# A MODEL OF ONGOING FORMATION “To be reborn

Brother Victor Ramos
District of Antilles-South Mexico



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We De La Salle Brothers, because of the dynamism of our own educational mission and in keeping with the spirit of the Church, must place a constant and determined emphasis on the ongoing formation of each Brother throughout his life. Our unique identity, which arises from Association and exists in Association, is devoted to educational service, and its processes of ongoing formation have the peculiarity of emerging from the community:

> *“In the community, the Brothers help one another to grow humanly and spiritually.”*
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> *(Rule 2015, 81).*

The calls that Pope Francis has made to members of Religious Life have been insistent on the renewal and care of the members of the congregations, to be consistent and to give authentic testimony of the following of Jesus and of life in common.



In the District of Antilles-South Mexico, that interest and concern have taken shape and have been in process since recent District Chapters. So, instead of carrying out only remedial and disconnected actions, a Study of Ongoing Formation in the District (2015) was carried out, which pointed out the structural strengths and needs of ongoing formation. In line with this thinking, the last District Chapter (2018) proposed "to design not a plan, but a Model of Ongoing Formation. A model which – unlike a homogeneous plan of content strictly established – is **personalized**, **procedural** and **flexible**, based on the identification of a common journey, and according to sectors, ages, responsibilities, risks, and current and future tasks. It is essential that in this Model each one can recognize his own situation, find Brothers to serve as mentors, and let themselves be accompanied and find the resources to give life to their own particular journey."

**THE EXPERIENCE OF ONGOING FORMATION:**
**"To be reborn"**

As part of this Formation Model, two-week
experiences have been designed, and they are scheduled at different times of the year, with the intention that all the Brothers of the District can participate in one of them, even when they find themselves fully involved with ordinary activities.



The icon for these experiences is that of Nicodemus, a man who must “be born again.” Like Nicodemus, so also we Brothers are invited by Jesus to descend to the deepest layers of our being. He invites us to go to the Source from which the meaning of our consecrated life is born and flourishes. To do this, we must leave the protection zone which we know and enter a space of vulnerability in which we can let go of the old and let in the innovation that brings us the unspeakable breath of the Spirit:

> *“I assure you, if one is not born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”*
>
> *(John 3: 5-9).*

The experience is organized around three separate parts. The first is that of internalization, encountering oneself and encountering God; the second is a unique, tailored workshop consisting of a) Accompaniment, b) Association, c) Encountering Reality; the third part is that of “harvesting” in the hope of renewing the Personal Annual Program (PAP).

In October 2019, the first experience was carried out with the participation of 15 Brothers. The place was in the Community of Our Lady of Hope (Cacalotepec, Puebla, Mexico), where the senior Brothers or those with a delicate health situation reside, which greatly enriched the experience. At the beginning, we recognized all the participants and were very hopeful about this meeting; even with the uncertainty that comes with the novelty of the activity, and with the prejudices that each one brought.




At the end of the first week, we met with the Community of “The Patrons” in the city of Veracruz, a group of women who for 25 years have voluntarily dedicated themselves to helping migrants who pass by on the train (“the beast”) which is located a few steps from their home. This meeting was “iconic” in terms of ongoing formation, since it not only involved an “Encounter” outside of our own reality but also because it was a spiritually rich experience which no one had expected.

We held a workshop on “Accompaniment,” which was led by Brother Adalberto Aranda. This was a Lasallian type of “Accompaniment” based on our “Institutional genetics.” For the Brothers who were present this workshop was a re-discovery of De La Salle as one who accompanies and it was a new way of understanding how to accompany and to be accompanied based on our vocation.

> ***By the way, we all wrote a “creed” about our convictions regarding this very important activity of accompaniment in our mission.***

The final evaluation of this experience
was very positive, in general “exceeding” our expectations and it
will surely be a trigger for the life of the District and for the renewal of
each Brother. The story does not end here. It will continue with the experience
that each Brother will have in subsequent sessions.

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For further information see the following Institute publications:

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Lasallian Formation for Mission. The Journey.
Circular 475 on Lasallian Vocations.



La Salle en el Caribe y el Sur de México