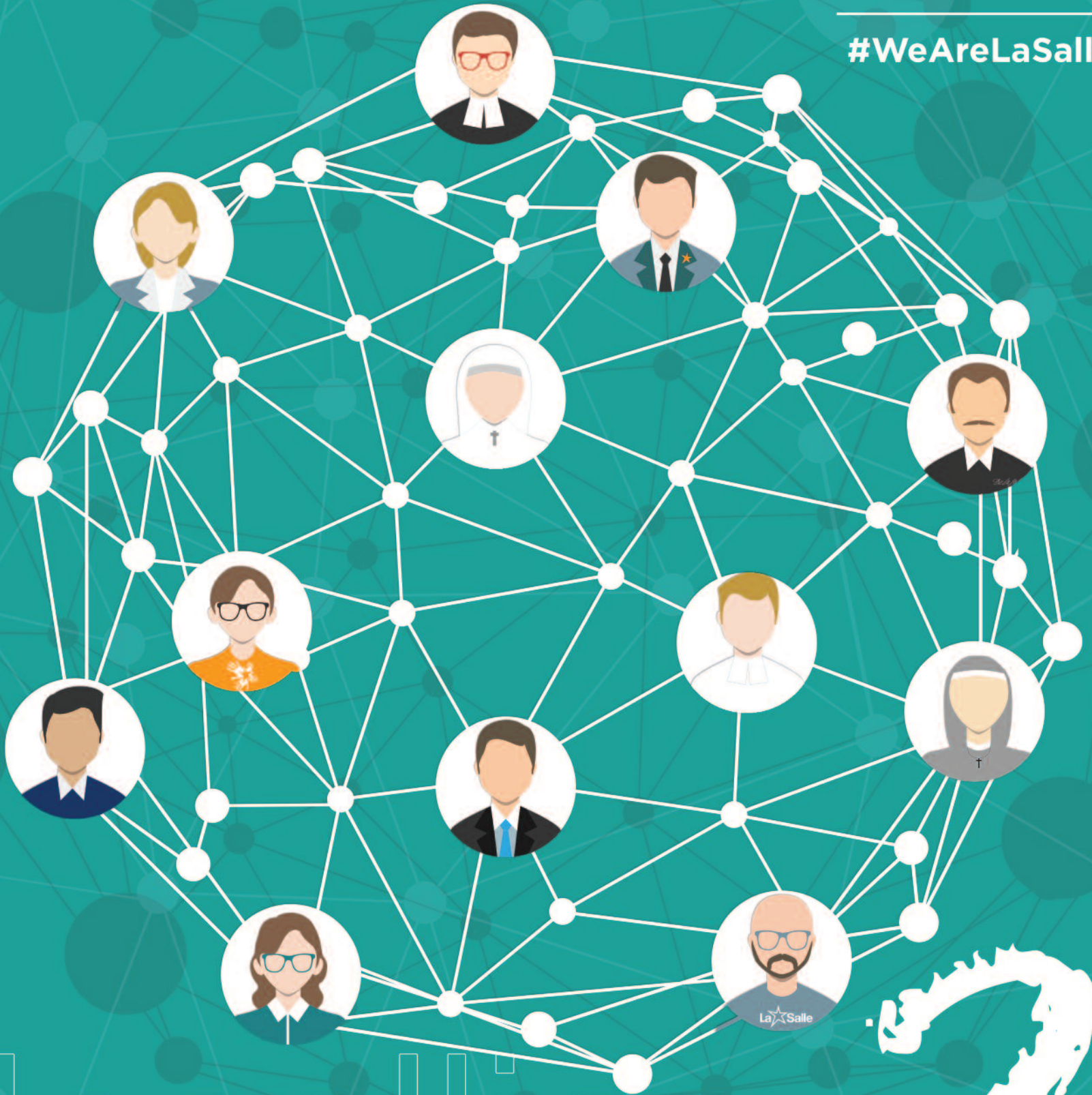




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## Vocations 3 - March 2018

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# Towards a Vocational Promotion today

Br. Rafa Matas, FSC  
*Counsellor General*

Doubtless for vocation to become an effective invitation to follow Jesus, especially to the consecrated life, it is necessary

- that the Brothers, Sisters and all Lasallians witness with our lives to the presence of God in the midst of our world.
- that our communities truly live fraternity that allows one to “come and see”.
- that we all work at our own renewal in order to be able to respond to the needs of the world, especially the world of young people. (Cf 86 R)

The development of a certain social environment is necessary, a “humus”, an “atmosphere”, which encourages and promotes the understanding and development of human life as vocation.

In the Rule of the Brothers it is expressed thus: “The promotion of a culture of vocations helps each person to realize his gifts and invites him/her to put him/herself at the service of others” (R 84.2)

A way of living will be vocational when it favours the birth and development of the Christian vocation, through its values, shared beliefs, behaviour models, structures, customs and forms of linguistic, artistic and symbolic expression, among other things, thus becoming “the first objective of general pastoral care” (NVNE 13, b)

Vocational culture stems from the fact that we are all called to holiness (Cf LG 41), including those to whom we direct our mission; and it is nourished by an environment of an ecclesial community of adult believers that helps each person, each family, each community to understand itself according to a mission entrusted by God to build the Kingdom that is always in continuous process of creation.

Moreover at the 45th General Chapter we affirmed: “It is a matter of promoting a culture of life understood as vocation; i.e., as a personal call to live a mission in community that gives meaning to existence”(4.8). This has its difficulties. When Pope John Paul II back in 1992 declared: “I wish, first of all, to draw attention to the urgency of promoting what we can call ‘basic vocational attitudes’, that give rise to an authentic vocational culture” he was aware of the special difficulties which the human being faces today in responding to God's call and living one's life in vocational context.

Precisely because of these difficulties, it is urgent to try to





create a vocational culture; in other words, develop an atmosphere in which young people can dispose themselves to check carefully and to freely embrace their vocation as a permanent way of life to which they are called in the Church.

From “Vocations-3”, we wish to make 2 SUGGESTIONS:

1. At the level of **community/fraternity**: we could share how we favour the creation of such vocational culture and if we should make greater effort.
2. At the level of **educational tasks**: it would be good that at a meeting of teachers, this issue be addressed transversely: to what extent within our educational mission are we supporting progressive vocational discovery in our young children and adults as well?

It is a need today, a demand to have greater awareness and to engage ourselves more strongly in this.

Pope Francis also reminds us in affirming “the need to turn to bringing to Christian communities a new 'vocational culture' that knows how to recount the beauty of being loved by God and able with courage to read reality as it is, with its weariness and resistance” but also recognizing the signs of beauty of the human heart.

# Talking with...

## Father Amedeo Cencini

Consultor for the Vatican Congregation for  
Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of  
Apostolic Life

For Br. Javier López Guerra

***“It is a tragedy that young people have the feeling that not being called by God means not being loved by Him”***

With these words, Father Amedeo Cencini, a Canossian priest, graduate in Education Sciences from the Salesian University, Doctor in Psychology from the Gregorian University, analytical Psychotherapist, lecturer, writer and Consultor of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, discusses the reality of vocation in current European youth.

Cencini participated in the Congress of Pastoral Vocational Activity that La Salle held in El Escorial from February 9 - 11, 2017, under the slogan “Towards a Lasallian vocational nurturing”. Taking advantage of the presence of Fr. Amedeo Cencini in two presentations on what we mean by fostering vocations and how to create this and how to create this nurturing of vocations, he drew us closer to himself so as to know him a little more in depth.

### **Who is Father Cencini?**

There comes to my mind what Pope Francis said when the same question was put to him: *“I am a sinner.”* Well, I'm a graced thief, a graced sinner, in the sense that I am full of gratitude to God for what He allows me to do, and it always feels like something that I have not deserved and that He fills my life with happiness and joy. Because what I do I do with a lot of heart, with a lot of conviction. Going around the world doing this service of animation is something that fills my life. This is my service and I do it with much gratitude to God, with the hope of sowing good seeds.

### **We are at a Vocational Promotion congress. How did you discover your vocation?**

In a very simple way - I am the son of a soldier and the barracks where he lived bordered the courtyard of the Oratory of the Canossian Fathers. Since my childhood I have breathed this sort of atmosphere close to the Canossian Fathers. The oratory was the place of education and has been for me, my life, and my normal living environment.

I can say that vocation has been something quite spontaneous, that I have felt grow progressively in my life. I entered the Seminary at age ten. I was very small. Moreover I don't remember having had any doubts - difficult times yes, but not vocational doubts. It has been something that I've felt growing in me gradually and in parallel with my life.

## **What is the life of Father Cencini today?**

I am living in the post-novitiate centre of our Institute. I am responsible for the formation of the post-novices, of the professed, and at the same time I teach in the Salesian University and the Gregorian, subjects related to psychology and consecrated life. I give lectures around the world and I also dedicate myself to writing. It is something that occupies a certain part of my life and is part of my education.

## **Society is moving towards an increasingly intense secularism, towards a certain religious**

## **indifference. What do you think are the reasons for this change?**

For myself I do not like talking about post-Christian society as the term is today. When we say secularization this refers to a society in which Christianity is not perceived as something of interest. In this sense we would be post-Christian. I believe that this is not the case.

I think that a post-Christian culture cannot exist. I believe that each culture will always be pre-Christian, because each man and each woman cannot delete, in him/herself, the need for God, to live this desire, even though it be not clearly and explicitly understood as such. This is the problem of secularization. Certainly it is a problem of ours, because it means that this world, this culture is talking this sort of language - or it has this type of sensitivity.

My task as a believer is the conviction that a post-Christian society does not exist and that everyone lives in need of seeing the face of God. I have to translate Christianity into secular terms of the present culture, because this is the culture of today and it makes no sense to continue talking about a culture of the last century, in



which there was a language, popular devotions, a Christian lifestyle with a way of living in which the main thing was assisting at Sunday Mass. This is no longer the case.

This means that it is I who says I am a believer, I who has the task of translating exactly the core of the Christian faith in terms that can be understood - in local language and dialect. Secularization cannot be perceived as something negative or diabolical. It means that this is the language of today. So then, are you a believer? If you are a believer you have the task of translating what you think into a language that can be understood by all, for those who come from another culture, another experiential context, of other habits... This is the testing of your faith.

The believer should be capable of doing this type of translation. If we continue to transmit the faith in terms that suppose a general understanding rooted in a Christian culture, it is as if I were speaking in Arabic. I have to translate the Gospel so that everyone can understand and identify what is a good thing for me myself.

**In your speech at the Congress, you spoke of the definition of vocational nurturing as something stable, something that progressively proceeds to getting into mindsets, into sensitivity, into the pedagogy of the person. Do you think that religious life is ready to transmit and spread you have defined as Fostering Vocational?**



Clearly not in a spontaneous way. We have to identify, we have spoken before about this translation. We say that we are not prepared to do this translation. We continue taking for granted that when we talk about God, salvation, redemption, the cross, about asceticism, about Christian conduct, we believe that we are saying things that everyone can understand correctly as we understood it. This is not the case. And it makes no sense not to realize this and shift the responsibility to today's culture.

In this sense we don't have this conviction and now risk living as if this culture was the culture of yesterday. No. We need to put at the centre of our attention and reflection the task of translation into this culture of today, to show that the essential content of Christianity, the Gospel, has a lot to do and say to this man, this woman of today, this cultural reality in which we are living.

The Beatitudes continue being Beatitudes for today's person, but our task is to show all this. It is not a language problem, it is a problem of life, of lifestyle above all, but it is also a language problem. To me it seems that we are not always attentive and should show another sensibility that is increasing within us.

**You also told us that the feeling of not being called is a tragedy in young people - not feeling called, as also not being loved. How do you think you can sensitize the young person to open his/her heart and be attentive to the call of God as to what is his/her future?**

It is not easy. The young person encounters an inner attitude that has not been adequately formed. This has to be inserted into a social, cultural reality. For example, the fact of not finding a job is like saying, "I am not called" by today's society to occupy a place, and be able to say that this is my way of contributing to the well-being of all, since work has this type of purpose. We live in a society where there is this problem.

The young person is not called. He/she waits and waits for someone to call him/her to work. It generates in the young a conflicting attitude and makes them think that he/she is not worthy of making their contribution to society.

This creates, on the one hand, a difficulty at the moment when the vocational animator presents him/herself as the announcer of a call, because he/she encounters in the young a conflicted, negative attitude, a young person who says that he/she is not worthy.

On the other hand, this could set up an opportunity, because the animator can reflect on what the young person is experiencing, that in each case there is a person who is calling you, in each case there is a person for whom you're absolutely beautiful - and this person is God - and this person is calling you - and this person cannot be a guarantee of your positivity. All this can become a call, the Church who calls you, to find your place in the Church as a married person, as... whatever you want. In this sense the Christian call is opposed to the social trend where no one is calling and no one is called.

**Another message conveyed to us at this Congress is that someone called who lives true to his/her call is able to transmit that call and generate a call, being the caller to new people. Do you think that religious life is living a certain crisis in which we the consecrated do not know how to explain the call that we have heard so as to be callers?**





Of course. Some are saying that the vocational crisis is not a crisis of the called but a crisis of the callers. It is enough to look around us. In our institutions, there we still have the vocational animator, who encounters a great deal of indifference, not collaboration, from people within the consecrated life - which does not help. In this Church, we are all called to be vocational animators for all vocations. It's like a global contract. All the called, are called to be callers to everyone without exception and to all vocations.

## **There is much talk about identity, about having a Christian, religious identity. How are you seeing this identity in young people?**

We can identify identity with sensitivity, because sensitivity must be inspired by identity. I must create in myself a sensitivity in accordance with my identity. This is the problem.

Why doesn't every called person change to being a caller? Clearly because their sensitivity has not been formed with respect to their identity. If my sensibility conforms completely with my identity and my identity is that of a consecrated person having the same feelings as the Lamb of God, if this process has been blocked, my sensitivity will not be able to be the sensitivity of a person calling the other.

When we talk about identity, it seems that we are talking about something that is very abstract and theoretical. If we are talking about sensitivity, we are using a term to which the person is more "sensitive". Sensitivity means having the same feelings that God revealed in Christ, and this is the sensitivity we have to build - and every charism means an emphasising of a certain aspect of this sensitivity. This is your identity.

If the person is progressively formed into this kind of sensitivity and identity, this person is living his vocation well as a happy, joyful person and is communicating this truth, this beauty to others. In other words, he/she becomes a vocational animator.

## **Laypersons who are closer seem to be the ones to transmit this sensitivity. Do you think that there is some kind of difficulty in formation or in the lifestyle of Religious that makes it that maybe we do not achieve this sensitivity so as to influence the young person?**

Yes. We find ourselves before a situation in which it seems that Religious are not reacting to the stimulus of life. We become beings who do not react to spirituality, to stimuli given to us every day. Prayer, the Eucharist, the Word of the day, the kind of life, community life is something to which the person adapts. When does this happen? Obviously when the person does not animate what he/she is doing with the fundamental inspiration which is God.

We must ask ourselves constantly: where are you my God. When we ask this kind of question, we are faced with a reality which is never the same, because when looking for the presence of God, every moment is a new search, a new experience. The God of yesterday is the idol of today, and this is something new. It is the passage from perseverance to fidelity.

All this should prevent the danger of this immunization, to becoming people accustomed to the miraculous and whose sensitivity and electrocardiogram are flat.

## **What would you say to vocational animators accompanying these young people who have some kind of concern, of doubt, of transcendental feeling?**

Being concerned is a good sign. If you feel concern, you can keep calm, because it is a normal concern. The

ordinary person is a concerned person, who experiences thirst, desire, hope, an attitude of the person who does not possess what he wants, who is lacking things.

Advent is the metaphor of a person's life. A human is a being continuously hoping. The problem is to find a way of hoping, of finding the path that leads you along the right path, where you will not find total satisfaction of your desire. But it is the right direction feeding your desire, when that encounter does not quench your thirst, but makes it increase once more. This is the normal person.

Also from a psychological point of view when someone does not desire more, such a person is dead, has nothing to expect from life and dreams of finding satisfaction in other compensations or situations. The vocational animator, the youth animator should be a person who communicates to the young this attitude, this hope, encouraging him to cultivate his desire because the Spirit of God lives within desire. Being a Christian means having a desire that cannot be met by any situation, creature or material item.

The educator is an educator of desires. He/she is the person who keeps alive in the young this capacity of desiring faced with God who is the only one who can satisfy our desires.

## **What you would you say to people who are engaged in encouraging these young vocations, as being keys to vocational experience?**

The conviction that when we engage in this type of service, when we talk about this, we are talking about the meaning of life, life as a received asset. We are dialoguing with a person's deepest self, even though we have the opposite feeling. When we are talking about this we are talking about what the young person needs to hear, although the exterior attitude is not the typical one of the person expressing this personal conviction.

We have an ally in the depths of the heart of anyone listening to us - and this is important to convince us that it is worthwhile. We are vocational sowers, and our vocation

is that of sowing without being worried about harvesting. Sowing the vocational seed is an operation that is worthwhile doing without worrying about harvesting.

We have to be convinced that sowing the vocational seed is something that is precious in the Church and that will yield its fruit, that it is not just somebody entering a school.

When we talk about this, we are responding to a desire and a need that is deeply rooted in every man and every woman. Also, taking a position on the formation of sensitivity as pedagogy is the direction of education today. We have put a lot of time into concern about the exterior of the person.

Now it is a matter of being experts in this type of education and formation of the sensitivity of the person.



# Looking Beyond

ARLEP Bulletin nº 281

## Pastoral Congress “Towards a Fostering of Lasallian Vocations”

ARLEP 2017

*224 Lasallian men and women arranged to meet at El Escorial (Madrid) to take part in the Pastoral Congress “Looking Beyond - Towards Fostering Lasallian Vocations”. It was an encounter designed to consider Lasallian future as vocation to life, the call of the Gospel and commitment to a better world. Also taking part were the Vocational Promoters of the Districts of France, Italy and Central Europe.*

The Pastoral Congress celebrated during the month of February last was a significant event in the life of the ARLEP District prepared to “look beyond” so as to proceed with making its communities and educational works places of “vocational promotion”. As Pablo Walker says “Vocational Promotion” is that web of values, ideas, concepts of life and death, evaluation criteria, ways of understanding freedom, love, sorrow, faith...that induce people to look beyond their own plans and set themselves to listening and to the service of the mission confided by God for transforming the world.

Participating in the event were the Bro. Superior General, Robert Schieler, and the General Councillors Rafa Matas (Lasallian Family and Vocations) and Aidan Kilty, Councillor for RELEM.

### Aims of the Congress:

- Promoting the fostering of vocations in the District and in the Church.
- Constructing a common language in the District about the vocational dimension.
- Unifying Vocational Promotion criteria within the educational context.
- Promoting “engendering” Lasallian vocation.





- Producing a new document, special to each District, about Vocational Promotion.

- Developing local and sectoral plans for promoting vocational nurturing.

## **Lasallian Vocational Nurturing**

Bro. Jesús Miguel Zamora, Visitor of the District at the time, set the tone of the Congress. What is bringing us together – he said – is the need to update our way of understanding the concept of vocation, adapting it to new times so as to proceed by making it promotional.

He emphasised that we should not be content with what has been achieved up till now but rather that we need to explore new forms of acting and to look beyond so as to open ourselves up to others. Faced with the uncertainty produced by this we need to remain attentive to the signs presented to us and look to the horizon with hope.

He pointed out that we are the first who have to continue asking the essential questions (What am I to do with my

life? To what and to whom do I respond?) so that our companions walk along with us with the confidence of knowing that, like them, we have had the experience of facing their same doubts, fears and searches.

After highlighting fraternity as an authentic part of authentic fostering of Lasallian vocations, he concluded: *“Striving to carry out Lasallian vocational nurturing, makes our church grow and make us believe in our Institute of men and women, Brothers and Laity convinced of their lay vocation that fosters any vocation that reflects a response to the call of Jesus.”*

## **Seven WAYS OF LOOKING**

The narrative thread of the Congress was the seven ways of looking we summarize here:

**Look 1:** Bro. Jorge Sierra, Coordinator of La Salle Pastoral in Galicia and teacher at La Salle College de Santiago, guided with this first look our search for the answer to the question "What are we talking about when we say 'vocational promotion'?"

**Look 2:** Bro. Rafa Matas, General Councillor, opened a window on the Lasallian universe so as to direct our look towards the lights, shadows and horizons of vocational work in the Institute.

**Look 3:** Fr. Amedeo Cencini, Religious of the Sons of Charity (Canossian), consultant of the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, invited us to look at the key concept: What is vocational promotion and how is it to be integrated into the life of the believer?

**Look 4:** The same Fr. Cencini continued looking at the essential elements for creating a fostering of vocations: a mentality, sensitivity to develop the inner world and a pedagogy where the person called becomes "caller".

**Look 5:** The three Lasallian formators Pilar Castro (teacher at La Salle Santander), Lidia Rey (teacher at La Salle Institution Madrid) and Maria José Sánchez (teacher at La Salle Figueras) revealed with a shared look the Lasallian keys to walking towards vocational promotion.

**Look 6:** By means of panels and statements about vocational experiences, participants asked themselves with reflective look: How do we create the fostering vocations in our Lasallian environments? The experiences covered vocational nurture lived in school, community, extracurricular and social environments.

**Look 7:** Finally, those present raised their regard to design future dynamics capable of generating vocation promotion in each one of the Sectors.

## **Commitments of ALL**

Bro. Rafa Matas made a call to the evangelical joy to "look beyond" and develop an adequate fostering of vocations that is a commitment of all (Communities, Sectors, District, Region, Institute and the whole Lasallian Family). He pointed out that God, through the General Chapters and Assemblies is sending us signals on how to promote vocations when they ask us:

- To improve the value and meaning of our fraternal life.
- To unite prayer and action in Vocational Promotion.
- To assume shared responsibility between Sectors, Districts, Regions and the whole Lasallian Family.
- To recognize the contribution of each Lasallian vocation to the Lasallian Family and the Church.
- To develop vocational promotion.

Throughout the Congress, dialogues, group work and reflection followed one another ... there were times of prayer and celebration that made it a unique experience.

Bro. Superior General Robert Schieler closed the meeting with an evocative message in which he made a call to promote Lasallian unity.

# Evaluation of the Congress

ARLEP District

We could summarize by saying that the Congress on vocational culture has been an experience that touched the minds and hearts of the participants. The high appraisal collected in the evaluation forms and in so many words of thanks that have been transmitted to us pleasantly surprised us. Presentations, panels of experiences, musical moments, prayers and celebrations, cooperative work and moments of conviviality... everything has helped generate a reflective, spiritual and fraternal atmosphere among everyone. Also highly valued was the diversity of the 220 participants: managers of the works, pastoral delegates, Brothers, members of other charismatic families, vocational pastoral delegates from several RELEM Districts, young University students, Novices and Scholastics, families...

The Congress has helped to build a common language around the vocational theme, beyond prejudices and biased views. We can say that the concept of Lasallian vocational culture becomes common ground on which to build our educational-pastoral mission. We now have to see how to establish all we lived there into our educational works and Lasallian communities.

## Comments of the participants

### Ana Carbonell (Valencia-Palma Sector)



The message that this Congress leaves us is openness to change, to look beyond, but above all with a look that is hopeful, positive and joyful. If there was any question left with me, it would probably be one that says: Where do you want God to be now and in what way? I would say also that we all have a way to go and that we must follow Jesus.

### Br. Juan González (Andalusia Sector)



The main message of this meeting and I believe also the main purpose of our schools and our way of evangelization is to believe, to wager, so that each person may be a dream, a dream of God. Each person is a unique and unrepeatable dream and I am wishing that our schools be a dream workshop, which proposes dreams.

### María Eugenia Vázquez (Andalusia Sector)



After living the days of the congresses what has remained clear to me is that the important thing for us is to discern what God is dreaming of with us. Following that, to be able to give what we have to others and to be able to help others to discover what God is dreaming in them. I think that we have to live all this with much joy and optimism.

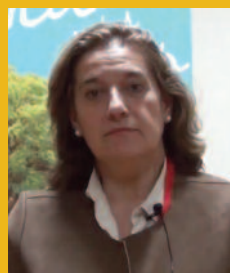
### **Br. Arsenio Turiégano (Madrid Sector)**



I think we're in a hinge era, of standing listening, of letting us evangelize through reality and concentrating more on what unites us and not what divides us. If we are able to make of our life a synthesis of authenticity, we will be able to transmit something.

I hope so.

### **Inmaculada González (Madrid Sector)**



I think the most important thing we have learned in this Congress is that we must learn to look, to look at ourselves and learn to look at the people who surround us, our students especially, but also our co-workers. Learning to look so as to build a different world, that is better and much more Lasallian.

### **Aitor Zulaika (Bilbao Sector)**



Out of this Congress, I'm left analysing to whom I am dedicating time and the need to look a little further, at students and co-workers.

### **Javier Hernández (Catalonia Sector)**



Congress is helping us to take up a position about what vocational culture is and to learn above all about challenges and projects in a regenerative way.

### **Br. José Tomás Cuellar (Valencia-Palma Sector)**



I take from this Congress that in La Salle we are vocational riches, that vocational culture unites us and does not set us apart from Lasallian educators.

### **Montse Toscano (Catalonia Sector)**



This is the first Congress that we have done on vocational culture. It's a brave step towards understanding more about how we are working in La Salle, where the student is the centre of all our projects.

### **Montse Nieto (Valladolid Sector)**



I'm sticking with that when you are faithful to your vocation, you cause others think about theirs.

### **Marta Espiniella (Bilbao Sector)**



Educating in sensitivity is essential in school, so as to listen to the call and be able to answer it.

# Lasallian testimonies

## Lizette Prado Rodríguez (Lizie)

### My Journey for La Salle

“Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God”... Thus begins the day in the classrooms of our school. So when did I become aware of the presence of God in my life? I was born into a Christian-Catholic family. My mother by her example instilled in us the importance of prayer. At home, the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus reminded us of his Holy presence. Despite the economic needs, Mami had as a priority to provide me with a Catholic education, leaving aside luxuries or her personal needs.

I came to La Salle as a mother, to enrol my children. At the beginning, I received a call from the Parents and Teachers Association inviting me to participate as a delegate of all the parents related to my son’s class group and I voluntarily accepted. At that time, I began my La Salle path. In the orientation for new families one of the first Brothers who worked in the school, Bro. Wilfredo Pérez from Utrera, better known as Brother Enrique (RIP); with the clarity and emphasis that characterized him told us... “You are enrolled at the De La Salle College of Bayamon, together with your sons...”

This Bro. Enrique used to give special emphasis to the formation of the laity and in meetings of parents always took a few minutes for a talk about the Founder, his work and his teachings. He nourished love of the Work in us and our desire to work for the same. Over time I was invited to be part of Family Ministry and then to work as



Secretary of the College with these words of welcome, “Lizie, God is leading you in your journey for La Salle, from commitment to commitment”... And so it has been.

Participating in the Workshops for the Educational Service of the Poor (WESP) in the Dominican Republic, in some presentations of Bro. Enrique and another by Bro. Alfredo Morales we were

invited to “not be dead members”... My heart caught fire and I understood that we cannot be lukewarm in our mission. In serving God the presentation cannot be done by half.

Given my vocation as a layperson; my spouse and I have been asking the Brothers for six years to be partners. Since then, every year we renew our commitment as an itinerary that is personal, in community of faith and service. It is the response to a formation and a lived experience, sealed with a free and formal commitment.

My projection for the future? Continue to do my actions for the love of God taking advantage of the opportunities that God gives me daily to serve children, youth and companions and giving greater emphasis to the service and formation of parents so that the work extends to each Lasallian home.

In this journey I learned to “see it all with the eyes of faith, with my regard fixed on God and to attribute all to God”. Being Lasallian for me, my spouse and my two children is a way of life. It is a commitment lived in daily life, convinced that God has a mission for each of us, that we must make a difference in the piece of the world that he has entrusted to us.



## Br. Arsenio Turiégano, FSC

### ■ I found my motive...

Yes, it seems that *God writes straight with crooked lines*. With me, I think, he worked hard but he got me. Looking back and observing those visits from God, sometimes on tiptoe, I realize all the good he has done me.

I remember the corridors of La Salle College, in Madrid. It was the college that my family chose and the place where I got to know the Brothers, the place that saw me grow up, learn to read and write, explore, discover, pray...

I preserve in my memory, with much love, the hours I spent in the courtyard of the school playing football, a certain maths class, attentive reading of *Don Quixote* in my room... I also cherish the endearing memory of the presence of those Brothers, who like older brothers, brought the faith and a broader perception of life closer to me. Yes, I think that the proximity and the testimony of those teachers was a lasting mark of God, a call.

It is difficult to express and narrate in a few lines how I was opening myself up to God, but I suspect that I recognized him in people, places, spending time with others and trusting. Being a believer changed my life and the way of seeing education. There are many ways of educating, but when it has to do with humanity, education takes on another aspect. I still remember the extra hour dedicated to us by Brother Baptist in English. I'm not sure of my knowledge of English but today I acknowledge with gratitude that the effort of that Brother to enable a small group of students to improve evangelized me.

I'm convinced that it is no coincidence. When I enter the classroom I always try to pay attention to the many, but it is inevitable that I occupy myself with those who have greater difficulty. They have engaged my life and heart without me realizing it. Perhaps this way of understanding education is the greatest of the riches that I received at that College, a very Lasallian heritage. Focusing on diversity, and especially on those who are the victims of its reality or of their own particular difficulty, is a way of understanding Lasallian mission.



If I were to speak of a place in which the Institute's mission has touched my heart, it would be India. The time I shared with the Brothers in community, the witness of Church that I experienced in those mass celebrations,

the smiles and the looks of children... I think they were privileged places that drew me closer to the friendly face of God.

Pope Francis invites us to *recover the freshness of the Gospel* and to open ourselves up to a diversity that he confides to each one in his/her own *call*. I have lived as a faith experience the feeling of being Lasallian family and I look at the diversity of Lasallian vocations with joy. For me, this global form of understanding vocation is a real experience of conversion and encounter.

Being Brother has drawn me close to God and living first person fraternity. I'm admiring inhabited silence more, the Alliance, the sense of ecclesial communion and seeing the sometimes difficult mission as challenge. The future presents itself to me as a hopeful horizon, in which I imagine an Institute as plural, bold, open, with Brothers and laity committed to live looking ahead to find new islands of creativity and new answers to new questions. A call to live risking!

## **Maria Teresa I. Castañeda**

### **Luzon Regional Coordinator**

### **Philippines**

#### **■ Desde Filipinas**

My parents were actively involved in our local church and community activities when we were young and as a result, I grew up doing the same thing in our spare time after school. Working in a Lasallian institution is akin to reminiscing and reliving my memories as a child, following my parents' passion. To be involved in Signum Fidei, initiated in La Salle GreenHills Philippines in 1981 by my mother-in-law, Dr. Telly Castaneda, makes it truly a double blessing.

My relationship with Signum Fidei Association has been an on-off affiliation since 1993 and in 2013, I gladly accepted the invitation of Br Antonio Servando FSC to assist by being one of the Philippine Regional Coordinators. I saw this as a great opportunity to start Project S.W.E.A.T. (Service Workers Evangelization, Apostolate and Training). We were able to give modular programs on Basic Sewing, Basic Hair Cut, Gardening and Landscaping and Good Manners/ Right Conduct for service workers assisting Lasallian institutions and other workers in our community. Signum Fidei members graciously volunteered to share their time, funds and physical resources to help out. In the 2013 II Signum Fidei International Assembly, it was also an affirmation of communion in mission when delegates like me belonging to different Lasallian institutions shared their advocacies and discovered we are one when it comes to helping others. I take my hats off too for the retired employees who voluntarily participate to do apostolic work, formation and even personal resources to keep the association's spirit alive. Inspired by these Lasallian retirees, it would be a noble program if we could gather elderly Lasallians and formally give them the avenue to continue to be an active part of the Lasallian family. Their



experiences as youth, educator and a Lasallian partner could be virtuous resources for the youth of today. It would be a wonderful journey for younger Signum Fidei members to bridge the gap among generations, to learn from each other and promote their experiences.

This desire will require time and I've been pondering for months how best to continue with the Signum Fidei projects. In a mass I recently attended, a priest read Mark 10:17-21 and ended his homily by these words, "Empty your cup and follow me..." I am now in my golden age and this is truly a turning point for me to have realized that I would want to lay new foundation for personal and spiritual growth. I knew this would be difficult if I continue with my current job, thus I've decided to simplify my work and fully live out the Jubilee of Mercy this year. The Lasallian community has been very good to me and my family and we would like to work together to show our gratitude by participating in spiritual and corporal works of mercy with the Lasallian family. Life is short, and it may be difficult, but it is worth living if you do things with love, passion and good intent. It is worth giving up a few conveniences for a meaningful service. Now I would like to begin a new chapter in my Lasallian life with aspiration to continue to teach minds, touch hearts and transform lives.

# WHY I WANT TO BE A SISTER?



I want to be a Sister because God has fixed his eyes on me with love. He took the initiative in my life by revealing himself to me, inviting me first of all to meet his person and his immense love for humanity. Finally, he touches the reality where I live, the reality where we live. He touches my heart arising there a very deep sensibility and capacity to see how much I am in need of Him, in my life and in the life of others. He invites me to accept his will living as a sign of total consecration to Him and to our neighbor.

Cristina Cordova

# Walking together: “3 Tents” Project

## ARLEP District. “VALENCIA-PALMA” Sector

Increasingly, we are noticing in our society the need for Christian formation for educators, parents, students etc., while aware of the indifference that can produce that need in many potential recipients. Likewise there is clearly perceived the need for many educators of spaces of interiority and silence through which to open themselves up to transcendence and sharing with others their inner world and their experience of faith.

In the Second Assembly of the Lasallian Educational Mission (MEL), of the ARLEP District and the Valencia-

Palma Sector, there were established objectives and specific lines of action for educational works to make a response to these needs. In the fields: "Called to Mission", "Educators and in Community" and "Networked, Together and by Association" has insisted on:

“The management team includes in its annual plan periodic meetings and spaces to share and strengthen within the educational community, personal relationships, a sense of belonging and charismatic identity that underpins the common project.”



"That the educational works ensure annual plans, times and spaces so that educators can live dynamics of fraternal life."

"Promote where there exists and create where there isn't, groups of educators in which they can reflect and pray based on the mission that we share."

"The management team offers educators spaces for sharing personal educational experiences, as also moments of assimilation and transcendence."

Based on the concrete reality of our sector, we are studying different possibilities in this regard. Finally, we proposed a monthly meeting on Saturday (half-day) with activities for developing knowledge, attitudes and actions for acquiring the religious sensitivity that can be translated, later on in the classroom, in the family, in religion class... and help consolidate the identity of our educational works. To facilitate the participation of those involved, these meetings have been designated in the schedule of each educational work from the beginning of the school year. The meetings have been held on a Saturday morning, from 10.00 to 14.00 including the sharing of a meal with those who attended.

When it came to giving a name to this project we saw that the name of "3 T", (three tents), picking up the Mount Tabor reference, the transfiguration of Jesus before his disciples, Peter, James and John, and the invitation of Peter to build three tents for Elijah and Moses (Mk 9.5), could give us much to play on. We are thinking that 3 is a symbolic number, three times or moments that we can live in these meetings. Of the Tents that we can have for charging our batteries for the rest of the week, month...

The plan that we have followed at each meeting has been very simple

- A preliminary moment of welcome
- Personal reflection activity: Time of internalization through the dynamics proper to the project HARA.
- Presentation of the theme of the Day.
- Time of silence and personal reflection, reading documents...
- Sharing and closing prayer
- Shared meal





Each meeting focused on a theme:

- Transcendence, to start the course.
- The parable of the "Good Father" on the occasion of the closing of the Year of Mercy.
- The hope of Advent.
- The Beatitudes to start the year.
- Lent
- Easter.
- Our Lasallian identity in the month of May.

Another key was that the powering of the project be communitarian, so the animation and elaboration of the themes be taken forward by:

- The Sector Animation Team
- The De La Salle-Montserrat de Palma de Mallorca Community
- The Animation Community of Saint Benilde Paterna

We were very clear from the beginning that we should not become obsessed with the number of participants. Things would develop equally whether the group was large or small. We proposed the example that if we had a bar we would give a drink to whoever is thirsty, and not say to him "It will be open if there are more than three customers", because the one looking for a drink is thirsty and in need of it, at that time.

Despite difficulty this project has been implanted in the three areas of the sector: the Peninsular Zone encompassing the Valencia Community, Castellón, Valencia and Alicante, Teruel. In addition the island zone of the two islands with Lasallian educational works: Mallorca and Menorca. The valuable collaboration of the animators who animated some of the proposed activities in each encounter was appreciated.

To avoid centralization at the headquarters (doing it always in the same place), we decided to visit each of the educational works in the sector as well as other significant Lasallian communities: Holy Family of Pont D'Inca, Montserrat, and even a convent of contemplative

nuns. Attendance at the meetings has been a constant in the different days and areas with around 40/50 educators, counting the 3 zones, by meeting. In addition, as we said at the beginning, we have not worried about numbers. Sometimes travelling from one end of the Sector to the other has made it unfeasible for the participation of some educators of the centre, while the educational work where it took place, would have a significant number of educators who participated. In the area of Mallorca, it happened that there were a significant number of educators who participated in almost all the meetings.

The target groups of the project were:

- Educators from the educational works of the Sector areas
- Brothers and Associates of the La Salle communities in the Sector
- Fathers and mothers of students of the educational works
- Alumni
- New teachers in the programme of “IFI” Initial Formation (as part of their Lasallian formation process)
- Known people with religious sensitivity
- Other religious communities of the various surroundings

Prior to the meeting the convocation, indicating title, place and time-table is sent. Registration is done "on line". Three or four days before the meeting, a reminder, with the number of the participants, is sent if they want to make good use of car space and thus save fuel and help the environment.

On the completion of the course there comes time for evaluation. However there is nothing official, but both the organizers and the participants have highlighted the following aspects:

- Creativity when presenting the dynamics.
- Having a moment of personal silence to think, reflect and share.
- The simplicity of the proposed scheme of work.
- Visiting and learning about other sites than your own educational work.

- Activities that have been able to be used later in the classroom (some used to ask us for materials for enabling the making the moments of interiority, or reflections, or the materials to encourage the day.)
- The good atmosphere that has been achieved between the participants.
- Lunch time power sharing with teachers and host communities.

Our intention to the year 2017-2018, is to continue with the same plan and structure of meetings where we continue working and deepen those aspects of faith and living Lasallian which help us to strengthen the identity of our educators in what is the in the environment of our society Lasallian educational mission, bidding and responding according to the signs of the times in which we are living.



# The path of Lasallian Vocational promotion in Argentina Paraguay

church appeals, talks to us about setting up a Lasallian Vocational Promotion. We are talking about a fostering that enables, promotes, and provides elements for each person and community to understand itself, personalising their existence (free gift), in the act of going beyond oneself

Our last Chapters and District Assemblies have given great strength to this dimension. One of the 6 key-issues by which we took a look at our District in the Assembly proceedings of 2015-2016, and put into practice for the current three years, is Fostering and Promotion of Vocations.

In this process of discernment we've been developing an understanding which integrates culture and pastoral work for vocations as dimensions of a common process of the pursuit of Full Life<sup>1</sup> of each person. So together we have said that:

"We can understand vocation as the dynamic process of construction of vital answers, inclusive and transcendent, that a person makes to realities that challenge him/her in particular. Those aspects of reality summon up in him his creativity, his responsibility, his fecundity, that take him well beyond Yes, beyond the past, in itineraries of conversion that open to the future and to meeting with the Other. Vocation is always a call involving a "so that"<sup>2</sup>, something that one discovers that may be best if he bets his entire life on it. In the effort to become aware of the reality that he inhabits and the responses he has been providing, each person discovers that he can describe who he is and how he can be and he can be creatively inserted into Community narratives<sup>3</sup> that he is part of.

Like all human process, he is influenced and conditioned by the culture in which he is developed, which is why the Document<sup>4</sup>, echoing academic research and contemporary

at the service of the bringing to fullness of creation and the human race, especially of those who suffer situations of inequality. We cannot ignore that contemporary culture is unfavourable to the before- mentioned process, so it is necessary to build a culture incarnated and alternative at the same time.

This countercultural proposal will be Lasallian if in itself it makes visible conceptions<sup>5</sup> and evaluations that are typical of this hermeneutical community of Christian roots that follows Saint John Baptist de La Salle. We especially need to make visible the free initiative of God who wants dignity and fullness for each and every one of his children. That Father who calls because he loves and who is teaching us to respond from our zealous fidelity to the small commitments that reality will pose us, because from the spirit of faith we discovered his fingers in it, gently leading our life and history towards the full establishment of the Kingdom. This awareness of Presence leads to entrust ourselves calmly to his conduct to bring to term in history his work, which is also ours.

In this context we understand as Vocation Promotion the work that a believing community carries on by proposing a meaningful dialogue between the life experience of Jesus and his communities of followers, with the awareness and vital options of young people. It is not a disinterested dialogue, it is a purposeful dialogue, that invites you to experience, that helps you discover called in the challenges and needs of Humanity and the Church,

<sup>1</sup> The Assembly called them Full Human Life and Life of Faith that is Growing.

<sup>2</sup> A mission.

<sup>3</sup> As Lasallians we know that our communities are source, place and goal, and for vocations likewise.

<sup>4</sup> Of the 2015-2016 District Chapter and Assembly.

<sup>5</sup> Its way of understanding: the person, the community and society; life, death, dignity, fullness, justice, truth, fertility and history.



which begins with the mystery of the diversity of Christian vocations as ways in which the living Jesus Christ continues freeing, so each one can go on discerning and building his personal response involving himself freely and creatively in this community framework.

Looking to the future from this perspective is to understand the process of vocational configuration of a person as constitutive of his humanization and personalization. It is to realize that those people, youth, educators and families transiting through our educational works are taken up with vocational search.

Also that, although at some point in their travels "the vocational" is made more manifest, it is a process of permanent configuration. "Before the vital moments of vocational theme, they may be aware of their searches and interpret them so as to build options of fulfilment using learning and mediations that culturally we have offered them throughout the whole educational process." (Lasallian Vocational nurturing, 2016)

We understand vocational nurturing as part of the matrix of institutional learning of our educational places. It is an open proposal, rooted in Christianity that becomes concrete over the educational process both transversely and in specific spaces, both within the school subjects and in complementary experiences and optional areas.

To implement this fostering of Lasallian vocations, the Brothers' communities have made the following commitments:

- "All the communities of Brothers express our commitment to pastoral work for vocations in the community project.
- In particular, the communities of Capiibary, Jujuy, Malvinas Argentinas and González Catán<sup>6</sup> will be privileged spaces for referencing and explaining Vocational Promotion and Promotion. Those four communities:
  - Need to place great emphasis on being witness and sign of fraternity, prayer, community life and mission for young people<sup>7</sup>.

- Constitute the basis of the District Commission for the Fostering and Promotion of Vocation.
- Help build the orientations for the Fostering and Promotion of Vocation to be developed in the triennium.
- They are the reference concerning vocational matters for the neighbouring Lasallian works.
- They articulate dialogue and exchange with other ecclesial and pastoral areas of their sector in matters vocational.
- They are the place of vocational experiences throughout the year. These experiences will be inserted progressively in participants in the daily mission of the Brothers, and in their community life and prayer.
- The experiences that we are talking about can be deprived:
  - Encounters or meetings with the community in form of prayer or service.
  - Vocational encounters of a few days.
  - Missions of a few weeks.
  - Longer volunteer sessions.
  - Vocational retreats" (cf. Chapter VIII and VI District Assembly, 2016, 45-46)

And in each educational community, we have formed a Local Vocation Promotion Team, composed of educators from different areas of secondary education. They are coordinated by a Local point of reference for culture and vocation Ministry with dedication paid for that purpose. In 2014, by means of a note in the district newsletter, we presented the proposal of working educators with the following words:

We offer to these teams a setting for prayer, formation and discernment for the vocation situations of children and young people of our target population. From that context, they can think about the specific interventions to be offered regarding ministries, other institutions and their context. We also hope, from the dialogue among these

<sup>6</sup> Our District is comprised of eight communities; these four stand out because they are embedded in disadvantaged contexts, with strong links to their surroundings and are relatively easily accessible by various means of transport.

<sup>7</sup> Called to conversion that touches all communities. From 12 to 18 years. In the future we will be expanding the proposal to other levels.

teams, to offer to the next Chapter and Assembly a proposal for the implementation of a District Culture of Vocations based on their local experiences.<sup>8</sup> (A Lasallian Culture of Vocations? 2014).

Currently, these teams:

- Are being constituted within communities that cultivate the Culture and Pastoral Ministry of Vocations in the life of educational works.
  - To accomplish this, they are going through a community training process on the Culture and Pastoral Ministry of Vocations based on the minutes of their meetings:
    - To be vocation references for young people
    - Youth cultures in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
    - Sociology of vocation
    - Psychology of vocation
    - Christological aspect of vocation
    - Ecclesiological aspect of vocation
    - Spirituality and Lasallian vocations
    - Lasallian educational pastoral ministry
    - Creation of a local plan for the Culture and Pastoral Ministry of Vocations
  - The minutes of these meetings have the following structure:
    - Periods of personal and community encounters
    - Reflection on the reality we are living
    - Reading, analysis and synthesis of theoretical materials
    - New, enriched, look at the reality, to think of forms of intervention in terms of the Culture and Pastoral Ministry of Vocations
    - Periods of prayer celebrating the process.
  - In light of this process, local teams have drawn up work plans in their institutions in accordance with the directives of the institutions and the District Team. From this, proposals such as the following emerged:
    - Coordination and collaboration regarding materials, service and pastoral ministry circles.
    - Formation workshops in service for specific

educators

- Celebrations and vocation days
- Revising the curriculum content of different school subjects to include a Lasallian perspective of vocations
- Vocation oriented experiences of Volunteering or Mission
- Experiences of small communities of discernment.

All this is to be implemented by creating a funded District Team of Culture and Pastoral Ministry of Vocations composed of Brothers and Lay Men and Women. This team will:

- “Continue to implement a Culture of Vocations and a Pastoral Ministry of Vocations in conjunction with Association for the educational service of the poor.” (Cf. 8th District Chapter and 6th District Assembly, 2016, 38.1). This shift from a Pastoral Ministry of Vocations just for the Brothers’ life toward a Pastoral Ministry of Vocations that proposes and accompanies the diversity of consecrated forms in **Association for the educational service of the poor**, has generated a lot of movement and collaboration throughout our educational circles and has brought significant support at the ecclesial level. We have specific experiences for young people who are asking about the life of the Brothers, but they are inserted and developing within the much wider and inclusive diversity of Lasallian vocations existing in the District.
- “Systematic program for those referenced and local teams, and implementing it with those accompanying vocations.” (38.2). In addition to the accompaniment and formation of Local Teams (see previous point), we have carried out a qualitative research process with young people, educators and Brothers of the District. This diagnosis has been the dynamic force for writing a new theoretical framework for accompanying vocations, for creating a formative plan for those accompanying vocations, and for new accompaniment materials for young people with interest in the Brother’s life.
- “Produce vocation narratives for pastoral use.” (38.3)

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<sup>8</sup> That ended up being a full core, the above mentioned.

We have fostered and favored incorporating stories and witness accounts of vocations in our schools and District circles in addition to beginning the production of an audiovisual series of vocation testimony - "Called to be Lasallians."

- "Design significant experiences in terms of vocation, along with other means of mission animation, for the entire District during the triennium." (38.4). In addition to those organized by the District Team<sup>9</sup> and Local Teams, we have been part of creating INEL (Itinerario formativo experiencial y comunitario para Nuevos Educadores Lasallano - Experiential and Community Formation Itinerary for New Lasallian Educators). We have joined the process of the District's Forming Pastoral Ministers, and together with the La Salle Foundation we have created an Annual Meeting of Lasallian Volunteers.
- 'Create an instrument which can animate the meeting of Brothers' communities regarding the District Vocation Pastoral Ministry plan: so that they will know it, embrace it, pray for it, and find ways that they can carry it forward.' (38.5).
- "Periodically report on the meetings and vocation related activities that will be held in the District by means of digital and printed media." (38.6).
- "This is deeply connected with the SAPJu<sup>10</sup> to mutually enrich the vocation perspective in these proposals." (38.7). Together with Youth Ministry we have prepared

and carried out together many of the District's planned experiences and we have a large group retreat for young students in their final year who were part of youth ministry.

- "Foster the emergence of new groups and contexts for discerning vocations in the District's ministries and communities" (38.8). We are in the planning stage of these proposals.

And from this journey, where we have experienced a closer relationship between young people and the Brothers and promoted an awakening reflection on the different Lasallian vocations, we find the following as fundamental challenges that we are facing at this time:

- Continue changing curriculum designs in terms of the Culture of Lasallian Vocations.
- Introduce collaborating and proposing our charismatic richness in wider ecclesial circles<sup>11</sup>.
- Develop a proposal of the Pastoral Ministry of Vocations for the Association for Educational Service of the Poor in our institutions of higher learning.
- Broaden initial vocation experiences within the Culture of Lasallian Vocations.
- Develop vocation experiences specifically intended for young people between 20 and 30 years of age<sup>12</sup>.
- Continue forming ourselves, researching, learning and sharing experiences and searches around the Culture and Pastoral Ministry of Vocations with other Districts, congregations, ecclesial circles and research centers.

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<sup>9</sup> 'We strengthen these processes by monthly meetings held on vocations with the participation of many young people. We see these meetings as times for students, graduates and young educators to be together for socialization, service, prayer and meaningful discussions of impoverished settings that seek to deepen their own discernment by seeing the meaning and life-giving projects of other Lasallians. They are benchmarks: times of initiation, exploration, deepening and option in relation to projects that young people are doing locally. The content and dates of each meeting are different and always open to suggestions and adjustments according to the participants' needs. In this first half of the year a Holy Week presentation will focus on how poorer neighborhoods live out death and resurrection and in May, how we can build the Kingdom in the neighborhood and in the school. In June, we will continue with one on the elements of a Lasallian pedagogy and in July, together with apprenticeship camps for students of the Argentine Malvinas community with special education needs, one on the educational relationship within which God reveals Himself and Justice is built. The proposals for the second half will be designed based on the needs that the local teams recognize' (A Lasallian Culture of Vocations? 2014).

<sup>10</sup> (Servicio de Acompañamiento a las Pastorales Juveniles [SAPJu]) = Support Service for Youth Ministries). In our District Youth Ministry and Vocation Ministry are different entities and in these years we have been reconfiguring their coordination.

<sup>11</sup> For many years, our Vocation Ministry was essentially focused on our educational centers, neglecting other ecclesial settings.

<sup>12</sup> Up to the present we have been close to young people of school age and then to formative programs for educators.

# Guadalupana Sisters De La Salle

Sr. Mari de la Cruz

*Vocation is not a Call but our Response to the One who Calls us; It is not a Renunciation but a Donation from Faith to a Life Project in the style of Jesus.*

I want to begin this brief sharing with the usual invocation of our Formula of consecration:

## “Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit”

And I do it precisely because talking about the Institute of the Guadalupana Sisters of La Salle is talking Sisterhood, Community, Association, joy in being sent by the Father... and the image of the Trinity is the perfect icon for sharing, as Lasallian, the being and the work of our lives.

As is already known by some readers, we owe our origin to the intuition and apostolic zeal of Bro. Juan Fromental Cayroche, of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools who saw the need of creating an Institute for women who could collaborate with the Brothers in their educational mission, in the aftermath of the religious persecution experienced in Mexico between the years of 1926 and 1929.

We are heirs of the spirituality, mission and pedagogy that have sustained Lasallian educational works, providing the maternal touch and mediation as we also welcome the icon of the Most Holy Virgin of Guadalupe.





We are women who live the joy of Community as part of our identity, we strive to strengthen our faith nourished by the Word of God, we rejoice to know and deepen the teaching style of Jesus so as to learn from the master to be the go-betweens and assist our recipients.

From the Trinity we discover guidelines for growing in interiority, to be women of presence, being and doing not our will, but following the path to doing the Father's will in the Spirit in the manner of Jesus. Knowing ourselves as chosen by him to labour in his work, responding creatively each day to the challenges that society will be presenting us and assuming that the Ministry we do is not something that belongs to us, but being the Father's work and we are **Ministers and ambassadors** of his Son to show the face of God present and acting in concrete reality that we live through the action and movements of the Spirit.

In the icon of the Most Holy Virgin of Guadalupe we learn to seek solitude and silence as requirements for

contemplating the reality that our children and young people live and from there walking with them. We learn to incarnate Christ in ourselves so as to be bearing Him for others and from that be evangelizing and educating in the style proper to us; We learn to be "seekers of God" on the realities that we live and from there not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, to do nothing without our eyes fixed on Him, attributing it all to Him so as to give Him glory with and in what we do on a daily basis.

Everything revitalizes our daily commitment, re-directs our constant walking and connects us to the same trunk from which we have sprouted, to the Lasallian Trunk in which we are grounded **together and by association** to promote educational works with burning zeal and the spirit of faith.

# Presentation of the La Salle Educational Fraternity – France

M. Laurent Vrignon &  
Brother Jacques-Vincent le Dréau

Living the La Salle Educational Fraternity means that educators, teachers, staff, Brothers and Laypeople daily live Lasallian Spirituality and come together regularly for three periods: an educational reflection in the light of the Gospel and of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, a prayer period, and a time of conviviality at a meal prepared by one of the participants.

Understanding the La Salle Educational Fraternity within the network of France today:

In France there are presently 45 fraternities in the whole network, among them three on Reunion Island. The fraternities include members of various institutions, which meet several times in the year.

And yet, the fraternities "produce" nothing so to speak. There is no reporting, they are not intended to write educational, spiritual or other texts or perform specific actions. What are they then?

The fraternities are intended to give a time and a place for members to re-read their mission, to share, exchange, and pray in community, to place themselves in view of God so as to "recognize Christ present in the mission".

This requires just taking time to act in this way, blocking out a few dates in the calendar (which is not the easiest thing), and participating in the life of the fraternity.

The fruits expected are not measurable or quantifiable. They are of the order of relationship. My life in fraternity can allow me to think about the attitude I adopt faced with such and such a family, student, colleague, or situation. How I cross the yard, what words I choose in class council, how I'll settle a conflict or a defect in work... of course, it's not always simple. But we also know that it is in the day to day of our relationships that a fraternal approach is lived or not, and sometimes this is a matter of not much at all.

The educational fraternity can also help us to become aware that the educational mission we are involved in can be lived as a commitment to following Christ, as a way of living one's baptism. And it is just this (!) that can produce the La Salle Educational Fraternity.

## Institutional implications of the La Salle Educational Fraternity

In the La Salle Educational Fraternity the spiritual dimension and the institutional dimension are intimately linked and inseparable.

Here we return to an important dimension for us: association. The Brothers are associated (and continue to associate) to hold together the Christian schools. The creation of the La Salle Educational Fraternity pertains to that intuition. The partnership Brothers-laypeople goes a step further by moving toward the creation of a body of Brothers and lay people that bears in the Church the mission of human and Christian education desired by St. John Baptist de La Salle.

After a time of participation in the La Salle Educational Fraternity, members can make the choice to engage themselves in the fraternity, so as to have the desire to live their Christian faith in the light of the Gospel, and to translate this into action in the Lasallian educational mission at the service of all.

In practice, this body is made up of those men and women who make the step of commitment in the La Salle Educational Fraternity. There are today 166 such including

14 Brothers. 20 fraternities have not yet proposed the approach, but the national gathering in Dijon in October 2017 will be an opportunity to do this.

AMEL (Assembly of the Lasallian Educational Mission) is henceforth made up of members of the La Salle Educational Fraternity, which likewise introduces the La Salle Educational Fraternity into a strong institutional dimension. The issue, beyond the fact that the schools of the network are working well, is to have concern for the charism, of the mission of the Church, and there are plans to seek canonical recognition from the Church of this form of association which links people having different states of life.

## Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I would like to recall the proposals made by Brother Jean-Paul Aleth, Visitor of France, at Beauvais in 2011 at the launch of the fraternities:

*"Very simply, but in truth, the Brothers want to remain faithful, humbly but courageously, to the spirit of their foundation for today's world, in the social and ecclesial context of this time." It is true, in our District the Brothers have grown old and are few in numbers in the educational centres (currently a few dozen)! This demographic reality should not hide another dynamic source of vitality. Indeed, for more than thirty years, the Brothers have acknowledged and valued the professional and Church commitment of very many lay people in associating them with leadership responsibilities, training and management of the Lasallian network at local, regional and national levels. The assembly that we form, so imposing in number of participants, is fruit of this movement, of the momentum that flows through the Lasallian world on the five continents. The Brothers of the District intend therefore to continue on the road with you "consecrating their life to God to bring the Gospel into the world of education" even if their presence has become reduced and fragile. This choice is important; other congregations have opted for devolution of guardianship to dioceses. Currently we are unable to continue without you. But there is another fidelity which we want to assure. Brother André-Pierre reminds us of it: for de La Salle, the field of education requires not isolated people each*



*working in his/her own field but a community of educators who sustain "together and by association" as we like to recall, "the mission of instruction, education and evangelization."*

The La Salle Educational Fraternity asks for an adherence to Christ and to the Gospel so as to anchor the mission and to be able to deploy it with all members of educational communities. The La Salle Educational Fraternities are a pillar of the organization of a network of Lasallian institutions having reference to the Gospel and the charism of the Founder, and in this sense, they represent a necessity for the sustainability of the educational work. They are the testimony of a living response of the Church and its members, regardless of their state of life, and in relation to all those participating in the educational mission, and to the educational needs of children and young people of this time.

## Why get involved? Testimonies.

"Having arrived by chance in my institution, I was able to appreciate the concern of the institution for its members: attention, listening, but also rigour and demands. If we receive a lot, it is also a call to give of our best, putting into the hands of the God of daily life the relationship that has to be grown. It is in brotherhood and sisterhood with others that I feel myself moving forward, growing in the footsteps of John Baptist de La Salle and his educational





# The first Signum Fidei fraternity in Togo

Br. José Manuel Sauras

On June the 12th, 2017, the first two members of the Signum Fidei Fraternity in Togo completed the final session of their formation programme which had been spread over two school years. Finally, the moment had arrived for Édith and Honoré to pronounce the formula of consecration and make their commitment as part of the District of the Gulf of Benin.

Who are these first two members of the **Signum Fidei Lomé** (Facebook)?

Édith TOUVI started secondary school as a pupil of the college in Togoville in 1997. After passing the BAC, she opted to study Spanish at the University of Lomé. Throughout her university studies, she kept in contact with the Brothers, since her family lived near our Provincialate house. After university, she taught for one year in a private establishment. Nine years ago, she started to work in the Brothers' school in Togoville as a teacher of Spanish. In 2013, she took part in the AIMEL in Rome. While she was teaching in Togoville, she also started to give classes in Spanish in Lomé University. In 2016, she defended her doctoral thesis with the title "The social condition of Spanish women in the second half of the XIX century, as seen in *Misericordia, Tristana y Doña Perfecta* by Benito Pérez Galdós". In May 2017, at the personal invitation of Brother Superior General, she took part in the symposium for Lasallian women in Latin America which was held in Saltillo, Mexico.

Honoré SODOGA studied philosophy, and after teaching for a short time in a private establishment in Lomé, he joined the staff of the Colegio de Togoville as a teacher of philosophy, and has been working there for four years. He is married and has a little daughter named Imelda who is the centre of attention for many of the college's pupils, especially during Sunday mass in the parish church. He has now started work on his doctoral thesis. The title will be "A relativist paradigm and the search for objectivity: the need for metaphysics".

Their two year formation programme was drawn up by Edith and Honoré themselves, and the sessions included reflections on the following documents: *Lasallian identity, the tree with seven roots* by Brother Antonio Botana; The Signum Fidei *Style of Life* in the 2013 version, which gives an outline of the characteristics of the Fraternity; *An educational proposition, St Jean-Baptiste de la Salle* by Brother Edgar Hengemüle; *St Jean-Baptiste de la Salle and the Saints of the Institute; The doctrine on the Laity* in the texts of Vatican II; the encyclical *Laudato si'* by Pope Francis; *The Social teaching of the Church*. Other documents will be studied in the future, including the Institute publications concerning the Lasallian Family, Association and Mission.

Edith and Honoré are currently in the process of thinking about the possibility of creating some educational activity proper to their Fraternity. Their main idea centres around literacy for adults, but their thoughts are still under consideration.



## **What about the future?**

**There are some young teachers and members of the administrative staff who are showing an interest. In addition, Edith and Honoré are available to talk about the Signum Fidei Fraternity in our District to the staffs**

**of other Lasallian establishments in Togo and Benin. The coming academic year will no doubt bring about more specific ideas for possible steps in the future.**



# A vocation without frontiers

Br. Edwin Arteaga Tobón, FSC

Being asked to write about my vocation, about myself I have resisted until now. All my books and articles were for the benefit of my students and the Brothers of my community. From the beginning of this composition... I felt that the best title would be “Brother without Borders” or “*A Vocation without Frontiers*” and it will be a rough outline with many points of suspension.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Frontier: from Colombia to France and discovering French culture

Young Lasallian aspirant in the District of Medellín, Colombia, Brother Antonio Maria Lozano, Assistant Counselor to the then Superior General, asked for volunteers to be “Missionary Brothers.” I was asked then, in December, 1960, to cross the first frontier and at 16 years of age, at the peak of adolescence, I was at Saint-Maurice l’Exil (France)... A strong emotional and cultural shock. But I wanted to be a missionary Brother. After a two year novitiate at Bordighera (Italy) I landed in Beirut, Lebanon for the scholasticate.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Frontier: from France to Lebanon and discovering the Arab culture

It was necessary to learn Arabic as quickly as possible but as there are “two” Arabic languages the frontier crossing was much harder and difficult. The spoken or common Arabic of the Eastern Mediterranean and the literary or classical Arabic used to communicate in the religious, economic and cultural Arab world. What an incredible

discovery! This can overwhelm one at 20 years of age, but one learns, and the horizons of the mind and heart widen to infinity. Teaching catechism classes in Arabic transformed me into the missionary Brother I wished to be. I was then sent to Jaffa. It was not a desirable place to be given the prevailing political conditions. But this was specifically pointing to my next frontier.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Frontier: from Lebanon to the Holy Land and discovering the Jewish culture

At that time our school in Jaffa had a multi-cultural school population: 70% Jewish, 20% Arab (Christians and Muslims) and 10% foreign, sons of diplomats or technical personnel invited by the government. Half of the day’s classes were given in Hebrew (with a view to obtaining the local baccalaureate) and the other half in French (for those wanting to achieve the desired French baccalaureate)... To communicate with the locals I had to learn Hebrew, It was another frontier to be crossed discovering the Jewish culture. By a curious decision of the Superiors I was sent to study Hebrew for four years at Jerusalem’s Hebrew University. I wanted to study the Bible and psychology...but, luckily the Divine Providence inspired the Vatican to open Bethlehem University and some De La Salle Christian Brothers would be in charge of its animation. Surprisingly, I was called to teach Hebrew in this place where it was not expected that students would request that service...being Palestinians. Eight unforgettable years were spent half-time at La Salle, Jerusalem (French and catechesis in Arabic) and half-time teaching Hebrew at Bethlehem University... But a scholarship from the Brothers of La Salle University, obtained thanks to the support of Brother Miguel Campos, was opening the door to another frontier.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Frontier: Discovering the American world, i.e., of the United States

In two years and two summers I completed my Master’s Degree (M.A.) in Theology. It was what I had wanted to do years before. It was also a sociological experience with my American lay colleagues and friends at the University and with three other student Brothers in the same field. The return to Israel / Palestine allowed me to cross

another frontier in an unexpected way. The one that led me to the world of the truly poor.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Frontier: the young poor delinquents of Nazareth, Galilee**

The State of Israel had asked the Brothers to take charge of a reformatory for young offenders. That is what the community did between 1965 and 1995. Being part of the Israeli Arab minority, the state seemed not to have sufficient personnel or the will to administer it directly. Without any particular preparation but with the Lasallian charism the Brothers put themselves to the task, during 30 years...I never had the least idea that I “would end up in the jail” of Nazareth, but God who guides all with gentleness and tenderness arranged for the Superiors to send me there as Director General. I went up to Jerusalem to sign on but did so for only a year. I stayed six years. I learned many virtues there. I learned to look with mercy on youths crushed by evil and abandoned by parents. I also saw wickedness close up, the hatred of young people... With the closing of this charismatic work of ours another frontier would open for me.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Frontier: The discovery of my Latin American roots**

I had departed at the age of 16, having barely left adolescence... A year and a half of transition in the Medellín District’s youth and vocation ministry. Then four years as Novice Master for young men coming from various Latin American countries. Then various years of teaching in our university, the Lasallian University Corporation and the Pontifical University Three years as rector of a large school in Pereira (Colombia). One year as Director of the De La Salle Scholasticate in Quito, Ecuador. All this brought me closer to what I had not ceased to be, a Latin American Brother, of Colombian origin.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Frontier: my permanent internationalization in the Generalate**

I have enough humor to realize that I will go beyond this

frontier : “I’ve been archived!” I told my friends when I related that I was being called to Rome for six years. as Institute Archivist. Internationally I had it all...Today I am at the Generalate as a translator and responsible for Translation Services. I see in these works many barriers and frontiers broken through. We learn much about the management and running of our beloved Institute. Prudence, solidarity, discretion, silence and prayer for all that is happening on the different frontiers of the Lasallian world... The remaining frontiers I have to cross are those prepared by the Lord for me... as I go along growing old...

**“Thank you, Lord, for having taken me from frontier to frontier, from one commitment to another.”**

And what will all of this say to a young person uneasy about the vocation of a De La Salle Brother? He would like to be a Brother but.... Here are his frontiers: fear of a long commitment, lifelong, of what seems to limit his freedom, his sexuality, and his undertakings, of “what will my family and friends say...

“Young man, put your hand in the hand of Jesus. He will lead you where He wants you to serve. He is the Way without borders, the Truth and the Life. I will accompany you with my prayers.”



# Summer Vocation Ministry Programs in the District of San Francisco New Orleans

The District of San Francisco New Orleans (SFNO) organizes its approach to vocation ministry around its commitment to promoting and nurturing a culture of vocation throughout its 24 apostolates and 17 Brothers communities. The District's Office of Vocation Ministry and Office of Education collaborate to create and offer vibrant District-wide experiences of faith, service, and community, with specific programs, activities, and resources designed to provide vocation discernment information, support, and accompaniment. Each summer, the two Offices invite both young men who have expressed an interest in the life of the Brothers and students who are involved in advancing Lasallian mission and leadership in their schools to deepen their understanding of Lasallian living through two initiatives: the Contact and Aspirant Live-in Summer Ministry Experience and the Young Lasallian Summer Gatherings.

## Contact and Aspirant Live-in Summer Ministry Experience

Each summer young men in the District of San Francisco New Orleans discernment programs have an opportunity to live in community and serve at the local apostolate. This allows these young men to immerse themselves in community and ministry. The District's Office of Vocation Ministry identifies communities and ministries where these young men can experience vibrant community life and a Lasallian apostolate that directly serves the poor. Contacts and Aspirants commit themselves for a one to five-week period where they spend the time teaching and further engaging themselves in the Lasallian mission. The

apostolic ministry is supported by living in community with Brothers and other discerners. In this way, they are able to better understand the dynamics of community life, including the importance of the community's prayer life. The summer live-in ministry experience provides the young men context for their discernment by directly



sharing in faith, service, and community. Finally, in addition to serving in District ministries, Contacts and Aspirants also have the opportunity to participate in an international Lasallian mission immersion experience at Bahay Pagasa in the Philippines.

The District of San Francisco New Orleans Live-in Summer Ministry Experience seeks to foster a culture of encounter where young men are able to experience the Lasallian educational mission through its evangelizing power and further discover God's call for their lives. In the words of Pope Francis, "Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God. Whenever our eyes are opened to acknowledge the other, we grow in the light of faith and knowledge of God. If we want to advance in the spiritual life, then, we must constantly be missionaries (Evangelii Gaudium, 272).

What follow are thoughts from young men who recently participated in the summer live-in ministry experience:

I feel as though summer ministry has helped not only grow in my faith, but to grow as a person. Working with the students has allowed me to see the mission of the Founder as it applies to the real world. It has allowed me to experience compassion and hope as I am a witness to

these students' growth. (SFNO Contact, 20)

My experience this summer was one of self-reflection and learning. I learned that by serving Christ through the religious life was not just about praying and forgetting oneself but of using oneself to better the community and in doing so serving Christ. Examples include: caring for one another, teaching students, being an older brother figure to students, and treating others as family.

During my summer ministry I learned a lot about myself. I learned that I am a very patient person and that I always try to help the students who give me a hard time. It's always wonderful to know that they are doing well and that they know that you are there for them. The experience affirmed that I am following the right path in my discernment. (SFNO Contact, 20)

Working this summer at De La Salle Academy was a wonderful experience. Being able to work with the students and another Residential Aspirant is everything I imagined the Brothers vocation to be. Living out my ministry in a great community, that is committed towards students, each other, and their relationship with God, is an experience I will not forget. (SFNO Aspirant, 24)





One of the lines that I feel captures my understanding of the Lasallian mission as I experience it in the Philippines is, "walk by faith not by sight." Everyday brought forth a moment in which we were challenged physically and/or emotionally, just as the Founder said, "In the light of faith you see things quite differently." Those moments of challenge were turned into moments of growth. (SFNO Contact, 21)

Last summer, I spent six weeks teaching summer school at two Lasallian schools. From the moment I opened the door at both schools, I could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. I had visited De La Salle Academy previously with the purpose of moving forward as an Aspirant with the De La Salle Christian Brothers. Very quickly it was made clear to me, that this is truly God's work and I was fortunate enough to be used as an instrument of God's purpose. It was not difficult to see the presence of God in the children and staff. Working with the students at De La Salle Academy and San Miguel was nothing less than a gift, and as such, my way to appreciate this gift was to put it to good use. (SFNO Aspirant, 40)

Volunteering at Bahay Pag-asa Youth Center in the Philippines this summer was an incredible experience and opportunity. Being able to see the Brothers at work in

a different part of the world only reaffirmed what I had discovered in Haiti a year prior. The work, though different, shares the same spirit and zeal as the mission we carry out in the United States every day. (SFNO Postulant, 22)

## **Young Lasallian Summer Gatherings**

In addition to the programs geared toward young men open to discerning a call to join the Brothers, our District's Young Lasallian programs provided Young Lasallians from around San Francisco New Orleans with opportunities to come together as a part of the larger Lasallian family. During the summer, our Lasallian Youth Assembly (LYA) and Lasallian Student Leaders (LSL) gatherings bring together hundreds of high school students, educators, and Lasallian Collegians to explore and grow in their understanding and experience of our Lasallian culture of vocation.

Lasallian Youth Assembly is a one-week event at which students are engaged in prayer, reflection, service, education sessions around themes of social justice, and Catholic social teaching. After participating in the Assembly, Lasallian Youth are challenged to promote a

culture of faith, service, and community in their home communities.

The location of the Assembly usually takes place on the campus of a Catholic college or university on the west coast of the United States. The location of the Assembly varies each year. This year's Assembly took place in New Orleans, Louisiana and featured the theme, "I Was in Prison and You Visited Me...Mercy Without Borders." Participants were able to learn more regarding some of the challenges and realities encountered within the United States' criminal justice system by accused or incarcerated persons and their advocates.

Lasallian Student Leaders brings together those student leaders elected by their peers, appointed by faculty or invited by administrators for a week of leadership, mission, and faith development. The program seeks to equip student leaders with an understanding of the inherent responsibility they have for the Lasallian Educational Mission as they take up their respective leadership roles on campus. Students are introduced to key concepts and philosophies that will guide their decision-making processes, including five core principles of a Lasallian school. They also acquire practical

leadership skills and understandings, as well as establish working and collaborative relationships with other Lasallian student leaders from around the District.

This year's Lasallian Student Leaders gathering took place at Saint Mary's College in Moraga, California. Over 180 students from 15 high schools around the District gathered to focus on the theme of servant leadership, examining it through the lens of the Lasallian core principles that SFNO schools celebrate and by which their members strive to live. Specialized input, skills training, and planning practicums gave the students the tools they needed to begin to integrate their experiences of faith, community, and service to animate Lasallian living in their schools in new and inspiring ways.

Through these summer programs, as well as those taking place throughout the rest of the year, the SFNO District's Offices of Vocation Ministry and Education continue to advance understanding of the District's culture of vocations and accompaniment by increasing awareness of the vocation of the De La Salle Christian Brother; expanding opportunities for broad discernment of Lasallian vocation; and enhancing collaboration with and among local ministries, the Region, and the wider Church.





# Volunteering in RELAN

*In the United States, the Lasallian Volunteers spend a year living in community with the Brothers and serving in ministries to those on the margins, especially young people. Here are some of their motivations for participating in the Lasallian Volunteers.*



“I want to be the kind of person that dedicates their life to giving, helping, and fighting for people who need the most help. With this hope for my future self, I sincerely believe becoming a Lasallian Volunteer will be a life changing experience” (Amy Siebenmorgen)

“I want to serve those who feel forgotten. I want to serve those who need inspiration and hope. I want to serve those who need the Word of God in their lives” (Baraka Douglas)

“I desire to have a positive impact in the lives of the young, giving of my time and talents” (Brady Fehringer)

“I feel that I am simply in love with the mission, and I don’t feel that it is done with me yet” (Carly Cohen)



“What motivates me most to become a Lasallian Volunteer is the desire to grow culturally, the opportunity to live in community” (David Morera)

“To be involved in making a positive and sustainable community both individually and communally is the humblest way of being that I know how to serve” (Emily Redfern)

“I believe that continuing to live in a Lasallian community will help me in the ongoing process of discovering my vocation” (J.T. Taylor)

“Through spiritual direction and personal prayer I have found that more than pinpointing a career, my vocation is a discernment of the ways my gifts and my passions can be used for the benefit of my community” (Jaclyn Ross)

“I would be so excited to be given the opportunity to serve with the Lasallian Volunteers for I feel that I would be able to use my gifts to live out my passions and grow as a person alongside others” (Jessica Kaluzny)

“To gain a better understanding of the Lasalian core values, to get a deeper perspective in various communities and culture, to gain experience in a school setting, to become more independent and hopefully gain a better understanding on my own personal future” (JinSu Seo)

“Lasallian Volunteers will be an opportunity for me to grow in my faith while living my passion” (John Tubbs)

“By applying to Lasallian Volunteers, I’m hoping to acquire and hone the skills needed to teach and to grow as a person and a Christian” (Jumari Callaway)

“It is my deepest desire to bring educational opportunities to children who are marginalized” (Kelsey Stenzel)

“I want to be a Lasallian Volunteer because I want to join the community of educators that helped make me unapologetically me” (Krystiana Schaffer)

“I wish to serve in this program because I wish to give back to those who truly need it. I wish to be someone that can help students overcome their challenges and look to the future with their heads held up high” (Liam Wintroath)

“I am at a time in my life where I need to go further, discover other realities and support a different group to what I’m used to working with” (Lidia Carreras Ochoa)

“I think becoming a Lasallian Volunteer would provide a good opportunity to take a breath after I graduate college, experience being in a community, and lending my time to help others” (Maddi Larsen)

“I want to be able to experience the world in so many different ways, as a teacher, as a student, and as part of a community” (Madison Caropino)

“I want to teach and I want to learn. I want to do something that makes me feel like I’m making a difference, not because I did much but because I showed up; I want to rediscover the value of presence without the necessity for filling all the blank spaces with activity” (Madison Chastain)

“I want to become a Lasallian Volunteer because I want to make a difference I want to change someone’s life in a positive way” (Quaneesha Shields)

“My faith, convictions about service, interests in others and community, and experiences with children in poverty I believe have led me to pursue becoming a Lasallian Volunteer” (Rakesha Gray)

*Learn more about the Lasallian Volunteers in the United States at [lasallianvolunteers.org](http://lasallianvolunteers.org)*



# Young people and Lasallian vocation

**Keane Palatino**

*International Coordinator  
for Young Lasallians*

***“For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” (Matthew 7: 8)***



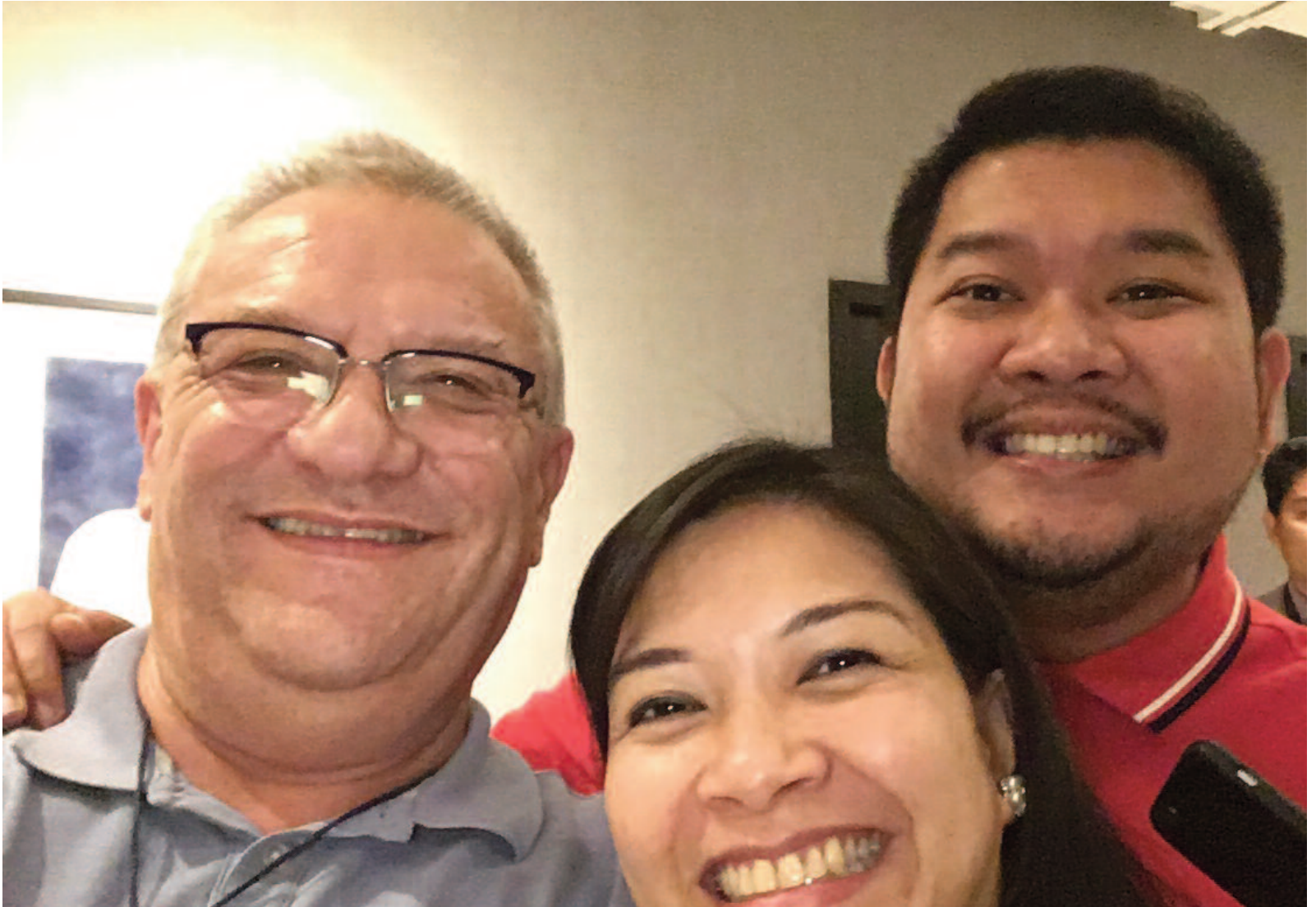
Growing up in a Lasallian institution back in the Philippines, I have been blessed to be accompanied by educators and formators who have contributed a lot to who and what I am today. The experience of being part of a Lasallian community is something I will always be grateful for because it had gifted me with a sense of vocation. Up until now, I continue to find joy, meaning and purpose as part of our Lasallian educational mission despite the many challenges that go with it.

## **A beginning that I did not imagine**

Never have I thought that the small encounters or the seemingly insignificant experiences back then would have nurtured my commitment and my desire to live the Lasallian charism. What I see now as my vocation - to be engaged in the ministry of forming and accompanying young people, comes from a profound experience of God's love manifested through the people who have touched my life in one way or another. To summarize my own experience in a La Salle school is to say that I have never felt alone and that there will always be someone there for you, especially in trying times... that feeling of being loved and accepted as part of a family. These same experiences I continue to carry with me as a source of inspiration in trying to live this vocation of ministering to the young. *What have I received and gained from all these experiences that I am now called and invited to share with others?*

## **Passing on the passion**

Passing on the passion is a phrase that I often hear often from our Young Lasallians in Singapore and Malaysia. This phrase, for me, summarizes the whole idea of an invitation to those young people who have been inspired by the Lasallian charism and mission - to share to others the sense of meaning and purpose they've acquired from their own formative journeys. What is very interesting to listen to, whenever I get the chance to speak to Young Lasallians from different parts of the Institute, is that common story of being touched and in some ways, transformed through their involvement in the Lasallian mission. These are the very experiences that can contribute to strengthening a culture of Lasallian vocations. *How do we make more meaningful the*



*experiences of Young Lasallians, both in our schools and outside; and how do we continue to guide them in discerning and considering a vocational journey thereafter?*

***Every journey has a secret destination of which the traveler is unaware.***  
**(Martin Buber)**

The quote from Martin Buber stated above speaks about the mystery of where we are all led to, and this is what makes it all the more exciting for me! While we give

importance to what and where the end goal is, there is a constant invitation to look at the journey itself and those we walk with, enriching ourselves and learning from one another in the process.

Having the opportunity to work from the center of the Institute for the second year now has made me discover to a whole new level, the richness of our diversity - our different ways of doing and understanding. But what amazes me really, is that despite of all these differences, we continue to celebrate our common way of being Lasallian and share in one mission of providing quality Lasallian education and formative experiences to those entrusted to us.

This is our identity, our mission, and this is our Lasallian vocation!

# Prayer

Br. Enrico Muller



Father-Mother of all, men and women, of all creation, the fruit of your being who is Love, you dared to create fraternity, but we, your sons and your daughters, we crushed it;

With Cain against Abel, the first brothers, his envy has caused a murder, but you, in your love, you have continued to protect Cain so that every person will always be worthy of fraternity.

In the Tower of Babel, where we sought unity based on uniformity and homologation, you chose the beauty of the conviviality of differences, the unique wealth of each, the multitude of races, of wisdoms, of genders of, spiritualities, of ethnicities, of cultures ...;

With Jacob and Esau, whose need and greed have cancelled the precious birthright, you have also led your servant struggling with you, to make him an instrument of peace and the father of a multitude.

To the house of Leah and Rachel, you have brought fidelity and boundless fertility, where law and passion only provoked waiting and infertility.

In the house of Joseph and his brothers, where jealousy has killed fraternity, your providence has preserved it, with compassion and prophecy, for the salvation of all.

Creator, you have dropped as a seed in our heart the longing for fraternity.

Christ, always crucified and risen, you brought us fraternity, with service and compassion, with mercy and hospitality, with hope and listening.

Jesus of Nazareth you founded the community surpassing the distinction between men and women, inviting them to your school of discipleship where the only rule is love. You broke family ties and exceeded religious norms: support us in the creation of fraternity which is the first

Good News, capable of transforming the world that we now sharing and... usurping

Holy Spirit, communion of the Father and the Son, who wanted to respond to the "lack of brotherhood in our world", calling on Lasallian vocations to witness to fraternity, service, communion and unity in diversity.

In front of us, the Lasallian Family, traces the border always new, and asking for Fraternity, so that we can only cross these frontiers cross if we leave the sure limits that we have established for our comfort; then our communities will be places where the experience of God will be shared with young people by welcoming them.

For this we establish educational centers as fraternity schools, meeting places for the exchange of different

generations, different religions and traditions, vocations that must always be discovered; trying to reach those who have been marginalized, by us, in the deserts, in the peripheries of our world.

Because the poor, the young and the vulnerable are your real presence and our saviors; they make our sign of brotherhood prosper, as a sign of the Kingdom of our Papa-Mama in Heaven, who has always dared to be and live brotherly.

Trinity, divine fraternity, you who came and lived among us, making us brothers and sisters of all, give us the joy of living together your Love, the only one who calls, sends and saves.

