



lasalleorg

#WeAreLaSalle



lasallian  
Evocations

5

# CONTENTS

Introduction - Br. Felix Joseph, F.S.C.	3
Lasallian Vocations, without an expiration date - Br. Rafa Matas, F.S.C.	5
Culture of Vocations: Vocation Ministers and the Cultivating and Nurturing of Young People's Vocation Journeys - Br. Angelo Dominic S. Paragas, F.S.C., Mr. Ritchie Bongcaron	7
Question and Answer with Brother Javier Hansen, F.S.C. - District of San Francisco-New Orleans	11
Lasallian Vocational Expedition 2018 - Brazil	13
Regional CIL on Evangelization, Pastoral and Catechesis	14
France, ministry of life choices - Br. Jacques-Vincent Le Dréau	15
Vitality in Vows - Midwest District	16
Lasallian Vocation Symposium. Deepening and Discerning God's Call - Mr. Chris Swain	16
I spoke with young people about the vocation and they asked me: "Why did you become a Brother?" - Br. Hermann Kabore	17
My Lasallian Journey - Ms. Bernice Morillo	18
Personal story - Liana Romero	19
Testimony - Sister Ana Claudia Barbosa	20
How did you find yourself in the Lasallian Family? - Yolanda Franco	21
Prayer for vocations	22

# INTRODUCTION

*Lasallians throughout the world will come together in 2019 to celebrate the Year of Lasallian Vocations with the theme "De La Salle: One Heart, One Commitment, One Life."*

*The Year of Lasallian Vocations marks the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Saint John Baptist De La Salle's entry into eternal life and celebrates the impact of the mission he started. The yearlong celebration will take place during the 2018-2019 liturgical year, beginning on December 2, 2018, with Advent and concluding on November 24, 2019, with the feast of Christ the King.*

One ongoing hope of our vocation ministry efforts is to accelerate our thirst and energy for witnessing and promoting Lasallian vocations. Internationally, a large number of efforts and activities focus on reaching this aim, for all Lasallians, and especially for the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The publishing of the Vocation Bulletins are a collective, honest, and hopeful effort to encourage vocation ministry from the Center of the Institute.

In our last issue, the fourth Vocation Bulletin, we shared best practices from around the Institute, including different ways of accompanying young people, involving Brothers communities, Lasallian ministries, Brothers and partners, involvement in parishes, and utilizing vocation teams.

In this fifth Vocation Bulletin, you will find reflections, testimonies and activities around the world that focus on fostering a culture of vocations and Lasallian vocations.

General Councilor, Brother Rafael Matas, FSC reflects on our Lasallian vocation being born of God, living in God and going towards God. He shares our common call to keep walking, in creative fidelity, living and proclaiming the Good News to the ends of the earth.

## Vocations 5 - January 2019

Editor: International Commission for Lasallian Vocations

Editorial coordinator: Br. Felix Joseph [jfelix@lasalle.org](mailto:jfelix@lasalle.org) |

Graphic design: Luigi Cerchi [lcerchi@lasalle.org](mailto:lcerchi@lasalle.org) |

**Brothers of the Christian Schools – Rome – Communications and Technology Service |**

[www.lasalle.org](http://www.lasalle.org) | Facebook: [www.fb.com/lasalleorg](https://www.facebook.com/lasalleorg) -

Twitter: [@lasalleorg](https://twitter.com/lasalleorg) - Instagram: [lasalleorg](https://www.instagram.com/lasalleorg)



#SomosLaSalle | #WeAreLaSalle | #NousSommesLaSalle



To have a better understanding of culture, Gelo FSC and Ritchi recommend that we should look at some of the ordinary signs or bearers of culture, namely: space, time, language, heroes that are honored, and systems of reward.

A question and answer with Brother Javier Hansen, FSC, one of three representatives from the United States who participated in the Pre-Synod Gathering in Rome in early March 2018, reiterates that “Young people need to continue to be involved and aspire to leadership and participate.”

Also included are various activities from around the world and testimonies of Lasallians.

With current trend of various challenges and realities of the Church, Pope Francis called for an extra-ordinary Synod on “Youth, Faith and Discernment. He has been insisting that *it is not enough to speak TO youth, or ABOUT youth. We need to LISTEN—HEAR FROM THE YOUNG.* We need dynamism of the young, out-of-the-box thinking, generosity and daring. Together, with deep mutual respect and much patient listening, we can truly construct something beautiful—a more humane and humanizing world. In doing so, we can also learn to be Church in new ways, more in line with what that unconventional young man from Nazareth showed us so many years ago. By **including the young, listening to them**, and guiding them, we shall be protagonists of the vision of Pope Francis, our good shepherd.

Once a Lasallian! Always a Lasallian!

Brother Félix Joseph, F.S.C.

## LASALLIAN VOCATIONS, WITHOUT AN EXPIRATION DATE

BR. RAFA MATAS, GENERAL COUNCILLOR, F.S.C.

We are in God’s hands, the best hands we can be in. Every Lasallian vocation is born of God, develops from the experience of God. We come from God, we live in God and we go towards God.

It is not we who have the power to put an expiration date on the Lasallian vocation, in any of its forms, in the world and in the Church. That depends only on God. We have not been called to be prophets of calamities but faithful witnesses of the love of God for children, young people and adults of our educational establishments, especially those who need us the most.

### What does this mean to us, then?

*It is up to us to be Lasallians.*

Brothers, Sisters, Lay partners ... associated to undertake together the mission to which we have been sent. We do it with a creative spiritual life, shared and expressed by faith, fraternity and service. It is all about opening ourselves to the Mystery and invoking Him in the secret of our heart. The **challenge** is to cultivate our **interiority**. Our Founder would tell us today: “Try to live with the greatest possible interior application ...” (Letter 10.2)

*Do I hear Him? Do I spend time with Him?*

It is up to each one of us to turn our eyes to the Lord, to put our lives in his hands, letting our hearts be touched in gratitude and his mercy. The **challenge** lies in our ability to de-center ourselves and **put Him at the center**, to let Him really be our God by setting our “gods” aside or, in the words of our Founder:

“One is not happy in this world but when one does things with a view to God.” (Letter nº 88,1)

*Do I make room in my life for God? What place does He occupy in my life?*

*It is up to each Lasallian* to make known the beauty of the Gospel as a life journey whose center is the following of Jesus, who tells each one of us, Follow me! It is not about religious beliefs or observations but to follow Jesus without explanations, reasons or motives ... The **challenge** is to **discover the will of God** in my life or, in the words of the Founder: “Strive, as the example of Jesus Christ ... in not wanting but what God wants, when and how he wants it” (MD 24,1,2).

*What is my life’s true call? What place does God occupy in it?*

*It is up to all of us* to be willing to leave our riches, our zones of security and comfort. Perhaps the experience of the rich young man of the Gospel is more frequent than we imagine. The **challenge** is to **live fully trusting in the Lord** or, in the words of our Founder, in a “complete abandonment in the hands of God” (Letter nº 34,1).

*Do I abandon myself in the hands of God or rather in my safety?*

*It is our responsibility to assume, as educators, our moral responsibility* “to challenge the globalization of indifference” as expressed by Pope Francis (17 May 2018) and to strive to serve with a clear option to fight against injustice, to care for creation and family, to develop the vocational culture and

personal accompaniment. The **challenge** is to **live** our **commitment today** with our mission in an updated way, for the present moment because, in the words of our Founder: "Consider that you are not in this world, nor in your state, but to do good" (CT 16, 1,5).

*Is my educational commitment for today or is it rather still anchored in the past?*

If we strive to grow from within, having Jesus in the center, trying to discover his will for each one, trusting in Him, living with updated zeal, we may awaken in our educational environments the question about the Mystery that will allow us to pass from indifference to the capacity to give oneself, to reciprocal commitment, to generous openness towards others. Without it, it is difficult for the question "What do you want from me, Lord?" to be born in our young people, and it is also difficult that he may tell them, as He said to Peter, "You, follow me" (Jn 21:22).

The Lasallian Reflection No. 4 that the General Council offers us for these months, reminds us that "a committed heart is only possible from a full life and in constant search, able to overcome contradictions and inconsistencies because one is known in the hands of God" and the end of that search is not written anywhere, it has no expiration date because all life becomes an incessant search for God, a desire to respond to him until expressing "I adore in everything ..." of our life.

It corresponds to us to rekindle our inner fire, to learn from the experience of the Emmaus and to feel that our heart burn within us because it feels touched by the Lord. Can we "touch the hearts" of those who are by our side without our being inflamed by their

presence, by the love of God? Difficult!

Every Lasallian vocation exists because God continues to call today so many people who are attracted to our charism, our way of life, our mission. Perhaps we need to ask the Lord more strongly to touch our hearts and ignite in them the passion to follow him unconditionally, the strength of his love.

Look, at the Center, there has not come any Whatsapp from God saying "this is the end of your vocation. Thanks for everything". Rather what He has told us through the "body of society" that is, the discernment of all: you have 300 years of life, 2019 comes as a year of great possibilities, fill your heart with the fire of the Spirit, without fear, and with creativity because we have many years of life ahead. Keep walking, continue in creative fidelity living and proclaiming the Good News to the ends of the earth. Live with joy your vocation and be Lasallians of heart. Do not put an expiration date.



## CULTURE OF VOCATIONS: VOCATION MINISTERS AND THE CULTIVATING AND NURTURING OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOCATION JOURNEYS

Culture is popularly defined as the *"integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge of succeeding generation"*. In the Lasallian Family, the Brothers' vocation has been transmitted from one generation to the next. More than 300 years after St. John Baptist De La Salle gathered the first group of teachers who would eventually become Brothers, the Lasallian Family has continued to witness the entry of men who take the journey to discern whether the Brothers' life is for them.

What factors have helped us in transmitting or, better yet, cultivating the Brothers' vocation throughout the years? What are the challenges that are currently faced by young people? To answer these questions, we offer our reflections from our experiences as vocations ministers from the Lasallian Family in the Philippines, and integrate them with the Gospel story of the rich young man (Mk 10:17-24).

Furthermore, to understand our culture of Lasallian vocations, we will also use some of the reflections of His Eminence Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, Archbishop of Manila, at the 51st International Eucharistic Congress in 2015. He shared that if we would like to have a better understanding of culture, we should look at some of the ordinary signs or bearers of culture, namely: space, time, language, heroes that are honored, and systems of reward.

### SPACE

Cardinal Tagle brought the audience's attention to the arrangement and use of space as indicator of culture. He asked them to look at their parishes, "How far is the first pew from the sanctuary?" In Mk 10:17-24, we have witnessed how Jesus made use of space. When the rich young man ran up to him, Jesus allowed him to come near. Despite being faced with a stranger, Jesus willingly engaged the young man engaged the young man in a dialogue.

In the Philippines, the Brothers have been generally viewed as people who are distant and unreachable because they are often associated with their work as school administrators. However, during the early 2000's the Brothers have made a conscious effort to make people realize that the Brothers are not "up there" but "with them". This is the period when the Brothers, especially those who held administrative roles, took upon themselves the



Mr. Ritchie Bongcaron

role of vocation promoters. A few years later, the efforts of the Brothers bore fruit with the entry of Young Brothers.

At present, the big space between the Brothers and the Lasallian Family continues to narrow as the Brothers take on roles like classroom teachers, student organization moderators or school animators that are more grounded with others. In addition, while having physical spaces like vocation offices in the schools, as well as dormitories and other facilities for vocation promotion activities in the Brothers' communities, young people are also brought to a closer understanding and deeper appreciation of the Brothers' vocation through

their interaction with the teachers and other members of our schools who have passionately shared the responsibility of promoting the Brothers' vocation.

### TIME

Just as a seed needs time to grow into a fruit-bearing tree, time also plays a vital role in the culture of vocations. We can only imagine how busy Jesus must have been when the rich young man interrupted him. Yet, amidst all his teaching and healing engagements, Jesus stopped to dialogue with the young man.

In the Philippines, apart from the national vocations director who is assigned full-time vocation work, the Young Brothers as well as Lasallian Partners take on the role of being vocation ministers alongside their work as teachers,

administrative staff or even administrators. Given the demands that these roles entail, one may say that to be with young people just to do nothing but converse with them might be a waste of time.

Indeed, it is a waste of time and it is this *wasting of time* that vocation ministers can discover their stories...the joys and the struggles that young people experience when it comes to their vocation journey. It is also in these moments with young people when the curiosity about the Brothers' vocation is slowly cultivated and richly nurtured. This curiosity, in time, might then bloom into a decision to continue discerning the Brothers' vocation.

### LANGUAGE

What was in Jesus that made the rich young man approach Jesus in the first place? Was it his wisdom? Was it how he carried himself? Could it be both? In communicating with the young man, we see that Jesus was, indeed, filled with wisdom. He knew what was lacking in the rich young man. Jesus also knew what challenge or invitation to give so that the young man could attain what he desired. And yet, even whatever his response may have been, Jesus, without using any word just looked at him and conveyed his love for the young man.

Amid compounding issues that young people face, especially when it comes to their self-esteem or sense of worth and acceptance, vocation ministers are invited to convey our willingness to listen with empathy, compassion and love like Jesus. However, while Jesus had nothing but love for the young man, He also did not hesitate to challenge the him to go and sell everything that he owns. As we communicate with empathy, compassion and love, there are also times when we are called to challenge or even correct young people to help their growth.

### HEROES

Jesus, in His dialogue with the rich young man, has presented one hero - God. When the rich



Br. Angelo Dominic S. Paragas, F.S.C

young man called him good, He was quick to point out that "no one is good except God alone". When His disciples had doubts about how we can be saved, Jesus said with convincing faith, "With God, nothing is impossible".

In the culture of vocation, we realize that, at the end of the day, the hero is God. Ultimately, the vocation journey of a person is between him/her and God. While the aim of any vocation promotion program is to increase the number of candidates in our congregations, vocation ministers are also reminded of this reality. There will be years when there is

abundance while there will be years of seeming drought. Yet, as vocation ministers, we are called to consistently be the living signs of God. Young people will look at us, messengers, as they consider whether to accept God's invitation for them.

### **SYSTEMS OF REWARD**

Perhaps, a lot of people could commiserate with the young man when he heard Jesus say, "Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven; then come, follow me". Normally, one sells things to gain profit. However, in the rich young man's case, Jesus is asking him to sell to have something to give away. This will now leave him with nothing. Perhaps, that is the reason why the rich young man decided to leave with a face marred with sadness.

In our experience of accompanying young people, the idea of giving up their so-called riches does not always sit well with anyone. Practically speaking, who would want to give up riches in the form of wealth, power, control, or even esteem? And yet, similar to the rich young man, all of us often fall to the temptation of just seeing the "giving up" part, thus missing the "gaining" part. That is why, it is also our mission to make sure that we can instill and nurture the Spirit of Faith in the people we accompany. While the calling to embark on a vocation journey would entail a lot of giving up, it is also important to be reminded that any journey with Jesus does not end with losing everything but rather gaining joys and rewards from God that even our own imagination may not be able to fathom.

### **CLOSING**

Cardinal Tagle defined culture as "the whole complex of forms feeling, thinking and acting shared by a society which allows members of a group to survive". In the end, sustaining a culture of vocation is an invitation not just for the vocations ministers but also for the community to be deeply involved in providing an environment conducive for young people to see deeper meanings of their daily experiences. It is not the work of a few, but it is a ministry that calls for a community to share a part of himself/herself in order for the young to also respond to the invitation that God makes through his interaction with people and through the relationships established along the way.

Vocation ministry after all - before it becomes part of the school community's culture - is God's work made manifest among those who are open to be part of this dynamic, providing the much needed space, where meaningful experiences take place and happen in and through time.

Br. Angelo Dominic S. Paragas, F.S.C.  
Mr. Ritchie Bongcaron

## **QUESTION AND ANSWER WITH BROTHER JAVIER HANSEN, F.S.C. DISTRICT OF SAN FRANCISCO-NEW ORLEANS**

Brother Javier Hansen, FSC was one of three representatives from the United States who participated in the Pre-Synod Gathering in Rome. The Pre-Synod Gathering is a preparatory step for the 2018 Ordinary Synod, *Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment*, a meeting of the Synod of Bishops to be held in October, 2018 at the Vatican.

Currently, Brother Javier, lives and ministers in El Paso, Texas at Cathedral High School, where he teaches religion.

### **How did you discover and discern your vocation?**

I knew I wanted to be a teacher first. Then, in high school (I didn't go to a Lasallian school), inklings of religious life started. When I met the Brothers, at Saint Mary's College, who were both teachers and religious, I thought that was the perfect fit.

At the beginning of my discernment I had curiosity, then through experiencing community and being a teacher, the curiosity wore off and I really liked what I was doing. And I thought, why would you quit doing something you love doing?

### **How did being a Brother shape your experience at the Pre-Synod Gathering?**

Being young and working daily with young people in the classroom, the interactions with my students I was able to carry with me and think about, as Brother we are called to actively listen to young people and take to heart what they say.

Having delegates with different vocation journeys (one married with kids, one single, and myself as religious Brother) I recognized the need to speak for religious vocations. We expressed vocation broadly and also needed to make sure the religious vocation which is valued and significant did not get compromised.

We have a responsibility to advocate for youth issues in the Church and listen to young people.

I am blessed and grateful for this opportunity. A year ago, I couldn't have anticipated any of this would have happened and I've learned so much. It's inspired me and been an incredible opportunity, one I want to pass on and continue to share.

### **What stands out to you from your experience and the document you created?**

I didn't know what to expect when I went to Rome. I was genuinely interested. Young people shared they wanted to be active members of the Church. They wish the Church to better explain its difficult teachings. They expressed a desire that they need a better answer than "it's always been done this way."

As a Brother I've had the opportunity to travel to internationally and one of my observations is that the Brothers in those places, despite different cultural contexts, were the same as my experience with Brothers in the U.S. The same was true of this gathering in regards to how much we have in common as Catholics.

We are all part of the Catholic faith even though we grew up in different contexts. For the most part it seemed we understood each other and the faith issues we were facing. I felt like I was part of a community with the 300 plus other people there. Even though seas and deserts separate us, it was a true unveiling that Catholic does mean universal.

### **Why are you hopeful about religious life today?**

There is a quote, "God always provides enough vocations for any an epoch of time." Education continues to remain a relevant topic in society, and our work is needed. I find that young people are open and appreciate the invitation to consider religious life. I believe religious values and vocations are on the rise. I am hopeful to see what happens in my lifetime.

### **What's a message young people discerning God's call in their life need to hear?**

Don't be afraid to contribute. I am hopeful the synod's focus on the youth is not just a one-time thing. Young people need to continue to be involved and aspire to leadership and participate. We need to be involved and have the courage to participate and be involved.

# **LASALLIAN VOCATIONAL EXPEDITION 2018 - BRAZIL -**

Seven young people from five Brazilian states (AM, PR, RJ, RS and SC) participated in the 2018 Vocational Expedition, between July 13 and 22, in Porto Alegre / RS and Metropolitan Region. The young people went through Lasallian Formation Houses and participated in activities aimed at strengthening their vocation. Group dynamics, training classes, volunteer work in nine educational units, recreation activities, sports and walking were part of the program. Launched in 2014, the Vocation Expedition is an experience that enables the Lasallian Institute to experience the Brother's lifestyle and contributes to the construction of the life project and vocational choices.

The Symbol of the Vocational Expedition is the Compass that points to the search and encounter with God (North), with himself (South), with the other (West) and with nature (East). The entire expedition is geared towards encounters that mark and transform. We heard of meetings with Jesus, with Saint John the Baptist de La Salle and with the Brothers and Collaborators with La Salle.

Following is a testimony for the Vocational Expedition by Brother Superior General, Robert Schieler about his meeting La Salle:

*"I was introduced to the De La Salle Christian Brothers when I entered secondary school in Philadelphia, PA in 1964. At that time there were 45 La Salle Brothers on the faculty! Collectively they inspired me by the joyfulness and their presence to us inside and outside the classroom. When a neighborhood friend decided to join the Brothers, I begin to think about the Brothers life for myself. One week after I graduated from secondary school, in 1968, I entered the Brothers. It was the best decision of my life. For 50 years I have been happy as a Brother. I have met and lived with so many good Brothers in the United States, in the Philippines and here in Rome. They continue to inspire me and to challenge me to be prayerful and attentive to God's successive calls in my life to faithfully meet the needs of today's children and young people, especially those on the margins of society.*

*Prayerful and best wishes for a successful Vocational Expedition Gathering."*

# REGIONAL CIL ON EVANGELIZATION, PASTORAL AND CATECHESIS

From April 22 to May 4, 2018, the first regional CIL on Evangelization, Pastoral and Catechesis was held in the Colombian city of Fusagasugá.

The aim of the CIL was for the participants to identify the regional and local challenges that the socio-economic-political-religious reality presents to Evangelization. Then, begin to design viable and pertinent responses in the field of youth ministry and catechesis.

This CIL, in addition, had some particular objectives, among others: to reinforce the response of the Districts to the orientations of the General Chapter, to share the plans and programs of Evangelization, Pastoral and Catechesis of the Districts of the Region, and to offer new insights in creative responses to the challenges that the Lasallian educational mission has in announcing the good news of Jesus.

All this was possible thanks to the expert speakers and participants who together analyzed realities of today, and offered insights during the workshop.

A total of 24 Brothers, 34 Lay Partners and 3 Guadalupanas Sisters from La Salle, represented the 8 Districts of the RELAL as well as the Institute of the Guadalupanas Sisters of La Salle. The experience was enriched by the participation and presence of the Brothers of the Secretariat for the formation of the Institute, Jesús Rubio and Paulo Dullius; as well as the Brothers of the Regional Community, Paulo Petry, Sergio Leal and Carlos Castañeda.

It is possible to affirm that it was an experience of community life, in which the participants shared faith, lived and strengthened the Lasallian community and reflected on and prepared themselves to better fulfill the Lasallian educational mission: the construction of the Kingdom of God through education.

Let us pray to the Lord, God of life, so that this activity bears much fruit in each of the people who participated, as well as in their educational communities and Districts.

Brother Eder Polido, F.S.C.

# FRANCE, MINISTRY OF LIFE CHOICES

**BR. JACQUES-VINCENT LE DRÉAU**

*Pastoral of life options*

For several years in the District of France, we no longer speak of "Vocation Ministry", but of "Ministry of Life Choices". Why this change? Simply because here in France, the word vocation has a variety of negative connotations and there are a number of young people and adults reluctant to use it.

The ministry of life choices is animated by a team of nine people: 4 Partners and 5 Brothers who meet regularly to exchange ideas, organize events, provide publications to respond to the communities of Brothers and ministries for reflection on the subject.

One of the great achievements was the development of a brochure, presenting the life choice of the Brother. We also created several videos, to present on the Lasallian network and Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

The Brother responsible for the ministry of life choices meets with young adults who inquire about of a commitment to our Institute. He also participates in the meetings of the SNEJV, (National Service for the Evangelization of Youth and Vocations). The Brothers presence as part of SNEJV also is a witness in the Church to the Brothers vocation as part of consecrated religious life. He shares all this with his team.

## **An Evolution.**

The program was an idea that grew from working in an individual way to a much more collaborative effort. This also included a change in thinking. A prayer of the vocations is shared the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month, as well as a diverse information, goes to the communities, to the groups, to the friends of the Brothers and to the National Service of Vocations.

## **Our Reflection.**

After reflection and exchange of ideas, we wanted the ministry of life choices to be at the center of our reflections to help young people find their place in our world. Life choices are everyone's business.

## **Different Efforts.**

- **World Youth Day.** We proposed post baccalaureate students of the of the Lasallian network that they participate in January next to the WYD of Panama. They will be more than 100.
- **Evening reflections "Choosing tomorrow".** "Life in abundance" is a gift from God that we want to share. For each cycle from Kindergarten to Post Baccalaureate, a meeting time adapted to each age is built.
- **For high school students there are reflective evenings on the subject.** "What do I feel called to?"
- **For 3 days will take place in Paris - Maison de la Salle: program, among others, includes.**
- **Presentation by Saint John Baptist de La Salle, "Does John Baptist de La Salle have something to say to me?"**
- **Encounter with witnesses.- To be Lasallian, Lasallian, national, international network.**



## VITALITY IN VOWS

Every year, the Midwest Brothers celebrate the jubilees of Brothers who are 25, 50, or even sixty years in the Brothers. It is a joyful liturgy, and will take place this year after their Mission Congress and District Days on July 21. But that is not all! The same day, two postulants were received - Farai Zvidzwa and Steven Angulo. Three novices - Brother Matt Kotek, Brother Dylan Perry, and Brother Mark Engelmeyer made their first vows. Brother Martin Montoya will profess his perpetual vows. Two other Brothers - Brother Johnathon Emmanuelson and Ryan Anderson renewed their vows in their respective communities earlier this summer.

The light endures, and the torch is passed on!

Midwest District

## LASALLIAN VOCATION SYMPOSIUM. DEEPENING AND DISCERNING GOD'S CALL

A new initiative of the Lasallian Region of North America (RELAN), the Lasallian Vocation Symposium gives participants, from each District of the Region, the opportunity to reflect on their own vocation journeys and how to continue to foster a culture of vocations in RELAN. Through three online sessions and an in-person gathering the participants reflected on a shared language and understanding of the term vocation and multi-dimensional approach in being able to articulate and talk about vocation with colleagues as well as the young people entrusted to our care.

The Symposium, also explored fostering and developing a culture of vocations and concrete ways to do that, as well as our shared Lasallian vocation and the multitude of Lasallian vocations within our shared call. The groups in-person time developed practical approaches and channels to further conversations and the culture of vocation in RELAN and local settings

Mr.Chris Swain  
RELAN Region

I spoke to young people about the vocation and the question "why did you become a Brother? I replied that it is certainly important for the first time, but what is essential for me is why and why I remain so today. Beyond the difficulties of my consecration as religious Brother, I must give myself in every moment, in every event meditated and integrated reasons always renewed to BE BROTHER, to leave Jesus Christ! To BE HAPPY and to communicate this happiness.

The happiness of a consecration lived in simplicity and discretion. Through a vocation "simple" but full and whole, in community, with the collaborators and among my students I am this leaven in the dough: A discreet but active PRESENCE of Jesus Christ! A daily offering renewed, associated with the work of salvation in spite of my poverty, my indignity, my clumsiness in situation of education! What responsibility but what happiness!

The happiness of the ever-renewed miracle of community life, often imperceptible but real: richness in diversity, the communicative joy of such, the attention, the merciful gaze, the simple gesture, a little word that makes live and raises a discouraged Brother ... I am always struck by the miracle of being together so that everyone can contribute to the harmony of the community and give the same soul to our educational works: the Lasallian spirit!

From these joys comes a rich experience of the Lasallian mission: to evangelize, to educate in faith, fraternity and service.

- The joy of being a younger brother of young people. This is expressed by the time of a presence! Availability, attention and welcome! The students with whom I had deep relationships that last until today are the ones I had when I was not in the administration of the work. I was really present to them! Years later, young people remind you of the trace left! The Lord is always good even with our mistakes!

- The joy of building with them a family, a fraternity! It is a great joy to see that the Lasallian school offers young people a family to quench their thirst for fraternity. They are happy to live in the spaces of this school and do not want to leave them.

- The joy of accompaniment! I learned with young people how to watch and listen to attitudes and words. From a simple interest in what he lives will establish a path of trust, accompaniment where we listen to each other, an opportunity to grow!

- The joy of a trace of success visible in education! We sow with every wind hoping that the Lord will do the rest; to water, to bring the good earth, to dig the beak to bring growth, but sometimes the Lord gratifies us with rare fruits visible! It cheers up !!!

My life as a Brother, a story that God touches and touches the hearts of young people!

**I SPOKE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THE VOCATION AND THEY ASKED ME: "WHY DID YOU BECOME A BROTHER?"**



Br. Hermann Kabore

## MY LASALLIAN JOURNEY



**Ms. Bernice Morillo**

My Lasallian journey started in the most unexpected way. I became part of the Lasallian family when I transferred to De La Salle Santiago – Zobel School. Like any new student, I felt shy and awkward. Until one day, my little sister invited me to go morning Mass. During mass, they didn't have a reader. Back in my old school I was Mass Server, so I volunteered. The Campus Ministry Office told me I did well. They welcomed me, and in time we became a family to one another.

As years passed and college days are fast approaching, my parents, family, some friends, almost everyone wanted me to go to De La Salle University. They wanted me to go there for the betterment of the family company. Sure, that was the most ideal choice, but I wanted to go to De La Salle College of St. Benilde. One day, one of my teachers told me he would see me in DLS – CSB. With that as the last trigger, I pushed myself to do what I wanted for a change.

At St. Benilde, I became part of the Benildean Deaf Association, the Student Learning Center, Benildean Operation Sagip, completed the Filipino Sign Language Curriculum. And I became part of the pioneer batch to be sent to Malaysia to teach in a La Salle school.

Of all the groups I became a part of, the most important was the group of friends I've made in my classes. No matter what we went through, we had each other.

Also, I was able to intern in America. I gained a wider view of how we differ, yet we were all the same. I saw how we can learn from anyone and everyone. If only we take the time to listen, not just with our ears but also with our hearts.

After graduation, I became a part of the family company. It taught me the value of time and money. They're both important and they both matter. But time is invaluable. You can always earn back money but you can never earn back time.

With that realization, it strengthened my simple dream. I dreamed of being able to become a missionary to my country.

One day, I did a random search on google. I typed in "La Salle" and "mission volunteer". I found this one simple link explaining the Lasallian Volunteer Program. I applied and was accepted!

Being a Lasallian for almost half of my life instilled in me the Animo Spirit, which is "Never Shall We Fail". Composed of 2 parts, first is that spirit of perseverance. No matter the challenges, giving up is not an option. We try and try until we succeed. The second part is the spirit of communion. One of the many things that my Lasallian journey has taught me is that we are a community. We build up each other. We don't leave anyone behind. We are an Ohana. As Lilo would say; "Ohana means family. Family means no one gets left behind or forgotten".

So You, there! Come on! And be a part of our ever-growing Lasallian Family!

## PERSONAL STORY

I understood that the secular cannot be separated from the religious and that religion is my responsibility, because it is life, with solidarity, respect, ethics, compassion, among other qualities. As a teacher and minister, I feel committed to carrying this message and thinking in a relational manner and that I am invited to overcome dualistic thinking with them and look for a strategy to understand that religion is a responsibility of daily life. I feel committed to bringing to my students the spirituality that St. John Baptist de La Salle left us and provoking in them words and actions that lead us to discover God in our neighbor, as our founder would say: "The joy of the world is brief, that of those who serve God will have no end."

**Liana Romero**  
*Experimental Institute La Salle,  
San Pedro Sula-Honduras  
Local Pastoral Coordinator*

## TESTIMONY



**Sister Ana Claudia Barbosa**

*Sister Guadalupana de La Salle*

*Curitiba - PR - Brazil*

Vocation is a word full of senses. I am Sister Ana Claudia Barbosa and my vocational history began in the city of Linhares-ES, within a simple and religious family. My vocation is the fruit of my mother's testimony and prayers. I feel that the vocation is a great mystery, whose roots are in the heart of God and each person. I seek to live my vocation as a Sister of Guadalupana de La Salle in the YES of each day. The Reign of God becomes reality, as we discover our vocation and occupy the place that God entrusts to us in the task of transforming the world.

## HOW DID YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE LASALLIAN FAMILY?

I applied to Lewis University as an impulse decision. I had no idea then that a Lasallian institution would become my own family.

I am a first generation student who knew nothing about student life on a college campus. Simple acts like check-ins by my admissions officer and help with class schedules would foreshadow the care I have experienced by the Lasallian family.

When I became involved with Lewis' Campus Ministry, I quickly understood the power of invitation. It was the semester after I attended a retreat that focused on community called Koinonia that I was invited to be a team member. Through my involvement with Koinonia I was able to witness the Lasallian charism. Soon after I found myself wanting to be more involved with social justice trips and retreats, and was grateful for the invitations I continued to receive. Steve Zlatic invited me to learn more about the Lasallian mission of education for underserved populations. Brother James Gaffney invited me to greet everyone with warmth. One of the gifts I continue to cherish is the invitation made by Sabrina Poulin. Her invitation to consider the Lasallian Volunteers (LV) program has given me the opportunity to dedicate my time to the Lasallian mission in different ways.

Living in community during my time as an LV made it easy to witness how the Brothers and lay people ministered to others and gave of themselves. It was during this time that I was invited to consider what vocation meant. If you google vocation, it's defined as a noun and described as employment or main occupation; through reflection I concluded that vocation is a verb. Google doesn't include that vocation is more than employment but instead it is a way of living. When my second and final year of being in the LV program came around, I knew I had to consider how I wanted to live out my vocation after the program. At the time I was unsure of where my vocation was going to lead me but I was always comforted by the support from the Brothers and the LVs who listened to me as we shared dinners, during the times we watched Friday night TV, and whenever we came together in prayer, as a Lasallian family.

In reflecting on the Lasallian family, I realize that the invitations that were extended to me are more than events or wonderful experiences. I grew as a spiritual being thanks to those invitations. When I left high school, my religious and spiritual life were hanging by a thread and my relationship with God was damaged. The invitations I received not only connected me to the Lasallian family they also provided opportunities to connect with God. Saying yes to invitations and to the Lasallian mission has allowed me to experience the zeal of the Lasallian family in Arizona, New York, and California.

I am filled with gratitude for a family that continues to extend an invitation; continuously through the Lasallian family, I find myself encountering God.

**Yolanda Franco**  
*Young Lasallian, RELAN*



# PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you sent your Apostles to take the Good News to  
the ends of the earth.

Raise up for your Church today men and women,  
endowed with Faith and Zeal to carry on the  
message of the Reign of God in our time in both  
word and deed.

We pray for vocations to our Institute; that God  
may call many faith-filled men and women to  
carry on the mission of education to the youth in  
our world today. AMEN.

By  
Novice Gerald Chika

