Brother Armin’s visit to Africa: On the peripheries of the Lasallian Educational Mission

This April, Brother Armin undertook his second trip to Africa since returning from Chad in January. This trip took him through Equatorial Guinea and Togo, where he had the opportunity to meet the Lasallian communities and enjoy some rich exchanges and discoveries.

Equatorial Guinea: Moments of prayer and exchange

The visit began in Bata, from 8 to 12 April, where Brother Armin and Brother Anatole were warmly welcomed at the residence of the La Salle de Léa community. As soon as they arrived, they took part in moments of prayer, culminating in a mass at the cathedral. One of the highlights of their stay was a meeting with the educational communities of Bomudi and Léa. Brother Armin had the opportunity to talk to students from different levels as well as the teachers.



Discussions covered key issues such as the lack of vocations among Guinean Brothers, the development of Lasallian works to welcome more young people, and concerns about access to study grants for disadvantaged students. He also met many parents at the distribution of end-of-term report cards.

Brother Armin enriched his visit by discovering the former Instituto «Laboral» La Salle, the Lycée Charles Lwanga and the Teacher Training School, which are strong symbols of the presence of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in this country.

To round off this canonical visit to Equatorial Guinea, the two communities in Bata met for a convivial moment of sharing and fraternity.

Togo: A warm welcome and unforgettable encounters

The trip continued in Togo, from 13 to 18 April, where the welcome was carefully prepared. On their arrival at Lomé international airport, Brothers Armin and Anatole were welcomed in an airport lounge with splendid bouquets of flowers, a welcome organised by a former student of the Brothers, now head of protocol, as well as by Brother Herman and Brother Séverin. A first meeting took place with the members of Signum Fidei, the delegates of the Young Lasallians and the former students, which enabled an enriching conversation to take place. After this initial contact, the delegation set off on the long 10-hour journey to Dapaong.

In Dapaong, Brother Armin was warmly received at an official ceremony at *Collège La Salle,* which included speeches, traditional dances and interaction with the students. The visits continued at *Collège Saint Athanase*, where he also had the opportunity to meet the local Bishop. A highlight was his visit to Twaga Catholic Primary School, where learning conditions are precarious, drawing the attention of the Superior General to the challenges faced by many schools in remote areas. The visit to Tami highlighted the Rural Training Centre and the Brother Pablo school, where an assembly with the local population gathered expressions of gratitude and expectations for the future. The closing meeting with the Brothers of the zone took place at the Brothers' community in Dapaong, followed by a festive farewell meal.

Messages of encouragement and acknowledgement

Throughout these trips, whether to Equatorial Guinea or Togo, Brother Armin did not fail to express his gratitude to the Brothers, the teachers, the students and the parents for their warm welcome and the excellence of their organisation. He also encouraged the entire Lasallian community to pursue its mission with fervour and determination.

Brother Armin was particularly touched by the fraternity that reigns within these communities and by the unwavering commitment of the Brothers, who work tirelessly despite difficult conditions and limited resources. These experiences evoke a deep sense of community and serve as inspiring examples for young people and lay teachers to commit themselves to the various Lasallian vocations.

For their part, the Brothers and their collaborators expressed their sincere gratitude to Brother Armin for his determination to come to meet them, to support them and to encourage them in their mission. They admire his courage,

braving sometimes difficult conditions to travel to areas sometimes considered to be at risk.

This trip helped to strengthen the bonds within Lasallian educational communities, while highlighting the power of fraternity and collaboration in the Brothers' educational mission. In addition, Brother Armin's trips highlighted the significant impact of the Brothers' presence in the countries visited. The active participation of the Visitors throughout the tour bears witness to the close collaboration between the Centre of the Institute and the local leaders.

Brother Armin's transversal message underlines that the recognition of the collective contribution of Brothers and lay people in the education and formation of young people is an encouragement to live today with prophetic daring. He affirms that it is entirely possible to commit oneself with love and selflessness to the service of others, especially the most disadvantaged.

* *Article written by Brother Anatole Diretenadji, General Councillor.*

