



*De La Salle*  
**TODAY**

A magazine for the Lasallian Community in the  
United States and Toronto Region

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Featuring articles on

**LASALLIAN SOCIAL JUSTICE**

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Dear Lasallian Reader,

Our beloved Brother John Johnston joined his creator on October 11. He has drank the cup that the Father has given him and now sits in that special place the Lord has reserved for him. Throughout his lifetime he touched many Lasallians, not only in the US-Toronto Region but in the entire Lasallian world, especially as Vicar General from 1976-1986, then as Superior General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools from 1986-2000. Brother John spent 55 years living the Lasallian charism as a religious, an educator, a champion for the rights of the child.

This issue focuses on Lasallian Social Justice. Several articles reflect what Brother John has passionately advocated—the defense of children. In “The Lasallian Commitment to the Rights of the Child” the Secretariat for Educational Mission suggests ways in which Lasallians can contribute to making the articles of the Convention a reality. “Stepping for Justice” by Bro. Ernest Miller shows how Central Catholic High School has implemented its social justice mission. “Care of Those for Whom You are Given Responsibility” by Bro. James Loxham tells us how the teachers and staff of Martin de Porres High School have succeeded in preparing at-risk students for a better future. “Starry Night Prom” by Peg Hodapp demonstrates how students have brought joy to people who are physically disabled.

Brother John has inspired us to live the Lasallian mission by safeguarding the rights of child. Let us continue this mission and preserve the legacy which he has left with us as contained in his Pastoral Letter of January 1999.

*Celine*

*Editor*



About the cover: *The Brother David Darst Center for Justice & Peace, Spirituality & Education in Chicago, Illinois, provides an engaging, safe and reflective environment in which participants of all ages can be introduced to and explore issues of social justice through a personal experience. Its goal is to invite a genuine conversion of lifestyle by raising awareness, challenging perceptions, and encouraging behavioral change that reflects the Christian social teachings of peace, justice and appreciation of the dignity and value of every person. For more about the Darst Center, visit [www.brdaiddarstcenter.org](http://www.brdaiddarstcenter.org).*

# The Lasallian Commitment to the Rights of the Child

*The following article is the third part of a series of letters on the Convention on the Rights of the Child produced by the Secretariat for Educational Mission of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. This article was originally written in French and translated into British English.*

**E**ach country, each region has a culture, traditions and a way of thinking which, in the course of time, have shaped a personal and collective approach to the reality of the child and the young person. Societies are very different on this point.

As Lasallians though we can suggest several possible avenues of commitment.

**1. To know our national or regional reality.** That means: contacting the national or international bodies which are working on the topic. In each country which has signed up, a government group is working solely on the Convention, its application, its consistency with the national laws. Each country has had to face up to the Convention. It is useful to know what reserves your country has set aside for ratifying the Convention and why.

Furthermore, it can be very worthwhile to contact specialist jurists who are reframing national laws or are members of the body supervising what each country has had to put in place.

This first step is important. It ensures one's participation in the long term and in the structural changes because the defence of the Rights of the Child is made mainly in the juridical field. We have to be there.

In certain countries the municipalities have all the representatives of the Rights of the Child. We could be there in a systematic way, consistent with a District plan.

**2. To make aware and to form.** The Convention is hardly known among us; we think that our ordinary educational commitment is sufficient. It certainly has its importance and shares in the defence and promotion of children and young people. It can, however, receive new blood in the Convention procedure and can be enriched by a universal consensus.

It seems very normal to suggest the organisation of a cycle of improving awareness of and formation in the rights of the child to the profit of the members of the educational communities. As this effort in increasing awareness is founded in Lasallian spirituality, it ought to concern all members of the Lasallian family: communities of Brothers, establishments [ministries], bodies of Lasallian formation, etc.

**3. To know the needs.** We can go about this work of finding needs within each of our establishments, but also outside them, case by case, in order to bring adapted answers (for example, search out the youngsters who do not eat in the morning or at midday; those who arrive tired in the morning because they work before class or late in the evening; those who are responsible for the family; those who carry burdens which are too heavy to speak about...).

It is, though, equally proper to draw up a state of the more general areas of needs of young people within each of the Districts, in the form of a report. Such a locating is written into the logic of proposal 14 already quoted: "to identify the violations of the rights of the child in the immediate locality." The proposal speaks in terms of violation, but to start with it may be easier to speak in terms of locating needs.

In this respect it can be stated that the Australian Lasallians have worked remarkably for 12 years with the telephone line Kids/Help Line which is open 24 hours a day: 80 operators receive 30,000 calls a week from all over the continent!

**4. Participating in the restoring of self-esteem.** Studies have shown how certain youngsters who were among the most disadvantaged and excluded underwent real narcissistic suffering: who am I that society does not respect me, and does not give me a chance? Living in difficult areas, often from immigrant backgrounds, these youngsters, feeling excluded from society, with no self-esteem, end by dropping out of school at an early age. They see no future for themselves, and quickly descend into drug-taking, delinquency, etc. Some of

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## Rights of the Child

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these young people are in our establishments. The narcissistic suffering can also stem from painful family situations: who am I that my parents take so little account of me?

These young people must be helped to regain their self-confidence and to raise their self-esteem above their sufferings and their frustrations: “you are so precious in my eyes”. This task requires among other

things that members of the educational community should be trained in the techniques of **resilience**. To see a child through spectacles [the eyes] of resilience helps us not to reduce him to a problem, never to make “a case” out of him, but to reveal and develop his potential, to use it to help him to rebuild his life. It is to be hoped that there would be at least one person, trained to listen to the young, present in each of our establishments [ministries].

5. **To comfort the families.** To help the young recover their self-esteem can also mean helping their parents to face up to the new challenges whatever form they take.

There lies a real urgency and the Colloquium ‘The Families’ has already given possible lines of action (cf N° 245 of the Bulletin of the Institute p. 14-17). Moreover, why not go further down the little known road of “schools for parents” which would offer parents who wished a place for reflection where they would be helped to solve one or other problems? The Lasallians of Andalusia in Spain have a lot of experience in this.

Ireland has provided educators to ensure the link between college and family. Brothers are working among them.

6. **To help young mothers in distress.** Article 6 of the Convention declares that “**every child has an inherent right to life.**”

This article has been the object of discussion. We are

going further by saying that ‘the unborn child has a right to life’. It is a great debate in which we have very little presence; and yet we must take our place there, respecting personal decisions.

Lasallians have developed very conclusive initiatives for young mothers seeking their bearings and immediate help: in France the teams of Brother Auguste Thérond give information, find accommodation, listen and give legal help; in Australia, Lasallians have opened a day center and a crèche for 25 mothers and a small residential center for 11 mothers and their babies. It is a vital stage for a welcome worthy of the unborn child or already born.

7. **To promote courses of sexual and affective education.** It is often in the years at college, high school, university, higher education that convictions are formed about loving relationships, respect for partners, commitment as a couple, responsible parenting... a whole human ecology waiting to welcome the child.

In the Cameroons a project of long duration has been organized by Brother Roque Delud.

We have a serious educational and Christian responsibility in these matters. What are our policies in the educational establishments and in the District? What process have we in place? With whom?

8. **To promote the education of girls.** This is a great international concern for two reasons: firstly, because developing countries, bogged down with financial problems, overlook the formation of girls; then because it is proved that lasting social changes, particularly in these countries, are the result of patient, specific, determined action by groups of educated women.

We see a good example in India with the work of Brother Sebastian and his teams who work with 10,000 women.

An estimated 78 percent of women in Afghanistan cannot read or write. Worldwide, an estimated 580 million women and girls cannot read or write.

With reference to our local situation, what must we decide?

9. **To put culture within the reach of the most disadvantaged groups and those who are excluded.** This is exactly what the first Brothers did, in company with John Baptist de La Salle in Rheims, Rouen, Paris and elsewhere. Our schools are certainly fulfilling this mission in part today, by admitting young people of all sociological-professional categories and offering

them formation in general, technological and professional teaching. In these schools, though, we must make these young people more welcome, improve the ways of helping their education when they have a great deal to catch up, or are excluded from the educational system or are having difficulty in integrating socially.

In certain cases a good quality boarding school can be a good substitute for a deficient family life. It is true that more and more social educators [workers] prefer to leave young people in the family. However, it has to be admitted that sometimes the youngster needs to rebuild his life in a more peaceful and structured environment. The Lasallians of the Balearics and Australia have pondered this question.

Equally, a welcome can be arranged for young members of social minorities who are often victims of discriminatory practices: travellers, youngsters in the suburbs, young who are handicapped, children who are in the hospital for long periods, youngsters in prison... For each of these groups, there can be one proposal or another adapted for teaching or accompaniment. The Lasallians of New Zealand have adapted for the numerous minority groups they receive in their three establishments, as also the Lasallians of Papua-New Guinea and of the Cameroon. Examples could be multiplied from Bolivia, Guatemala, Colombia, India, the Philippines, the Ivory Coast, Italy, Palencia in Spain...

There are some prophetic actions seen occasionally, such as the uprooting of an establishment in the town centre towards a suburb or the opening of small primary schools as the Lasallians of Turkey have done voluntarily with their eight recent elementary schools.

Some help and school support by associations can certainly be easily started and responsibility accepted and maintained by an establishment (not simply on a financial level, but a human one too: calling on the older students for some teaching, on teachers for organising, etc.). Facilities of this kind exist in France, Belgium, California with the Leo Center, and elsewhere.

**10. To make basic experiences happen.** Before becoming someone in the town, the child needs to grow, to be surrounded by adults who suggest aims and plans. The Convention certainly gives the family this role in education, but the young person—especially the most disadvantaged—must complete family support by basic experiences outside the family circle. This young person must be urged on, called upon at his/her liveli-



A painting of Saint Miguel Febres Cordero and Saint John Baptist de La Salle hangs on the corridor of San Miguel School in Chicago.

est. That is done by projects, taking risks, an appeal to share in his/her own strengths.

The network of San Miguel Schools in the United States has gambled on this vital dynamism. And it is working!

**11. To educate for solidarity, for social justice and peace.** Finally, all that has been said would have no meaning if a true education for solidarity, social justice and peace were not at the heart of our establishments. Education for solidarity represents the corollary of all pedagogy based on the welcome of the most disadvantaged young people: what use would it be to pay particular attention to the poor without at the same time educating the body of pupils we receive, to solidarity with them? Particular attention to the poor and educational service of the poor, the promotion of rights of the child and respect for his dignity must not be written into a vertical structure of the exchange, which would amount to no more than a form of outdated paternalism. We must be constantly seeking a horizontal exchange. This horizontal exchange means that if our attention is attracted by poverty, it must also be attracted by a solidarity which we are educating towards. Poverty is not solely a measurable objective reality, it is also and above all the object of a struggle and a fight to make this evil disappear on a long-term basis.

What programs and processes are we developing in the educational centres? What projects of solidarity are we suggesting to the young people we live with? In these areas the work being done by inter-district exchange groups (France, England, USA with Asia, Africa, Central America...) bear lasting fruit in the minds of the young people and adults who benefit from it.

# Stepping for Justice

## The Rights of Children, the Reign of God and the Lasallian Mission

BY BROTHER ERNEST MILLER (BALTIMORE)\*



CCHRIST (Central Catholic Human Rights Initiative for Societal Transformation) students going to an Obama rally at Temple University in Philadelphia.

International human rights scholar and advocate, Louis Henkin, wrote in *The Age of Rights*, “Human rights is the idea of our time.” Everywhere around the world, it is impossible to escape the challenge of human rights.

The intersection between the Lasallian educational mission and human rights, especially the rights and needs of economically poor children is undergirded by three key sources—Scripture, Church Tradition and Lasallian texts.

In the first chapter of *Second Corinthians*, Paul calls us to “support others in their hardships.” John Paul II, in his 1999 Message, *World Day of Peace: Respect for Human Rights, the Secret of True Peace*, raises the vexing question, “How many exploited children do not even know they have rights!” Reflecting on the results of their meeting in Aparecida, Brazil, in May 2007, the Latin American bishops’ Aparecida document forcefully

\*Brother Ernest Miller has ministered at Central Catholic High School for the past six years and is presently Director for Lasallian Mission in the Baltimore District.

expresses that the preferential option for the poor is not optional for followers of Jesus. The bishops put it this way: “Everything that has to do with Christ has to do with the poor, and everything related to the poor refers to Jesus Christ.”

Writing in his January 1999 Pastoral Letter on “Defense of Children, the Reign of God, and the Lasallian Mission,” Brother John Johnston, then Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, states: “[My] intention is to situate the defense of children squarely in the context of our faith and our Lasallian heritage and mission.” Moreover, “[W]e need to struggle against the destitution, injustice, manipulation, and exploitation that prevent children from being children and make a mockery of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (UDHR), the mother of all human rights treaties. Grounded in the gospel message and informed by the spirit of Catholic social thought, Brother John’s Pastoral Letter takes the principle of solidarity and identifies it as a fundamental mark of the Lasallian educational mission.

Focusing on the connection between the defense of children and the Lasallian mission, Brother John underscores how the Lasallian community’s educational service is in accord with what the Reign of God requires. The Pastoral Letter echoes the gospel of Luke’s testimony that “the kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed.... For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.”

Because of the appearance of Brother John’s letter, the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter (2000), with Proposition 14, declared that human rights, especially the rights and needs of children, constitutes a crucial component of the Lasallian educational mission. (A General Chapter is the highest governing body of the Brothers that meets every seven years to set directions for the Brothers’ life and the Lasallian mission.)

Grounding its vision in the gospel call of the Church and the Institute, CCHRIST (Central Catholic Human Rights Initiative for Societal Transformation) is Central Catholic High School's response to the call of the General Chapter to promote human rights and educate for justice. In 2001, the Pittsburgh school launched this co-curricular student organization, part of a global human rights movement. Members are committed to the advocacy of human rights in the United States and around the world, especially on behalf of children from income-poor circumstances.

Though CCHRIST has worked on many social justice issues in the last six years, war-affected children is a significant issue of concern and action. Over the last few years, with the encouragement and support of Brother Robert Schaefer, FSC, head of Student Affairs at Central Catholic, the Lenten Mission Drive encompasses an important educational component to raise consciousness and unsettle stereotypes and fictionalized views of people who suffer from poverty and war. The 2007 Mission Drive, a coordinated effort of Student Affairs, Campus Ministry, and CCHRIST, supported by the National Honor Society and Student Council, collected more than \$16,000 (free-will offering) for the Lasallian International Children's Fund, created by the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council in honor of Brother John. Throughout the Mission Drive, the purpose is to provide education and promote reflection, dialogue and effective action.

Educating for justice, Central Catholic convened a whole-school assembly in March 2007 on war-affected children with leaders from Invisible Children. This gathering was a visible, tangible expression of both the solidarity and interdependent character we have with all humanity. "For too long the world has been content

to judge peoples and nations in distress largely on the basis of received stereotypes drawn from mythologies of oppression," asserts Chinua Achebe, a Nigerian author and activist. For sure, educating for justice begins to clear away these stereotypes.

The 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter reaffirms the Institute's unbending commitment to those who are poor and for social justice, one of the five Lasallian Core Principles. The Chapter declares: "We dream together with our Lasallian partners, of continuing to work for the education of the poor, the defense of the rights of children, and education for justice. We dream of the renewal of our existing educational works so that they may become islands of creativity and agents of social transformation."

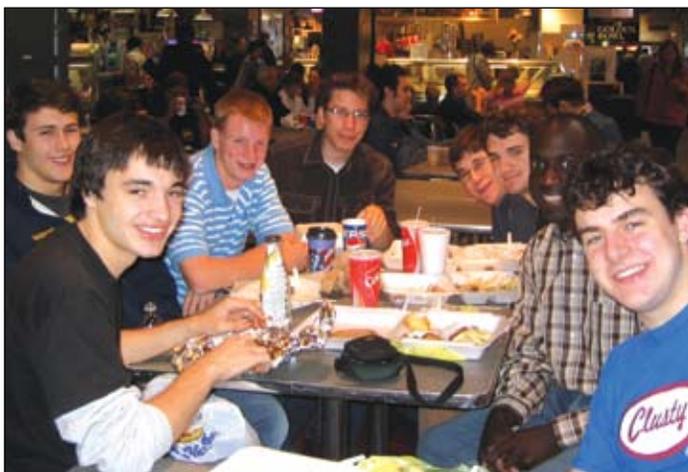
The spirit of faith and zeal of Saint De La Salle and the first Brothers remains for us a great legacy. We know that De La Salle's vision still encourages us to expand the reach of our efforts to promote justice and peace for all. Brother Alvaro Rodriguez Echeverria, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, observes: "Our Institute was born to serve children. We count on [young Lasallians] to make the Defense of the Rights of the Child a flag of our Lasallian family."

Today, the educational ministries in the North American Region of the Institute are not alone in the challenge to move forward in joining our great efforts in providing service opportunities for students and faculty with a firm commitment to do human rights promotion, social justice education, and public advocacy. Echoing the thrust of Catholic social thought, we must labor to transform structures that impoverish fellow humans.

If we first understand and accept the lesson that impoverished people can take responsibility for their development and progress, then we can *step* more boldly towards doing justice.

*"... We dream of the renewal of our existing educational works so that they may become islands of creativity and agents of social transformation."*

44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter



Brother Ernest and CCHRIST members enjoy a meal together.

# The Sacramental Dimension of the Lasallian Religion Program

BY BROTHER BRENDAN KNEALE (SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT)

*As a follow up to the report of the Lasallian Symposium on Catechesis which was featured in the Summer issue of De La Salle Today, this piece addresses the need to emphasize the sacramental and liturgical dimensions of Lasallian schools and programs.*

**A** Catholic school is not only an academic training center or an athletic powerhouse or a social necessity. It should also incorporate the Catholic concern for the sacramental. Its curricular and extra-curricular programs should, and generally do, contain sacramental elements. However, the programs do not always emphasize them.

Liturgy is a key factor in Lasallian education. La Salle himself set good example in this regard. Teaching about the sacraments and the Mass was important to his scheme of instruction—he wrote a booklet for students about devout and intelligent participation in the Mass. He also made the sacrament of reconciliation available on a regular basis. And, of course, his Brothers incorporated into their daily school schedule many quasi-liturgical rituals. Also, La Salle had the Brothers take their students to the local churches. These buildings were often the only contact the boys ever had with the kind of art and music that sacramentals can provide.

Most religion textbooks in our own time provide instruction about the liturgy and the sacraments. In return, the liturgy itself is structured to be instructive. But it is natural to ask the following question: While the liturgy is clearly instructive, is there a special way in which our instruction can become liturgical? Should

we not think of our religion program as sacramental—a channel of grace? When La Salle urged the Brothers to “touch the hearts of their students,” he did not mean that they should use psychological tricks but that they should work through grace and be themselves sacramental.

On the other hand, since things liturgical are often thought of as (and in practice often are) simply ritualistic, there is serious need for education about the liturgy to elevate our experience above the merely routine. With proper preparation (and cooperation from the clergy) liturgical experiences can be like laboratory experiences for the students. As in science education,

they are hands-on forms of confirming and developing classroom instruction. As in service learning, one hopes that the students come back to the instructional classroom with confirmation of what they learned and with new questions about it (and, in addition, an appetite for more.)

*“Of the many things that Catholic schools are meant to be, one thing that justifies them is that they are concrete means of grace, and therefore, sacramental.”*

Of the many things that Catholic schools are meant to be, one thing that justifies them is that they are concrete means of grace, and therefore, sacramental. Saint La Salle certainly realized this and asked the Brothers to put such a conviction into practice. Campus ministry programs are important in this regard. Campus ministers often give timely instruction, but the chief burden of formal instruction about liturgy lies in the classroom, so that any description of the department’s responsibilities must include and emphasize it. As Brother Alfred Brousseau once wrote: “In the *Epistles* of St. Paul we find him constantly reminding the faithful about

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## New General Council Organizes to Implement the Acts of the 44th Chapter



The new General Council of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian School: (l-r) FRONT—Brothers Thomas Johnson, Vicar General (USAT); Robert Schieler, General Councilor for the USAT Region; Alvaro Rodriguez Echeverria, Superior General; Gabriel Some, General Councilor for RELAF; Jacques D’Huitema, General Councilor for RELEM; Alberto Gomez Barruso, General Councilor in Rome (Spain); Back—Brothers Claude Reinhardt, General Councilor in Rome (France); David Hawke, General Councilor for PARC; Edgar Genuino Nicodem, General Councilor for RELAL; and Jorge Gallardo de Alba, General Councilor in Rome (Mexico).

Superior General Brother Alvaro Rodriguez Echeverria and the new General Council met in Rome during the month of September to begin forming a community and organizing its work for the next seven years. It was a time for listening, for prayer, and for planning. The council met with all the services of the Casa Generalizia and the community of Brothers.

## The Sacramental Dimension

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their baptism: that it was the great act of their lives, a new birth by which they began to live in Christ. ... The renewal of baptismal vows is a practice well calculated to make this sacrament more of a force in life...” That renewal, we may recall from Holy Week liturgy, reminds us of our quite drastic commitment at baptism and makes apparent our need for grace.

Several writers have made the point that the liturgy provides official guidance to private prayer. It often supplies examples for teachers to use for their students. Religion teachers do not speak for themselves alone—they provide official guidance, often by way of the Church’s liturgy, to the intellectual life and moral life.

A first priority of the new council was the finalization of the document containing the Acts of the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. We then turned our attention to the decisions made at the Chapter and the International Mission Assembly. To help us implement those decisions secretariats and general services of the Institute were organized and persons to head these departments were identified.

A week-long retreat, from September 10-15, was held at Torricella in Sabina. As Brother Alvaro noted, in a setting of tranquility and prayer council members got to know each other a little more while still having a lot of time to share lives and our own personal journeys. We also developed our community annual plan.

It is a time of transition for the new central government with five of the General Councilors based in the Regions and three in residence at Rome. To help ensure a good transition, the Council agreed to continue to listen to the voices of the Institute before finalizing plans for the next seven years. Between October 2007 and February 2008 Council members and Brother Superior will attend Regional Assemblies and Visitors Conferences that will take place during this time.

In February, the entire Council will gather again in Rome to finalize its plan of government and animation for the next seven years.—*Brother Robert Schieler, General Councilor, USAT Region*

There is the additional value—of special attraction to the young—that liturgy is celebratory. Both Catholic doctrine in the classroom and liturgy in Church celebrate the wonderful things achieved on our behalf by Christ. Lasallians imbue their teaching with this spirit.

## THANK YOU

TO ALL LASALLIAN SCHOOLS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE **TWINNING PROGRAM** IN SCHOOL YEAR 2006-2007. COLLECTIONS REACHED \$203,500 WITH THE HIGHEST COLLECTION OF \$22,860 FROM CHRISTIAN BROTHERS COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, FOR THEIR TWIN SCHOOL, ST. PAUL SECONDARY BOY’S SCHOOL IN MARSABIT, KENYA.

# Starry Night Prom for People with Disabilities

By PEG HODAPP (MIDWEST)



Guests and student-volunteers enjoyed the night together.

In the spring of 2001, 25 members of DeLaSalle High School's Lasallian Ministry program gathered to plan and sponsor the first ever prom for people with disabilities. Lasallian Ministry at DeLaSalle combines typical Campus Ministry and Lasallian Youth programs with social justice and diversity initiatives. Lasallian Ministry has consistently challenged the school community to be mindful and respectful of differences through a variety of programs, speakers, discussions, annual weeklong symposiums and celebrations, and special events. During the 2000-01 school year, students wanted to more closely examine ability awareness. After the small committee was presented with the idea of hosting a prom for people with disabilities, the wheels were set in motion. Flowers, decorations, music, food, dresses, tuxedos, party gifts, and more. The students sought donations, contacted local agencies and planned a magnificent evening. On May 5, 2001, 60 guests from the greater community came

out for an evening of food, dancing, pictures, a grand march, and lots of fun.

Seven years and eight proms later, DeLaSalle students will begin gathering once again to plan what has evolved into the annual Starry Night Prom. Each year the number of guests has increased as have the number of students involved. In May of 2007, the final count of guests, including caregivers and family, was 1,059 and 132 DeLaSalle students participated. Interested students are now required to take part in several trainings and planning meetings in advance of the day in order to prepare themselves for the excited attendees

*I am a teacher in the DCD program at Roosevelt High School. I went to the prom the other night. Many of our students attended and were talking about it for a couple of months before hand. I just wanted to tell you thank you and let you know how much it means to our students and their families. You really 'did it up well'.—Renee' Soule-Chapman*

Ms. Peg Hodapp is Vice-President for Lasallian Mission at DeLaSalle High School, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

*I just wanted to send a note to tell you how nice the Prom was. My son had a really good time. Everyone was so kind and hospitable...My husband said this prom was nicer than his.—Cathy Snodgrass*

who will descend upon DeLaSalle on Saturday, May 3, 2008. The trainings include people living with disabilities who come to share their stories, speakers from local agencies, like Special Olympics and The Courage Center, disability simulation activities, and movies like *The Other Sister*, *I Am Sam*, *Radio* and *Door to Door* which are excellent teaching tools as well.

In the first three years of the prom we were able to provide a meal with food donated from local restaurants but when numbers expanded beyond 500, serving a meal was no longer possible. We now provide snacks, beverages and, the all time favorite, ice cream Sundaes with a chocolate fountain. Local DJ's have often donated their time for the event and have said, without a doubt, that the Starry Night Prom was their favorite gig.

The guests arrive at the prom in vans, cars and limos. One year a local Model A car club offered short rides around the island in their old cars. This was a thrill for the guests. A few group homes bring guests each year. This year Opportunity Partners and Special Olympics listed the DeLaSalle Starry Night Prom as one of their organized activities. They provided transportation and personal assistance for over 200 guests. Many of the guests come as individuals, often with family members, from as far away as 75 miles. Some guests come year after year. Each year dozens of guests come for the first time. Mai Yer Yang, '08 is impressed with the guests,



Prom guests.

saying, "They have a sense of confidence and a sense of humor that a lot of us don't have. We're busy striving to be better. They accept themselves for who they are now. At the dance, they are happy and ready to go out and have the time of their lives."

The main gym at DeLaSalle becomes a giant, energetic dance floor, while the adjacent smaller gym is a place to enjoy refreshments and relax to the music of the DeLaSalle orchestra. "By the end of the evening at Starry Night Prom," said Alex Clohesey, '09, "it's like the top is blown off and everyone is having fun." Clearly, the event makes an impact on DeLaSalle students who help out at the prom.

Jasmin Brown '07, who had worked three proms, said, "The prom makes a big difference in their lives. By the end of the night, it's like we are best friends. I like being a part of that." Chris Hueg '07, who worked on Starry Night Prom all of his four years at DeLaSalle, offered a unique perspective on the experience. Referring to those who come to this special evening, he said, "I feel like I'm their guest."



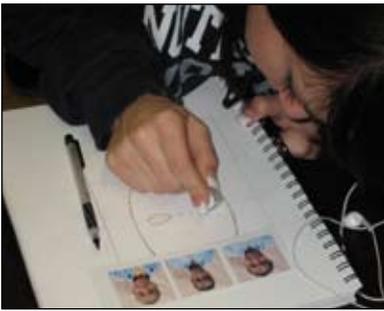
The Starry Night Prom Committee—GREAT JOB!

*We just wanted to say THANK YOU for all your hard work in putting on the starry night prom. This was my daughter's first time to attend, and wow! were we impressed. The place was so nicely decorated like you were in some fancy place. You even had flowers for everyone to make them feel special.*

*I spoke with a lot of the volunteers and they all seemed so excited to be helping out. You all made this so special for my daughter and the other kids. Many thanks for making a difference in the lives of others!—Julie and Nicole Abbott*

# Portrait Project Connects Lasallian Students in California and Ethiopia

By JOHN GRAY (SAN FRANCISCO)



**C**hristian Brothers High School (CBHS) in Sacramento, California, and the Meki Catholic Mission School in Meki,

Ethiopia, are participants in the Twinning Program that links Lasallian schools in the US-Toronto Region and the Lwanga District. In Sacramento, art instructor and religious studies teacher Findley McIntosh and Christian Service Coordinator Stephanie DeBenedetti-Emanuel enlisted students in a creative way of connecting with their fellow Lasallian students across the world.

“We asked Brother Betre Fisseha, FSC, the headmaster at Meki, to send us photographs of his students,” says Stephanie, “so that our students could paint their portraits and send them back to the students at Meki to keep.”

In their painting classes, CBHS students under McIntosh’s instruction labored to create portraits of the African students. “One of the most difficult tasks in art is creating a recognizable likeness of someone,” says Findley. “So our students undertook some real learning in art while also learning something about the needs and rights of children elsewhere in the world.”

The students in Sacramento also created compact discs of favorite music to send to their twinned counterparts, writing liner notes and creating original cover art for the CD cases. Says Findley, “The students really took a lot from this project and really emotionally connected with the Meki students while doing the portraits.”



*On August 11, 2007, we officially inaugurated the Meki Catholic School (MCS) Alumni Association at this year’s graduation gathering. More than 60 university students graduated this year in more than 10 different fields and about 30 were able to come together and begin this significant event in the history of the school (photo above). Besides holding the MCS Alumni Association at the gathering of the graduates, it aims to minimize the cost of every graduate preparing a party at home and creates an occasion to bring the parents, teachers and the graduates to celebrate their common success story and, above all, think about what they can do for their school in the future.*



*In the graduation gathering, parents, teachers, the parents-teachers committee, local officials and students were present. After the ceremony we all planted 2000 trees (left photo). The trees were planted on garbage area (people from town used it to dump dead animals and other dirt next to the school property which has been affecting the school) which recently became part of the school property.—Brother Betre Fisseha, Headmaster, Meki Catholic School*

*The trees were planted on garbage area (people from town used it to dump dead animals and other dirt next to the school property which has been affecting the school) which recently became part of the school property.—Brother Betre Fisseha, Headmaster, Meki Catholic School*

## Regional Novitiate Opens Its Doors to New Novices



New novices (l-r) Brother John Luczkowski, Brother Chris Patiño and Brother Peter Nguyen. Photo credit: Brother Matin Vu.

**Brother John Luczkowski** (Baltimore), **Brother Chris Patiño** (San Francisco) and **Brother Peter Nguyen** (Baltimore) have begun their novitiate year at the Regional Novitiate in Mont La Salle in Napa, California. The three novices, who have all studied and taught in La Salle schools, will spend an intensive communal year of study, work, prayer and discernment.

## Brothers in Final Vows in the San Francisco District



**Brother David Caretti** teaches mathematics and religious studies at Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory in San Francisco, California.

**Brother Joseph Kirk** will be teaching religious studies at La Salle High School in Milwaukie, Oregon.

**Brother Thomas Pham** teaches mathematics at Christian Brothers High School in Sacramento, California.

Photo credit: De La Salle Institute

## Brothers in Formation in the Baltimore District

At the General Assembly of the Baltimore District on September 22, five men in various stages religious formation were recognized. Introduced to the congregation at the gathering held in Calvert Hall College High School, Towson, Maryland, were **Brothers Don Alger, Michael Kramer, Anwar Martinez, Michael Miller** and **Robert Peach**.



(l-r) Baltimore District Brothers: Robert Peach Don Alger, Michael Kramer, Anwar Martinez and Michael Miller.

The newest member of the Baltimore District is Brother Michael Miller, a 1998 graduate of Calvert Hall, who has served two years as a volunteer worker in the southern and western United States. He is presently a teacher at La Salle College High School, Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania.

Brothers Anwar Martinez and Robert Peach received the habit of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to mark their movement into the Apostolic Residency phase of their formation. In early September Brother Anwar joined La Salle High School in Wyndmoor as a full-time language teacher and Brother Robert was assigned to teach English at Central Catholic High School in Pittsburgh. Both Brothers also teach religion.

Professing final vows during the Liturgy were Brothers Don Alger and Michael Kramer. Brother Don currently serves on the faculty of the science and religion departments at Calvert Hall. Brother Michael serves as counselor and religion teacher at Hudson Catholic High School, Jersey City, New Jersey.

# Vietnamese Lasallian Youth Troupe Keep Their Heritage and Faith Alive

By VUONG DO



The Vietnamese Lasallian Youth Troupe at the 2005 Religious Congress in Los Angeles, California. This dance was choreographed by Vuong Do (center in rolled sleeves) using chopsticks to celebrate the Last Supper in Vietnamese style.

## How did the group begin? Are all members Vietnamese?

The cultural dance group began way back when Brother AnPhong, FSC was serving in Philadelphia. When he relocated to San Jose, he immediately formed a group here as well. The official first show was for Tet (New Year's) of 1991. I was 10 at the time and was fortunate to be part of the show!

Yes, all of our members are Vietnamese.



Brother AnPhong with the Vietnamese Lasallian Youth Troupe.

## What is the mission of the group? How do you accomplish your mission?

During the 1990s, our mission was to provide a place where any Vietnamese-American Youth could come to produce traditional shows that retold stories of the past...with a Catholic twist, of course, because we belong to a Vietnamese-Catholic diocese.

It wasn't until the new millennium that we "upgraded" our mission to another level. We began to add more shows outside the community. Our mission now would be to bring Vietnamese heritage and prayer to the world, while simultaneously fostering our own self with pride and faith in God.

## What are some of your projects? Do members perform service in the community?

Our current projects include the annual Day of Remembrance of the Vietnamese Martyrs in November and the 2008 "Tet" show. Throughout the year we are invited to help bring prayer to religious conferences. Our next one is in October 2007 at the Second Annual Faith Formation Conference in Santa Clara. Some



The troupe performing at World Youth Day 2005 in Germany.

shows in the past include drumming at World Youth Day in 2002 and 2005, and the Religious Congress in Los Angeles in 2004, 2005 and 2007.

Besides the troupe, which is very time demanding, our young members are very active in the community. This past summer, they coordinated a charity dinner and dance to raise money for marginalized youth in Viet Nam. Some members are active in school as class president or captain of a sports team.

**Does the group meet regularly? What activities do you do at these meetings?**

We meet on Sundays from 10-4 pm to practice. The days are broken up into time slots where we can prac-

tice for our upcoming shows. It's just like high school with class periods!

**How do the members bring the Lasallian spirit into their lives? How do they participate in the Lasallian mission?**

Our members bring the Lasallian spirit of youth and education by functioning as a big family. Our group consists of students ranging from 12 to late 20s. It takes a great sense of respect for everybody to get along...most of the time. Everybody is a teacher. The older leaders rely on the younger leaders to teach the younger ones and so on. On top of that, the other day, I jokingly reprimanded a fellow member for leaving practice early. His reason: he had to leave for a catechist class. Many of our members grew up in the Lasallian community so they have the spirit of giving back to the community, especially in the education field.

**How does being a member help in your spiritual growth?**

I have been a member of the Vietnamese Lasallian Youth Troupe since 1991. Throughout high school and college, and graduate school, I manage to incorporate the group in my life, the reason being that the youth feeds my spirituality. Seeing them drumming and dancing their hearts out really nurtures my sense of self, as a Vietnamese-Catholic. We always try to enforce the ethic that practice makes perfect. Because we pray as a group, whenever we perform, members feel a sense of transcendence that will help them grow spiritually in their lives.



Performances of the troupe include drumming and dancing.

# Called to Western Maryland

## The Brothers of the Christian Schools in Cumberland, 1907-2007

BY BROTHER JOSEPH GRABENSTEIN (BALTIMORE)



La Salle Institute in Cumberland, 1909-1924. The building on the extreme right was the original La Salle Institute, 1907-1909.

In the collective memory of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, the mountains—and especially the people—of Western Maryland hold a special place.

A century ago (September 1907), three Brothers opened a school for Catholic young men in the Cumberland area. La Salle Institute was a modest enterprise at first—so small that not many Cumberlanders know that its first location (the prim brick residence at 201 Fayette Street) still stands, or that the Brothers initially lived on its top floor. This same structure has been recently renovated into a bed-and-breakfast and now honors the name of the original occupants, the Bruce House Inn. One guestroom on the third floor, incidentally, now bears the name of “La Salle des Freres.”

In 1909, La Salle Institute moved to a larger residence just across the street, but the growing pains persisted. St. Patrick’s Parish offered the school its spacious Carroll Hall in 1924. This accommodated the increasing waves of students, but the need to concentrate on secondary education necessitated the name changing in

\* Brother Joseph Grabenstein, a native of Cumberland, Maryland, is Archivist of the Baltimore District.

1937 to La Salle High School, to reflect the dropping of the upper elementary grades. A phrase repeated by generations of Brothers to their students (“Boys will be boys, but La Salle boys will be gentlemen”) evolved into an oft-heard—and fulfilled—quote around town. Even the pronunciation of the very name “La Salle” (think of the second syllable as rhyming with “hall”) by many of the older populace was probably unique among Lasallian schools in the United States.

The Christian Brothers knew all along that they were in a different sort of place; the students would not fully realize it until they would inevitably compare it, later in life, with other locales. Laboring under conditions which could be considered as heroic, the Brothers “walked the talk” in Cumberland. They adjusted to daily teaching schedules with multiple class preparations in rooms which were typically more crowded than the Brothers’ teaching loads in larger schools elsewhere. Each Brother, furthermore, was given one or two extracurricular activities which made the schooldays and most weekends even more active. Their residence for most of these decades, 114 Hanover Street, has never been described as palatial. No permanent secretary, no fulltime maintenance person, and no Brothers’ automobile would arrive on the scene until the mid-1960s. Many a Saturday morning found members of the faculty doing routine cleaning and maintenance of Carroll Hall. Frozen faucets in January and the occasional wearing of winter coats in classrooms until lunchtime was to be expected. (One new faculty member, complaining of classroom heat in September and ordering that the windows be opened, was greeted with, “Hey Brother, this heat has to last us all winter!”) The school never had a cafeteria as such; the boys always improvised by finding their favorite grocery store, burger place or bakery in the downtown area. No one complained.

Another truism, with a genealogical twist, which the Brothers observed was “Never publicly make fun of the students in Cumberland...because they are all related!”



La Salle High School, 1924-1966.

La Salle's academic reputation, however, was assured. The Brothers themselves modeled a work ethic, which even the slowest student was certain to notice. The sports teams, clad in blue and gold and nicknamed Explorers like their Philadelphia counterparts, responded to fierce school pride (and the floor-shaking pep rallies on the sloping auditorium floor) which usually equaled that of their much larger public school rivals. Victories—and there were many—over the bigger schools were rendered all the sweeter. One particular 1965 football triumph garnered a short article in *Sports Illustrated*. Bragging rights in a small city are no small thing.

The 1960s brought sweeping social and physical changes to the local landscape, and the biggest of all was the welcomed merger of La Salle with two girls' high schools and a small co-ed high school in nearby Westernport. The result was the new co-educational Bishop Walsh High School, which opened in 1966 atop one of the mountains which ring Cumberland. The Christian Brothers pooled their efforts with those of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (who similarly came to Cumberland in 1907) and the Ursuline Sisters to give



Bishop Walsh High School, 1967-present.

Western Maryland youth the same quality education in a modern facility. Adjusting to the needs of the times, Bishop Walsh added grades 6, 7, and 8 in 1985 and became known as Bishop Walsh Middle/High School. For over four decades, the students, united under their burgundy and white and known as “the Spartans,” have distinguished themselves in classrooms, playing fields, clubs, and community involvement.

Time has caught up with the Christian Brothers in Cumberland. Sister Phyllis McNally, SSND, became the first non-FSC principal of Bishop Walsh in 1997. Elementary grades were added to the building in 2002, and another name change (Bishop Walsh School) resulted. In 2007, Sister Phyllis' title changed from principal to president, with a principal and an assistant principal reporting to her. From their peak number of about one dozen Brothers in the Community during the 1960s and 1970s, only four Brothers remain today to continue the legacy.

Approximately 230 Christian Brothers have lived and worked in Cumberland over the decades. As of July 2007, 51 living Brothers (almost one-third of the Baltimore Province) can point to Cumberland on their resumes. Their tour of duty in Western Maryland lasted one year, or multiple years, or in the case of Brother Stephen H. Paul, 41 years...and still counting! Talented principals and directors have steered the school and the Brothers' Community toward educational excellence. Some of these, notably Brothers Elzear Alfred Kelly, Edward Patrick Sheekey, and Dunstan Jeremy McNamara, went on to become “giants” in larger Lasallian schools in later years. Brother Lawrence Colhocker, the founding principal of Bishop Walsh, helped set its professional tone from the first day. Twenty-nine young men from the Cumberland area answered the call to a Christian Brothers' vocation by receiving the Robe; nine of these men are still in active duty or have received their eternal reward while remaining in the Institute.

The names and the faces of the Brothers have certainly changed over the decades. Whatever the future holds, however, the sons of De La Salle are proud to have walked the streets of a city and a region which have grown with them. This anniversary, then, yields a fine opportunity to rediscover and reconnect with their century of service, sacrifice, and dedication...and to re-echo the expression of thanks from a grateful community.

# “Care of Those for Whom You are Given Responsibility”

BY BROTHER JAMES LOXHAM (LI-NE)

**A**s the young people came into Martin de Porres (MDP) High School in Brooklyn, New York, on the morning of June 11, 2007, it became obvious that something different and at the same time something great was in the air. Many students were dressed with obvious care about themselves. Several had a different nervousness about themselves, giving off the hints that they wanted to be sure that something was going to go off well. Some of the staff, as well as their constant great care, had another vein of attention in their presence.

This Monday centered upon these young people showing their talents, gifts, energy, enthusiasm, and, above all, their hope and yearning for “a life.”

Everyone gathered at the nearby auditorium of Bishop Ford High School. Preparations, considerable work, and movement on the stage area were in progress. The other students took their places. Guests were there from Queens and Elmont. During the entire day spent in that auditorium I experienced an attentive, interested, participative student body, with a different spirit and behavior which was much better than many other assemblies of high school students I had participated in.

One of the most important factor that contributed to this calm gathering of students was the composure of the staff. There were no agitated teachers giving directions and orders. The staff generated their usual, wonderful kindness, watchfulness, and patience. In fact during all the components of both the morning Stage Production, and the afternoon Awards Assembly, administration and staff took things naturally, and that not only calmed the young people, but also gave them a sense of security.

For the Stage Production I was told that the young people themselves had written the script. A creative dance teacher took that script, added music, lights and stage direction, then with patience and professionalism guided and coached the students in crafting a compelling performance.

The theme of the Dance-Drama is the young people who wrote the script and by extension, all the students of MDP High School. The setting is a school. It is, however, a school of dance.

To see these young people who battle so many obstacles in life put this together, work together, control their motions, and be unafraid to perform on a stage to their peers, is so gratifying. Having so many teenage boys dancing and young women in a leading part was a great achievement. During a regular school day there are several occasions or displays of anger, uncontrollable movement, agitation, emotion, sadness, even despair. All those powerful, unmanageable behaviors were brought together and put into a unified artwork of beautiful movement. This performance reinforced for me the belief that there are many ways of learning. We just have to find the key to the specific lock. That is “the gift of teaching.”

Immediately after the performance all the participants were recognized—the many actors, the stage crew, the technical directors, and the producer, Mrs. Zachia Moreira, the dance instructor for all the Martin de Porres Schools.

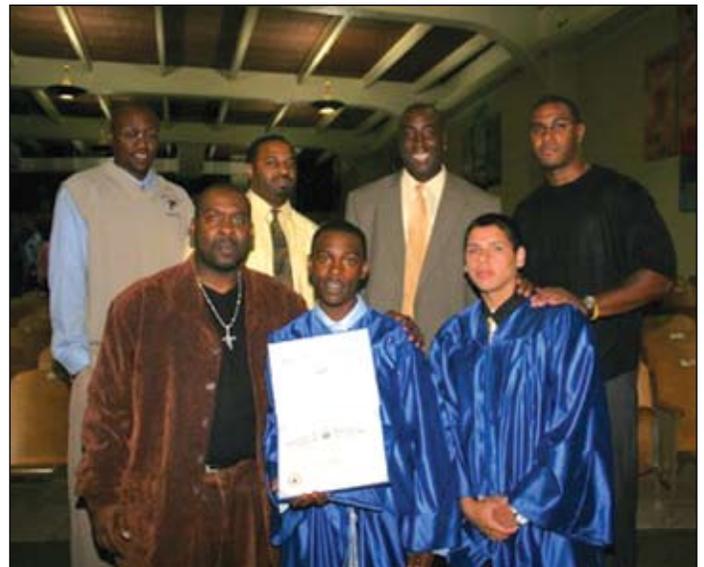
The Awards and Honors Assembly followed after lunch. Once again there was complete attention to the event.



“Dance is an intrinsically human manner of self expression.”



Zachia Moreira (far left), dance instructor, with some performers proudly displaying their awards.



Two members of the Class of 2007.

Each subject had two recognitions: one for achievement, another for excellence. The students received medals, plaques, trophies and other materials which recognized their work and improvement, as well as their marks and competency in the subject. While the Academic Vice-Principal, Karel Lancaster, presided at the event and announced the names, the teacher of the subject in consideration was asked to come to the stage to actually present the award. There were also awards for mentoring work some students had performed, and recognitions of those who supported all the activities, and a marvelous Principal's Award given to the student who had during all his four years worked hard, had good attendance, and who had consistently helped and supported all the activities of the School. This was earned by a young man, Calloway Parillo, who, along with six others, has been accepted into college. This college possibility is the result of the research and planning of Thomas Spragan, and Priscilla O'Connor. An award was given to practically each student for good attendance and also for following as consistently as possible the dress expectations and cooperation expectations of the school. The teachers and the staff were also recognized.

The "care of those for whom you are given responsibility" is evident at this ministry. De La Salle insisted upon vigilance, correction and recognition. For me this was a day full of inspiration and the conviction that the need for this Institute is very great. The young, the poor, the world and the Body of Christ still need the ministry of the charism of John Baptist de La Salle.

**“Have U Ever?”**

Have U ever  
Switched from place 2 place, feelings from feelings,  
Love 2 hate—hate 2 love,  
Not knowing where you'll end up?

Have U ever  
Thought u would grow up 2 be  
somebody inside,  
But grew up 2 be someone else  
Thought your life was made for a reason,  
And that reason was,  
Something good is gonna come out of it?

Have U ever  
Felt like u were at the finish line,  
But still had a couple more laps 2 run  
So quitting was the answer at the time?  
Mads some mistakes,  
And those mistakes followed u throughout life,  
So u begin 2 feel like it was a punishment?

I know u wonder, “Have I ever?”  
I'm making new decisions; I'm not making  
the same mistakes,  
But I've decided to go out with the old,  
And go in with the new.

Congratulations 2 my peers. I call friends.  
We made it into the next level of life.

## REGIONAL NEWS

### Honors



**Brother Vincent Malham** (Midwest) was awarded the Holy Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal at the Vatican on June 23<sup>rd</sup> by Cardinal Moussa Daoud, Prefect of the Congregation of Eastern Churches, in recognition of his distinguished service at Bethlehem University.

**Brother Larry Schatz** (Midwest) was invested into the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem at the annual assembly of the Northern Lieutenancy on September 15-17 in Minneapolis.



De Marillac students and teachers with Department of the Environment mascot Phoebe the Phoenix.

**De Marillac Academy** in San Francisco, California, was recognized by the Department of Environment, San Francisco County, for having a rate of waste diversion of 97 percent, the highest among the 285 schools participating in the Department's composting program. The school was honored at a reception held earlier this year at the San Francisco City Hall.

### Affiliations

**Archbishop Harry Flynn** of the St. Paul and Minneapolis Archdiocese and **William Rybak**, chair of the Board of Trustees of Lewis University, were affiliated as a members of the Institute .

### New Appointments



**Brother Dennis Malloy** was appointed Visitor of the Baltimore District by Superior General Brother Alvaro Rodriguez Echeverria. Brother Dennis was Executive Director of the Saint Gabriel System since the year 2000.

**Father Paul Novak, OSM**, was selected as the President of De La Salle Institute in Chicago, Illinois, and will start in the fall of 2008.

**Brother Michael Kadow** is the new Principal of San Juan Diego Middle School in Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

**Michael Sawicki** is the new Director of La Salle Retreat Center in Wildwood, Missouri.

**Paul Haney** is the new Principal at San Miguel-Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**Phil Pusateri** is the new Principal at De La Salle, St. Matthew Parish in St. Louis, Missouri.

**Michael Lighthiser** is new the Principal at De La Salle Blackfeet School in Browning, Montana.

### Lasallian Volunteers Run the Annual Chicago Marathon



Lasallian Volunteers Sara Vogelpohl and Casey Wilson.

Eighteen Lasallian Volunteers (LV) joined 36,000 runners from all over the United States and 120 countries in the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Marathon. The 26.2-mile race was held in the heart of Chicago, Illinois, on October 7.

Despite record heat and humid weather, all 18 volunteers braved the race and elements with friends and fellow volunteers providing water, refreshments and encouragement at designated points throughout the course.

The Lasallian Volunteers successfully raised over \$26,200 in donations, meeting their goal of \$1,000 for every mile of the race to insure future volunteers for the children and families they serve.—*By Philip De Rita*

## Bethlehem University Hosts Inter-religious Dialogue

Bethlehem University was host to the International Religious Conference, from September 5-7. The three-day gathering provided a forum for “Exploring Christian-Muslim Relations in the Middle East and the West.” Presenters and participants from Germany, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Sweden, Israel, the United States (U.S.), Philippines and Palestine left the conference with a better understanding of and a deeper responsibility for the future of Christian-Muslim relations in their respective communities.

“Interreligious dialogue is possible,” said Fr. Jamal Khader, Cardinal Hume and Cardinal de Furstenberg Endowed Chair of Religious Studies at Bethlehem University in Palestine. “Our belief in God, in human beings and in the power of education pushes us to be optimists.” The challenge is how to continue this dialogue in a way that will produce concrete change. Fears and misconceptions must be addressed, people must be educated and dialogue must be initiated.

Dr. Werner Wertgen, a Professor of Theology from *Katholische Fachhochschule*, University of Applied Sciences, Germany, said that it was imperative to understand the context in which the religious communities live before initiating dialogue. One conference participant, George Rishmawi from the Siraj Center in Beit Sahour, called dialogue a tool for justice, while Fr. Vincent Hanssens, former general secretary of the International Federation of Catholic Universities, said, “Dialogue is the responsibility of every citizen of a multi-cultural society.”

Many noted the extreme importance of academic institutions in not only providing a space for dialogue to take place, but in making concerted efforts at initiating this dialogue and focusing it further. Presenters agreed that Bethlehem University was the ideal venue for such initiatives, considering its location in the Holy Land, the crossroads of the three monotheistic religions. Fr. Henri de La Hougue, Vice-Director of the *Institut de science et de théologie des religions* in Paris, said, “Because Bethlehem is located in an area where the culture and history is the same, you have a great opportunity to build a model for the whole world. Bethlehem

University is showing us that dialogue is possible and fruitful.”

Dr. Eduardo Domingo, Associate Professor in the Theology and Religious Education Department at De La Salle University in the Philippines, among others, commented that the participation of Bethlehem University students in the conference was essential and most appreciated. “It gives us the impetus to work for them and for the future,” Dr. Domingo said.

It was suggested that Bethlehem University hold a yearly international religious conference on inter-religious dialogue. Fr. Jamal concluded by saying, “We believe in what we are doing. With the on-going support of our friends and benefactors, and the blessings of God, we at Bethlehem University will do whatever it takes to continue inter-religious dialogue in the Holy Land.”

The Conference presented over 15 discussions about Christian-Muslim relations and dialogue in 11 countries, including Egypt, Palestine, the U.S. and the Philippines. Its main aim was to address the challenges of coexistence between Christians and Muslims in the Middle East and the West by sharing the personal experiences of the academe and students alike. Conference proceedings will soon be available. For more information, please contact [religiousconference@bethlehem.edu](mailto:religiousconference@bethlehem.edu).

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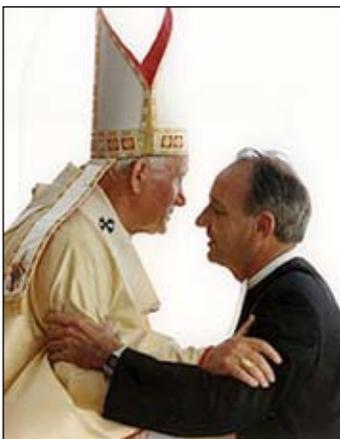
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# Celebrating the Life of Brother John Johnston, FSC

NOVEMBER 10, 1933-OCTOBER 11, 2007

EXERPTS FROM THE LETTER OF BROTHER ALVARO RODRIGUEZ ECHEVERRIA UPON THE DEATH OF BROTHER JOHN

Brother John Johnston was a distinguished member of our Institute and had a profound influence on Brothers and lay Lasallians all over the world. This happened first of all in his religious Province of Saint Louis, Missouri, where he held responsibilities in the formation of young Brothers and where he became Provincial. Later it was as Vicar General of the Institute (1976-1986) and as Superior General for two periods of seven years (1986-2000). For a number of years he was also Vice President of the USG (Union of Superiors General) always defending strongly the value of the vocation of Brother in the Church and participated in three Synods, being Assistant Secretary of the Synod on the Consecrated Life. At the end of his mandates as Superior General he was in charge of the Department of Education of the Lasallian Region of USA-Toronto; he was also in charge of a Foundation for the defense of children and traveled around the Lasallian world giving retreats and attending assemblies, meetings...



...I want to share with you some of the traits of his personality that have made the greatest impact on me. I have felt Brother John to be a man of convictions, spiritual depth, and profound interior life; his sense of Lasallian values was contagious for all of us and he had an extraordinary capacity for leadership. He always remained close to young people...

Another of his characteristics was his love of the Church, a clear and filial love.

On a personal level, I much appreciate the vigorous impulse that he gave to association with our lay partners and to the shared mission as well as his interest in the rebirth of the Institute in several countries of Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and his special care for our missionary development in Africa and Asia. A special mention should be made of his concern for the Rights of the Children and his energetic support



for Bethlehem University in its service to the People of Palestine. Besides all of this we will remember his visits and his writings which have given such a strong

thrust to the renewal of the Institute and its mission.

Finally, I do not want to forget to point out another aspect of the life of Brother John that has been an inspiration for me. It is the love for his family, here present. I saw it as a love expressed with affection, closeness and admiration...



*Testimonies on Brother John at the end of the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter on the completion of his ministry in the Institute:*

“An understanding man yet firm, never superficial. His pastoral letters underscore criteria for what is essential to move forward. They attract us by their clear reflection. I value his respect for the diverse Regions of the Institute, encouraging us to respond to the challenges that all of us have.”—  
*Brother Jacques d’Huiteau(France)*

“Brother John has helped us to look both at the present as well as the future in a proactive way. His themes have been the Defense of the Rights of the Child, the new apostolic commitments for the poor, the Lasallian perspective of today’s reality and a creative fidelity to wipe out the separation between words and deeds.”—  
*Brother José Manuel Aguirrezabalaga (Spain)*

“He speaks with passion for the rights of children. He knows the Brothers by name and encourages them. He knows when to move forward slowly: serene yet passionate. I have valued his vision, his ability to adapt and his realism.”—*Brother Thomas Johnson (USA-Toronto)*

## IN MEMORIAM

*“Those who teach others unto justice shall shine like stars for all eternity.”*

*—Book of Daniel, 12:3*

- **Brother William Rahner** (Baltimore) passed away on June 17 at the age of 86.
- **Brother Brendan Wilkinson** (NO-SF) passed away on July 2 at the age of 87.
- **Brother John Griffin** (New York) passed away on July 3 at the age of 82.
- **Brother Christian Connors** (San Francisco) passed away on July 13 at the age of 94.
- **Brother Timothy (Julius Timothy) McNary** (Midwest) passed away on July 19 at the age of 85.
- **Brother Anthony Gajewski** (Midwest) passed away on July 30 at the age of 48.
- **Brother William James Fox** (NO-SF) passed away on August 9 at the age of 80.
- **Brother Bertrand (Louis Bertrand) Juettner** (NO-SF) passed away on August 29 at the age of 82.
- **Brother Edward (James Edward) Mason** (Midwest District) passed away on September 7 at the age of 85.
- **Brother Peter Reidy** (New York) passed away on September 19 at the age of 94.
- **Brother Basil Pichette** (Toronto) passed away on September 29 at the age of 85.
- **Brother John Johnston** (Midwest) passed away on October 11 at the age of 73.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### NOVEMBER 2007

- 09 Martyrs of Almeria
- 15-17 Huether Lasallian Conference  
St. Louis, MO

### JANUARY 2008

- 04-05 Regional Education Board Meeting (location to be determined)
- 18-19 RCCB Meeting  
Townson, MD

### FEBRUARY 2008

- 09 St. Miguel Febres Cordero
- 28-29 Lasallian Leadership Institute - West Coast, St. Joseph's Camp, Duncans Mills, CA

### MARCH 2008

- 01 cont. Lasallian Leadership Institute - West Coast, St. Joseph's Camp, Duncans Mills, CA

- 06-08 Lasallian Leadership Institute - Midwest, Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, IL
- 13-15 Lasallian Leadership Institute - East Coast, Fernwood Hotel & Resort, Bushkill, PA
- 25-28 NCEA Convention & Exposition, Indianapolis, IN
- 28-29 Regional Education Board Meeting, Midwest District

### APRIL 2008

- 25 Regional Finance Board Meeting  
Washington, DC

### MAY 2008

- 28-29 RCCB meeting, hosted by CB Conference in Washington, DC

### JULY 2008

- 06-11 Lasallian Leadership Institute - Midwest, Lewis University, Romeoville, IL

- 13-18 Lasallian Leadership Institute - East Coast, Pocono Manor, Mt. Pocono, PA
- 20-25 Lasallian Leadership Institute - West Coast, Saint Mary's College, Moraga, CA

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