



Report of the
International Assembly 2006

**Associated for the
Lasallian Educational Mission**

Rome, Italy
October, 23th - November 4th, 2006

**INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS
OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

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Reflection at the beginning of the International Assembly

In their first communication after the end of the 43rd General Chapter, the Superior and the members of the General Council remembered the Assembly of the Founder and the first Brothers who made their perpetual profession in Paris in 1694. The General Chapter itself affirmed that: *The foundation event which links the Institute today to its origins is that of June 6, 1694, when John Baptist de La Salle and twelve of his followers came together to consecrate themselves for life, to the Christian education of poor boys.* (Circular 447, p.2), and later adds that *this vow at the origins is the source of Lasallian associations of lay persons and religious who wish to be part of the Lasallian Mission* (p. 3).

Lasallian history also reminds us of other Assemblies, which, like the one already mentioned, were fundamental marker events in the structuring of the Institute and the implementation of the mission. It seems important to situate our Assembly in this context as a continuation of what has gone before us, not only in the lives of the Founder and the first Brothers, but also throughout our history. This has never been the fruit of brilliant individual intuitions, but rather the result of community discernment for the mission that the Lord and the Church have entrusted to us.

Many of these Assemblies took place between Pentecost and Trinity Sunday. I don't believe that this was accidental; it was a symbolic event. Our journey together to carry on the Lasallian Mission by being instruments of salvation for the young and especially the poor, is not our work, but the work of the Spirit. It is the Spirit of God who guides and enlightens us. The Founder surely reminded the members of the early Assemblies that constituted the Society of the Christian Schools about the disciples gathered together in the Cenacle, at the origins of the Church. That is why we too can pray as the Founder invites us to in the Meditation for the Feast of Pentecost: *You carry out a work that requires you to touch hearts, but this you cannot do except by the Spirit of God. Pray to him to give you today the same grace he gave the holy apostles, and ask him that, after filling you with his Holy Spirit to sanctify yourselves, he also communicate himself to you in order to procure the salvation of others.* (Meditation 43.3).

Br. Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría
October 23th, 2006

Opening Letter



Fellow Lasallians:

In his words at the opening of the International Assembly: Association for Lasallian Educational Mission, Brother Alvaro Rodriguez Echeverria, our Superior General, reminded us, in speaking of the Assembly, that “this time of God is always a kairos, a time of grace and salvation. It is not about an adventure undertaken alone. Our adventure bears fruit in fraternal communion and in our common efforts. In our case this adventure is lived ‘together and by association’.”¹

We acknowledge with gratitude that the 43rd General Chapter of 2000 called this “historic event”² into existence and that the Superior and the members of the General Council set in motion the planning of this event through the constitution of the “Associated for the Educational Service of the Poor Commission” and the “Standing Committee for the Lasallian Educational Mission.” In fact, the work of this Assembly began many months before this gathering in Rome through the partial assemblies held in 11 Regions of the Institute and the 2nd International Symposium of Young Lasallians – occasions through which lived realities were discussed and visions for the future were offered.

We members of the Steering Committee of the International Assembly offer this report to all members of the Lasallian Family, particularly to the Brother Capitulants who will gather for the 44th General Chapter, in order that you may experience and understand what occurred



during the two weeks in which some 154 Lasallians from around the world gathered together to engage in “building a new reality, in which all of us who make the Lasallian charism our own are expanding our association for the educational service of the poor and the evangelization of the young. We are seeing a true rebirth or re-foundation, a providential time in the history of the Lasallian charism”.³

We offer this document not as an end product in itself, but rather as an opportunity to continue the process of “community discernment for the mission that the Lord and the Church have entrusted to us.”⁴ We realize that Brothers and Lasallians will use this document in their communal discernment with the Brothers Capitulants prior to the 44th General Chapter and that the Brothers Capitulants will study the document and use it as a major source in the formulation of some propositions that will be voted upon in the final days of the 44th General Chapter⁵. It is our hope that the entire Institute and Lasallian Family will engage in a similar process of discernment in order to see ways in which the main orientations, points of emphasis, and suggested lines of action would assist them to build a new reality, to “vision possibilities and anticipate actions...that are bold and daring, in the creative, authentic, radical spirit of De La Salle.”⁶

The process of the Assembly was in four stages: Orientation; Sharing Experiences; Discernment; and, Action Plan. Following an Introduction, this document is divided into six sections to reflect the four stages of the Assembly and to present the report, Our Final Outcomes, and the concluding remarks of the Superior, along with a Final Message using the words of the delegates at the end of the Assembly. For each of the six main sections we offer a series of reflection questions to assist in making this a “living” document. On an accompanying CD we offer you a visual presentation of the Assembly experience, some of the key documents, and assorted pictures.

The International Assembly was a point of a journey, “a continuation of what has gone before us, not only in the lives of the Founder and the first Brothers, but also throughout our history.”⁷ It is our hope that this document will allow the journey to continue.

“Our journey together to carry on the Lasallian Mission by being instruments of salvation for the young and especially the poor, is not our work, but the work of the Spirit. It is the Spirit of God who guides and enlightens us.”⁸ May our work as a Lasallian Family associated together for mission and the work of the 44th General Chapter continue to be guided and enlightened by the Spirit as we reflect upon this phase of the journey called the International Assembly 2006!

Steering Committee for the International Assembly 2006

¹ *Words of Welcome*, Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, 23 October 2006.

² *Welcome Comments*, Gery Short, 23 October 2006.

³ *Words of Welcome*, Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, 23 October 2006.

⁴ *Prayer Reflection*, Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, 23 October 2006.

⁵ This sentence was added by Brother Superior and General Council. For further explanation, please see Circular 453, pp. 18-19 and Circular 454 p. 14.

⁶ *Welcome Comments*, Gery Short, 23 October 2006.

⁷ *Prayer Reflection*, Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, 23 October 2006.

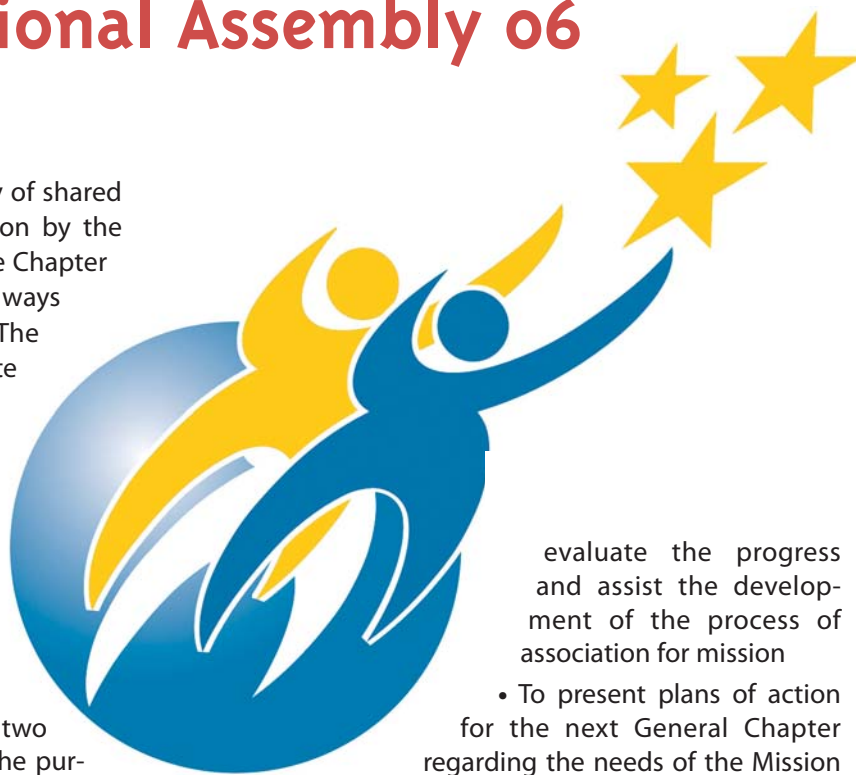
⁸ *Ibid.*

Introduction: The Purpose and History of the International Assembly 06

The 43rd General Chapter recognized the reality of shared mission and the vitality brought to the mission by the combined efforts of Brothers and partners. The Chapter sought to formalize this recognition and to find ways to further explore Association for Mission. The Chapter called for two commissions to facilitate the dialogue of Association for Mission on the local, Regional, and international levels: The Lasallian Education Mission Commission (MEL) and the Commission for Association. Since 2001, these two commissions have formulated processes of discussion and offered some articulation of that discussion in the form of MEL booklets, Institute Bulletins, Forums, and other publications.

These Commissions also helped to develop a two stage process for an International Assembly. The purpose of the two stages of the Assembly, ultimately convoked by Brother Superior General and his Council (June 18, 2004), was:

- To look for and propose responses to the new needs of the Lasallian Mission
- To share experiences of association, to analyze and



evaluate the progress and assist the development of the process of association for mission

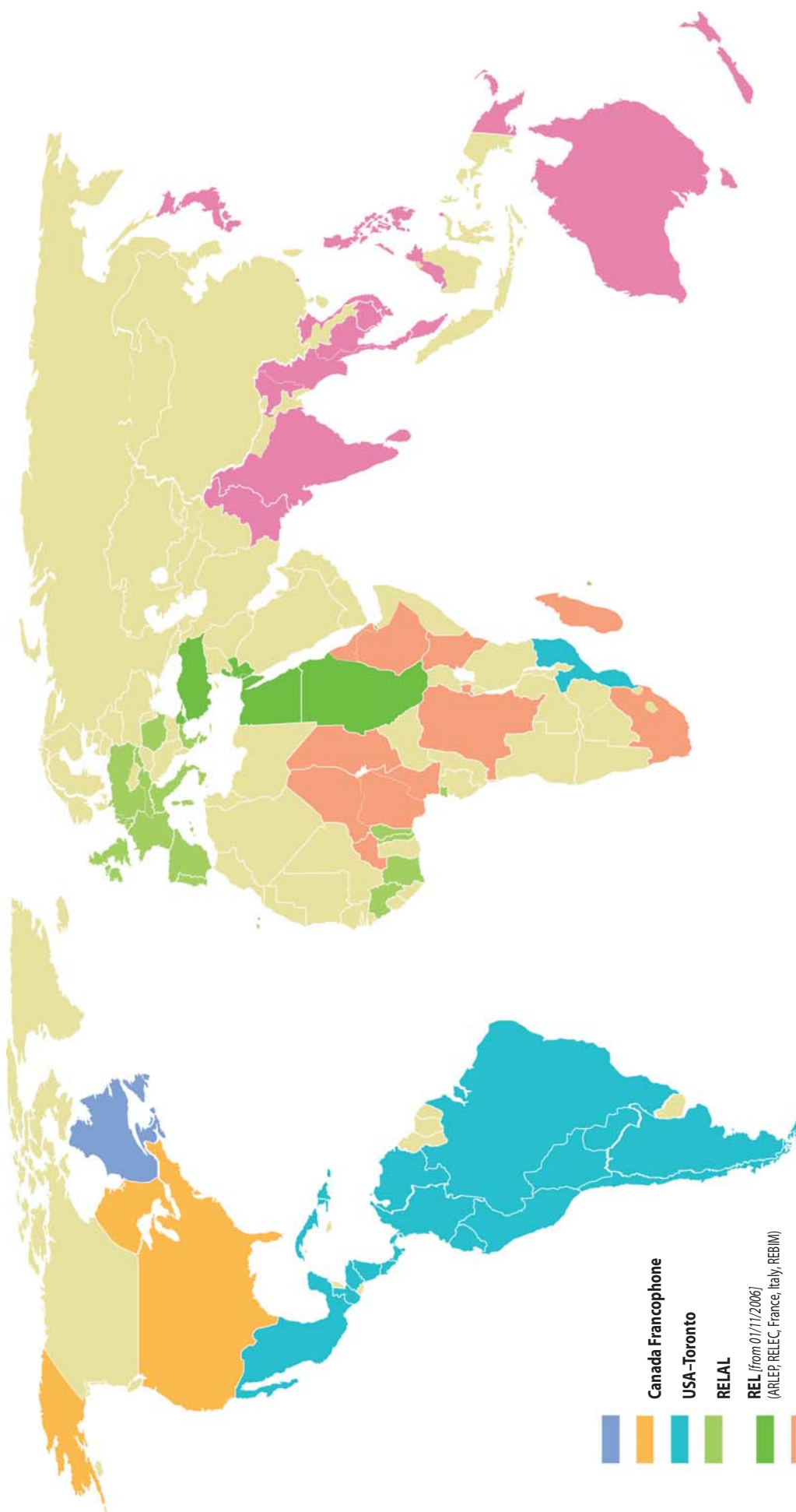
- To present plans of action for the next General Chapter regarding the needs of the Mission and Association.

The Assembly's role was to discern, discover and articulate the realities of Association and the educational mission in light of the Lasallian charism and to express a collective future vision by recommending orientations, areas of emphasis and some lines of action.

The First Stage: The Partial Assemblies at the Regional Level

The task of the Partial Assemblies at the Regional level was to hear as many voices as possible in order to discover and articulate the collective Lasallian identity in the context of the present world and to recognize the diverse ways of living the Lasallian charism of human and Christian education, in the service of the young and especially the poor. The Regional Assemblies were designed to be an expression of the reality of association and of Lasallian education as lived in the Regions by Brothers and partners, associates, Lasallian movements, young Lasallian volunteers, Lasallian Sisters, etc. The Partial Assembly membership followed guidelines provided by the Commissions, 2/3 Partners and 1/3 Brothers.

The Partial Assemblies that were held in the different Regions of the Institute reflected on the themes which were suggested by the International Commissions on Association for the Educational Service of the Poor and the Lasallian Education Mission. The themes were enriched during the Inter-Capitular Meeting of May 2004 and approved by the General Council on June 18, 2004. The themes were designed to explore the realities, trends, obstacles and challenges regarding Lasallian Educational Mission and Association for Mission, as well as Structures, and to lead toward vision of the future with possible lines of direction.



- Canada Francophone
- USA-Toronto
- RELAL
- REL (from 01/11/2006)
- REL (ARLEP, RELEC, France, Italy, REBIM)
- Proche Orient
- RELAF
- PARC

Lasallian Regions
 (Nov. 2006)

Partial Assembly Agenda

Themes for the Partial Assemblies:

I. Association: *(Documents of the 43rd General Chapter, Propositions 1, 2, 3 and 4)*

1. What is the regional definition of Association?
What is the meaning of Association in the Region?
2. How is it lived out in the regional reality?
3. What does Association teach us about the identity of the Brothers and the identity of the Lay Associates and the way they complement each other?
4. What encourages Association in the Region?
5. What are the challenges to Association in the Region?
6. What is the vision of a desired future for Association in the region?
7. What steps should the Region take to make this a reality?

II Educational Mission: *(Documents of the 43rd General Chapter, Propositions 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16)*

1. How is the Lasallian Educational Mission lived/expressed in reality in the region? This should include the following: relationships with students/ those served, management of institutions or services, approach to students/ those served, organizational structures, authentic service to the poor, etc?
2. What are the emerging needs, attempts at innovation, and challenges to the Educational Mission?
3. What encourages or strengthens the Educational Mission?
4. How do you vision the future of the Educational Mission?
5. What steps should the Region take to make this a reality?

III. Organizational Structures:

(Documents of the 43rd General Chapter, Propositions 5, 6 and 11)

1. How have the new organizational structures helped the Educational Mission?



2. How can these structures be strengthened?
3. What are the implications for leadership as a result of these structures?
4. What are the implications of these for the formation of those involved in the mission?

Eleven Regions of the Institute held Partial Assemblies and the Young Lasallians convened their 2nd International Symposium; each generated a report.⁹

At the conclusion of their Regional process each Assembly sent a report to the MEL and Association Commissions to be shared with the delegates at the 2nd phase - International Assembly in Rome and the Lasallian world.



⁹ Available on the accompanying CD/DVD, as well as on the Institute website www.lasalle.org.

Dates of the Regional Assemblies

2005		
Madagascar (RELAF)	March 21-23	
Central Africa (RELAF) Rwanda, Camaroon, Congo Kinshasa, Guinea Equatorial, Lwanga	August 21-25	Nairobi, Kenya
Italy	October 8	3 assemblies: Catania, Milano, Torino
Proche Orient	November 3-6	Cairo, Egypt
USA/Toronto	November 15-19	Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
PARC	December 15-18	Manila, Phillipines
West Africa (RELAF)	December 27-30	Lome, Togo
2006		
RELAL	March 5-8 March 15-18 March 23-26	Cuernavaca, Mexico Bogota, Colombia Santiago, Chile
Canada Francophone	March 25-26	Montreal, Canada
RELAF	March 25-29	Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso
REBIN	April 7-9	3 assemblies: England, Ireland, Malta
ARLEP	April 27-29	Catalunya, Spain
RELEC	April 28-30	Vienna, Austria
France	July 10-12	La Motte Servolex, France
Young Lasallians	July 15-23	Rome, Italy

The Second Stage - The International Assembly in Rome

In announcing the Assembly in June 2004, the Superior General and the General Council stated that the Assembly had a specific relationship to the General Chapter of the Brothers as called for in the 43rd General Chapter and that, during the preparation for the 44th General Chapter, Brother Superior and his Council along with the Preparatory Commission of the Chapter will take into account the reflections and conclusions of the International Assembly, in accordance with Recommendations 36 and 37 of the 43rd General Chapter.

Additionally the Assembly was to serve as a structure of discernment and communion for all persons and Lasallian groups involved in the Lasallian educational mission.

The Assembly was to be a response to the new Lasallian reality in the present situation of the Church that seeks to be a presence in the world as communion for the Mission.

It was to represent all the persons and groups who share

Recommendation 36

That Brother Superior and his Council invite some lay Associates, members of the Standing Committee on the Lasallian Education Mission, to attend the next General Chapter for a few days, to present the work of the International Assembly on the Lasallian Educational Mission.

Recommendation 37

That Brother Superior and his Council, in consultation with the Regions, select the important themes for the 44th General Chapter, and set in motion an interactive process sufficiently ahead of time to enable all Brothers to participate in its preparation. This preparatory work would make it possible to shorten the Chapter.

the educational mission based on the same Lasallian charism. The participants in the Assembly were to manifest the diversity of the Regions and the different ways of being Lasallian. As a consequence, the opportunity for communal discernment offered by the Assembly was to enable it to become an efficacious instrument for updating and deepening the charism.

Participants of the International Phase of the Assembly in Rome

Regions were asked to devise a process to designate delegates keeping in mind that delegates should have:

1. participated in the Partial Assembly of their own Region,
2. undergone a Lasallian formation,

3. participated in the Lasallian network for at least five years,
4. demonstrated an effective commitment in the Lasallian world,
5. visited in the previous months at least two Lasallian works of different types and different from those in which they were engaged and
6. grasped what is currently at stake as regarding association and education.

Additionally, the Region was to have a ratio of 2/3 Lay and 1/3 Brother participants and attempt to balance as much as possible gender representation, types of apostolates, etc. Regional participation numbers were suggested by the MEL and Association Commissions and given final approval by the Superior and General Council as follows:

LASALLIAN REGIONS	Associated Commission	MEL Commission	Delegates	Total
RELAL	3	3	30	36
EUROPE: France, REBIM, RELEC, ARLEP, Italy	2	3	33	38
Proche Orient			2	2
PARC	2	1	22	25
USA/Toronto + Canada Francophone	1	3	20	24
RELAF	1	1	13	15
TOTAL	9	11	120	140

In addition to the Regional representation described above, Brother Superior General and the General Council were to be participants, as well as 15 members appointed by Brother Superior General and his Council. On this occasion, two representative of the *La Salle Guadalupanas Sisters*, two representative of the *La Salle Sisters of Viet-Nam*, one representative of the *Union of Catechists of Jesus Crucified*, one representative of *Lasallian Universities*, and representatives of *Young Lasallians*, among others, were invited.

A Diverse Assembly

After the Regions had completed their appointments it became apparent that the delegates gathered in Rome were a very diverse group, coming from over **50 different countries**. In one informal survey it was noted that among

the delegates were speakers of over **42 different mother tongues**. The delegates served in all forms of educational settings from universities through middle school and non-traditional centers for youth.

International Assembly 2006 Participants^o

	Total	%	%
Lay (F)	36	23	61
Lay (M)	56	35	
Sisters	4	3	
FSC	62	39	39
Total	158	100	100

Committees of the Assembly

Preparatory Committee

Gery Short, Chair, Br. Antonio Botana, Br. Miguel Campos, Br. John D'Cruz, Ms. Eveline Geoffroy, Br. Carlos Gómez, Br.



¹⁰ See accompanying CD/DVD for a listing and pictures of all delegates



Lorenzo Gonzalez Kipper, Br. Frederick Mueller, and Br. Claude Reinhardt.

Steering Committee

To guide the International Assembly a Steering Commit-



¹¹ See Flowchart in the accompanying CD/DVD

tee was formed from the two Commissions (MEL and Association) and by members of the Generalate Staff. The members included: Gery Short, Chair; Br. Lorenzo Gonzalez Kipper, Secretariat; Br. Michael French, Liturgies and Celebrations; Carmelita Quebengco, Moderator; Br. John D'Cruz, Listening and Writing Committee; Br. Valere Adonsou, MEL Commission; Charles "Skip" Gaus, MEL Commission; Luis Pena, Association Commission; Eveline Geoffroy, Moderator.

Listening and Writing Committee

Br. John D'Cruz (Coordinator), Albert Leroy, Joan Landeros, Luis Peña, Greg Kopra (Scribe).

Liturgy Committee

Br. Michael French, Eric Amaladas, Br. Timothy Coldwell.

Final Report Committee

Gery Short, Chair, Br. Antonio Botana, Br. Miguel Campos, Br. John D'Cruz, Charles "Skip" Gaus, Eveline Geoffroy, Br. Lorenzo Gonzalez Kipper, Br. Frederick Mueller, Luis Peña, Br. Claude Reinhardt.

Structure of the Assembly¹¹

The Assembly was organized in a flow of four movements: Welcome and Orientation, Sharing, Discernment, and Action Plans. The participants began their Assembly in an Orientation and Welcome phase, getting to know one another and the Generalate. The next phase of the Assembly involved sharing of realities and experiences as the participants listened to reports from the Regions and some lived experiences of Mission and Association. After hearing all the reports the participants began to discern, in prayer, the challenges and priorities for the worldwide Lasallian Family. Having identified the challenges and priorities as Main Orientations, the Assembly participants moved into the final phase of identifying Areas of Emphasis and Action Plans to be sent to the 44th General Chapter and the Lasallian Family.

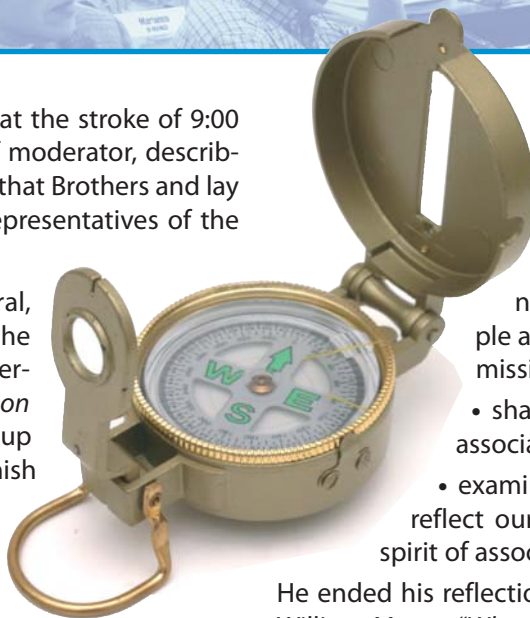


Section I: Orientations (October 23rd, 2006)

The Assembly got off to a brisk start at the stroke of 9:00 AM, with Carmelita Quebengco, chief moderator, describing this historic event as the first time that Brothers and lay partners had gathered together as representatives of the worldwide Lasallian family.

Brother Alvaro, our Superior General, gave the keynote address¹² in which he welcomed the delegates to the Generalate as the *"Mother House, our common home, our family home."* He summed up the Assembly in the words of the Spanish poet, Leon Felipe: *"It is not important to arrive quickly and alone, but all together and at the appointed time."* He challenged the delegates to answer *"the call to conversion and to uniting our strength in a communion of service."*

The Chairman of the Steering Committee, Gery Short¹³, congratulated the delegates for having been chosen as the representatives of almost 80,000 educators from over eighty countries around the world. He introduced the members of the Steering Committee before outlining the



purpose of the assembly: *"to describe and reflect upon the history and present situation of our Lasallian Association"* and especially to:

- identify and offer responses to new, emerging needs of young people and others for the Lasallian education mission;
- share and evaluate our experiences of association;
- examine our structures and leadership to reflect our contemporary experience and our spirit of association.

He ended his reflections by quoting our Vicar General, Br. William Mann, *"When the Church is in crisis, the Holy Spirit has never failed to raise up people to do God's work"* and by concluding: *"We are these people. Let's get to work."*

The rest of the morning was highlighted by a well-crafted, five-minute video presentation of the Lasallian world by Br. Roch Dufresne of the Communications Department, and a very lively and interesting *"talk show"* by Br. Michael French to indicate some of the pitfalls of communication in such a diverse cultural group.

Later, the delegates met in small, inter-cultural groups for a *"getting-to-know-you"* session. There seemed to be great



¹² See text in the accompanying CD/DVD.

¹³ See text in the accompanying CD/DVD.



joy in becoming aware of similarities in our life and work as Lasallians and increasing awareness and respect for our cultural differences.

In the afternoon, tours were conducted to various important parts of the Generalate and a number of delegates expressed surprise and interest in visiting places not normally open to casual visitors. This was followed in the late evening with an Opening Prayer Service. Regional groups made their way to the Main Chapel from various parts of the Generalate led by representatives bearing colorful

banners and symbols and moving to the sound of various rhythms of drums. Brother Alvaro offered a short reflection¹⁴ that situated this Assembly in the great heritage of other assemblies of the Brothers and in light of the gathering at Pentecost. The feeling of welcome and orientation was enjoyed by all.



¹⁴ See text on page 4 and in accompanying CD/DVD.



Questions for Reflection

As you begin a reflection process on this document, we invite you to think about the following questions that the delegates used in meeting each other. We invite you to share your responses with fellow Lasallians.

1. What has been your best professional experience?
2. What has been your most defining personal experience related to Lasallian mission?
3. What has been your most defining experience related to association for Lasallian mission?
4. What are your personal hopes and dreams for your future?
5. What are your personal hopes and dreams for the Lasallian family?





Section 2: Sharing Experiences (October 24th to 26th, 2006)

The Region of PARC¹⁵ started us off in the morning. Gerard Louis gave an introductory PowerPoint presentation of the vast geographical, cultural, social, faith, political, and educational diversity of the Asia-Pacific Region while Meredith Campbell continued with a comprehensive view of the realities, trends, obstacles and challenges of the Region in its Organizational Structures, Lasallian Educational Mission and Association, ending with the PARC Vision and Action Plan as discussed during their Partial Assembly late last year.

This was followed by comments given in inter-cultural groups regarding the PARC Report. Questions for clarification were fielded by PARC members within each group.

Then all the delegates were back in the Aula Magna to listen to Carmelita Quebengco, Jack Firman and Br. Loorthunayagam S. share experiences of specific examples of PARC Lasallian activities: Philippine “structures for Association”; Boys’ Town, Australia; and a Lasallian School in Pakistan with 95 per cent Muslim students.

The same process of Report - Inter-cultural group reactions – Sharing some specific programs was repeated in the afternoon by the RELAF Region¹⁶ and was to be repeated for the other Regions.

N. Vitalis gave a PowerPoint presentation of an “educational tour of Africa” outlining socio-economic and political realities, thematic content, tendencies, obstacles and difficulties, Vision and Plan of Action of our Lasallian educational projects. Again, after the delegates had considered this RELAF Report in inter-cultural groups, we listened to two specific programs: Brother Valere outlined the background to the “*Life in Abundance*” Lasallian program, while Dominic Kithendu explained the locally-founded “*Mutien Marie Centre*” for poor youth.

The day came to an end with praying our experiences of the day in our small inter-cultural groups.



¹⁵ See accompanying CD/DVD for a copy of the Report.

¹⁶ See accompanying CD/DVD for a copy of the Report.

¹⁷ See accompanying CD/DVD for a copy of the Report.

¹⁸ See accompanying CD/DVD for a copy of the Report.

¹⁹ See accompanying CD/DVD for a copy of this Report .

On the morning of the 25th the RELAL Region (Latin America) took the floor beginning with their own stirring Prayer-slide show. This was followed by Br. Oscar Azmitia who presented the RELAL report¹⁷ with an analysis of their realities, and then proceeded to give a summary of their Partial Assembly findings under the headings of: Educational Mission, Association and New Structures envisaged, and ended with some very pertinent questions affecting the Region as regards association.

After the usual inter-cultural group reactions to the RELAL Report, we had a detailed explanation of PERLA, their Regional Education Project and its basic assumptions and objectives. This was further highlighted by a video-presentation showing various aspects of the Project and their experience of “joy at changing a bit of reality” and realizing that “reality is transformable.”

In the afternoon session, the Regions of USA-Toronto¹⁸ and Francophone Canada¹⁹ shared their experiences. The USA-Toronto Region went first and Greg Kopra gave a clear PowerPoint presentation of their educational ministries pointing out significant experiences, Formation programs, District-Regional-International Identity, their experiences of Association and ending with some Challenges and Important Directions for the future. Francophone Canada followed with Brother Fernando Lambert giving a brief outline of their history and how “teaching seems to have become a profession rather than a vocation” and described how they have evaluated their present strengths and are moving towards their “Never Alone Program” which emphasizes association connected directly with child-centered pastoral programs.

Once again, the inter-cultural groups had time to give their comments. Increasingly, there is the general feeling about how valuable these meetings are turning out to be - not only in getting a closer look at the various Regions, but also in building up good relationships with Lasallians from all over the world.

In the late afternoon, through a number of speakers, both the USA-Toronto and Francophone Canada Regions shared their video presentations. Sylvain Beauregard spoke of the

Holiday-Pastoral Centre at which Brothers and lay partners offered a significant spiritual experience to students throughout the year. Michael Anderer-McClelland described “the powerful experience of association and a return to the roots” in the Miguel Schools movement, and talked of some prominent Lasallian leaders. Br. Edmund Siderewicz shared about community life among associates and the presence of faith in situations “where we don’t have it all figured out.”

Finally, some participants mentioned how the prayer services in the same inter-cultural groups in which they worked during the day seemed to bring the day to a fitting close as they prayed their experiences.

The Regional Reports of Europe²⁰ and Proche-Orient²¹ brought Phase 2 to an end on the morning of the 26th. Brother Nicolas Capelle started us off with a PowerPoint presentation which began with a brief analysis of the socio-cultural context of Europe under the headings of: Education, Youth, Family, and Religion. He went on to describe the experiences of Lasallian Mission, Association and Structures, and the Lines of Action proposed at their recent partial Assemblies.

Br. Noel Sakr then filled us in with an overview of our varied educational ministries in Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, and the Holy Land (Israel-Palestine) and more recently, in Sudan. He also talked poignantly about our “lived association” and our Centers as places where we “use a multi-cultural approach to peace.” There was also a PowerPoint presentation about our Bethlehem University by Sami El Yousef.

Another example of Lasallian mission in Europe was illustrated by Victoriano Ciruelo who gave an account of some

of the processes of community-building, and the different varieties of Christian Communities that have been formed during the last seventeen years. Implications for mission are also present as many of the Lasallians in these communities are also involved in educational tasks and projects.

Finally, Geert Mortier explained the historical process of another good practice of association: the VLP (a team of Lasallian professional advisors) in North Belgium which has now been given the official mandate by the Brothers to take sole responsibility for Lasallian formation and education.

The delegates were reminded that the report²² of the 2nd International Symposium of the Young Lasallians was to be a part of their sharing; the delegates were urged to read that report and to consider it, as well as the other reports, in the Discernment Phase to follow.

Gifts and souvenirs from the different countries appeared daily on the tables of the delegates. Today we all received a copy of the book “*I Want to Go to Your School*” - *Lasallian Pedagogy in the 21st Century*. Under the supervision of Brother Nicolas Capelle, this joint-work of a number of Lasallians is intended to commemorate the publication, in 1706, of the Conduct of the Christian Schools.

And with great joy, the delegates trooped out to enjoy a well-deserved free afternoon to mark the end of Phase 2.



²⁰ See accompanying CD/DVD for a copy of the Europe (REL) Report.

²¹ See accompanying CD/DVD for a copy of the Proche Orient Report.

²² See accompanying CD/DVD for a copy of the Young Lasallians Report



Questions for Reflection

As you read the Sharing Experiences section (and read the reports from each of the Regions and from the 2nd Symposium of Young Lasallians), we invite you to reflect upon the following questions that the delegates used. We invite you to share your responses with fellow Lasallians.

1. Which experiences noted by the different Regions and the Young Lasallians seem most significant to you?
2. Which challenges do you find are most important for them?
3. What do you understand as the most important trends in these different Regions and with the Young Lasallians?
4. How do the experiences, challenges, and trends noted above relate to your own Region and to your own local situations?
5. What common challenges and trends emerge?

Section 3: Discernment (October 27th to October 31st)

On October 27th we began the Discernment Phase. This phase was to help us discover, in the light of the realities we had heard, the critical points for our Lasallian Mission, Association and Structures.

The “Listening and Writing Committee” addressed their first report to the Assembly. This Committee gathered the main ideas of each day and presented them back to the Assembly at the end of each Phase. Today the Committee emphasized some important points raised during Phase 2 under the following headings:

ORIENTATION:

- The first and most important thing is to be attentive and let ourselves be affected by our reality just as our Founder was with the reality that touched him.
- The international dimension which characterizes us is a call to live some of our basic attitudes with a view to “otherness”; this means knowing how to accept, respect and value differences.
- The answer to ‘how do we act’ is none other than a call to conversion and to uniting our strengths in a communion of service.

REALITIES:

- Disintegration of traditional family life
- Loss of Childhood and Youth as a result of migration, HIV/AIDS, loss of meaning, etc.
- New forms of poverty and the increasing gap between rich and poor
- Many places characterized by diversity of Culture, Language, Economics, Religions, Races;
- Constant change of realities and needs and the challenge of responding to them

MISSION:

- Repeated call for the identification of the characteristics of authentic Lasallian Mission
- Need for flexible adaptation to multi-faith realities especially regarding Lasallian charism
- The rise of new non-traditional works for the poor and greater attention to the poor in traditional works; these have served as catalysts for renewal of Mission; in some cases, the absence of Brothers has stimulated innovations for Mission
 - The urgent need to promote the dignity of teachers, and to create effective training programs and provide economic means to ensure the permanence of teachers
 - Challenge to find new sources of funding and human resources for the Mission
 - Solidarity can reconcile the tension between the established traditional schools and those which serve the poor
- The promotion of Justice and Peace is common to most Lasallian works; emphasis on the socio-political formation of students is an important way to counter poverty
- Lasallian Educational Mission can offer life-long learning from kindergarten to University and not only address issues of the “right to education” but also provide quality education
- New styles of leadership based on the idea of community-life have been suggested
- Many Regions are facing the challenge of having the Church understand the new forms of working for the Lasallian Mission
- There seems to be a tension between Lasallian theory and practice; we must do what we say.



stachoo



ASSOCIATION:

- The processes of searching, with regard to Association, are very significant and well accepted.
- It is seen as timely to develop steps, perhaps modest but determined, to promote Association: "One must not wait for Ali Baba's cave to open."
- One senses a need to clarify the significance of Association and its eventual adaptation to realities and needs in different cultures.

- The emergence of small creative communities is highly valued and appreciated.
- There are doubts about the need for associates to be obliged to express their commitment in a public manner; rather, in lieu of that, the significant value of their life commitment to the mission is proposed.

STRUCTURES:

- Structures centered on the Brothers and dependence on them are evolving towards structures of a "shared mission" with lay colleagues; the "shared mission" itself is evolving towards what some have called "our mission".
- New models and new structures are established for "our mission", e.g. the Councils of the Lasallian Educational Mission or the new models of District.
- In all the regions, there has been a call for the continuing formation of our lay partners and the Brothers, and especially for joint formation programs, including most notably, leadership formation.
- Questions concerning the management of finances and control often complicate efforts towards the achievement of true association.
- The Lasallian family is an international community that requires the development of a common vocabulary in order to communicate with one another in a more efficient way.
- The creation of regional networks of communication would allow us to address complex multi-cultural and multi-lingual realities.
- "There are moments when we shouldn't attempt to repair the house but rather when a new one should be constructed."

Then, Br. Miguel Campos, General Council member, addressed the Assembly in a presentation entitled: *Fidelity to the movement of the spirit: Criteria for Discernment*²³.

"When lived reality begins to unravel, a new one does not necessarily emerge immediately. Rather, what makes itself manifest is a difficult period between two spaces of time. It is here, in this critical space, that we find ourselves obliged to discern." – Br. Miguel said.

This presentation helped the participants to discover that discernment as an experience is not only "the individual



²³ See accompanying CD/DVD for a copy of the presentation.

²⁴ See accompanying CD/DVD for a copy of the MEL Report.

²⁵ See accompanying CD/DVD for a copy of the Associated for Mission Report.

discernment of a personal calling" but also *"the community discernment of a group associated for a mission."*

Br. Miguel led us through the lived experience of St. John Baptist de La Salle at various crossroads which called for discernment, and identified many "icons" from the Founder's Meditations that could stimulate and help us engage in genuine Lasallian discernment.

The rest of the morning was a quiet moment for each one of the participants to pray over pertinent questions suggested by Br. Miguel. Later in the afternoon, delegates shared their answers as an experience of *"community discernment"* in self-chosen groups of four. In the groups they created posters to reflect their discernment. Creativity was visible!

The main chapel was transformed into a beautiful exposition of the posters which brought together all the different ideas of the day. People were very happy looking at this excellent way of expressing what the main challenges were for the next few days of discernment.

We all prayed to the Lord:

*Thousands of signs,
An image of your Glory!
Thousands of signs,
In our personal history!*

As part of the Discernment process, the Lasallian Educational Mission Commission (MEL)²⁴ and the Associated for the Educational Service of the Poor Commission²⁵ presented their respective Reports on the morning of October 28th.

The MEL Commission Report was a PowerPoint presentation by Br. Frederick Mueller, Joan Landeros and Albert Leroy. After Br. Frederick had given a brief introduction about their Commission, the work given to them, and the manner in which they had done their work, they presented in grid-form the following five major themes proposed to their Commission at the last General Chapter (2000):

- Service of the Poor and Rights of Children
- Pastoral Ministry and Evangelization
- Educational Innovations
- Lasallian Identity and Characteristics
- Models of Structures

For each theme, the three Commission reporters presented their work under the following headings: What we did... Key Ideas... Questions for the future.

Following their report, clarifications and comments were given from the floor and the questions raised by the Report stimulated some meaningful comments.

The Association Commission Report began with an Introduction by Br. Carlos Gómez in which he described the work of the Commission as *"a journey of search and reflection"* and they recognized that *"we don't have all the answers,"* and that *"we are not experts."* He focused on two aspects of their reflections as a Commission: the elements of association (and the language to be kept in mind); and some guidelines on how to proceed with the process of association.

Following that introduction, five members of the Commission presented other aspects of the synthesis of their reflections as a Commission: Dominic Kithendu on *"Cultural Expression of Lasallian Association"*; Eric Amaladas on *"Association in a Multi-racial and Multi-religious Context"*; Evelyn Geoffroy on *"Formation for Mission"*; Br. Antonio Botana on *"The Role of Brothers in Association"*; and, Luis Peña on *"Leadership and Governance in Association"*.

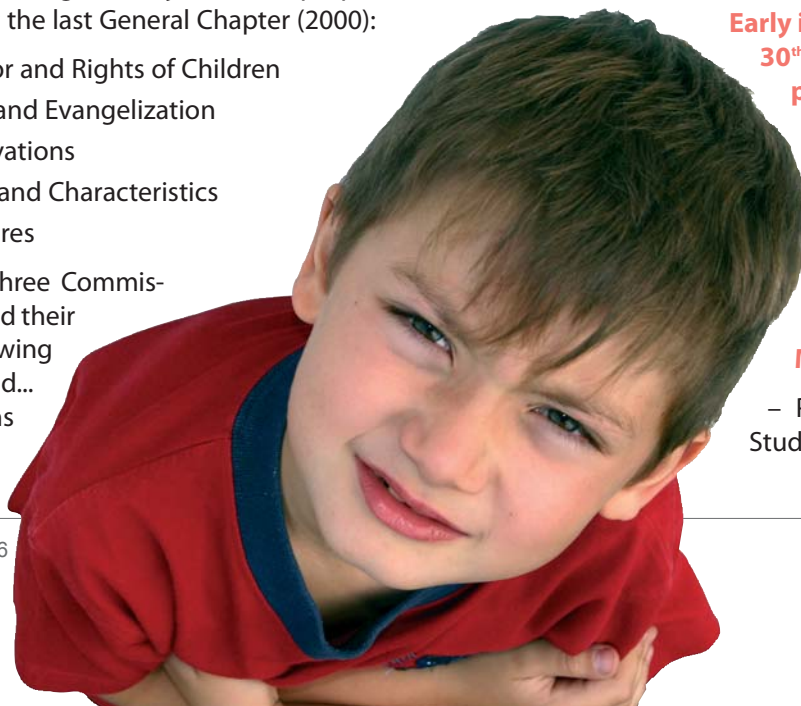
The Assembly then asked for clarifications and offered their comments. This was followed by discussion in Linguistic Groups in which the participants were asked to identify *"three main achievements, challenges and priorities you have learned and discerned"* from the discernment they did the previous day and from the reports given by the two Commissions.

We completed the day's discernment by meditating on the Word of God in the same linguistic groups as a preparation for the celebration of the Eucharist that evening.

Sunday 29th was a free day, and most of the participants went on an organized visit to Assisi while others visited places of interest in Rome or just had a rest at home. Meanwhile, the Steering Committee prepared the first Draft of the Main Orientations.

Early in the morning on October 30th the Steering Committee presented us with nine Main Orientations, along with sub-items, gleaned from the discernment process which had been done in Linguistic Groups on October 28th. The following were the Main Orientations:

- Pastoral/Faith Formation of Students;





- Clarification of Mission;
- Structures for Mission and Association;
- Formation for Mission and Association;
- Accessibility of Resources;
- New Responses of Mission to New Realities;
- Clarification of Association;
- Multicultural/Multi-religious Realities;
- Service of the Poor.

Then, in five groups organized by Regions, we examined the text and, where necessary, proposed changes and additions to the first draft of the Main Orientations and their sub-items.

After this session and presentation of the Regional feedback, the Assembly came very much alive in two somewhat lengthy sessions as, with the encouragement of the facilitators, almost seventy people (no one was allowed to speak more than once) gave their comments, raised questions or offered ideas that seemed to have been “lost.” The participants were to be congratulated for the disciplined

way in which they gave their points in regard to time, relevance and brevity.

The afternoon sessions really helped to give a more international, a more global shape to the second draft, and hence, more work for the Steering Committee which presented the final draft of the Main Orientations the next day.

At the end of the late afternoon session there was a meaningful Prayer Service in the Main Chapel followed by dinner and after dinner, socials in Regional Groups.

As the Assembly approached the end of the Discernment phase there seemed to be much excitement in the air, a feeling of anxiety and in some cases, as one speaker put it, a readiness to move into action.

Tuesday, October 31st began with the second presentation of the “Listening and Writing Committee” and, as usual, they presented their “listening” under the following headings:

MISSION

1. We are hearing a desire to better emphasize service of the poor in our formation programs.
2. Many are asking that evangelization and pastoral ministry need more attention in our plans.
 - What role do/should evangelization and pastoral ministry play in our Lasallian educational mission?
3. There was significant discussion around the need to do more research in critical areas of our mission, including faith formation of youth, new forms of poverty, Lasallian pedagogy. Descriptive research to better help articulate what it is we do in Lasallian schools will help us better accomplish our mission and will help us promote our mission to others.
 - a. The universities are willing and able to do this research and to raise awareness of the research that has already been done.
 - b. Perhaps CIEL (International Lasallian Studies) could be of assistance.
4. Some say we can be bolder on the international level – our voice must be heard for the rights of the child and for educational innovation so our work doesn’t appear to be so “neutral.” We need to be clear about what we do, who we do it for, and why we do it in the way we do.
5. The “Good Shepherd” seems to be a powerful icon for Lasallians. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came so that all may “have life and have it to the full.” The Good Shepherd seeks out the lost sheep and brings it back to the

fold, symbolic of the accompaniment that is so important for us. Is there a need to indicate icons within the context of our Assembly report?

6. As we look to the future, it is important to encourage our students to become Lasallian educators. It is also important to encourage students to be Lasallian leaders in other areas such as business and government.
7. What kind of teaching model do we want – individual and competitive, or cooperative and interactive?
8. We need to more fully develop social justice education.
9. We need to identify more clearly some of the essential elements of the Lasallian mission.
10. Missing Elements: role of Lasallian universities in the Lasallian educational continuum (university, adult education); the dignity of teachers and the teaching profession; human and financial resources (distinguishing between Institute, District, educational establishments, and new resources); co-responsibility and management.

ASSOCIATION

1. It is important to be clear about the fundamental characteristic of Association – we are associated for mission, which is the educational service of the poor, which is part of the evangelizing mission of the Church.
2. We are still trying to understand and describe Association. People are at different places in their understanding of Association and in their Associative commitments. We have to respect that but we must also move forward so we can achieve greater Association for the mission.
3. It is important to always allow for varying levels of Associative commitment.
4. Guidelines are necessary to understand Association – or at least something needs to be said to move us toward guidelines.
5. Many are recognizing the need for good Lasallian formation for everyone at all levels, Brothers and lay people together. This will strengthen our Association. We must pay special attention to young Brothers so that they are formed in the new model, not the old model.
6. Lasallian discernment is community discernment. We discern future directions together, using our Founding Story, the Gospels, current realities, and the lived experience of the poor as guides.

7. Our community, our Association, arises out of the demands of our mission – the human and Christian education of the young, especially the poor.
8. Missing Elements: others associated with our mission (e.g., alumni, parents); the need for reflection on “Being Lasallian Today;” the development of a spirituality appropriate to lay persons.

STRUCTURES

1. New structures should reflect various aspects of our charism, including educational aspects (what we do and how we do it), vocational aspects (why we do what we do), and communal aspects (how we do this together).
2. It is important that the international MEL and Association Commissions communicate their work to Lasallians at the local level.



3. There is a need to clarify relationships between the Mission Councils and the District Councils and the Visitor, as well as to a possible Regional Council and to a possible International MEL Council.
4. Should we contemplate some sort of Regional Council? Some sort of link between the international and District levels?
5. We must put “new wine into new wineskins.”
6. Missing Elements: communication regarding the sharing of resources that is going on between Regions, Districts, Sectors, and nations.

Besides the above points, the “Listening and Writing Committee” also summarized some of the creative tensions that they heard in the Discernment phase:

Mission – We heard tensions between

- Taking a ‘neutral’ position and taking a definite ‘politi-

cal' position

- 'Shared' mission and 'our' mission
- 'Church' mission and 'Lasallian' mission
- Explicit proclamation of our faith and witness proclamation of our faith
- "Giving up" Christianity to embrace others or "being Christian" to embrace others
- Seeking local resources to move towards self-sufficiency and depending on outside resources
- Actual practice and theoretical, abstract definitions
- Teaching as vocation and teaching as a profession
- In educational service of the poor – between treating the symptoms of poverty and treating the roots of poverty
- Serving students from poor families and serving students from middle and upper middle class families

Association – we heard tensions between

- Inclusive and exclusive
- Formal, public Association commitment and *de facto* Association
- Rules/legislation and Lasallian intuition
- Continued experimentation/learning from experiences and authoritative definitions
- Adherence to Brothers' spirituality and developing lay spirituality
- Traditional formation of Brothers and new formation of Brothers

Structures – we heard tensions between

- Adapting traditional Brothers' structures and inventing new structures
- Hierarchical structures and more community life structures (networking)
- Geographical relating and 'virtual' (e.g. internet) relating
- Organizing by geography and organizing by 'webs of significance'
- Dialoguing with various agencies and working on our own

More and more, the delegates are realizing that "what you see depends on where you stand." Indeed, there seems to be a dynamic tension between what one sees in the Region and what is to be seen from a worldwide perspective.

After this, the Steering Committee presented the second draft of the Main Orientations with sub-items and these were discussed in Regional groups for final changes which were sent to the Steering Committee for the preparation of the third and final draft.

Gery Short, the Chairman of the Assembly, made some announcements for the next and final phase of the Assembly: Action Plans.

The moderator described how the "showing of preferences" would take place and, shortly afterwards, the Steering Committee delivered the final draft of the ten Main Orientations with some possible Areas of Emphasis below each Main Orientation.



After a prayer, and having read through the ten Main Orientations summarized by the Steering Committee, the participants went down to the John Paul II Room in silence to indicate their priority areas by putting their “red stickers” on to white sheets on which the various Main Orientations had been printed. Each participant was given five stickers and had to choose five from among the ten Main Orientations.

The day ended with a resounding Mass in honor of All Saints’ Day complete with a rendition on the harp during communion, the sharing of three stories of “saints in ordinary life,” and some stirring hymns.

After dinner, the results of the prioritizing were posted in the Aula Magna as follows (see enclosed list):

The participants were then asked to indicate their choice of working groups to help the Steering Committee in the formation of Commissions to study each of the *Main Orientations*, as well as to develop *Areas of Emphasis* and *Action Plans* as part of the final phase of the Assembly.

- Initial and Ongoing Formation for Mission and Association	(99)
- Understanding Lasallian Association	(88)
- Structures for Mission and for Association for Mission	(87)
- New Responses of Mission to New Realities	(87)
- Service of the Poor	(74)
- Understanding of Mission	(69)
- The Process of Lasallian Association	(61)
- Pastoral Ministry/ Faith Formation of Students	(54)
- Accessibility of Resources	(43)
- Multicultural, Multi-religious	(37)

Questions for Reflection



As you read the Discernment section (or read the presentation of Br. Miguel Campos and the reports of the Standing Committee for the *Lasallian Educational Mission* and the *Associated for the Educational Service of the Poor* Commission), we invite you to reflect upon the following questions that the delegates used in their discernment. We invite you to share your responses with fellow Lasallians. These questions are to be used in reference to the prior two sections, i.e. your personal reality and the reality of the Lasallian world. You are invited to listen and to respond to the movement of the Spirit at this lived moment.

1. What are the critical concerns (with regard to the Lasallian educational mission, to the association for the mission, and to the structures) which have the greatest impact on the Lasallian family and those that the Lasallian family needs to consider, just as De La Salle and his associates had to deal with in their own time?
2. As you reflect on the itinerary of De La Salle and his associates, what questions, what challenges, what action steps taken, might inform the critical concerns you have identified for the Lasallian family in the previous question?
3. What icons and texts from Scripture shed light on those critical concerns?
4. What are the icons for today: the persons and the works in today’s world in our Regions, Districts, and local situations, which best articulate and reveal those critical concerns?

I see the presence of God in the words and gestures of each of the persons gathered here; having come to know of the realities of our Lasallian world I feel invited to be faithful and in solidarity to continue collaborating in building the Kingdom of God.

Maria Lourdes Barboa Lozanilla, Mexico North, RELAL

The assembly has given me a global perspective of the Institute and I will go home filled with hope and enthusiasm for the future.

Br. Peter K. Kombe, Lwanga, RELAF

To feel Brothers, Sisters and Lay Lasallians come closer together in spite of their diverse origins, their multiple cultural and religious points of view is to live 'directly' the power of the Lasallian intuition: the road towards a community of educators. I hope to continue along the road with many of you in spite of the physical distances that will separate us.

Br. Jean-Pierre Berger, Belgium North, REL

"The poor call out, and we must respond NOW!!" The Lasallian world has journeyed far but we still have a more radical path to take to bring change for all, especially the poor.

Jerald Joseph, Malaysia, PARC

This assembly has been a profound and powerful experience of international association with a gathering of Lasallians committed to our collective future. I am inspired and ignited and energized by all I have witnessed.

Mary Catherine Fox, Mid-West, USA/Toronto

Section 4: Action Plans (November 1st to November 4th, 2006)

To celebrate the end of the *Discernment* stage of the Assembly, the participants had a long break for the morning of November 1st and many of the participants took the opportunity to attend All Saints' Day Mass in St. Peter's Basilica celebrated by the Holy Father.

Meanwhile, in the Generalate, the Steering Committee was concerned with making preparations for the final phase of the Assembly: Action Plans. To facilitate this process, the participants were divided into Working Groups (or Commissions) to tackle the task of addressing the Main Orientations and discovering Areas of Emphasis and clear Action Plans. It was finally decided to have nine Working Groups.

In the afternoon, Gery Short, the Chairman of the Steering Committee, gave some preliminary remarks about the procedure for the Working Groups. Among them, he invited the Regional Groups to present possible ways of integrating the Main Orientations into a meaningful framework for presenting the Assembly recommendations to the General Chapter and to the whole Lasallian family. PARC, RELAF, Europe-Proche Orient, and RELAL presented their suggested schemas while USA/Toronto and Francophone Canada asked the Assembly to keep in mind as background to their work the *creative tensions* raised by the *Listening and Writing Committee* the previous day. It was also decided to re-introduce the suggested schemas when writing up the final Recommendations.

Then, our Superior General, Brother Alvaro, announced the inception of our newly-formed Region of Europe, to be known as **REL**. He reminded us that making changes in structures should be made as "an impulse to give life" and to bring about "vitality and viability" to our Lasallian family.

The remaining two sessions in the afternoon were devoted to working in our newly-formed Working Groups (Commissions) to determine Areas of Emphasis and possible Action Plans in preparation for the first draft of the Assembly Recommendations.



After supper, we had a quiet, meaningful Prayer Service to commemorate the dead as a preparation for All Souls Day.

On the morning of November 2nd we moved into our Working Groups (Commissions) based on the nine Main Orientations and priorities, and worked on Areas of Emphasis within each Main Orientation and the expression of clear Action Plans. It was suggested that we do our work against the background of three questions:

What risks are we willing to take?

What journeys are we willing to walk?

What horizons are we willing to reach?

There were two sessions in the morning for this important task, and two sessions in the afternoon when we shared our Working Group (Commission) work in the Assembly. By late evening it was found that all groups had succeeded in presenting their findings despite the obvious difficulty of working in multi-lingual groups.

There was a feeling that we had worked hard and had become closer to each other as a result of much concentrated listening, much patience in being attentive to translations and much sensitivity in phrasing our Action Plans in the three main languages. All in all, it was a day of moving towards greater convergence of ideas for action in our pri-



Friday, November 3rd was truly a day of much hard work as the various Working Groups (Commissions) began to give shape to the Main Orientations, Areas of Emphasis and Action Plans. There were two rounds of drafting the documents during which time there were genuine efforts to:

- give feedback to each other's presentations after due clarifications;
- become aware of overlapping issues;
- arrange the work of the different Commissions into a meaningful schema;
- translate their work into the three main languages and clear up problems about the meaning of certain phrases/words;



Br. Antonio Botana, the Secretary of the Commission for Association, gave some brief reflections on what the General Chapter expected from the Assembly: a statement of accent points or "lights," priorities and needs of the Lasalian Family, and he suggested that the language used be the language of illumination and prophecy rather than that of too many legislative or technical details. There was a call to articulate a "spirit of life."

The "Listening and Writing Committee" offered its third presentation focusing mainly on points to be kept in mind when framing the final document:

Moving to Action Plans

- There seems to be some anxiety about the process: how will we work together, what will we accomplish, how are we moving from the third to the fourth stage?
- Some cultural groups offered "schemas" around which to organize the Main Orientations; the Steering Committee chose not to use these schemas at this time, but indicated a willingness to consider their use after listening to the presentation of the Working Groups.
- It was suggested that the creative tensions mentioned in the last report of the "Listening-Writing Committee," and the three fundamental questions offered for direction, as the Working Groups began their meetings, be kept in mind.
- When delegates participated in the prioritizing they expressed their support of and commitment to the Main Orientations that had been articulated. A consensus has emerged and the whole Assembly was moving together in this process.



riority areas.

Br. Victor Franco informed us of the tragic death of Br. Rafael Donato in the Philippines and prayers were offered for the repose of his soul.

On Friday each Working Group (Commission) worked on its second and third drafts of Action Plans and consider ways of presenting a final document. In the spirit of our morning prayer we pray that we will "stand firm and see what the Lord can do."

Reporting of Areas of Emphasis and Action Statements

- Criteria for re-structuring: oriented towards life and leadership; possibilities for initial and ongoing formation;

richness of community life; sharing of mission and spirituality in association; with the capacity to serve the poor; witnessing to Gospel values; financial self-sufficiency; strong spirit of interdependence and solidarity.

- Some Action Plans from different groups are converging and could be expressed in one statement.
- We are learning to be a worldwide Lasallian family:
 - a. We experienced difficulties expressing global concerns in multi-lingual form.
 - b. We struggle to broaden our language sufficiently to take into account multi-religious realities.
 - c. We are challenged to be inclusive of all Lasallians in the use of language.
 - d. We are working hard to make sure that the scope of our actions go beyond local realities to express a global reality.
 - e. We are finding creative ways to work with other language groups.
 - f. The multi-lingual experience of our groups brings us closer; it pushes us out of our comfort zones and enables us to feel more comfortable in the broader Lasallian family.
 - g. We are being challenged to listen to one another and clarify before debating.
- Several categories of comments emerged as delegates asked clarifying questions:
 - a. Clarification of semantic points;
 - b. Who are the protagonists involved? Who are the target groups?
 - c. Clarification of concepts and technical terms;
 - d. Concepts and terms that are clear in one culture but not so in others;
 - e. Some people want to “debate” certain issues.
- There is a call to see “dialogue” and “sharing of experiences” as ways of learning.
- We need to be aware of connections with worldwide Movements; there

is a call for an international body for multi-collaboration.

Our connections with the Institute and with the General Chapter:

- We must not forget the “umbilical cord.” Who guarantees the charism?
- The importance of continuity and the need for a suitable transition period;
- Need for the rhythms of life, of phases of action-reflection;
- Need to keep in mind the emphases of previous Chapter and Institute documents/reflections;
- The 43rd Chapter called for the Assembly and prepared the process of preparation;
- Our results go back to the 44th General Chapter.

Preparation for final Document:

- It might be useful to re-consider the “schemas” proposed previously and find a useful framework in which to integrate our priorities.
- This is not a “finished product” – we could be wrong; there is a need to begin process to allow for more participation of Lasallians to take part in discussing our document.

- In the first week of our Assembly there was much appeal to the “heart” for inspiration; in the second week there was a tendency to have recourse more to the “head” and to be somewhat legislative; there is a need to use inspirational, prophetic language.

After the above presentation, a “schema” – an organizing plan – that was the joint-effort of the various Regions was offered to the Assembly as a way to give shape to the *Main Orientations, Areas of Emphasis and Action Plans*.

By late evening, following one important meeting of the leaders of the Commissions, the third and final draft was clearly recognizable.



Knowing that you can
Wanting it to happen
Painting your face
the color of hope
Risking the future
with your heart

The day ended with a Prayer Service to ask for the necessary graces to understand better the will of God and that we may give ourselves wholeheartedly to a more conscious accomplishment of His holy will.

Our last day's work on November 4th began with the prayer, "Here I am Lord, I come to do your will." This certainly was in the hearts of all the delegates, as we began our discernment of the *Areas of Emphasis* contained in the final working document.

We were reminded of the Assembly's prophetic authority and the importance of our participation in setting priorities for the Lasallian family.

Row by row, we passed to the John Paul II Room, where we each marked five *Areas of Emphasis* that we considered priorities. The Steering Committee explained that all the *Areas of Emphasis* were important and would be included in the final report of the International Assembly, but that it was necessary to especially highlight accents among these priorities for the Lasallian family.

The *Writing Committee* from the MEL and Association Committees will consolidate the final document of the International Assembly, which will be distributed to the entire Lasallian world in January.

The representatives of the groups, which had suggested schema to organize the *Main Orientations* for the final document, presented their integrated proposal. The Assembly analyzed and commented upon the schema and it was passed to the Writing Committee to be incorporated in some form into the final document.

The last working session of the International Assembly was in the Intercultural Groups with which we had begun our work two weeks ago. This was a wonderful exercise to

come full circle and be with the associates, now friends, with whom we began this journey. We were asked to write three phrases or ideas to express a message to the Lasallian world about not only the work we did with our heads, but also the experiences we had in our hearts.

When we returned to the Aula Magna, our phrases and ideas were read aloud like a litany of shared hopes, ambitions, passions and commitments. We hope that these words will help to convey some of the emotional colors of our experience during the Assembly and our dreams for the future.

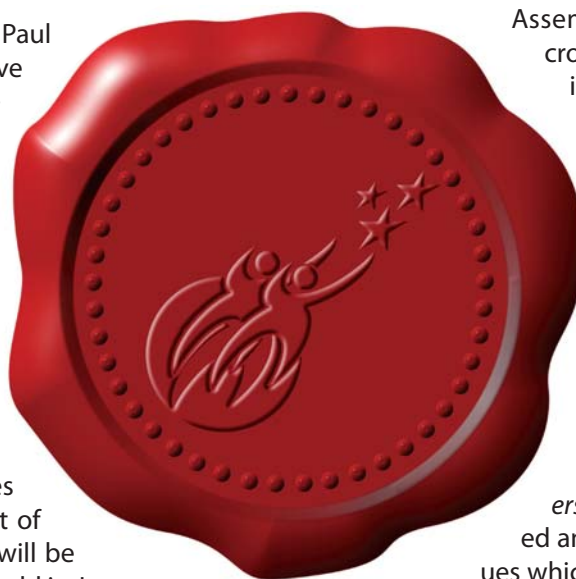
The closing session of the International Assembly, Saturday afternoon, was crowned by the beautiful and inspiring words of the Superior General, Br. Alvaro Rodriguez, *New Wine in New Wineskins*.

Brother Alvaro shared our joy and thankfulness to God for permitting us to gather together as Lasallians from every continent, but he also reflected upon the realities to which we should respond. Our mission is to help all youth become men and women "for others," especially the poor and excluded and to educate young people in values which give meaning to their existence.

Brother Alvaro focused on two particular realities that he challenged us to not distance ourselves from: the phenomenon of immigration and the tragedy of hunger. "If children are the very heart of our Lasallian mission, what is the 'sign of the times' telling us?"

Just as in his words on the first day of the Assembly, Brother Alvaro reminded us that "the Spirit of God is the great protagonist in our Lasallian adventure."

He ended his remarks with the following words: "When you return... bring with you a message of hope and a word of



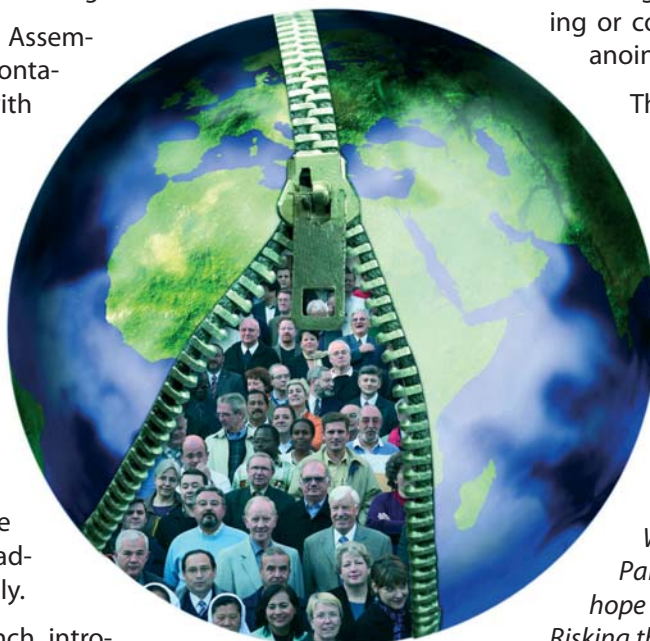
courage... Let everyone see the fire of an unstoppable ardent passion in our eyes and let it become contagious."

A standing ovation by the whole Assembly was the only way we could spontaneously express our agreement with and acceptance of his words.

Gery Short ended the session with special thanks to all the numerous groups, committees, commissions, staff and individuals who worked to organize, support and guide the Assembly. The General Council and the Brothers' Community of the Generalate were thanked for sharing their home with us. Br. Paulo Fossati, in the name of the Assembly, thanked Gery for his leadership as President of the Assembly.

In the evening, Br. Michael French introduced our final Eucharist together, as the closing of a cycle. Two weeks ago, we began with a gathering. We

then shared the Word in our midst. Finally, as part of this last liturgy, we were symbolically sending or commissioning one another by anointing each other's hands.



The joyous hymns, music and dancing of our Mass continued through the reception, dinner and party afterwards.

As the delegates began to leave, we remembered the verse from the song, the "Color of Hope," which Brother Alvaro had shared with us:

*Knowing that you can
Wanting it to happen
Painting your face the color of
hope
Risking the future with your heart.*

Live Jesus in our hearts...

Questions for Reflection

As you read the Action Plan section, we invite you to reflect upon the following questions that the delegates used as they created Action Plans and indicated the Areas of Emphasis that they believed need to be "accented" at this point in our common Lasallian journey. We invite you to share your responses with fellow Lasallians.

1. What risks are you willing to take regarding mission, association for mission and structure for mission and association?
2. What journey are you willing to walk with other Lasallians in these critical areas?
3. For what horizons are you willing to reach as the Lasallian family faces the future?



A stop on the way to reflect on our mission and a light that can illuminate our walking in the future. The spirit of God has led us in the deepening process of the educational commitment to the poor.

Sebastián Castro Prieto, Andalusia, REL

This has been one of the most amazing experiences of my life as a Lasallian....My concept of "family" has taken a new meaning and my hope is that this family will become closer and closer as we head into the future.

Sami El-Yousef, Bethlehem University, Proche Orient

The delegates have opened their hearts and minds to each other; they have engaged in rich dialogue; they have challenged themselves and each other to journey in faith and to take the risks of imagining new horizons.

Brother Frederick Mueller, LI-NE, USA/Toronto

God has called us from our villages, towns and cities to live in love, to bear witness that it is alive in the world. May a new people be created in the name of the Lord through his servant John Baptist de La Salle!

Vitalis Ndikum, Douala, RELAF

I read the guidance of God in this event which marks a road on which we have been building up speed since 1993. Little by little God has led us "gently and taking lots of time".

Br. Nicolas Capelle, France, REL



Section 5: Our Final Outcomes

Methodology

At the end of the discernment phase of the International Assembly, the delegates identified ten **Main Orientations** for the future. These orientations were:

- A. Pastoral Ministry and Faith Formation of Students
- B. Understanding Lasallian Mission
- C. Structures for Mission and Association for Mission
- D. Initial and Ongoing Formation for Mission and Association
- E. Accessibility of Resources
- F. New Responses to New Realities
- G. Understanding Lasallian Association
- H. The Process of Lasallian Association
- I. Multi-Cultural and Multi-Religious
- J. Service of the poor

Nine Commissions were then organized around each of these **Main Orientations** (C. and E. were combined). Each Commission was asked to specify **two Areas of Emphasis** within each **Main Orientation** and no more than two Suggested or Recommended Action Plans within each **Area of Emphasis**.

In the Final Report you will note that, as a result of discussions in the Steering Committee, **Main Orientations G. and H.** were also combined and some titles of the Main Orientations were revised, allowing for, in the end, **eight Main Orientations**.

- A. Pastoral and Faith Formation of Youth
- B. Understanding Lasallian Mission
- C. E. Structures for Mission and Association
- D. Initial and Ongoing Formation for Mission and Association
- F. New Responses of the Mission to New Realities
- G. H. The Understanding of and Process of Lasallian Association
- I. Multi-Cultural and Multi-Religious
- J. Educational Service of the Poor

Each delegate indicated which Areas of Emphasis should be prioritized at this time in the history in our Lasallian world. The following accents were noted:

*(Note: The letter shows the **Main Orientation** and the number shows the **Area of Emphasis**).*

Preferences expressed by the Delegates.

Highest Priority

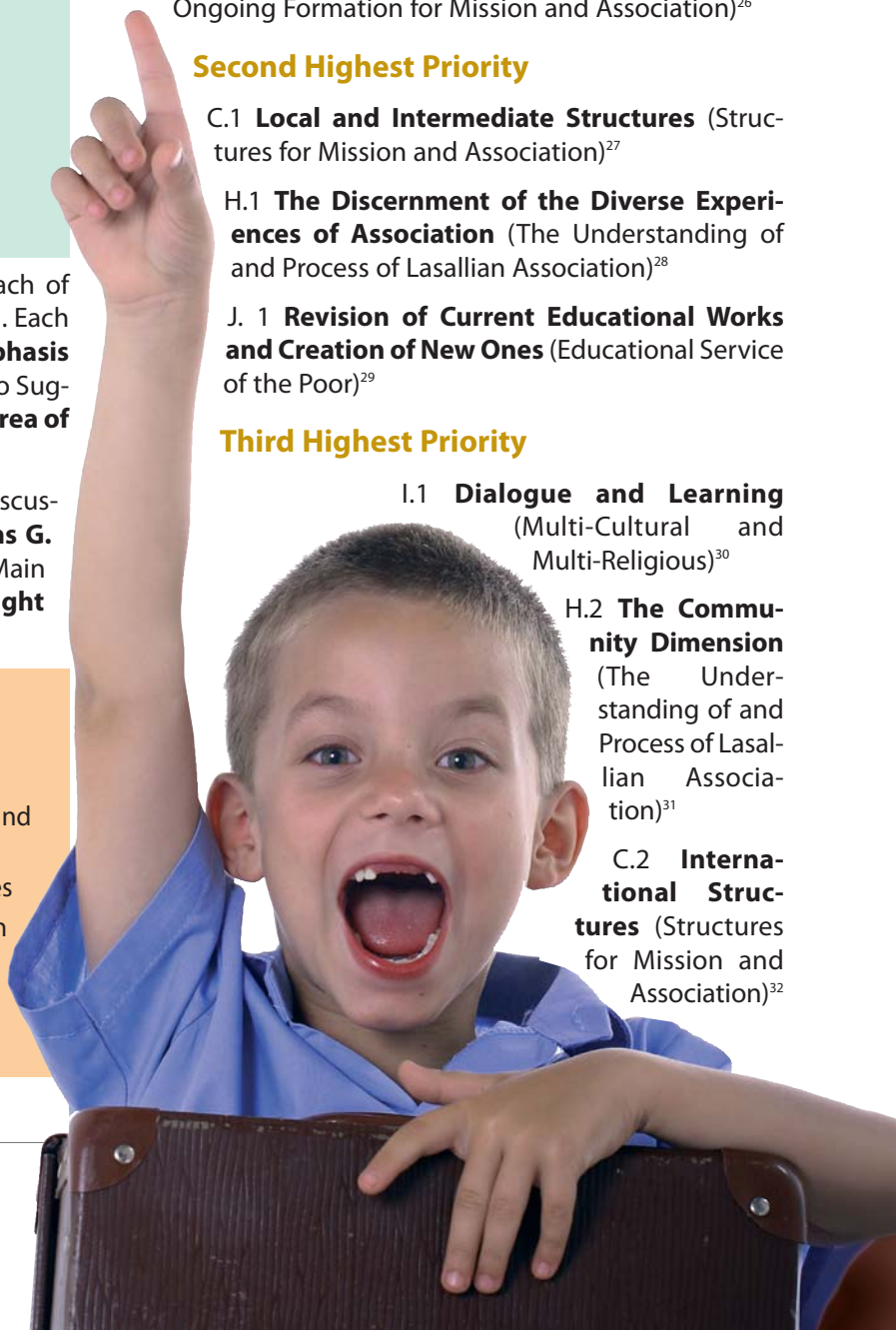
- D.1 **Formation and Accompaniment** (Initial and Ongoing Formation for Mission and Association)²⁶

Second Highest Priority

- C.1 **Local and Intermediate Structures** (Structures for Mission and Association)²⁷
- H.1 **The Discernment of the Diverse Experiences of Association** (The Understanding of and Process of Lasallian Association)²⁸
- J. 1 **Revision of Current Educational Works and Creation of New Ones** (Educational Service of the Poor)²⁹

Third Highest Priority

- I.1 **Dialogue and Learning** (Multi-Cultural and Multi-Religious)³⁰
- H.2 **The Community Dimension** (The Understanding of and Process of Lasallian Association)³¹
- C.2 **International Structures** (Structures for Mission and Association)³²



- A.1 **Human and Christian Formation** (Pastoral and Faith Formation of Youth)³³
- F. 2 **Attention to New Forms of Exclusion** (New Responses of the Mission to New Realities)³⁴

Fourth Highest Priority

- C.3 **Collaboration and Communication** (Structures for Mission and Association)³⁵
- A.2 **Church Communion** (Pastoral and Faith Formation of Youth)³⁶
- D.2 **Responding to the Needs of Today** (Initial and Ongoing Formation for Mission and Association)³⁷
- B.1 **Criteria and Common Terminology** (Understanding Lasallian Mission)³⁸
- F.1 **Attention to New Family Situations** (New Responses of the Mission to New Realities)³⁹

Fifth Highest Priority

- J. 2 **Plans of Formation** (Educational Service of the Poor)⁴⁰
- B.2 **Diversity and Quality at All Levels** (Understanding Lasallian Mission)⁴¹

New classification of the Main Orientations.

The International Assembly: Associated for the Lasallian Mission tried to face the challenge proposed by Br. Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría in his opening words to the delegates: “to rein-

vent our mission and to secure its future, in responding to the needs of the young and especially the poor, by means of the human and Christian educational ministry which the Lord has confided to us.”⁴² The delegates recognized that they were being called upon to build “a new reality.”⁴³

The following outline is an articulation of the main orientations that the delegates have discerned from their listening, reflection, and sharing during the assembly. It presents the high priority areas of emphasis and some proposed action statements for the consideration of the 44th General Chapter and the wider Lasallian family.

New classification and numbering of the Main Orientations.

Context

- 1 (F) New Responses of the Mission to New Realities
- 2 (I) Multi-Cultural and Multi-Religious.

Mission - Association.

- 3 (B) Understanding Lasallian Mission
- 4 (A) Pastoral and Faith Formation of Youth
- 5 (J) Educational Service of the Poor.
- 6 (G H) The Understanding of and Process of Lasallian Association.

Formation

- 7 (D) Initial and Ongoing Formation for Mission and Association

Structures

- 8 (C) Structures for Mission and Association.

In the work of discernment done in the Assembly, the delegates recognized, first of all, the **new realities (1)** of the Lasallian world-among others, new forms of poverty, immigration, the loss of human values, the rejection of religious faith, HIV/AIDS, hunger, the dissolution of families, and the **multicultural and multi-religious (2)** contexts in which these realities are experienced. These new realities and these contexts offer both new opportunities and new challenges.

Secondly, the delegates recognized that the **Lasallian Educational Mission (3. 4 and 5)**



²⁶ Prioritized by 107 delegates

²⁷ Prioritized by 75 delegates

²⁸ Prioritized by 68 delegates

²⁹ Prioritized by 63 delegates

³⁰ Prioritized by 49 delegates

³¹ Prioritized by 48 delegates

³² Prioritized by 47 delegates

³³ Prioritized by 45 delegates

³⁴ Prioritized by 43 delegates

³⁵ Prioritized by 31 delegates

³⁶ Prioritized by 30 delegates

³⁷ Prioritized by 30 delegates

³⁸ Prioritized by 28 delegates

³⁹ Prioritized by 28 delegates

⁴⁰ Prioritized by 17 delegates

⁴¹ Prioritized by 15 delegates

⁴² Words of Welcome, Brother Alvaro Rodriguez Echeverria, 23 October 2006.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

and **Association for Mission (6)** are dynamic and inter-related realities. Over its 300 year history Lasallian Educational Mission has been done *"together and by association."*

Thirdly, the delegates recognized the urgent necessity of **initial and ongoing formation (7)** that impels the Lasallian family (Brothers and lay persons and all those who wish to share the Lasallian charism) to deepen that charism within them by means of *"a communion of services so that the young, starting with the poor and marginalized, may arrive at their human and Christian fullness, whether in the form of dialogue where the young of other religions are concerned or of explicit announcement in the case of believers."*⁴⁴

Finally, the delegates discovered the challenges: 1) to adapt and to invent the **structures (8)** and 2) to find and to make available the **resources (H)** necessary to respond to the requirements of our Association for the Lasallian Educational Mission.

The diagram below offers one way in which one could visualize and organize the interconnecting realities noted above. The Steering Committee offers it to you for your reflection and invites you, if you so choose, to visualize the work of the Assembly in other ways that you might find helpful.



Context (1.1; 1.2; 2.1)
Mission (3.1; 3.2; 4.1; 4.2; 5.1)
Association (6.1; 6.2)
Formation (5.2; 7.1; 7.2)
Structures and Resources (8.1; 8.2)

Note: Figures refer to the **Areas of Emphasis** as they are presented in the next pages

Main Orientations and Areas of Emphasis



1

Main Orientation

New responses of the Mission to new realities

The International Assembly of 2006 has been moved by the new realities that today strongly confront the Lasallian Mission and challenge us to create new responses.

Area of Emphasis No.1: Attention to new family situations

The Assembly invites the different regional and local structures:

1.1.1 To promote and/or develop research and formation programs for experts, partners and young people on the following themes:

- The new information and communication technologies
- The challenges for spiritual and Christian education
- The new kinds of family

in collaboration with Lasallian (or other) institutions, especially universities.

1.1.2 To adapt the works and/or take specific measures to accompany the children, youth and families in at-risk situations, especially those young people who are found in extreme situations.

Area of Emphasis No.2: Attention to new forms of exclusion

The Assembly calls on all those who are responsible for the Lasallian Mission:

- 1.2.1 To promote local, regional and international structures to achieve the integration of the poor, excluded and marginalized through initiatives such as:
 - The creation of Lasallian regional think-tanks
 - The creation of “incubators”, i.e. model programs and support centers for new social action projects
 - The promotion of collaboration with local and international organizations.
- 1.2.2 To promote local, regional and international intervention and formation programs such as:
 - Innovative programs with an inclusive focus for social-educational intervention in both formal and informal settings
 - Specialized training programs for intervention in contexts of exclusion
 - On-going training programs which promote respect for plurality and social justice.



2 Main Orientation Multi-cultural and multi-religious

The International Assembly of 2006 recognizes:

- That the Lasallian mission is the mission that God has entrusted today through the Church to the Lasallian Family and
- The reality of our multi-faith and ecumenical Lasallian family.

Area of Emphasis No.1: Dialogue And Learning

- 2.1.1 Therefore, we call for an inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue leading to an articulation of common Lasallian values that transcends religious differences through:
 - Gathering together persons from different Christian

denominations and other religious and spiritual traditions who have demonstrated levels of experience, knowledge and practice.

- Using existing research and practices in inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue to create a synthesis.

- 2.1.2 To be a sign to the world, we have to be a community of faith, hope, love and reconciliation. Therefore we will promote and enhance at all levels (local, district, regional and international) a process of systemic dialogue and learning to celebrate diversity and recognize the diversity of all people. The type of dialogue we encourage is the dialogue of life, the dialogue of religious experiences, the dialogue of action, and the dialogue of ideas, beliefs and world views.

3 Main Orientation Understanding Lasallian Mission

The International Assembly of 2006 feels the necessity of a common understanding for all Lasallians regarding the essentials of the Lasallian Educational Mission, which is compatible simultaneously with the recognition of the great variety of forms in which the Mission is expressed.

Area of Emphasis No.1: Criteria and common terminology

The Assembly asks the MEL Commission or another qualified Lasallian structure to specify the meaning of the Lasallian mission in the context of a changing world which

embraces diverse cultures and beliefs.

Area of Emphasis No.2: Diversity and quality at all levels

The Assembly invites Lasallian educational communities to:

3.2.1 Recognize the diversity and value of Lasallian educational services and encourage educators to strengthen their sense of belonging by:

- fostering networking
- visiting other ministries (where practicable)
- sharing experiences with other educators.

3.2.2 Seek for a high quality educational environment, by ensuring that educators:

- are appropriately skilled and trained to recognize each person's special needs
- have access to specialized services.

4

Main Orientation

Pastoral and Faith formation of Youth

The International Assembly of 2006 is conscious of the necessity to provide to our students and other young persons a human and Christian education (or spiritual, within a multi-religious context) that facilitates the openness towards other cultures and religions and which makes our students committed to peace and social justice. It also recognizes the necessity to locate the education in the faith that we provide to our students within the framework of the Church-Communion energized by Vatican Council II.

Area Of Emphasis No.1: Human and Christian formation

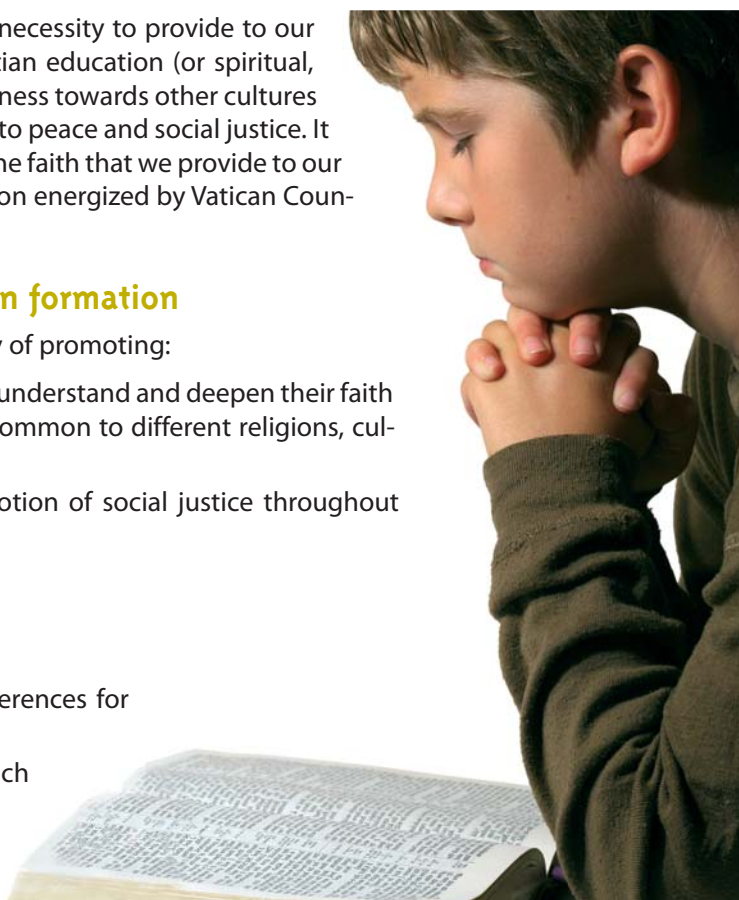
The International Assembly 2006 points out the urgency of promoting:

- Programs which help young persons and others to understand and deepen their faith in the context of beliefs, values, texts and icons common to different religions, cultures and traditions.
- Programs for education for peace and the promotion of social justice throughout Lasallian works.

Area of Emphasis No.2: Church Communion

The Assembly invites:

- The promotion of adult communities that are references for young people.
- The encouragement of Lasallian youth groups which live the values of faith, fraternity and service and the creation of structures for their accompaniment that are sufficiently lengthy in time.



5

Main Orientation

Educational Service of the Poor

This International Assembly of 2006 hopes that all Lasallians remember that the vitality of our mission depends upon how we, who associate ourselves with one another, respond to the needs of the poor. We value the effort that Lasallians make to liberate the poor from their dif-

ferent forms of poverty and we ask everyone to consider service of the poor and the promotion of justice as the heart and the main source of strength of the Lasallian Mission in the world.

Area of Emphasis No.1: Revision of current educational works and creation of new ones

Therefore, we ask that those responsible for mission and association at all levels - local, intermediate, international - offer ways for:

- a. Existing ministries to assess and renew their educational programs (in the areas of pedagogy, pastoral ministry, organizational structures and resource management) so that the focus upon the poor, the elimination of the various forms of poverty, the commitment for the transformation of the structures that create poverty, and the defense of the rights of children, become a priority.

- b. Favoring the establishment of new works - both formal and informal - that promote service to the poor and, above all, the defense of the rights of children. (Cf. 43rd General Chapter, Proposition 14)

Area of Emphasis No.2: Plans of formation

That those responsible for mission and association at all levels - local, intermediate, international - consider as a priority that all Lasallians participate in formation programs designed from the perspective of the poor. Besides providing a theoretical formation, these programs will always offer the opportunity for a unique, personal experience, along with other Lasallians, of service to the poor. (Cf. 43rd General Chapter, Recommendation 7).



Main Orientation

The understanding of and process of Lasallian Association

The Lasallian charism is pronounced and expressed by the Lasallian Association. This International Assembly of 2006, feeling responsible, with all the Lasallian Family, to give continuity to the Lasallian charism in the Church, sees the need to discern accurately the essential elements of Lasallian Association, by discovering and understanding the associative experiences, as well as the different processes and itineraries that lead today to Lasallian Association.

Area of Emphasis No.1: The Discernment of the diverse experiences of Association

The International Assembly recommends that all those responsible for Lasallian mission and association at all levels:

- 6.1.1 Analyze and evaluate the diverse experiences of Association in order to highlight the essential elements and processes of Association, with special reference to the five criteria stated by the 43rd General Chapter. These results should be synthesized in the next two years by an International Committee that will share them at all levels in such a way so that they can be useful to promote further expressions of Association. (Cf. 43rd General Chapter, Propositions 3 and 4)
- 6.1.2 Promote reflection on the lived associative movement in the Lasallian Family, from a starting-point of "Church-Communion-People of God" in multicultural and multi-religious contexts. This reflection must be integrated into formation programs.

Area of Emphasis No.2: The Community dimension

The Assembly asks especially that those responsible in the local levels:

- 6.2.1 Create relational community spaces to:
 - a. Make known experiences of new communities
 - b. Explore the concept of community
 - c. Accompany persons and groups towards their community engagement
 - d. Encourage community experiences which respond to the needs of the mission
 - e. Promote Lasallian spirituality appropriate to a variety of life experiences
- 6.2.2 Develop personal and community accompaniment in order to promote the processes of association
 - a. By forming companions
 - b. By offering places and times for resources and for maturation.



Kadri Poldma

7

Main Orientation

Initial and ongoing formation for Mission and Association

The International Assembly of 2006 recognizes that initial and ongoing formation and the support of accompaniment constitute a priority of first order for all the Lasallian Family. Formation and accompaniment make it possible to create a process in which the essential elements of the Mission and Lasallian Association are integrated.

Area of Emphasis No.1: Formation and Accompaniment

7.1.1 The Assembly asks that the International MEL Commission form a Committee to create a Guide that articulates essential elements of Lasallian formation and accompaniment for the Lasallian Family.

Based on this Guide, varying levels of the Lasallian Family will be responsible to design programs of joint Lasallian formation and accompaniment for ALL members of the Lasallian Family. These programs will:

- a. Be adaptive to particular Regions and Districts
- b. Be sensitive to the lifestyles of Lay Partners
- c. Promote and strengthen appreciation for the multi-religious and multi-cultural diversity in the Lasallian Family (some examples are: offering CIL in different Regions; orientation of new teachers; celebrating internationally one Region each year)
- d. Be based on both knowledge and experience
- e. Include service of the poor.

7.1.2 The Assembly asks that the Mission Councils at every level create and implement modalities of formation and accompaniment for formators in Lasallian Association for Mission:

- a. Process
- b. Programs
- c. Network of formators to share and enrich activities

Area of Emphasis No.2: Responding to the needs of today

7.2.1 The Assembly asks those responsible for Lasallian formation programs at varying levels to develop a process of evaluation for those formation programs:

- a. to ensure a continuing openness and creative responses to the changing needs of today
- b. to address the needs of educators, youth and others

7.2.2 The Assembly encourages research about the needs of today in order to help all those with responsibility for the Lasallian Mission to better serve those entrusted to their care. This research should:

- a. Develop a methodology for social analysis that includes knowledge, skills, experience and action;
- b. Respond to local needs, especially new forms of poverty;
- c. Include research into best practices from local situations in multi-cultural education and ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue in order to identify common effective pedagogical principles and practices;
- d. Communicate results of the research to appropriate groups.



8

Main Orientation

Structures for Mission and Association

The International Assembly of 2006 identified the need for a general revision of the structures that serve the Mission and Lasallian Association, in order to renew them, to adapt them and to create other new ones, with the purpose of assuring the best service to the Mission and the good development of Association in all the Lasallian Family.

Area of Emphasis No.1: Local and intermediate Structures

8.1.1 Local structures and representation. The Assembly proposes to the local levels that they support and encourage continued development of local structures (in the District) of voice and vote as put forth by the 43rd General Chapter (cf. 43rd General Chapter, Proposition 5). These structures should:

- a. Bring forward the proposals of this International Assembly 2006
- b. Assess local needs and identify local priorities for the Lasallian Educational Mission
- c. Evaluate whether current local governance/organizational structures meet current needs
- d. Encourage networking of individual works
- e. Have representation with voice and vote in intermediate structures
- f. Create a process for accountability of the Lasallian Educational Mission

8.1.2 New intermediate structures and representation. The Assembly proposes that the Districts and Regions create an intermediate structure/council (regional level) of voice and vote between the local and international level. This new structure/council will work in collaboration with existing Regional structures. These structures should:

- a. Bring forward the proposals of this International Assembly 2006

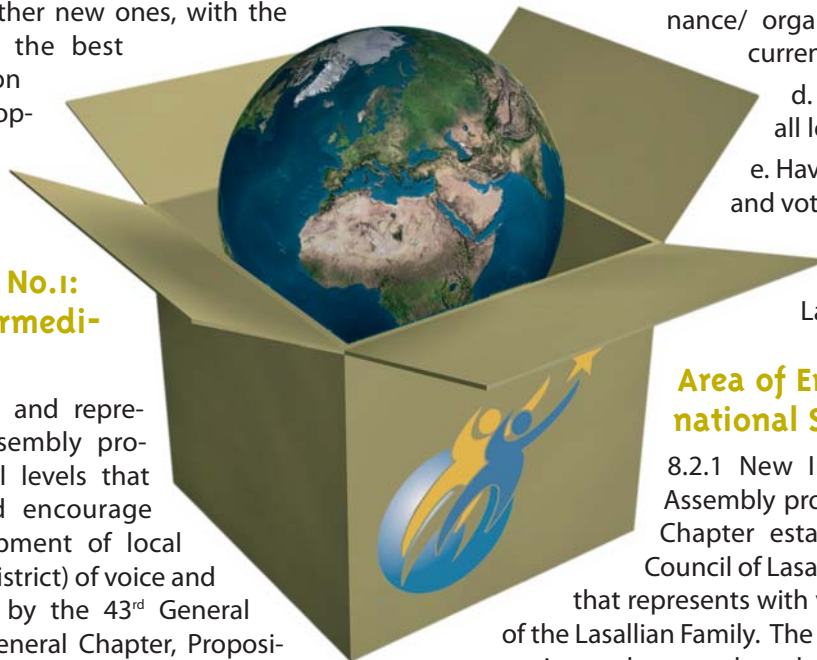
b. Assess needs and identify priorities for the Lasallian Educational Mission at this level

c. Evaluate whether current intermediate governance/ organizational structures meet current needs

d. Encourage networking of all local structures

e. Have representation with voice and vote in international structures

f. Create a process for accountability of the Lasallian Educational Mission



Area of Emphasis No.2: International Structures

8.2.1 New International Council. This Assembly proposes that the 44th General Chapter establish a new International Council of Lasallian Association for Mission that represents with voice and vote all members of the Lasallian Family. The purpose of this Council is to receive and respond to the action statements of this International Assembly and the 44th General Chapter. The membership of this Council should be representative of the Regions, keeping in mind the continuity of the work of this Assembly 2006. We suggest that the responsibilities of the existing commissions on Mission and Association be transferred to this new council. In addition to the responsibilities listed above, this council will:

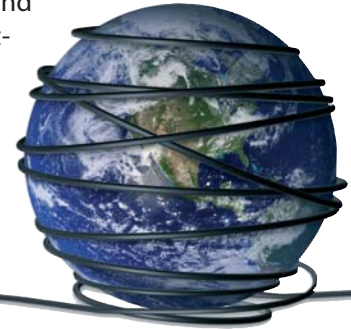
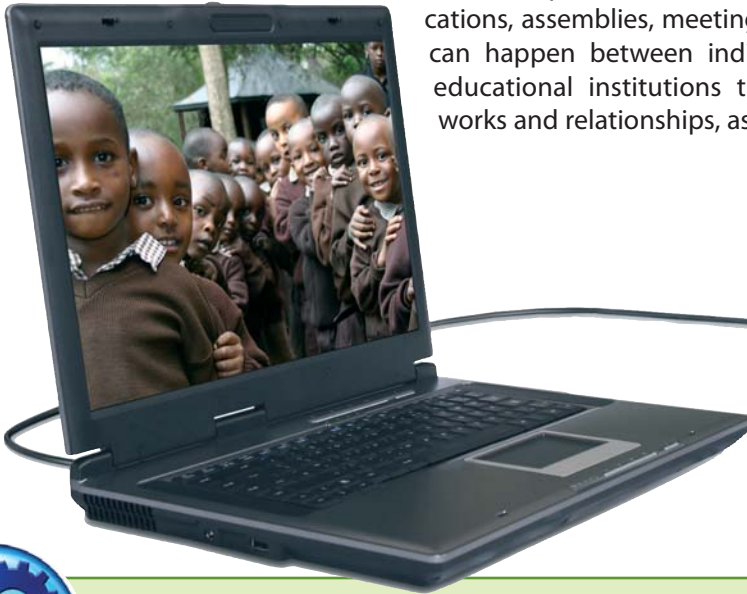
- a. Compare and evaluate existing structures of Association for Mission at all levels and make recommendations for further developments;
- b. Investigate juridical and canonical issues related to emerging Lasallian structures and make recommendations to guide these emerging structures.

8.2.2 International Assembly. This Assembly proposes that the 44th General Chapter call for the next International Assembly. The new International Council could be mandated to organize the processes leading up to the Assembly. The Assembly will study, evaluate and make proposals on Association for Mission to the Lasallian Family and the 45th General Chapter.

Area of Emphasis No.3: Collaboration and Communication

8.3.1 The Assembly proposes that local, intermediate and international levels enhance and create structures to facilitate the global sharing of human and financial resources and knowledge, including but not limited to education, training, networking, fundraising, grant making and volunteer programs. This can happen between individuals, ministries, and educational institutions through informal networks and relationships, as well as structures.

8.3.2 The Assembly proposes that local, intermediate and international levels create effective communication networks to share experiences of Association and Mission, including but not limited to publications, assemblies, meetings, internet, and email. This can happen between individuals, ministries, and educational institutions through informal networks and relationships, as well as structures.



Questions for Reflection

As you read the Our Final Outcomes section we invite you to reflect upon the following questions. We invite you to share your responses with fellow Lasallians.

1. What do you see or discern as the priorities in the Lasallian world today?
2. In what ways do you visualize and organize the interconnectedness and the priorities of the Main Orientations and Areas of Emphasis considered by the International Assembly?



Section 6: Final Reflections “New wine in new wineskins”

Last Saturday a member of the group within which I was sharing the readings of the Sunday liturgy said to us that the text that most spoke to him was the Responsorial Psalm: *The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy* (Psalm 125). These words are what come immediately to my mind and heart at the closing of this Assembly. Yes, truly the Lord has done, is doing, and, I am certain, will continue doing great things for us and through us. It is for this reason that we are joyous.

We must not tire to give thanks to God for allowing us to participate in the same charism, the same mission, and the same spirituality. Throughout the world, far and wide, on 5 continents, the glory of God is made manifest through our fragility in the lives of so many children, youth, and adults, in and through the Lasallian Sign of Faith Star. Many of the experiences shared here have been indeed quite moving.

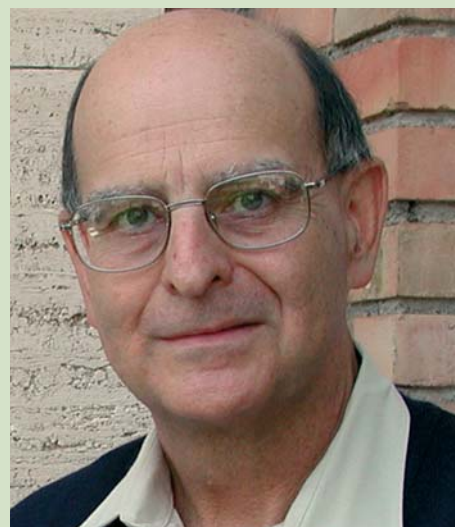
But it is no less true that, during these days, we have also felt challenged before the magnitude of the changes in our society and the growing needs of the young in the face of old and new forms of poverty in a world more and more pluricultural and multi-religious. For this reason, my first reflection refers to the realities to which we should respond.

Realities to which we should respond

Our mission is to procure the *human and Christian education for the young, especially the poor* (R. 3). Our mission is to discover that the poor today are our teachers and it is they who will be our judges in the future. It is to allow the poor to become active agents in their own development. Our mission is to announce the Gospel and to discover in the poor the face of God. Our mission is to be attentive to all forms of exclusion. Our mission invites us to have our eyes open before the inequalities created by our society and to be creative in our response to new needs. Our mission must not be reduced to mere assistance but rather go to the roots of poverty in order to find structural solutions and educate to justice. Our mission, in the words of Father Kolvenbach, S.J., is to help all youth, whatever their economic situation, not to become men and women just *for themselves and those closest to them* but rather to be *for others*, most especially the poor and the excluded.

Yet our mission also consists in helping to keep alive the search for solutions to the existential questions of the young we seek to educate. Our mission is to help them acquire an adequate hierarchy of values that gives meaning to human existence. Our mission should promote the development of an interior life, disinterested love, and generous commitment. Our mission is to assure that youth integrate within themselves reason and emotion; sentiments and impulses, free will and fragility. I believe it is necessary that we honestly ask ourselves what is the reality of our educational institutions and our other apostolic works before this need for “*something more*” that today’s youth make manifest.

I would like to share with you, as I did when speaking at the Assembly of Lasallian Universities in Barcelona, some statistics that, though gathered by Brother José Cervantes at Lasallian schools of higher education, would seem to me to be valid also for other levels of learning, and though the data refers only to Mexico, could be representative of other geographical contexts as well. Specifically, the fact that only 35% of our



Br. Alvaro Rodríguez Echeverría
Superior General



youth is concerned about poverty, only 32% about insecurity, or only 22% about corruption. The fact that only 3% express an interest in politics. And, to the contrary, the fact that being happy in life constitutes the highest goal of 49% and that only 5% express a philanthropic spirit should not fail to have us question why. Moreover, if we add to this list what Brother José Cervantes calls a troubling religiosity in which only 33% claim to be practicing, we should ask ourselves to what extent is the Lasallian gift that we offer being taken to heart and lived.

Certainly, the challenges and the needs of today overwhelm us. I invite you to be attentive to the realities that the 42nd General Chapter in 1993 presented to us, more than 10 years ago, and, unfortunately, have not stopped growing: *the flow of migration, racism, urban violence, terrorism, drug addiction, the loss of human values, faith crises, the rejection of religious faith, the attraction of sects, unemployment, HIV / AIDS, hunger, illiteracy, street children, displaced persons, the lack of respect for life, the breakup of families, family exclusion...* (Circular 435, p. 22).

Two realities from which we cannot distance ourselves

I would like to focus on two of these situations to which, it seems to me, we should particularly draw our attention today: the phenomenon of immigration and the tragedy of hunger.

As I reminded the Brother Visitors of Europe in Angers recently, a few years ago the Jesuit Provincials of Europe drafted a document in which they said that to accept immigrants is to not only to say that one must not force them to return to their home country but also to provide them lodging, social services, education and the right to be united with their families in the host country. Furthermore, immigrants should not be considered as merely economically useful but also as human beings with basic rights.

At the same time, they highlighted to role of education: *Teachers play a key role in assuring that the next generation will develop well informed and responsible attitudes with regard to refugees and those who seek asylum. We urge the development of appropriate programs at all levels of learning.*

And they conclude by saying: *Our world today is facing a crossroads moment. We can construct barriers that exclude some people and include others. We can erect walls that will need to be continually erected higher as the clamor of those who remain outside continues to increase in volume. Or we can otherwise create a global order in which justice and equality prevail and in which our faith in a common humanity is respected and incarnated in the structures of our society. History has shown us that the first solution leads to war and violence while the second leads to peace and development.* (Declaration of the European Jesuit Provincials, Brussels, November 2000)

Immigration is a reality that today concerns all continents and affects particularly children and the youth; I believe that it should be for us a sign of the times that we should read with the eyes of faith and should ask ourselves what is it that God is telling us through this human situation and how can we respond to it from the lived experience of our charism. Furthermore, it seems to me, given that youth generally have fewer prejudices than adults, they could help us - with their free, tolerant, and open treatment toward those who are different - to try to always keep our heart open and to find better solutions for those who find themselves obliged to leave home, their friends, their familiar surroundings and their country, seeking to begin

a new life of dignity and work.

In the past few days, the meeting of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations concluded in Rome and issued its final report on October 30th concerning hunger in the world. It noted that we have lost 10 years and that the current situation is actually much worse. The document deals with the bitter failure of the plan proposed in 1996 that has put 854 million people at risk of malnutrition. The Director of FAO, Jacques Diouf, acknowledged that far from reducing the number of people who go hungry in the world, the number is increasing at the rate of 4 million a year. This is an unacceptable and intolerable situation. *Ten years later, there has been no improvement. However, today's world is much richer than it was 10 years ago and the food supply is even more abundant* (Corriere della Sera, October 31, 2006). Already in 2004, Jean Ziegler, the UN's Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Food, affirmed: "Hunger is a daily silent massacre that constitutes a crime." It is a human tragedy that targets, above all, infants and children. The annual report of the FAO indicates that 17,000 children, under the age of 5, died daily of hunger in 2004.

If children are the very heart of our Lasallian mission, what is the "sign of the times" telling us? What can we do? What should we be doing when we claim that the defense of their rights is a distinctive concern of our Lasallian Family, as was asked of us in the last General Chapter and that we recalled in this Assembly?

Through the movement of the Spirit

I have always been very inspired by the conclusion of the book, *Announcing the Gospel to the Poor*, by Brothers Michel Sauvage and Miguel Campos, which invites us to a continuous renewal in the Spirit. Like I said in my introductory words the first day of our Assembly, the Spirit of God is the great protagonist in our Lasallian adventure. In his Meditations, the Founder repeatedly invites us to be faithful to inspiration and guides us by movements. I am convinced that more than documents and orientations, more than structures and projects, putting us in His hands and following His paths is what will enrich our being associated for the educational service of the poor, evangelizing the poor, and for the salvation of the young.

Paraphrasing the final paragraphs of this conclusion, which when it was written was directed exclusively to the Brothers, it seems to me that we could say that it is the Holy Spirit which makes all of us in the Lasallian Family discover the most urgent needs of the poor and the new forms of poverty of many of the young people, who are above all looking for meaning for their lives. It is the Spirit which sends us towards them with the fervor of hope and the force of love in order to fight for justice, to become a part of their worlds, to understand them from the inside as friends who accompany them and not as judges who from the outside condemn them. It is the Spirit who invites us to make history with them in order to introduce them to fraternal liberty, in the capacity to serve ones brothers and sisters, in the daily life of the Gospel and the eschatological hope of their future well-being.

We ask the that Spirit use our weakness in order to achieve the work of God in favor of the young children, the youth, and all those whom God in his mysterious ways has confided to us, putting the salvation of many in our hands.

On the night of October 11, 1962, eight months before his death, the day of the opening of Vatican II, thousands of people were assembled in the enormous St. Peter's square



MarcoBarnbeck



with lighted candles. John XXIII, tired but happy, was on the balcony. The moon was full and the Pope, addressing the multitudes said: *One could even say that the moon itself was hurried this afternoon. Look at how it is contemplating this spectacle. Today is a great day of peace. Glory to God and peace to people of good will. We must always repeat this. Above all we can say that truly the light and sweetness of God unites us and carries us. There is here an anticipated proof of all that life could be, everyday life, and life that is waiting for us for all eternity. Let us continue loving like this...*

And after having given the blessing, in words that have been recorded as one of the most moving Papal texts, he concluded: *When you return home, get together with your children. Embrace them and say to them: This is an embrace from the Pope. Perhaps you will find a tear to wipe away. Have a word of advice for those who suffer. Let*

the afflicted know that the Pope is with his children especially in times of sadness and pain. Let us all remember, above all, the union of charity whether we be singing, or breathing, or crying, but we should always be filled with confidence in the Christ that helps us and listens to us. Let us continue to be serene and confident in our path.

I would also like this to be my final word. When you return to your families, to your communities, to your schools, to your apostolates, to your Districts, Sub-Districts, or Delegations in the various Lasallian Regions, bring with you a message of hope and a word of courage. Tell them that the God of life, the God of the poor, the God of history, the God of the kingdom, the forever-young God, revealed by Jesus, has made us a part of his work and that we are always disposed to allow ourselves to be guided by His Spirit in order to collaborate in His project of salvation. Let everyone see the fire of an unstoppable ardent passion in our eyes and let it become contagious.

Rome, 4 November 2006

A Final Message from the Assembly to the Lasallian Family

November 2006

Fellow Lasallians:

As we close this report of the International Assembly: Associated for the Educational Mission, we wish to convey to you some of our final thoughts as the Assembly came to an end. These thoughts have been gathered together from the voices of the delegates in their final sharing in intercultural groups and from the voices of many delegates heard in our concluding General Assembly meeting. They express our collective hopes and dreams, wishes and prayers, challenges and risks. We offer these to you under three headings: Journey-Community-Mission.

We recognize that we are on a hopeful and enthusiastic journey, seeking a response to the will of God today. Our fellow travelers are people of great faith who are all members of one family with one name-Lasallian. We come from different cultures and different religions but we are united by a common mission, a common spirit, a common charism. We are in solidarity with and want to remain faithful to our Founder, John Baptist de La Salle, in our response to the new realities: the needs of the poor today in a multicultural and multi-religious context.

We acknowledge that this Assembly was an historic moment, an experience of communion in faith, in prayer, and in action to respond to the needs of the young, especially the poor. It was, in fact, an experience of association in our Lasallian journey.

New perspectives have arisen and have been discerned from our different points of view and from the lived realities of new needs, and these new perspectives have offered us new hopes for and new pathways in the building of the Lasallian Family.

The journey has begun-the journey continues!

Along this journey we have discovered that the “way” had to be walked, as Jesus did, in community:

- a community built on the encounter, the discernment, and the shared generosity of its members
- a community that responds to the cry of the poor by sharing personal gifts and talents, passion, and fervent zeal
- a community that recognizes, on the one hand, that each of its members has a unique identity and, on the other hand, that dialogue with the other who is different is essential
- a community that comes together and by association for a mission.

On this journey, together and by association, we have dreamed about new ways to transform today's society.



Journey



Community



Mission

The Lasallian mission has been part of our lives here, and because of this experience, we have become more deeply engaged in the mission, a mission that calls us in a special way to the educational service of the poor, to an understanding of the systemic roots of poverty, and to the promotion of justice. This mission also calls us to be SIGNS of the times and the living memory of De La Salle.

The experience we have lived is like the Pentecost of the first Christian community. We feel compelled to proclaim the Reign of God by means of the Lasallian educational mission. We feel compelled to be lights in the hearts of the young people whom we serve and lights to the world. We feel compelled to educate and form young people in human and Christian values.



Closing

What we have lived here in Rome over these past two weeks has been an experience of and practice in what "Association for the Mission" must be in this world today: an experience of the universality of the Lasallian charism and a sense of communion that has caused the differences, real as they are, to diminish and to dissipate the fears between and among people.

Our experience is a witness to the Lasallian family and a powerful sign of our Lasallian charism, for it points us to the risks that we must take as we return to our ministries. We have discovered the shared and living charism; we have discovered it in creative fidelity to our Founder; and we have discovered its prophetic voice in our own lives.

We want to follow the itinerary of John Baptist de La Salle and we want to walk together in the light of the Lasallian charism, realizing as we do that we are being led by a God, Who guides all things with wisdom and serenity, who in an imperceptible way and over a long period of time will move us from one commitment to another in ways that we could never have foreseen in the beginning.

We invite you to walk along with our Founder and to walk with us!!

On behalf of the Delegates to the International Assembly

The Writing Committee



Questions for Reflection

As you read the Final Reflections, i.e. the concluding statement of the Superior (New Wine in New Wineskins) and the Closing Message culled from the voices of the delegates, we invite you to reflect upon the following questions. We invite you to share your responses with fellow Lasallians.

1. To which realities do you believe the Lasallian family needs to respond in light of our Lasallian mission?
2. Does your collaboration in God's project of salvation—the God of life, the God of the poor, the God of history, the God of the kingdom, the forever-young God, revealed by Jesus—enkindle an unstoppable ardent passion in your eyes that is contagious? How is that ardent and contagious passion evident in your life and in your mission?
3. Like your fellow Lasallians who were present at the International Assembly 2006, are you willing to continue the journey? Are you willing to claim the name "Lasallian" as your own and embrace other Lasallians in all their diversity as a sign of association for mission? Are you willing to assist in the building of a new house for the vitality and viability of the mission in the light of the Lasallian charism? How will you do these things in your own life and mission, i.e. continue the journey, embrace unity in diversity, assist in the building of a vital and viable Lasallian mission?

I shall be taking back to South Africa the experience of the challenges and visions that have been presented during the past two weeks.

Jenny Potgieter, Lwanga District, RELAF

We reaffirm our YES to being lighthouses which project a new light; new roads are being created which allow us to increase and revitalize, more intensely and with new outlooks, the charism of our dear Founder.

Myriam L. Devia Velásquez, Venezuela, RELAL

The Lasallian Mission of Educational Service of the Poor is well and alive!! We have accomplished much and we have much to do. May the Spirit of God and those who have gone before us in Faith, guide us, protect us and assist us in Building the Kingdom of God for those entrusted to our care.

David Kasievich, USA/Toronto

I leave encouraged to continue working with the poor and with a desire to continue organizing new Signum Fidei groups

Ernesto Vallejo, RELAL

I noticed during the past fortnight the zeal and the passion for working together, in complementarity, for the educational service of the poor, the marginalized and what we might call the neglected of today.

Éveline Geoffroy, France, REL

Good Father, united with Saint John Baptist de La Salle and with Br. Juanito, I commend to you the Lasallian Family so that we may be bearers and promoters of peace, justice and hope.

Sister Elia, Guadalupe De La Salle

The contact with each other, the exchanges, the various stages of the meeting have been very enriching and formative from every point of view. It has been the summit of Association which we have been living for the last fortnight. May St. John Baptist de La Salle help us to understand our differences of opinion so that Association may become a living reality in our Districts.

Christophe Kouglo, Gulf of Benin, RELAF

