundred of them drowned in one accident a few months before this historic visit. Certainly, the gesture and the words of Francis on that occasion do not leave room for any doubt: “I would like to propose some words to rouse the conscience of all, to make us reflect and change in practice some attitudes.”²

What is doing the Institute for immigrants?

The proposal of His Holiness has not fallen on deaf ears; his call has raised our awareness “so that what has happened will not happen again.”³

What is doing the Institute for immigrants?

The answer is not easy. Certainly, **“A lot”**, is our answer; indeed, part of the objective of this IINTERCOM issue is to present some examples. **“Not that much”**, could also be our answer. This is the other part of the same goal: to encourage us to do more.



If we go by the answer “A lot,” we can legitimately feel happy to see that there are, and have always been examples of solidarity with migrants given by the Institute. There are small and large initiatives based on our history of hospitality and care for the needy. Let us recall the Venerable Brother Alpert who already in the seventies of the nineteenth century, at the “Saint Joseph Mission” in Paris, welcomed children whose families were forced to flee from Alsatia and Lorraine because of the Franco-Prussian War. Fifty years later, and in another region of Europe, we have the Venerable Brother Theodoreto, who in Turin, between the two world wars began with the “Table for the Poor”, serving the poor, especially countrymen who came to the big city hoping to find a job in that great industrial city. The center continues to operate; you will find in this INTERCOM issue, an article about Brother Teodoro. There are other cases presented here to illustrate what creativity and diligence many Lasallian have shown to keep the spirit of hope for those immigrants and their spirit of mercy as they welcome them. We also present cases, increasingly common of inter-institute initiatives such as those of Solidarity in South Sudan or Fratelli project in Lebanon.

The cases presented here are not limited to the field of economic solidarity. It is inspiring to see that there are Lasallian vocations that were born in the midst of



these experiences as traumatizing as they could be. These vocations come from both ends of the migration drama, from those who reach out to provide assistance and from those who accept it. Since such contrasting positions both hearts have been moved in the same direction: the service.

There are many other initiatives in favor of immigrants, for obvious reasons, they can not be presented in this INTERCOM issue. Let us read these pages and look around to recognize with gratitude those who have served and cared for immigrants during their journey of hope with the clear intention of avoiding what could be transformed into a journey of death, as so often happens.

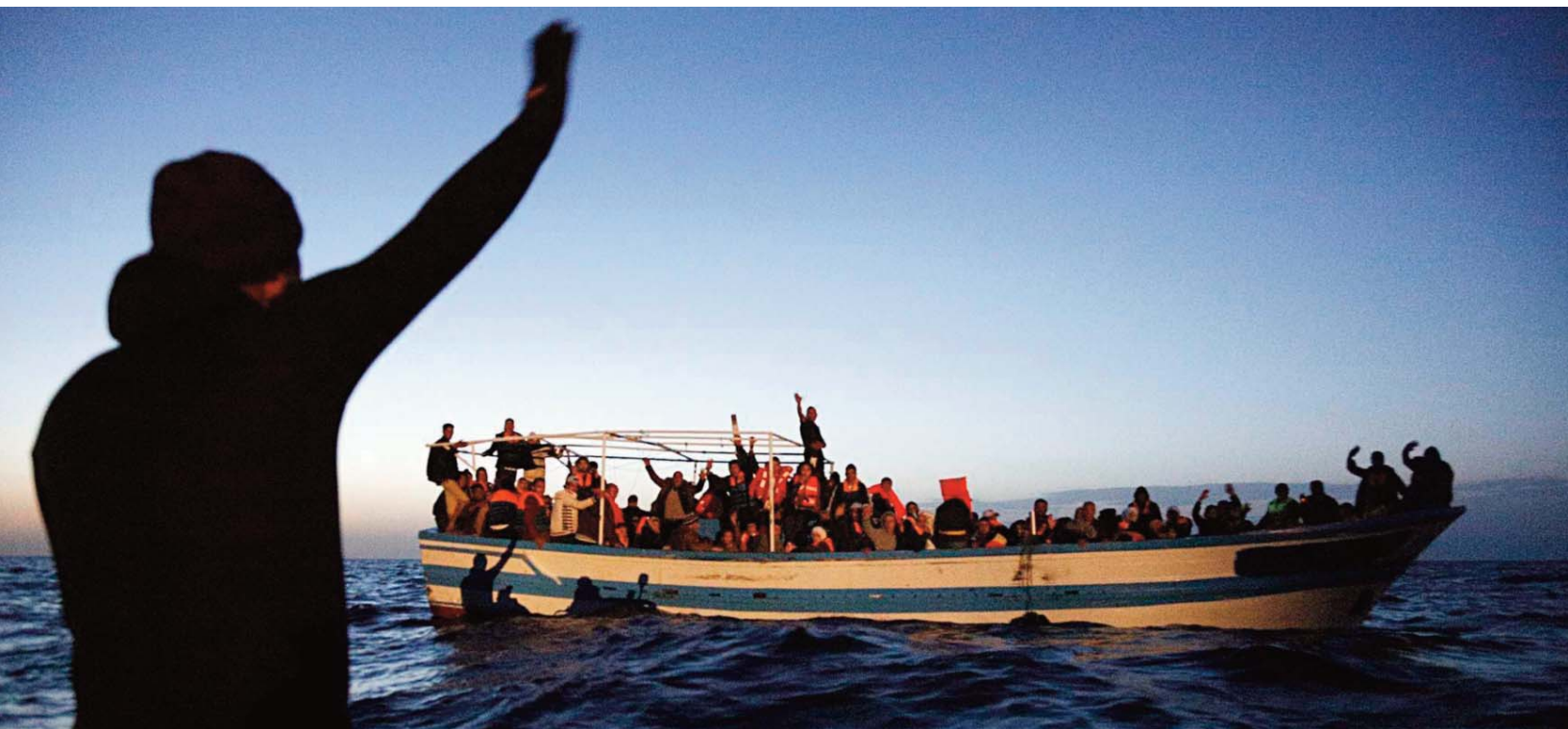
Am I my brother's keeper?

If, however, to the question: what is doing the Institute for immigrants?, we answer “very little”, we must take this issue as a motivation, an invitation to discuss our particular situation and act. It is true, no matter how hard we try, and we'll always have more to do. Cain's stunned response: “I do not know. Am I my brother's

¹ Sources: All the statistics cited here come from: Eurostat; IOM; Frontex; IMAP; UNHCR; TIME Magazine, 19 October de 2015, and elfaro.net.

² Homily of Pope Francis at the Sports Area “Arena”, Lampedusa (Italy), 8 July 2013.

³ Idem.





keeper?⁴ will continue calling on us. If we ask ourselves this question seriously we could not ignore the call to action. We know that the only truly Christian answer is “Yes”; an “I am, yes,” “yes we are” responsible for the fate of our brothers. It could be that even having these feelings of solidarity we may feel constrained by the legal situation of immigrants. No doubt that the enormity of the migration crisis has become a political issue, manipulated to the extent that in some countries it has been presented as a threat to national security.

The invitation we are now offering as Lasallians is to be touched by the reality of the person of the immigrant. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle and the first Brothers, deeply moved by the spiritual distress of the children of artisans and of the poor, wanted to meet their needs and distress and listened to the call to exercise active mercy. The result is already well known: the renewal of the school to make it accessible to the poor offering it to all as sign of the Kingdom and Salvation.⁵ Their example encourages us to give the importance needed to the circumstances people are living in today. Instead of remaining passive considering the regularity or irregularity of the immigrant, we will do better if we consider their dignity and put us at work where we are to defend and promote the right of that person to be a better person .

A Gospel adventure

The theme of this year in the Institute: “A Gospel adventure” happily coincides with the decision taken by the Pope Francis to celebrate the Jubilee as an extraordinary Year of Mercy. In fact, by announcing in September the events scheduled for this Holy Year he shares with us the hope that the “World Day of the Immigrant and Refugee” 2016 will be centered on the topic: *“Emigrants and Refugees challenge us. The answer of the Gospel of mercy.”*⁶

Will we be also ready to answer ?

Show us, O Lord, the wonders of your mercy, you who saved those who take refuge at your right hand while fleeing those who stand against them.⁷

Br. Jorge Gallardo

⁴ Gn 4,9.

⁵ Cf. Rule 1.

⁶ Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the “World Day of the Immigrant and Refugee”, 17 January 2016.

⁷ Psalm 17,7.

Solidarity with South Sudan



What are we doing for immigrants in South Sudan? Trying to make things better for the ordinary people who are simply too poor to emigrate. Horrific statistics abound: fewer than half of the population ever attend school; a 15 year-old girl has more chance of dying in childbirth than completing secondary school; one child out of every six dies before the age of five; a teacher is paid less than \$25 per month. South Sudan endured more than 40 years of war until it gained independence from Sudan in 2011. A brief period of genuine liberation followed and now a senseless civil war is inflicting even more horrific conditions upon the innocent, suffering and patient people. What are we doing? We bring hope to these people. Surely that is what all people need, immigrants and those too poor to emigrate – hope that life can be better, more fully human.

Solidarity with South Sudan, a combined initiative of men's and women's religious institutes, has 31 members working in South Sudan, including three De La Salle Christian Brothers. The Solidarity Priests, Brothers, Sisters, and a few lay volunteers, live in mixed communities. One is Brother Joseph Alak, a South Sudanese who joined our Brothers in Egypt and has now returned to help his own people. Solidarity conducts residential colleges to train teachers, nurses and mid-wives, has a large agricultural project and delivers wide ranging pastoral programmes on community, trauma healing, justice, reconciliation and peace building. Here the people are poor but the churches are full, the liturgical celebration is vibrant and the gift of life is cherished. It is a privilege to walk beside these people on their stumbling journey to a more prosperous society.

Br. Bill Firman, FSC
Solidarity Executive Director
solidaritysudan@gmail.com - www.solidaritysudan.org



Supporting children, Central African refugees, at Saint Joseph School in Diang, Cameroon

Situation of Central African refugees

This project intends to give cover and shelter to alleviate the dramatic situation experienced by thousands of displaced people from the Central African Republic settled in Cameroon.

The Central African Republic has never been a peaceful country. Since the beginning of the civil war between Moslems and Christians, in December 2012, both factions have had thousands of victims. This situation has generated a dynamics of cyclical revenges which worsened the conflict during two years and a half, until May 2015 when a peace treaty was signed between the parties.

This unstable situation is permanent and fosters the struggle to control the country and its resources since its independence from France in 1958; since 1960 the country has suffered five coups.

According to reports from the United Nations Agency for the Refugees (ACNUR), after the last wave of violence the Central African Republic has already



460.000 refugees (about 10 % of its population), The main stream of refugees heads to Cameroon where more than 100.000 have settled. They also move to

Tchad, in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Congo-Brazzaville.

Children are the most victims of these wars. They are risking forced recruiting, sexual exploitation, abuses, forced labour, violence, discrimination, difficulties to access basic resources such as education and health care. Vulnerability increases when children are separated from their parents or relatives.

The Central African case is more difficult against children. According to UNICEF this situation has seriously affected about 2.3 million of children displaced, mutilated, enrolled by force in fighting factions, kidnapped, assassinated or raped. UNICEF reports that there are between 6.000 and 10.000 children and youth serving rival armed forces.

All this ends in massive exodus from the Central African Republic to neighbouring countries and, as we said before, Cameroon received the most people.



Saint Joseph School in Diang, Cameroon

Our Project will take place at Saint Joseph School in Diang, Cameroon. Forty kilometres west of Bertua, the capital of the province and 250 km. east of Yaoundé, the Cameroonian capital.

The Saint Joseph School in Diang, Cameroon was founded in 1962 by the De La Salle Christian Brothers who since the beginning have been in charge of its pedagogical and financial management. It is a solid institution, well known in the country after 50 years of providing excellent technical formation and training disadvantaged young people for the labour market

Saint Joseph technical school in Diang strives to provide technical education and formation in human values. One important goal is to offer a positive experience of the various cultural -ethnic

realities of Tchad, Central Africa and Congo

The formation on these values may also play later to help them live in harmony with other people in their place of work, even fostering industries with social commitment.

Our Proposal: to welcome and give educational support to young refugees from Central Africa

The Saint Joseph School in Diang welcomes young refugees who have fled the war in the Central African Republic

On the frontier of both countries there is a Catholic Centre, in Garoua Boulai, east of Cameroon. This school is related to Saint Joseph's in Diang and both coordinate the humanitarian welcome and accompaniment of the refugees once they cross the border

The Garoua Boulai Centre shelters boys and girls and gives them food and primary education. The idea is to take them to Saint Joseph's to carry on their education at a secondary level, in Diang.

The project is supported by the ACNUR Agency open only to those declared refugees who meet ACNUR standards.

Saint Joseph School support 35 students through scholarships provided by the above agency. This support includes food, shelter, education and educational material. Thanks to the support of our former students in Japan and the helping hand of SECOLI, we are able to accommodate another 15 young students; we still need more help to assist other 20 refugees.

Br. Juan Pablo Martin



Lasallians in Australia reach out to Syrian refugees



The De La Salle Brothers Provincial Office in Australia has offered to accommodate refugees from Syria in a motel it once used as a conference centre on the south coast of New South Wales.

It comes after the Australian government agreed to accommodate 12,000 refugees fleeing the current conflict in Syria.

The resettlement of the refugees is expected to commence in December.

Brother David Hawke, Visitor, has written to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and NSW Premier Mike Baird offering the 45-room motel in Narooma which is now

surplus to the needs of the Brothers.

Premier Baird sent a personal letter back to Brother David, thanking him for his generous offer and the federal government has also expressed gratitude and is currently considering where the refugees will be resettled.

La Salle Learning Center: Thailand (Bamboo School)

“No Child Left Behind”

The La Salle Learning Center (Bamboo School) is a completely gratuitous educational institution without state support. The campus itself is located in what used to be the battlefield of the tribes. The school was started in 2008 by a group of five dedicated local women who wanted to teach the children the Thai language. The De La Salle Brothers were invited to take over the center in 2008. Every day, the students cross the border from Myanmar to the school. The Brothers also need to pass through military checkpoints to reach the center.

The Bamboo school serves underprivileged Mon, Burmese, Karen, Loas and Thai students. Since 2011, there are two campuses: Bamboo and Parmenie. For Parmenie, the Brothers in Thailand have decided to buy a piece of land within the Sangklaburi district.

There they will provide formal education and continuing education for the students from the Bamboo School. Presently, there are about 500 students in both campuses, 28 staff members, 6 Brothers and 1 diocesan priest.

There are trucks going to Three Pagodas Pass every morning to fetch the students to school and send them home in the evening. Students living nearby walk. The school provides lunch and educational materials.

The hope of this project is to give a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor. The Brothers want to provide good education for poor children and help them to have a better future and become good citizen of their society.



Waking up young people to the migrants' life



In January 2015, the District of San Francisco-New Orleans organized a gathering with the District of México North. At that meeting, Alma Mejiá-García was appointed Project Manager to assist the District in determining a new ministry along the USA-México border.

In June 2015, the annual Lasallian Youth Assembly, "Lasallians without Borders", focused on immigration. Students from the SFNO District and México-North gathered for five days to learn about the complexity of the USA-México immigration situation. They reflected on service, justice, and advocacy.

San Miguel High School in Tucson, Arizona, continues to coordinate the El Otro Lado program. Under the direction of Ms. Kenenna Amuzie, this five-day immersion experience provides high school students the opportunity to appreciate the plight of migrants and the complexity of the immigration issue in the USA.

**"It is the time to throw ourselves into the void of uncertainty and to open our ideas to new borders, new challenges, new calls."
(Circular 469)**



Students deepen their understanding from various perspectives: Catholic Social Teaching, humanitarian, and legal. In many ways, the participants come to walk in the shoes of the migrant and this, in turn, allows them to enter into a spirit of solidarity. El Otro Lado empowers youth with a desire to respond to the needs of their migrant brothers and sisters.

In January 2015, the El Otro Lado program expanded to El Paso, Texas. Beginning this school year, Cathedral High School, Los Angeles, will sponsor a similar immersion program. Between both locations (Tucson, Arizona, which borders Nogales, Sonora, and El Paso, Texas, which borders Ciudad Juárez) a total of 12 schools will participate in this immersion program. The opportunity seeks not only to teach minds, but also to touch hearts so that young people may continue to experience the call of Jesus Christ in their lives.



“To feed the hungry”



To feed the hungry is one of the most venerable catholic traditions and the Lasallians in Italy have been among the best in this practice for years with a great sense of creativity.

Since 1928 in Turin, the Lasallians have run the “Table for the Poor”. This service goes beyond feeding people. It takes care of education, instruction and social assistance; this way they foster the integration of immigrants between them and into the surrounding Italian. This task run by the Catechists of the Holy Crucifix from the start, assist now around 250 immigrants coming, in particular, from Romania, Morocco, Senegal and the Ivory Coast. The ethnic and religious diversity has given a new feature to the centre; nevertheless, the Sunday Mass is the most important moment when everybody is invited to participate freely.

The service is totally done by volunteers; around fifty of them cook, serve and do the cleaning by the end of every day. In Rome, at the school of Villa Flaminia, is functioning since 2011 the “De La Salle Charity Table”. This activity was created by the initiative of some mothers of our students and the double aim has been, on the one hand, to help the poor and, on the other hand, to implicate the students themselves in a specific generous task. From Monday to Friday, this group of volunteers prepares 120- 130 meals made of: entrée, main dish, garnish and dessert. The meals are distributed and sometimes prepared to be taken elsewhere, reaching so other immigrants in the city. Those are also coming from Romania, Ukraine, Peru, Bangladesh, Senegal; Albania, Poland, Philippines and India. Expenses are covered by volunteers whose number is difficult to assess. This year, in fact, counting students from the upper grades and their mothers, they are around 40. These last years they have prepared more than 200.000 warm meals and around 9.000 meal packages to be eaten outside the premises.

Once they have served the warm meals, the students become barbers... While they do their work speaking with their “clients”, others become nurses healing their wounds or infections which affect them in general; others mend their clothes or provide them what they need... In the meanwhile, others become secretaries because some are looking for a job and need to fill in forms... For some, what they need is medical care, legal support, etc.

We are thankful to Mrs. Graziella Bussoni, in Rome and Bro. Egidio Mura, in Turin, who wrote seminal articles for the magazine “Lasallians in Italy”, in September 2015, with permission granted by Bro. Mario Chiaparini, the magazine Director.

What is the Hogar La Salle?



It is a place which welcomes ten young African immigrants in order to facilitate their integration into Western society. It helps them in three ways over a period of two years. First, it goes through the legal situation with them in order to secure a residence permit. Second, it undertakes a programme of education to bring them up to the level appropriate to their age. Third, it helps them to become integrated into the world of work by offering them workshop experience and specialized courses to prepare them for employment.

The project was started at the initiative of a group of lay Lasallians, who have been supported from the outset by the Brothers. Currently, there is a community of four Brothers and eight lay Lasallians which sees to the leadership and organisation of Hogar La Salle. A strong group of volunteers helps to carry out this Lasallian mission.

At the same time, the community is open to the neighbourhood and is attentive to the local need for education and evangelization. Thus it is a platform for the local community and Church as it listens to the cry for a new world.



The 'Fratelli' Project

News bulletins are full of pictures of thousands of people fleeing the war raging in Syria. 1.5 million of them have landed in Lebanon. It is not easy, either for them or for the country receiving them, since it means that a country of 4.5 million inhabitants must absorb one third more within a few years.

Lasallians and Marists have responded to the call of Pope Francis and of our own General Chapters for inter-congregational action to reach out to the fringes. We responded with openness and creativity, even before the news of these events caught world-wide attention.

We have found, however, that there are many more Lebanese, Palestinians and especially Iraqis who are often much poorer than the Syrians, since the latter receive help from the NGOs. Christian Iraqis have fled from persecution and they trust that God will not abandon them. Their faith encourages us and strengthens us in the idea that we are not here to teach but to learn through mutual enrichment.

That is why we wish TO GO WHERE NOBODY GOES. Our aim and desire is to help those whom nobody helps. The first few months we spent listening, looking and understanding the situation. Our first step has been to go and live for a while in one of the poorer quarters, in a small apartment where a refugee Syrian family of 6 used to live. The family has moved on to take up residence in Austria. We are near the people, their culture, their language, their real faces.

We want not only to teach them, but also to attend to the full range of their needs.



Some children attend school but have nothing to eat, nowhere to sleep or settle down to do their homework. Many of them suffer from war wounds. To give them the proper attention, we need psychologists, teachers, social workers and volunteer workers. Up to now, our plan consists of the creation a socio-educational centre called "Fratelli" to attend to their needs in social, educational and financial terms. We work together with Lasallian and Marist educational establishments and with other organisations with similar goals.

Much remains to be done, but we have made a start and are already taking action to help and support particular children who cannot afford to pay for schooling. We need the support and collaboration of the Marist and Lasallian communities and the Church in this country. We also need the international community to denounce injustices. We need PRAYER and financial help. The Fratelli Project is inter-congregational, and it is a challenge for everyone.

This initiative has the support of the two congregations and represents a new extension of the Lasallian charism to the poor and underprivileged. The first donation (£30,000) was given generously by Myfanwy Blanchette of the UK, the daughter of a French Huguenot immigrant from Paris. Individuals, groups or foundations wishing to assist with the vital Fratelli Project are encouraged to contact the following: secoli@lasalle.org - or The Solidarity Secretariat at the Casa Generalizia (Rome).

Fraternal greetings,
Brothers Miquel y Andrés
fratellilibano@gmail.com

A Response from Vienna as Europe Struggles



As Europe struggles to cope with huge numbers of refugees from the Middle East, the Austrian Sector of the District of Central Europe is leading the way in welcoming those most affected by violence and terror. We saw it as our Lasallian obligation to offer non-bureaucratic and immediate help to those in need. In September, the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Austria donated € 20.000 to CARITAS and the four Lasallian ministries in Vienna welcomed 23 children (Fünfhaus: 15, Währing: 4, Marianum: 1, Strebersdorf: 3).

Nobody said it would be easy to work with children from war zones, with a completely different cultural background and who have to learn a new language and a new alphabet. Since communicating with them is still a challenge, we do not always know what is on their minds or what traumatic experiences they had but every day we get to know each other a little bit better. At the end of the day, the gratitude and happiness in their eyes is what counts.

School for stateless children



In Higüey, Dominican Republic, the Hermano Paquito De La Salle School is a response to the needs of many children at-risk who might otherwise be educationally excluded. The school is in the neighborhood of Villa Cerro de Higüey, a disorganized area loosely formed during the last 20 years.

The situation principally stems from Haitian immigrants who left their country in search of a better future for their families. Many of the children were born in the Dominican Republic; however, since their parents do not have valid citizenship documents, the children do not have citizenship rights and, therefore, are stateless.

Looking beyond any political disputes regarding the status of the children, the Brothers at Hermano Paquito De La Salle School guarantee these children the right to education, giving special attention to young people who dropped out of school or never attended. Thanks to their efforts, today the children are able to attend classes which, ultimately, will enable them to receive a primary school certificate.

The school is located in a neighborhood of approximately 50,000 people, the majority of whom are poor. As such, it is an area rife with domestic violence and drug / alcohol abuse. There are very few recreational spaces afforded the youth and most of the children come from broken families. Needless to say, their opportunities for future are very bleak.

In this context, the school is a safe harbor for the children. While it currently provides primary education, plans for future development include the establishment of a vocational technical center so that young people can learn trades and find employment. There are also plans to provide increased social spaces for the school so that the students can engage in healthy outdoor sports. It is hoped that this process of helping people obtain wholesome lives through education will establish a trend in the neighborhood where school becomes commonplace rather than the exception.

Caring for older migrants



Malvinas District is a marginal area of the city of Jujuy, Argentina, where much of the population emigrated from the Andean regions of Argentina, Bolivia and Chile to work in mining industries.

They are isolated - often lonely - indigent people. Grandparents in particular feel the isolation as members of the family work during the day and then need to sleep immediately upon their return to the house. While the week's work is difficult, Saturday evenings are moments of joy for the Jujuy Malvinas District's grandmothers.

The La Salle Foundation of Jujuy, in cooperation with local families and a youth group, gather the grandparents for much appreciated time together. Also included are individuals with disabilities.

Approximately 50 otherwise isolated people gather in Nelly's house each Saturday. Young people enliven the evening with a lottery, songs and good companionship. Volunteers prepare the meals and each person receives a bag of food to use the following week.



Formation is migration



The world has been entrusted to humanity for them to help it grow and develop. For that reason, there is a task of human development which is incumbent upon everyone. The task involves a journey of continuous growth. We move from one horizon to another, but always towards the fulness of humanity as God sees it.

Essentially, we must leave behind the immature forms of childhood and move towards the perfection of ourselves and others in line with God's plan. The journey always involves going out from our own country, our areas of security, immaturity, individualism, so as to move out towards the other, towards love, towards gratuity, towards those who have no voice, those who are vulnerable.

The process of migration has an interior energy which seeks to better one's life in one or more of its aspects. In general, it is based on economic, political or religious reasons. But it can also be a chosen way to help those in greatest need who are

far from every kind of salvation, especially those who are physically removed and suffer want in various forms.

In a broader perspective, however, we are all pilgrims and migrants of the Kingdom of God. Formation consists in this process of human development by purification, overcoming weaknesses of all kinds - affective, intellectual, spiritual, existential. It is the development path of our being. It means entering into a process of hope. We all need to set out on this journey, which will never be fully completed. Migration is usually thought of as a journeying outwards. Migration inwards, whether for individual or groups, is a challenge of a qualitative rather than a geographical nature, and it is just as difficult. It is linked more to the meaning of life and the quality of life according to God's plan for individuals and to the groups to which they belong

All of this is what is meant by formation, learning, human development, and it is a journey of migration that is lifelong.

Br. Paulo Dullius, FSC

Providing a “migrant” experience: the Institute’s centers for initial formation



Our novices and scholastics “emigrate” to get their initial formation. This has been our experience in the regions of PARC, RELAF, RELEM AND RELAL, and less dramatically in the RELAN Region.

“Brothers without frontiers”: restructured Districts, postulancies, novitiates, scholasticates, regional communities and even some international communities, all of these are calling us to assume the “migrant” attitudes.

Following the global migratory crisis, I invite you to think about “the formation beyond frontiers”. For more than ten years the Institute has been sharing with Districts and Regions their restructuration process which compelled us to face the challenges of any “migrant”. It is now quite clear. We now have Brothers getting out of their comfort zones willing to experience the worldwide Lasallian culture. This process has been well planned.

Many of our centres of formation are now “regional” and it is a good example of Brothers going beyond frontiers. It is important to point out, nevertheless, that we are speaking about an experience conducted in a free and secure environment.

I acknowledge and assess positively the challenges coming from leaving the comfort of a family and the struggle to adapt to new cultural realities, but we should not exaggerate the reality of a formation of Brothers abroad, beyond frontiers and, obviously, we should not compare it to the terrible situation of our brothers and sisters who suffer expulsion from their homes.

I do hope that the experience of a “migrant”, although temporal and secure for our Brothers in formation, would serve, practically, to prepare them to live without frontiers in our global Institute.

Br. Joseph Felix, FSC

Neither foreigner nor in a foreign country



In no way do I regret having been in Africa for my initial formation. That may surprise some.

In fact, the first three months of novitiate at Bobo-Dioulasso in Burkina Faso were difficult. We were young men of 12 different nationalities coming to the interafrican novitiate as a response to the call of God. Neither food nor climate nor remoteness from my native land was an obstacle for me. It was rather the cultural origin of each that was preventing our union. That is why it was urgent for us to discover a common identity, something that would unite us over and above our national and ethnic identities.

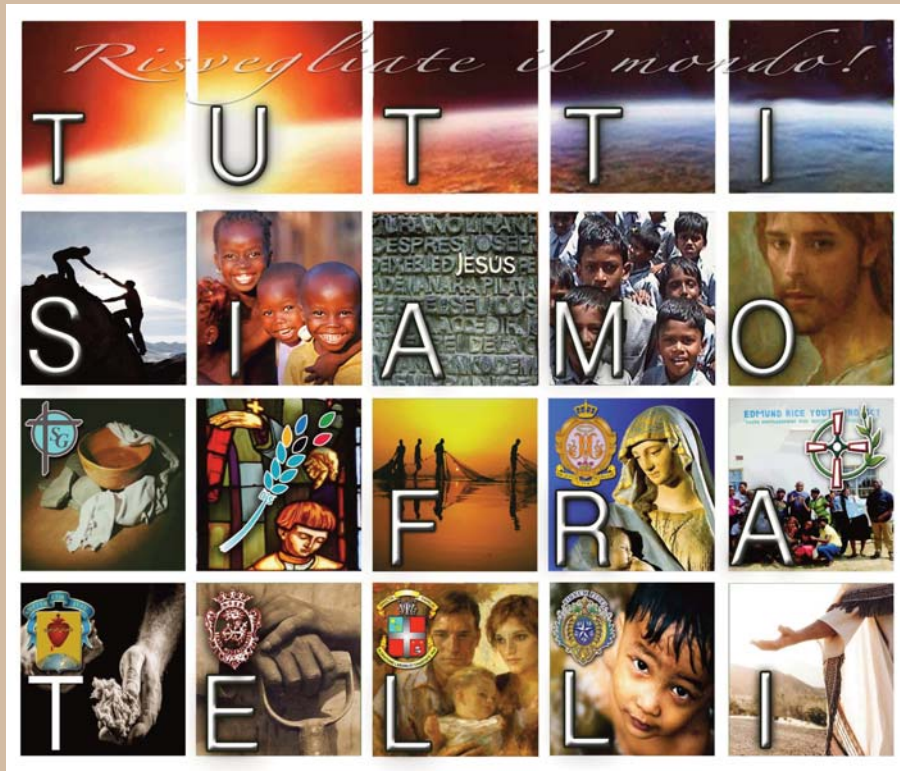
The support, the assistance and the encouragement of Brother Director and our formators helped us to go beyond our personal limits and to live fraternity during the two years beyond borders. The culture shock felt at the beginning became minimal when faced with the greatness of fraternal life and our lived sharing. Our fraternity ripened and deepened during the time of the scholasticate at Abidjan where we lived unforgettable times.

Even five years after my first vows, I remain in contact with my Brothers of Africa and I wish to return there one day. Africa *touched my heart* and I have fallen in love with it.

I thank the Lord for this enriching experience where I felt neither foreigner nor in a foreign country.

Br. Louis Mjalli
Near East District

Gathering of religious Brothers resident in Rome



An historic gathering of 133 religious Brothers from 21 distinct congregations took place in our Generalate in Rome. The theme was the Year of Consecrated Life and a team of representative Brothers of the various congregations took on the organisation of the gathering. The motto of the gathering was "We are all Brothers". The programme consisted of five phases. First, the moment of arrival fostered informal exchanges among the participants. Second, the welcoming on the part of the organisers and the brief messages of Bro. Superior General and of the representatives of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and of the Union of Superiors General culminated in the presentation of a video with photos of Brothers of all the participating congregations. A third phase consisted of language-group sharing of the most significant experiences of fraternity lived as Brothers. The most important phase was a prayer of fraternity in the sanctuary of Saint John Baptist de La Salle to remember the past with gratitude, the

future with hope, and to live the present with passion. Finally, a supper in which it was possible to interact with a large number of those participating closed the gathering. We hope that this gathering will continue with other initiatives whether of those residing in Rome or for Brothers in the different regions and countries.

RELAF: Regional CIL 2015 on the revised Rule



From 10 to 28 August there took place at the San Miguel Scholasticate, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, the first CIL organised on African soil, organised for the most part by African Brothers for the benefit of African Brothers. Its theme was "Being Brother today in Africa with the revised Rule" and 46 Brothers from all Districts of RELAF participated. The team was coordinated by Bro. Valère Adonsou and the support team by Bro. Anatole Diretenadji together with Brothers of the regional office. Among those who facilitated the programme were Brothers Pierre Ouattara (General Councillor) Valère Adonsou, Romain Sodey, Jean-Luc Traoré, Joan Sala, Jesús Rubio and Alain Houry. Two young Brothers of the District of West Africa together with Bro. Michel Tolojanahary supported the service of written

and simultaneous translation. This initiative promoted by the Region and by the Secretariats of Solidarity and Development and of Formation is a good step forward in view of formation and the functioning of this Region.

Secretariat for Formation: a secretariat in transition



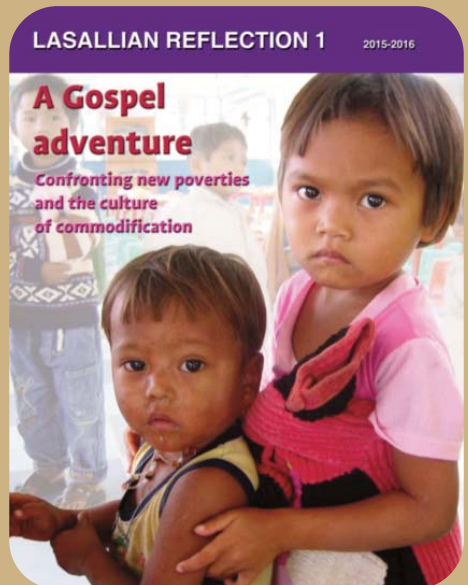
The Secretariat for Formation has replaced the previous “Being Brothers Today” Secretariat. Following the orientations of Circular 470, this secretariat wishes to be orientated towards the needs of formation of Brothers and Lay Lasallians. It now includes the areas of vocation ministry as well as formation for the Lasallian mission and the formation of Brothers. The previous secretaries for formation and the previous CIL team form part of this new secretariat. The fact that all are working together requires reinforcing the message of the unity which exists in the formation of Brothers and lay Lasallians, in initial and ongoing formation and in the work for all Lasallian vocations. The Secretariat also includes three services: the coordination of formation programs, looking for financial resources for formation

programs in Districts needing such funds and the creation of a Lasallian ‘observatory’ for formation and the pastoral ministry of vocations. This transition is not yet complete. The new structure of the Secretariat which is more flexible, is more a vision towards which we are moving rather than a reality which is already up and running. The Secretariat wishes to involve lay formators, especially women, as well as young Lasallians working in youth and vocation pastoral ministries and Brothers who are working in formation. The formation programs which are in the pipeline include various programs which will be implemented in the Regions by means of a mobile team which includes members of the Secretariat and local Brothers and lay Lasallians. The big challenge of the Secretariat now consists in having a continuous dialogue with the Regions which will allow it to respond in a way which takes into account the different contexts of each Region.

International Workshop for Young Consecrated Religious



The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Associations of Apostolic Life organized during the Year of Consecrated Life, a workshop for young consecrated religious. It took place in Rome and in the Vatican between September 15th and 19th 2015. More than 6,000 young consecrated religious responded to the invitation, including, on the part of the Institute, 15 young Brothers and a Postulant. The Brothers were from the Districts of ARLEP, Antilles-México South, Bogotá, Congo-Kinshasa, Norandino and the Middle East; the Postulant came from the District of Poland. Availing of the presence of the General Council in Rome, they met with them to talk about the joy of living together for the mission and about the commitment of the young Brothers to the pastoral ministry of vocations.



The Superior General and his Council have published the first issue of “Lasallian Reflections”. It consists of an invitation that will allow all Lasallians to reflect on the themes of support which appear in Circular 470. By means of this reflection they are inviting the Brothers and our Lasallian collaborators to continue to deepen their call and extend the charism in the light of *The joy of living together our mission*.

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Brothers of the Christian Schools - Via Aurelia 476 - 00165 Rome, Italy

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Web: www.lasalle.org