

Experiences in
Pastoral Ministry in
the Lasallian World

Brothers of the Christian Schools
Via Aurelia 476
00165 Rome, Italy

June 2008

Presentation

The present Bulletin is devoted to presenting some experiences in pastoral ministry at this time in Lasallian history. Which ones? The most important or the most significant ones? Let us set that question aside for the time being.

To present in a few pages the magnitude of the Lasallian mission would be an impossible and uncomfortable task. How do you show the beauty of the universe in just a few photos? How do you show the beauty of a country in a few watercolors? How do you show in a few pages the dreams, projects and activities of thousands of persons who work passionately with a task day by day?

A fruit salad is not necessarily made more tasty by adding a greater number of possible products. Neither is a symphony necessarily made more beautiful by adding more and more instruments to the ensemble. It is the same here. From the conceptual stage of these Bulletins there have been criteria to try to offer some experiences that may give an idea of the overall reality: youth ministry, interreligious dialogue, multi-cultural awareness, pastoral ministry centers, sacramental experiences, prayer promotion, etc. There was also the desire of a geographical representation that would gather together the reality of the five continents...this was not always possible to do. In spite of these limitations there has been the interest, the encouragement, the amazement of so much energy and the desire to respond to the daily here and now.

The term "pastoral ministry," like other Lasallian terms, does not carry the same meaning in all languages. The understanding of the term varies significantly from one place to another. That is why the first articles deal with this term. There is a desire to explain and to understand, to clarify and to clear up, to understand and to be understood, because when we speak of evangelizing, of mission, of the Good News, we do not all understand these terms in the same way.

The rest of the presentations do not follow a rigid order. One could deal with the contents "a la carte" and pick and choose what one wishes. The origin of the article or the author's name is

stated at the beginning of each heading in order to give some context to the story. Behind these stories there is an infinite number of wonderful people.

Throughout the collection of MEL Bulletins we have seen the multitude of activities that make manifest the desire of thousands of Lasallians to respond to the challenges and needs of an ever-changing and complex society. Hundreds of similar experiences and projects could have been presented for the awareness of the Lasallian network. It is hoped that by gradual access to means of communication we will be able to follow these experiences, while being enriched and sharing life and being blessed in the near future.

The Bulletin concludes a first stage by means of which it has been possible that many Lasallians have helped us to resonate with, taste, and appreciate the mission that we have in our hands. It is right to recognize once again the wonderful idea of Brother Nicolas Capelle. It is also right to thank all the authors of these Bulletins who, with great generosity and service, threw themselves into this work. When all is said and done, we can say thanks to them as we feel more Lasallian, more universal, more united. Finally, thanks goes to all the readers who have contributed in one way or another through their voices and suggestions.

Brother Alfonso Novillo

1. What the Evangelising Mission is

(French Canada)

Proclaiming the Good News.

There are many ways of introducing the mission of evangelisation. According to the etymology of the word, to evangelise is to announce some good news. Obviously the good news under consideration is that which Jesus Christ himself announced. His fundamental message is that God loves us and that God revealed that love in his Son, Jesus.

Evangelisation, a process.

Evangelisation is a process which is fulfilled in several stages. This process is presented below, in a diagram. It would be good to become acquainted with it at this point before continuing the reading.

Introducing someone who is loved to someone else who is loved.

This can be expressed in very concrete terms: to evangelise is introducing someone you love to someone else you love. In this formulation, it can be seen that the evangeliser has a privileged relationship on the one hand with the person he wishes to introduce, Jesus, who was the first bearer of the Good News and who is himself Good News, and on the other hand, with the person to whom he wishes to introduce him. This special bond is a bond of friendship. The evangeliser, in fact, maintains a bond of friendship with Jesus and likewise with the man or woman to whom he is going to make the introduction.

A first stage.

The relationship that the evangeliser establishes with his interlocutor is a relationship heavily influenced by an attitude of openness to receiving and imparting information, to dialogue and to the possibility of a bond of mutual friendship. This fundamental attitude is at the base of the whole process of evangelisation (see

the diagram below, stage 1.1). Such an attitude is heavily influenced by a willingness to recognise a deep meaning in human reality and to work at transforming it so that it develops all its potentialities – personal, social, intellectual and spiritual. Already, the person opposite the evangeliser feels recognised in his dignity and his potentialities. He feels invited to walk along for a while towards what looks like an opportunity for growth and realisation of his personal and social options.

A second stage.

In such a relationship, the evangeliser bears witness to a special way “of living in relation to possessions, other people and God” (stage 1.2). His interlocutor can be touched by this testimony and himself seek to develop a new way of living which reveals it to himself, at the same time as it reveals to him a totally new and profound sense of the realities of existence.

A third stage.

When circumstances are favourable, the evangeliser makes an explicit announcement of the one in whose name he is acting like this and makes a first introduction of the one whom he loves, Jesus, to the person he loves, the beneficiary of his testimony. He invites the latter to conversion, that is to turn to the God of Jesus Christ with confidence (stage 1.3 of the process).

A fourth stage.

If the person addressed shows some interest in getting to know Jesus better and feels himself called, in his turn, to enter a relationship of friendship with him, he can set out on a path of appropriating for himself who Jesus is, what he did and taught. The decision to follow this course is a conversion and opens up a new stage of catechesis and Christian initiation (stage 2).

A fifth and a sixth stage.

If the course is followed to its end, the interlocutor becomes, or becomes again, a Christian capable of entering fully into communion with the Church, of living his life in it, and witnessing to it in the world by his manner of living and acting as well as by his words (stages 3.1 and 3.2).

Supplementary remarks.

This summary presentation shows that evangelisation does not exist in the first place to increase the number of adherents to the Church. It is first and foremost announcing good news for the men and women to whom it is addressed. This means that these latter are welcomed with unflinching respect, with their questionings, their richness and their shabbiness. This acceptance leads them to open up to their own dignity and to bring up to date the resources they possess. They embark on a course of growth. And even if the course does not lead them to conversion, it gets them over a stage in their growth as persons.

In addition, the evangeliser is aware of the spring from which he draws his confidence and his friendship for those to whom he speaks. He never hides the identity of this spring. He makes use of favourable moments to state it clearly and to herald it in an explicit manner. And with the greatest respect for the freedom of each one, he invites his interlocutor to enter freely upon a relationship with this spring.

When the desire to take this step is perceived, the evangeliser has to be ready to journey with his friend along the way of discovering the one in whom he himself has placed his faith.

The evangelising mission: a schematic diagram.

It can be illustrated how, while the work in going on, in the activities already offered, this is taking place and one can ask oneself how it can be still further developed. Let us look at each of the stages still in a schematic but concrete way, by applying the content of what has just been said to what can be practised in our surroundings:

- Young people come to your home. They come because a friend has invited them, because they are attracted by some activity offered, which interests them, by the advertising, to have something to do, or for whatever other reason. Most, if not all, have been baptised. Some have a faith life, others no. But they all have a motive for being there, and in this respect, they are open and not antagonistic. They are accepted by other young people and/or by responsible adults. The welcome is respectful and warm. The young people and the adults who do the welcoming, see that

activities are offered, that suggestions are made that unite those who come. That acceptance, those activities, those suggestions, through their quality, are already a form of witness (stage 1.1)

- In the activities offered, through their content and the way they are carried out, there is shown a special way of relating with oneself, with others, with the world and with God. The welcoming persons are in fact inspired by the Gospel, and they have an evangelical approach to these realities. (Stage 1.2).
- At no time is there concealment of the source which inspires the people doing the work. At times, it is even stated explicitly (beginning of stage 1.3).
- To the young people disposed to listen to it, the name of Jesus is announced as the source. To the young touched by this very first announcement, an appeal, an invitation to turn towards Jesus is made (stage 1.3).
- Those who have heard this first appeal and who have shown that they are susceptible to it are invited to become more broadly acquainted with the person of Jesus and with the Christian manner of living and acting (embarking on stage 2).
- To all those who demonstrate the desire, some routes are suggested to deepen their experience of meeting Jesus. That can go, for someone not baptised, as far as the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation. For others, it becomes an opportunity for deepening their faith and picking up again the threads of Christian practice (working through stage 2 and beginning stage 3).
- The young people who so wish then become Christian men and women who have acquired a certain maturity in their faith, and live this faith with others (stage3.1) and become in their turn witnesses of the One they have met (stage3.2).

Stages in the Evangelising Process

The chart appearing below is to be read from bottom to top. It presents the different stages in evangelisation. Sometimes three

broad stages are distinguished: 1) the first announcement; 2) catechesis and Christian initiation; 3) pastoral activity; and sometimes six stages, if account is taken of the subdivisions which appear in stages 1 and 3. If the chart is read from the bottom to the top, the whole process is seen to rest on the first stage (the first announcement) as on its foundation. Stages 2 and 3 are somewhat like the stages that complete the edifice.

Stage 3 – Pastoral activity

- 3.2 It keeps on constantly promoting the mission.
- 3.1 There is non-stop development of the gift of communion.

Stage 2 – Catechesis and Christian initiation

- 2. The introduction to the faith and Christian life is through catechesis and the sacraments of initiation.

Stage 1 – The first announcement

- 1.3 It proclaims the Gospel explicitly as a first announcement with a view to the first conversion.
- 1.2 It then bears witness to a new way of living with regard to possessions, other people and God.
- 1.1 The church spurred on by charity heavily influences the whole temporal order.

2. Reflecting on the meaning of “Pastoral Care”

(Br. Jean-Paul Baraton)

When we have to give an account of our mission as educators in a Catholic school, we often make use of words which, instead of conveying a clear thought, misrepresent it, because those words are insufficiently defined and, by that very fact, convey dreadful ambiguities. Are we sure that words like **Catechism, catechesis, Chaplaincy, Pastoral Care and Religious Culture** have the same meaning for all parties in the debate? Between the members of the same Pastoral Team, do the same words cover the same meanings?

A need for clarification.*

The following lines are a reflection on the meaning of the word “Pastoral” that we commonly use because it is convenient and covers many different realities (at the risk of excusing us from defining these realities). Moreover, it should be noted that it is an example of using an adjective as a noun, otherwise known as “reification”. So, rather go back to the root of the word and discover the Pastor – the only Pastor. It is fully obvious, and maybe not completely useless, to go back to Christ (see John, chapter 10), when we wish to reflect on Pastoral Care.

Trying to say what Pastoral Care is.

Pastoral Care cannot be reduced to catechesis, to chaplaincy or to the action of individuals or groups “specialising” in “religious leadership”. It is more than any of these because it is what enables them to exist and is their justification. Catechetical sessions, celebrations, or reflection groups which are not incorporated into and backed by Pastoral Care risk having only the status of “optional subjects”, on the same level as the chess club or the time for extra help in Mathematics.

* In English the word “Pastoral” is commonly used only as an adjective. As a noun is used the term “Ministry”.

It is primarily a shared willingness, not only to keep the Church going in an educational establishment, but also to open the establishment (and those who compose it!) to the inspiration of Him who wishes “that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2,4). Every Lasallian knows the use John Baptist de La Salle made of it in his meditation 193, and the extension he made to Paul’s quotation: “and he cannot really wish it without giving them the means for doing it”.

Pastoral Care is the willingness, embodied in a certain number of instances and structures, to open up the school community, in all its elements, to the process of the salvation of all men and to the knowledge of the truth, that is to Christ.

A Pastoral Care which raises questions.

It will lead to casting a critical eye over the reality in which it seeks to be embodied, and this could find expression in the following three questions:

- What obstacles are **to be denounced**?
- What achievements and projects are **to be encouraged**?
- What responses are **to be devised** in answer to the challenges pinpointed?

A Pastoral Care that can say what it wants.

Humanisation must come before Christianisation. Only a human person can be made a Christian. In asking the three preceding questions (and answering them!) you must:

- Allow the young persons (and the adults) to become aware of the dimensions of their personalities that are usually masked (the interiority dimension: who am I really?; the dimension of being an evolving person: what are my future paths so that I may blossom by becoming truly myself? What calls do I perceive?)
- Allow Christians (young persons and adults) to experience, deepen, expound and celebrate their faith.

Preparing the ground.

Definitely, it is a matter of preparing the ground for the Word; by never forgetting that we are not the masters of the harvest, that our words are at the service of a Word to be announced; by not for-

getting that Pastoral Care is the desire to create a community which originates in the revelation of a Trinitarian God. In essence, then, it is called to become creative of community and rooted in the community-Church (a Pastoral Care which does not refer to the Church as its source, its vital middle and its completeness, is nearing division).

If metaphor can help us in our reflection, it could be said that it is easy to make plants grow in a hothouse because it is open only to what has an immediate, visible and rewarding effect thanks to a lot of sunlight, the right amount of humidity and good compost, thanks especially to its insulation from everything that could be an obstacle.

But the hothouse is shut against the wind.

The apostles had to leave their hothouse-refuge on the day of Pentecost to receive the Spirit.

If metaphor can further help us in our reflection, it could be said that Pastoral Care is like a sailing ship which needs to be nimble with the weight of all that is human, of everything that seems to us to be heavy, too heavy, in everyday life, but which prevents it from flying off, from toppling over. But it needs sails, that is, everything that directs it towards the spiritual. And it must not forget to unfurl its sails and lay itself open to the wind of the Spirit.

Adopting criteria.

To get good answers, it is useful to ask good questions. It is also useful to ask them of yourself, from time to time! The following questions or statements are meant to constitute a kind of tool-box which could enable us to test the vitality of our Pastoral Care in our own surroundings.

- Is our Pastoral Care a community affair (which springs from a community and grows towards the creation and promotion of community)?
- Does our Pastoral Care refer back to Christ, the Good Shepherd, a Christ who is met in his Word, his sacraments, his Church and the poor?
- Does our Pastoral Care embrace the young person in his totality, does it seek to get to know him before wanting to “press” the Good News onto him?

- Pastoral Care exists only to “evangelise”, that is to announce Good News. But our world is punctilious about freedom of thought and quick to have doubts about recruitment, about “brainwashing”. Pastoral Care should also be a setting for reflection on the language it uses. What difference (in theory and in practice) do we make between announcing and proselytising?
- Is our Pastoral Care capable of creating spaces and times for speaking, in which the adventure of dialogue may be accepted?
- Is there any place in our Pastoral Care for non-Christians? How do we take their culture into account?
- Does our Pastoral Care ask questions about the connections it has with secular disciplines? These are not strangers to Pastoral Care, but they should also have the benefit of their own rightful autonomy. Have we reflected on the connection between Pastoral Care and Religious Culture? What do we expect from the latter? Is it taken on as a passenger by Pastoral Care? Who teaches it? In what form? What approaches do we suggest from the Bible?
- In what way does our Pastoral Care show that it cares about presenting a human face to everyone? Smile? Welcome? Listening?
- What place does our Pastoral Care give to prayer, contemplation and silence? Is the beauty of the places we set up a concern? (What is the state of our chapels, our “prayer spaces”?)
- Can our Pastoral Care recall, in season and out of season, that welcoming the small, the weak, the most disadvantaged is the standard for all action which claims to have reference to the Gospel?
- In its concern to bring real communities into being, is our Pastoral Care interested in (does it contact) all who compose that community (young people, teachers, youth workers, parents, staff...)? What dialogues do we suggest?
- Pastoral Care should be continuously mindful to push the boundaries. What example of international openness do we suggest by our actions?
- The workers in the harvest are growing old. How does Pastoral Care show its concern for a relief team?

- The educational domain is one where things are changing quickly. What works well at some given moment can very quickly become unsuitable, even counter-productive. Do we regularly take time to go over our activities in a lucid and critical manner?

Finally, our Pastoral Care recognises its distant roots in the adventure of John Baptist de La Salle. Reading the Founder's journey should encourage us to re-read our own journey. It should also give back to key-words all their 'bite': realism, the right to doubt and uncertainty, availability for new exoduses which crop up, the certainty that God is at work throughout life, the certainty that all life can lead to God, and the importance of encounters.

Conclusion.

Our tiny texts should not stop us from drinking at the springs of the great texts, for example, the Conciliar declaration on Christian Education!

And to end, I suggest that you read or reread this invitation which can help us prolong our reflection:

From listening to and sharing the Word draw continual stimulus.

Your personal and community prayer will be enriched by *the regular reading of Scripture*.

You are going to be the witness of the Lord and his Good News!

Make the young, the poor, the world and the Church your preferential choice.

The Good News is also aimed at the most humble and the poorest.

In your activities,
shaken up by means of a continuous conversion,
build up the *Kingdom, already there*,
like a seed to be made to grow.

Carry out your mission with ardent zeal.
Go towards others with the heart of a poor man.
It is God who is sending you *to do his work*.

Live *association* as a great source of wealth

which supports the evangelisation of the world.
And be happy to make others happy.

Begin by being *converted to Jesus Christ:*
You are responding to his call,
and giving your life to his service.

Make the Gospel the rule of your life,
abandon yourself to God's leadership
to be sent by the Church
to the heart of today's world
in which, with your Brothers, you receive the mission
to become witnesses.

Put yourself *at the disposal of the Spirit* of your baptism.
He is working in you, leading you towards the young,
especially the poorest.
By force of Hope and Love, he is urging you towards them.
In a single movement, he unifies
your actions and your prayer,
your community and those you serve.

Open your heart to God's light.
Beyond appearances, in a glance of faith
you will see as God sees.

With your Brothers, together and in association,
you are an ambassador and minister of Jesus Christ,
to procure the glory of God.

3. The Lasallian school: what we promise, we live!

(National Pastoral Ministry Team, District of France)

150 Lasallian establishments -150 realities- all different. And yet it is the convictions that we hold in common which motivate us. In the service of young people, all young people, let us take one more step together. Together, today, each in his own place, let us become, even more, the protagonists in the Education Project in all its dimensions. Each one at his own speed...in the pastoral ministry!

1. The pastoral ministry dimension in our establishments.

The classroom: a place of growth, a Gospel space.

It is in daily activities (lessons, copybooks handed back, class councils....) that our attitudes and our works express the values which we hold. It is in this that children and young people discover, from our way of being, that the demands made upon them as well as kindness, trust and even forgiveness, help them to grow.

The school: a time for living what we proclaim.

As young people and adults we receive different calls and challenges: meeting different religions and different trends of thought, developing a questioning mind and interiority, living human and Gospel values, getting to know Christ better, structuring our belonging to Christianity with the help of the Sacraments and catechesis...

Within the school, the daily relationships, pedagogical and educational activities and the organization of the establishment must show that we are marching together towards more consistency between what we say and what we do.

To call upon the young to take responsibility.

When, as young people and adults, we cross the threshold of our

school, we are welcomed such as we are, with our history, our projects, our questions and our doubts.

This is why a fraternal climate allows us to call people to commitments which, step by step, build an existence which makes sense and has a flavour to it.

To allow everyone to advance along the path of fraternity, service or faith.

It is up to adults to help the young person to welcome these calls and thus to educate him towards liberty. Each responsibility, in fact, allows us to live educational values such as self-confidence and concern for others.

To open up the young to the life of the Church.

Our school belongs to the Lasallian network and is situated in a parish and a diocese. Each of these “places” can enrich the experience of the young person if we invite him/her to discover them and ‘live’ them.

To invite adults to live their profession as a vocation.

To promote meeting and sharing, creating more fraternal relations, risking a word....It’s up to each adult to take a (small) step, to give (a little) of his time and in this way to put the young person at the centre of educational activity.

2. The reality of pastoral ministry in our establishment.

Where do we start out?

The young:

- What are their expectations and their...?
- Do our proposals respond to these?

The education community:

- How are people involved in the pastoral ministry proposal?
- What *facilities* have they available: being accompanied, formation, reduction in their time-table, adjustment of work periods...?
- What is the role of the accompanying priest?

Priorities:

- Is there a pastoral ministry centre?
- What is the budget allocated to pastoral ministry?
- How are proposals re the animation and formation of the Lasallian network received?

Towards a responsible management council.

What is the place and the role of the APS in the Management Council?

What is the involvement of the Management Council in:

- Inviting and accompanying adults?
- The presentation of the pastoral ministry proposal to the education community: pupils, parents, staff?
- Pastoral ministry activities on the ground?

What are our achievements and our difficulties?

What projects and decisions are conceivable?

What is the time-frame for putting them into action and who is/are the person/s responsible for following them up?

How do we take on/pass on the proposals of the Church (the Lasallian network, the parish, the diocese)?

With all adults....a possible step!

Transmitting knowledge of religious fact, promoting a way of acting and relations founded on Gospel values, initiating or educating in the Christian faith: three possible paths of commitment for all members of the education community.

What are the initiatives and who are the actors?

What are the difficulties encountered? Pick out those which arise from:

- the direct responsibility of persons,
- the attitudes of the young,
- institutional 'brakes'

What are the advances noted? Pick out those which arise from:

- the direct responsibility of persons,
- the attitudes of the young,
- institutional dynamisms.

For a school which keeps its word.

What consistency can we see between our education project and class councils, career guidance, how sanctions are managed?

How do we speak of the young? How do we speak to the young?

What are our priorities when we are accepting a young person into our establishment?

How do we accompany young persons who are having difficulties with study or behaviour?

4. The education offer of the human and faith process.

An evangelizing proposal in a Lasallian school centre

*(Br. Luis Octavio Solano Luengo,
Delegate of District Pastoral Ministry and
the Delegates of Pastoral Ministry from the Centres and
Educational Works of the District of Madrid)*

1. Question.

We can ask ourselves a question:

Does any evangelizing offer exist for someone who is being educated in a La Salle Centre?

Does the Centre provide an opportunity for maturing in the human and faith process by means of pastoral actions?

The said process, itinerary, planning-organization and specific proposal, imposes on the parents the necessity of opting for a human, believing education, as an innovative sign and one of quality, for their child and family.

2. Evangelizing AIM.

One of the Lasallian aims, from the criteria of evangelization, consists in being able to have the opportunity to offer to a pupil a process of human educational formation and faith formation in a Lasallian centre.

This process is that which we describe with the wish to be able to give ourselves enthusiasm and unite ourselves as Lasallians. This motivation will permit us to share together the same Evangelizing Educational Project aware of belief:

- in the sun of the merciful God-Christ.
- in the star of faith in the person, as a real living sign of the image of the one.
- who is always present in our hearts.

As a brief presentation we are showing our evangelizing proposal, conscious of the dynamism and vitality of our action and of the pastoral dynamic.

3. Reference documents.

In a spirit of research and with the need for a theoretical-practical frame of reference, we have used as our inspiration some documents drawn up by certain inquiring, creative persons with a vision of the future.

At Regional level:

- THE EVANGELIZING PROJECT:
Our mission in ARLEP: to evangelize.
- THE PASTORAL PLAN OF VOCATIONS
Called to be Christians in the 21st Century.
- RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL PLURALISM:
Basic criteria of the Lasallian school in regard to religious-cultural pluralism.

At District level:

- The Annual Plan of the District Pastoral Delegation.

At the Education Centre level:

- The Pastoral Plan of the Centre.

4. Levels of concretion in Pastoral action.

Pedagogically, and from an innovative criterion, we structure our pastoral action at various levels of methodological expression:

In the first place, from the Pedagogy of the Threshold as proposals of Personalization:

- We set out the importance of transversal education in the following facets and actions:
 - The morning reflection.
 - Education in Values.
 - The option for Peace.
 - The value of Justice and Solidarity.
 - Involvement in the Rights of the Child.
 - The choice of Voluntary Service.
 - Living together during Lasallian Week.
 - The experiences shown during the Vocations Week.

- And also: we opt for the humanizing value of school retreats and vocation-oriented retreats together with the enlivening effect of solidarity campaigns:
 - World Missions Day.
 - Christmas.
 - Days for the NGOs: Proyde and 'Edificando'.

5. Faith-Culture Dialogue. A believer's reading of reality.

Secondly and as a concrete proposal: we reflect on and evaluate the transmission of culture open to the spiritual, religious and believing dimensions from the Christian and evangelical perspectives.

A dialogue between faith and culture which allows us to read reality in a critical and transforming way.

For this:

1. We choose as a relevant cultural area religious teaching in the schools as a prophetic evangelizing sign.
2. We plan the formation of the teachers and pastoral ministers:
 - A. From specific contents
 - offered by the Higher Centre of La Salle University Studies for:
 - obtaining the Ecclesiastical Declaration of Suitability for Infant and Primary Schools.
 - obtaining Diplomas in Religious Science and the Ecclesiastical Declaration of Suitability for Teaching Religion in Secondary and Upper Secondary Schools.
 - B. From concrete conceptual and attitudinal themes for:
 - Teachers of Religion and Coordinators of ERE
 - Teachers of Formative Cycles in a formation course on values in justice and solidarity.
 - C. From contents suitable for:
 - Animators and Catechists
 - Animators and Coordinators of Free Time.
 - D. And from an original formative offer for:
 - Pastoral Ministry Delegates of the District or of a Centre.

6. Explicit catechesis.

Thirdly as the expression of our missionary work of evangelization, we believe in explicit catechesis as the announcement of the Good News of Jesus-Christ-Love.

In the phases of the catechumenal process which we propose, we assess and prepare in the sacramental experience of First Communion and Confirmation.

In the midst of the noise (environmental, social and personal) we invite people to contemplate Nature and the Persons with whom we live as the fruit of the Shared Bread and Wine in the Confirmation of our Faith, Hope and Charity.

7. Christian groups.

In the process of reflection, experience of life and the expression of our faith, we encourage the existence of Christian Groups in the different formative-evolutionary stages:

- a) of DISCOVERY:
 - for those in 5th Class of Primary School and/or the 2nd Year of Compulsory. Secondary Education.
- b) of PROPOSAL:
 - for those in the 3rd Year of Compulsory Secondary Education and/or the 1st Year of Upper Secondary.
- c) of COMMITMENT:
 - for those in 2nd Year of Upper Secondary and/or in University.

8. District meetings during liturgical seasons.

In the process of relationship, experiencing the faith and the transforming commitment of the children and young people that we educate, we have discovered that they are motivated by the District Meetings which we offer during the various Liturgical Seasons.

- a) In the INITIAL MEETING OF CHRISTIAN GROUPS, offered to those in 5th Class Primary and /or 2nd Year of Secondary.
- b) THE ADVENT MEETING, planned for those in 3rd Year of Secondary and/or 2nd Year of Upper Secondary.
- c) THE LENT MEETING, organized for those in 5th Class Primary and/or 2nd Year Secondary.

- d) The PRE-EASTER for Secondary school pupils.
- e) EASTER for Upper Secondary and University pupils.

Likewise:

- We live the VIGIL OF PENTECOST with our older pupils and university students.
- We express our faith at the beginning of Lent, with the RECEIVING OF THE ASHES or some other symbol.
- We show our feelings with our greetings, poetry and prayers to Our Lady in the month of May.

9. Celebrations.

At different moments during our Pastoral Ministry planning:

- We live intensely Symbolic Celebrations and /or Celebrations of the Word.
- We celebrate Eucharists for various reasons.
- We celebrate our dialogue and meeting beginning with a prayer of confidence, gratitude and petition.

10. Occasions for living together.

Times in school and outside school which strengthen living in common, the opportunity for getting to know each other and relating to each other, along with the chance to use recreational and formative dynamics, allow us to discover the necessity to continue encouraging school occasions for living together and others of vocational orientation as an attitude formation value necessary for the personal and spiritual development of our pupils.

11. Summer experiences.

In the process of experience with the Christian group and starting out from the formation of a human team; we invite and we organize in summer: the Camp and the Road to Santiago.

- a) With more than a hundred boys and girls from the 3rd Cycle of Primary Education and the 1st Cycle of Secondary, we begin the Camp 'Wings in the Wind' in the first two weeks of July.

The content of the said experience makes reference to the slogan which we have been working on during the year.

The activities and dynamics which we use are related to some theme of interest from a film, book or story. On the basis of the guide we build the concrete actions of the camp.

The catechesis and reflections try to analyze the values promoted in the different dynamics.

We use the evenings to show our creativity in activities involving participation and cooperation.

- b) We begin the activity of the **ROAD TO SANTIAGO** with a prayer in Aravaca and we prepare to travel the path of meeting-relation, help along the road, overcoming difficulties and the joy of succeeding in going beyond the aim established.

We are always well accompanied by our travelling companions and our route book. There we can find:

- the program of the different stages, the kilometers for each one. The songs, the catechesis and reflections for each day and the documents of the pilgrim.

- c) Along with these two described activities, we also offer in the District the possibility of living the experience of **WORK CAMPS** and **PRAYER CAMPS** which serve to express living **voluntary service**.

- d) The **MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE** of the SUMMER PROJECTS motivates those who share and give of their lives for the good of a sector of humanity in:

- GUATEMALA. Department of S. Marcos. Municipality of San Lorenzo and Communities.
- PARAGUAY. Pozo Colorado.
- MANCHAY. Peru.

In these experiences we work on the following aspects:

- Projects for the training of parents, children, catechists and ministers.
- Collaborating in human and Christian formation.
- Education in faith and values.
- Basic formative teaching.
- Interactive and cooperative dynamics of collaborative games.

- Presence with and closeness to the boarders.
- Attention to older people by means of Occupational Therapy.
- The care of children in a Special Education Centre.
- Running workshops on: drug-abuse prevention, sexual education, solving conflicts and group pressure, education of the emotions (identification and control of the emotions, self-esteem and skills for daily life) in Primary and Secondary classes of the parish school.

12. Young Lasallians.

The impetus of the Young Lasallian movement was developed after participation in the Regional Sub-Commission of the Young Lasallians and in the preparation of the 2nd International Symposium of Young Lasallians which took place in Rome last summer. It was an inspiring feeling of enthusiasm to be able to share with all of them commitment to the Lasallian Education Mission.

The first meeting of the Young Lasallians of the District helped us to reflect on the slogan: “Mission possible: a dream shared” in relation to the following aspects:

- Educational challenges.
- Lasallian identity today starting out from the mission.
- The design of the reality of the dream: the Young Lasallian Movement.
- The wish to be able to share our expectations with young people, with Brothers, with Educators and with Associates.

13. The Lasallian Christian Community.

There exist in our District Lasallian Christian Communities which live and express their Faith in Community as “living members, driving forces of Faith and hope”.

They have based their confidence and belief in the coherence of their Itinerary:

- They have grown stronger in MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE as persons.
- Their FORMATION has enabled them humbly to develop in a personal and community way.

- Their belief has benefited them in their experience and the expression and deepening of their FAITH.
- Their COMMITMENT OF SOLIDARITY has transformed them.

14. THE ETHICAL WAY OF BEING.

And last but not less important, the invitation to believe in certain axiological contents that underlie the evangelizing offer and pastoral action starting out from the Evangelizing Educational Project described:

1. To accept the social principle of **relation and living together**.
2. To value proceedings which benefit **equality and justice**.
3. To practice the **spirit of solidarity** as a principle which is based on justice and is governed by charity based on confidence in persons and in God.
4. To be respectful towards the beliefs and traditions of Society and of the Church in this inter-cultural world.
5. To look upon **tolerance** as the virtue for discovering, valuing and constructively criticizing social reality and the persons with whom we live.
6. **Dialogue** as the agreed pedagogical criteria which allows us to participate, become involved, accept, validate, listen, understand, respect, support, serve, search, discern, criticize and improve the proposals for pastoral action in the framework of the Evangelizing Educational project.
7. To believe in the sense of **transcendence** starting out from the witness of social mercy and transformation.

5. Lasallian higher education in the USA and its responsibility in preparing religious educators and pastoral ministers

(Fr. Robert Smith, PhD - Vice President for Mission - Saint Mary's University of Minnesota)

For more than 150 years, the Lasallian family has worked together to offer post-secondary education in the United States. At present, there are seven Lasallian universities in the US: Manhattan College, New York; La Salle University in Philadelphia; Saint Mary's University, Minnesota; Lewis University, Chicago; Christian Brothers University, Memphis; The College of Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Saint Mary's College, California. These seven institutions of higher education work with approximately 23,000 full-time and part-time students. The majority of students are Catholic, but there are also large numbers of other Christians and non-Christians in the student populations of each of the schools. Upwards of 5,000 full-time and part-time members of the Lasallian family serve these students as teachers, staff members, campus ministers, administrators, and staff members and make it possible to offer bachelor, master, and doctoral level degrees in a wide variety of disciplines. The academic programs are offered on multiple campuses of the same university and at many sites in order to respond to the needs of students.

Since the founding of these institutions, each has worked diligently to maintain its distinctive Catholic and Lasallian identity. The unique and powerful Catholic and Lasallian heritage of each school has been made even stronger in the past ten or more years in light of the publication of Pope John Paul II's *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which invited Catholic universities around the world to reflect on and commit themselves to a vigorous and Spirit-led renewal.

The seven Catholic, Lasallian universities in the United States have always given pride of place to their Theology, Religious Studies, and Pastoral/Campus Ministry departments, which is only

natural given their mission to serve both church and society. Today, each of the schools continues to emphasize its Catholic and Lasallian nature by offering to all students a wide array of curricular and co-curricular experiences that assist them to come to a deeper understanding of life's mysteries (who I am?, what is my purpose?, is there meaning in life?, where is God?) and a believer's response in faith to those mysteries.

At present, each of the seven Lasallian universities in the United States has a department of theology or religious studies that leads to the first degree, that is, a Bachelor of Arts degree in theology, religious studies, pastoral ministry, religious education or similar. These departments are the academic units that offer formal classes in all areas of theological study. Graduates of these bachelor level programs move on to graduate studies (Master's degrees in Theology, Ministry, Religious Education, and so on), to work in Catholic primary or secondary schools teaching religion and/or doing campus ministry, to parishes in which they are responsible for religious education programs, liturgy, youth ministry activities, and/or adult education and formation, or to a variety of other types of church and non-church-related professional positions.

Saint Mary's University of Minnesota and La Salle University in Philadelphia both have graduate level Master's degree programs in a theological discipline. La Salle offers a graduate program in Religious Education, aimed primarily at those engaged in the formal faith/religious education of students in secondary schools and/or parish settings. Saint Mary's University of Minnesota offers a Master's degree in Pastoral Ministry, aimed to enhance the skills of those professionals already working in a wide variety of ministerial settings in the church. Christian Brothers University in Memphis has just created a new Master's degree in Catholic Studies the goal of which is to assist students in gaining a solid theological foundation in preparation for service to the Church and the larger society.

Since at least the time of the Second Vatican Council, there has been a renewed call for the involvement of lay women and men in the life of the church. At the same time, there has been a call for and a need to educate the laity for taking more responsibility for and assuming leadership roles in the contemporary church at all levels. The Lasallian universities in the United States have been

attentive to this call and have responded enthusiastically and continue to do so, ensuring that the church in the United States will have competent, committed, professional ministers to teach, lead, proclaim the Gospel, and advance social justice so that God's reign may be more and more realized.

In June 2006, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota hosted a first-time-ever symposium for representatives of all seven Lasallian universities in the US in order to discuss and come to a deeper understanding of what it means to be a Catholic and Lasallian university in the 21st century.

6. The Lasallian school in view of religious-cultural pluralism. The experience in CSEULS - Madrid

(Juan García Callejas)

The present-day context in which we live is marked by, among other things, the phenomenon of globalization and its consequences. This is especially true as regards the constitution of plural groups, trans-nationalism, and migratory movements of great human masses of people who are fleeing the impoverished South for the paradise of development and comfort of countries in the North. A society that is becoming a "global village," but which is diverse and heterogeneous at the same time. A society which is more and more "multi" and which, precisely because of that, raises new and complex situations that affect interpersonal relationships, social organization and, of course education – situations that are often times problematic and for which we often have no recourse but to look for solutions based on integration, peaceful living, mutual knowledge and dialogue, tolerance, and respect. In that way, our society today can be defined correctly as a society that is multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-denominational. In short it is multicultural.

Religious reality also manifests itself as one of the constitutive elements of this diversity and it is a contributor towards this diversity. It is enough to take a look at daily reality presented to us by communication media to be made aware of this. The new multicultural context is, for that reason, one that is multi-religious.

In the framework of the statement made by our Institute, "*the Lasallian charism is lived now in the context of societies that are pluri-cultural and multi-religious.*"¹ the Regional Pastoral Ministry Commission for ARLEP, along with the Regional Education Commission, in their reflections on the **Character Proper to**

¹ 43rd General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, II Evangelization, statement 6.

Lasallian Schools, reflected on the criteria that should guide us as we face the new multi-religious context of the present time.²

It is not possible to face the problems of education today from a Lasallian perspective without being aware of the new reality of which we speak. Here are a few citations on ideas I am speaking about:

*"...the new multi-religious context that we see in the near future requires a change of mentality on the part of educators and a new commitment on the part of the Lasallian school."*³

*"...religious and cultural pluralism, as well as its main place of encounter, immigration, is a new reality that needs to be confronted in the educational arena, among other places..."*⁴

*"...as believers and Lasallian educators we are called to face the challenge of education for dialogue and living together..."*⁵

In this sense, for some years now, our CSEULS in Aravaca has been involved in an academic session each year, under the creative and enthusiastic direction of José Luis Cancelo and with the collaboration of his department. This interesting experience which combines concern for didactic innovation and approaches in new technology and educational activity, is based on international interchange and multicultural experience.

The **Religious Sciences Department**, in collaboration principally with the Swedish University of Gävle, organizes courses by video-conference for second-year students enrolled in the programs of teacher training, occupational therapy, and social education. From the very beginning until now various universities and/or associations have collaborated with this program: University of Helsinki (Finland), University of Legon (Ghana), Taoist Association of China "Temple of White Clouds" of Barcelona, in conjunction with the University Ramon Llull, and the Buddhist Tebetan Temple "Nagaryuna" of Madrid...next year the University of Cairo will link up with this program.

² *Basic Criteria of the Lasallian School in view of Religious and Cultural Pluralism.* ARLEP, 2006.

³ Op. Cit., page 6.

⁴ Op. Cit., page 6.

⁵ Op. Cit., page 6.

This is a seminar type of course organized around a central theme and it consists of 50 hours, including videoconferences, personal work, research, and student presentations. Participants register both in Aravaca and in Gävle. At the end of the course, they are awarded a certificate and they also receive 2 academic credits that can be used in their personal study plan. In principle, sessions are held every two weeks on Wednesdays from 4:15 PM until 7:20 PM, from the beginning of October until the end of January, at which time the program is evaluated. Those in charge of organizing and directing the course are Ake Tilander, for Gävle, and José Luis Cancelo, for CSEULS, with the collaboration of other teachers from their respective departments and the students who are registered from each of the universities and participating associations.

The central theme that unites the different studies and interventions is generated from the **fundamental objective** of this program: *To get to know, from the perspective of globalization, the intercultural and religious reality in the specific places or centers where interchange takes place by videoconferencing.*

In principle, the student participants have to draw up a **dossier** in which they gather their research, bibliography, and a summary of the most significant ideas they heard, as well as a summary and personal evaluation of each of the interventions of the professors and students that were presented during the course. Then, they have to give a schematic **presentation** of 30 minutes in length, after which there will be time for questions and exchanges about the topic treated.

So far the evaluations on this experience have been very positive and this is significant for our La Salle University Advanced Studies Center because of the satisfaction that has been reported, both on the part of the professors who teach there and on the part of the students who participate. The interchange of knowledge and personal enrichment gained helps us in a significant way to appreciate the multicultural and multi-religious reality that we are living in today's society. Above all, this experience makes us reflect on what is needed to face new situations that come from this aforementioned multicultural reality in the field of education, which is our fundamental objective as a Lasallian center. We also believe that this experience is in line with the *"challenges for Christian*

education in a multi-religious world...and the guidelines and responses that the school can offer" as expressed in the document from ARLEP⁶: without losing one's proper identity, to be open to interreligious dialogue and the search for God and interreligious living together, through education in world religions.

To give a general idea about this, over time these courses have been dealing with themes directly related to multicultural and multi-religious reality that exist in our current society. What follows are some of the themes that have been developed by students and teachers in CSEULS as well as by collaborators in other centers:

- *Religious syncretism in the city of Limna, Cameroon* by Martha Likome Nbombe a student.
- *How to work on Islam from the Internet* by Professor Adolfo Sillóniz, the advisor of the SM Publishing group.
- *Immigration as cultural enrichment* by Mohamed Chakor, director of the Time to Believe program on TVE 2.
- *Candombe as a concrete form of syncretism* by Professor María das Graças Rangel Lumak, from the Catholic University of Pernambuco-UNICAP, in Recife, Brazil.
- *Some examples of linked classrooms in Madrid* by students Irene Arriba V., and Laura López C.
- *Buddhist Temples in Madrid* by students César Martín L. and Ana Oviedo H.
- *The relationship between faith and culture in the novels of The DaVinci Code and the Barro Bible* by Professor Juan García Callejas.
- *Judaism in Madrid* by Andrea Hernández D.
- *The stance of the principal religions as regards organ donation* by Professor Jesús de Miguel.
- *Intercultural awareness and inter-religions in the area of Canillejas, Madrid* by students Rafael Eduardo Bartolomé G., Lara María Molina P., and Raúl Bazas G.

In the 2006 - 2007 course the videoconferencing program starts with an exposition of the study done by Professor José Luis Cancelo on *The influence of globalization on religions*.

⁶ Op. Cit., page 7.

Clearly, the daily reality we experience at this time makes us affirm that *“the school is a place of encounter.”*⁷ As Lasallians, we are called to contribute our grain of sand in the creation of a new humanity, of a new civilization that necessarily must be an inter-religious society. To fight for this new reality will suppose fighting so that the inequality of opportunity not become a reality imposed by belonging to any minority ethnic group. With this simple experience that we share we are aware that we are taking a small step towards the objective which so clearly characterizes us in the aforementioned document from the ARLEP Pastoral Ministry Commission: *“In the light, then, of the 43rd General Chapter itself, and the Character Proper of Lasallian Schools, our school is called to be committed to dialogue which assumes, above all, being witnesses more than agents of our own faith and being open to other faith realities, even those that are not Christian, accepting a real existing diversity of cultural and religious systems.”*⁸

May the light of the charism that has been given to us in Saint John Baptist de La Salle continue to enlighten and propel us to take other steps in this direction. This is the experience of Lasallian discernment, which seeks to be faithful to the Spirit, inspired by Faith and Zeal, as it responds to the new needs of our world.

⁷ 43rd General Chapter. Lasallian presence in multi-religious societies. Guideline 2.

⁸ Op. Cit., page 7

7. Pastoral activity at the youth impact centre

(Document prepared by Br Jean-Louis Jeurand)

Founded in 1997 by the Youth Pastoral Service in the diocese of Montreal, the Youth Impact Centre is missioned to encourage and support the human and spiritual development of the young. So, the Centre allows movements for young people such as Etincelle, Relève, Aclé, Salut Terre, Youth for Christ, Jochim, Cor and several others, to make use of a centre and its facilities to hold their meetings and their pastoral and/or social activities there and at an affordable cost. The team of the Centre is always on hand to assure a welcoming presence and special support for the different groups staying there. It is likewise available to offer training and pastoral resources to the young people and youth speakers. In this respect the Centre has set up Christian leadership camps, a certificated course in youth pastoral care and courses for education in the faith, especially high points presented to the young as they advance towards Confirmation. In addition, the Centre team invites young adults to be co-leaders in encounter sessions, training courses, leadership camps, sessions for education in the faith and social solidarity experiences which are on the Centre's programme. By taking part in these projects, the participants are thereby initiated into the Christian life, into pastoral action and social justice at the same time as having an opportunity to open up to the young and persons in their own milieu.

If in one sense youth pastoral care remains our premier objective, we are also careful to offer courses of training and integration into life in society. Thus, there is the summer project **Young Neighbours in Action**, a programme integrating young people and adults into community organisations for a week to familiarise them, as Christians, with their social responsibility towards the less fortunate. During the school year a programme, **Homework Help**, allows pupils from the neighbouring school to come, once a week, and finish their homework at the Centre while taking advantage of the presence of students from the secondary school

who voluntarily help out by answering their questions and likewise run a hobbies workshop and organise little games.

The Youth Impact Centre being a centre for education in the faith which comes under the Montreal Diocese, it goes without saying that the diocesan guidelines regarding education in the faith are followed. These directions are summed up in a diocesan guideline: Present Jesus Christ today.

It is a programme based on theological convictions:

- The Spirit meets us in what is real, in events, in human experience, in cultures; - The heart of the Good News is meeting with a person, Jesus Christ.
- In a missionary community, we are all responsible for proclaiming and catechising. *“The local plan for education in the faith calls on everyone to take part, embraces and integrates all facets and practices of the Christian life, seeing, sharing and celebrating as well as transforming. This plan concerns the life of the whole community which, at one and the same time, catechises and is catechised.”*

The preceding theological convictions lead to giving overall priority to catechesis as journeying. It sets its hopes on an approach which is at the same time individual and communitarian. People change from believing as to believing with. This catechesis of journeying is:

Unrestricted: It is a catechesis for every stage in life. It affects young people, older people, single people, families with their thousand faces and at different stages of their lives...

Inter-generational: The fragility of relationships and the break-up of families give rise to a search for new solidarities in a community. Faith is, in the first place, the mystery of encounter.

Centred on the person: The beneficiary must show himself to be an active, aware and responsible subject. The pace, the person's capacity for accepting, his wishes and his centres of interest regulate the “dosage” and the nature of the spiritual nourishment presented. The way of communicating imitates the rite of Christian initiation which calls upon the whole person (body, heart and spirit) and transforms him into a disciple...

Permanent: From early childhood to death, the life of faith, like

life itself, needs stimuli, food, clashes, questioning and relationships in order to mature. Christian initiation starts a journey, a pilgrimage, a conversion which goes on throughout the whole of life.

In the spirit of the baptismal catechumenate: Its strength lies in journeying towards an encounter, the encounter with Jesus Christ. The rhythm of the march is marked by liturgical stages, kinds of oases, which pave the way for the next part of the journey. Ripening takes time. Discovery of what is essential for the life of faith is made in dialogue with the people and community supporting the march. Celebrating the sacraments of initiation is not a point of arrival but a starting line.

Journeying is community building: The family is still the most important magnet for transmitting the desire for and interest in the life of faith. But community favours sharing, collaboration and pooling of talents.

We believe that this type of *catechesis as journeying* reflects very well what Lasallian Pastoral activity should be:

- A pastoral activity for the young and by the young and touching all facets of their lives; - a pastoral activity which brings together teaching, training and initiation;
- A pastoral activity which favours understanding Jesus' message, interiorising evangelical values and commitment to building a better world.

To illustrate this vision of Lasallian pastoral care, we offer you an outline of a session presented as a high point to young people aged 12 and 13 as they advance towards their Confirmation:

Step 1: *"To connect them in all facets of their lives"*: Suggested activity: *"The family album"*. At home, each participant prepares a family album in which he pastes photos and relevant information about his family. At the start of the session, each one presents his album to the members of his team. The desired goal: To encourage an atmosphere in which each can make himself known and get to know the others... and lead to the discovery of what better characterises the family and living conditions of each one... At the conclusion of this step, the leader brings them to see that the story of each is not so different from the story of the people of God... He invites the young ones to continue the session by travelling along God's path.

Step 2: *“Integrate teaching, training and initiation”*: Suggested activity: **“My dream planet”** The young ones are invited to develop, in a handyman sort of way, a planet which reflects their dreams, desires and wishes for today’s world as well as the values making of this world a place in which it is good to live... The desired goal: To help the young to discover the dreams and desires within them to live in a better world and bring them to discover the link between their dreams and God’s dream for the world...

Step 3: *“to encourage the understanding of the message of Jesus and making gospel values their own”*: Suggested activity: **“The road of Life”**...Those taking part are invited to follow a path illustrating visually (photos, pictures and various objects) the different stages of life (conception, childhood, youth, adolescence, young adulthood, parenthood, mid-life, old age...). The desired goal: To help the young to understand that the journey they are choosing to undertake through Confirmation continues throughout life...The Christian life is the story of a whole life. As a conclusion to this step, a young adult comes and testifies to his journey as a confirmed person and a believer and reveals that the journey of a young Christian is a journey of discovery, of challenges, of falls, of reappraisals but also of commitments...

Step 4: *“encouraging personal commitment”* Suggested activity: **“My personal commitment”** The leader suggests that participants take on a clear and specific commitment as a pledge of their desire to prepare well for Confirmation...This commitment can be made at home, at school or in the parish.

Questionnaire on Pastoral Care - 29 October 2003

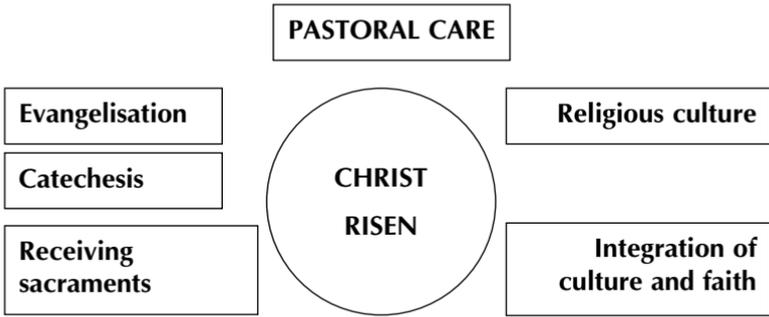
1. What activities normally come within the scope of your field of pastoral ministry?
 - Preparing programmes adapted to the human and spiritual development of the young, in collaboration with those responsible in schools and parishes.
 - Representing the Villa des Jeunes with pastoral care people in schools and parishes.
 - Leading groups of young people who come to the Villa des Jeunes making use of different teaching methods: Showing

video tapes to the young, video themes prepared by the young, sketches, instruction, prayers, sharing the Word of God, stories, group discussions, debates etc.

- Individual counselling
 - Being on diocesan and Lasallian committees
 - Taking part in the association of leaders of the Province, among others, on their training days
 - Meetings of the leaders' team of the Villa des Jeunes (for planning and resourcing)
 - Welcoming groups who run their own courses.
2. What relationships do you see between the following realities: pastoral care, evangelisation, catechesis, receiving the sacraments and religious culture?

For sure, these realities leave their mark on the religious education of the young. The term 'pastoral care' refers to the fundamental attitude of the pastor "gathering together" the people of God. So, it embraces everything the educator does. On the other hand evangelisation consists in "announcing the Good News to all the nations", firstly in his own manner of living then in making known Jesus and his plan of love. Catechesis follows evangelisation to allow the person who so desires to deepen the Christian mystery. Finally, receiving the sacraments develops and makes concrete the relationship to the Risen Christ. On the other hand religious culture ensures that the need for transcendence is inscribed in the human heart and that each human being is called to develop the spiritual dimension in his life. What ties these dimensions together is the Risen Christ, the foundation of our faith. Let us add that the faith is incarnated in a given culture and that the pertinent language and teaching method has to be found to present it to the young.

3. Can you draw a diagram to clarify number 2?



4. What, in your opinion, characterises Lasallian pastoral care?
 - Faith (abandonment to providence)
 - Zeal to live and bring to life Jesus' plan for today's young people, especially those who are poor.
 - The spirit of brotherhood and service in which we are living this project.
 - Unity within the working team.
5. Can you be more specific about question 4 using a short narrative of 10 to 20 lines?

At the Villa des Jeunes we strive to put into practice in our day to day work the Lasallian characteristics mentioned above. For a long time we have been affirming what relates to the question of faith and abandonment to providence, because we have been "witnesses" that the Villa des Jeunes is really the work of God. We ask the Spirit to guide us in the choice and content of the programmes we offer, and after doing all we can do, we leave to him the responsibility for entrusting to us young people to whom the presence of God in them can be revealed.

As for zeal, Brothers and lay people offer the best of themselves to assure a quality service. Collaboration amongst us is excellent, to the point that at the beginning of each year, we have no hesitation in affirming publicly our willingness "to be associated together in carrying out the mission of human and Christian education of the young entrusted to us". We are able to make this gesture because there exists among us a spirit of brotherhood and unity in the faith which inspire us every day.

8. Pastoral care at the Notre Dame de La Rouge centre

(Br. André Gauthier)

Activities which normally fit into the field of our pastoral ministry

Having assumed the mission of favouring the integral development of young people by allowing them, within the framework of an experience of life, in the heart of the countryside, to acquire a better knowledge of themselves and a greater self-esteem and to become the artisans of their human and Christian lives, the Centre team sets up activities which will help the young to grow in all facets of their personality and to achieve their value as human persons and children of God. The activities will also lead them to become active agents in building a world with a flavour of Jesus Christ in it.

During the school year (September to June), school, parish and other groups stay here for 2 or 3 days with the object of deepening or putting into practice what has been learned in religion courses, to prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation, to do some training to become more competent and effective leaders in their own milieu or to spend some time in recharging their spiritual batteries.

During the summer, six one-week 'live-ins' are on offer. The younger ones (8-11 years of age) have the opportunity during the Youth Adventure camps to experience moments of reflection and prayer which inspire their days. The older ones (aged 12-17) take part in the Camp of the Future all the activities of which are linked to a plainly pastoral theme.

Pastoral care, evangelisation, catechesis, receiving sacraments, religious culture

Our educational approach can be described as pastoral. It is based largely on action. It starts from real life and goes back to it.

It is an integrated approach. For us, the praxis generally precedes the theory. Often, the theory becomes clear of itself, after an actual experience. We want to live and bring to life a practical gospel experience. This is how we carry out evangelisation... On the other hand, especially with certain groups, mainly those preparing for Confirmation, we cope with catechesis, seen as the passing on and development of the content of faith. We often work with those in charge of education in the faith who carry out catechesis in a more direct way and over a more extended time.

We mentioned that we work on preparation for the sacraments, but we should also note that we do not always succeed, in our sessions, in experiencing a sacrament, the Eucharist, for example. When the young are ready there is no problem in doing so. Otherwise it would be premature and shallow. The groups that we accept are quite varied: the degree of religious culture varies according to the age, milieu and personal history of each one. Sometimes, we see young people who come to the Centre walking into a chapel for the first time in their lives. With these young ones, some knowledge can be passed on and some pre-evangelisation done. By contrast, those who have been on the road longer can be brought to meet and extol Jesus Christ who died and rose again.

Lasallian Pastoral Care

Lasallian pastoral care is experienced in community, in brotherhood and in association with lay partners.

It is centred on the young and tries to be close to real life.

It leads the young to find and extol the God of Jesus Christ, to live after his example and to work towards the Kingdom, a kingdom of justice for all – which brings us to pay special attention to the helpless – of peace and joy.

An example illustrating the preceding questions

Among the groups coming to the Centre in the course of the year, a certain number of young people choose to come and experience a week at the Camp of the Future to further their human and Christian development. A week of different activities with a pastoral aim is offered to them. These activities have been a year in

the planning by a team of Brothers, partners and young adults who have generally grown up at the Centre. Here is an example of one activity which can take a whole day.

The campers are invited to canoe up the river Rouge and go as far as possible through the rapids. The current is very strong and in order not to get swept away a mighty, sustained effort is needed. Some capsize... On their return, they have an opportunity to say how they reacted to this challenge. A little later, they do a role-play: Jesus Christ is lead into court and is accused of having done actions or said words which are contrary to what is acceptable in Jewish civil or religious laws (curing someone on the Sabbath, associating with people of evil repute, encouraging crime in his parable of the prodigal son, etc.) Jesus having no defending lawyer, the teams of young people are asked to draw up arguments defending Jesus' conduct, with each group starting from a different gospel text. After some time for reflection and discussion, each team delivers its plea after which the verdict is brought down. At a subsequent stage, the young people are asked to name situations in which they had to go against the currents in their milieu in order to uphold their values. It is easy then to make a connection with Jesus who stands out not only as a model of courage and strength but as someone who understands us. At the right moment, it is possible to return to what has happened throughout the day in a moment of prayer of thanksgiving, petition or sorrow.

This activity:

- Highlights the "together and by association" as much in the preparation by the team as in the experience of the young people who are initiated at the centre into developing this outlook: work, share, reflect and pray together.
- It is put together starting with the interests and real life situation of the young. Moreover, our hallmark is that each camp, each activity is built up starting from some objectives and the make-up of the group rather than from a pre-established programme.
- It allows us to cast a glance at Jesus who placed himself on the side of the poorest.
- It presents a human, accessible Jesus who did not always have an easy life but who was always courageous

- It gives the young person tools to go back into his environment and face up to difficulties with more courage and confidence.

9. An overview of Miguel pastoral day centre Downpatrick

(Br. Benet Conroy)

Miguel Pastoral Centre derives its name from that of Saint Miguel Cordero, a De La Salle Brother from Ecuador (1854-1910) who was canonised in 1984. Br Miguel lived his commitment to God and to the service of the young as a Brother to the full. He was a scholar who made his teaching and writing so clear and accurate that God's truth shone through for all of his students. The Centre follows from research into the pastoral needs of young people and from three similar successful Lasallian Pastoral Centres in Ireland.

It will continue to provide the successful candidates with the opportunity to enrich their own lives; to use their initiative, imagination and enthusiasm in the pastoral care of young people and the challenge to commit themselves to the human and Christian education of the young in a unique way.

1. Aim/Purpose.

The overall objective of the Centre will be to enable the students to have a greater understanding and experience of their faith. It will help to lead them to a greater appreciation of themselves, to improve their self image and to be more accepting of themselves and others. The spiritual dimension will permeate each activity and the students will be encouraged to believe in their own worth as children of God by whom they are loved unconditionally. It will provide a relaxed atmosphere with a friendly, welcoming Team and the absence of school regimentation will enable the students to get in touch with themselves in a deep way that allows the real person (the child) to appear.

2. Nature of the Programmes.

The programmes will be of a pastoral and spiritual nature helping students to develop their personalities, their faith and their spiritual lives and will also include para liturgies and prayer services. They will be suitable for the different levels of ability and

maturity of primary and secondary students from local schools/colleges in east/south Down and further afield. Initially the Centre will cater primarily for primary and secondary students but as it continues to develop the Trustees hope that it will be able to offer a suitable programme for third level students and adults particularly those involved in or preparing for the field of education.

3. Delivery of the Programmes.

The programmes will be drawn up and delivered by a small team of suitably qualified persons with a qualification in Religious Education or allied subjects and with training/experience in the area of pastoral care of young people. One of the team will be the Director of the Centre. One other suitably qualified person is also being employed. Other part-time qualified persons may also be employed as required in a voluntary capacity. Groups of students will normally arrive as a class unit from local schools for one day. Occasionally some Third Level and adult groups may request a day retreat.

4. Management of the Centre.

Role of the Trustees.

The Trustees have the ultimate responsibility for the Centre. Their role supersedes that of The Governing Body and the Director in all matters relating to the Centre as they deem necessary or appropriate. They reserve the right to directly appoint a member of the Congregation to the Pastoral Team. They ratify all other appointments made by the Governing Body.

Role of the Governing Body.

The Trustees delegate to an umbrella Governing Body the management of De La Salle Pastoral Centre, Belfast and Miguel Pastoral Centre, Downpatrick. It is responsible for the general management of the Centres on behalf of the Trustees. It supports and advises them on all matters as required by them. It facilitates the process for all appointments and recommends candidates for ratification by the Trustees. It supports and protects the Director, the Team and the overall operation of the Centre.

It will include a member of the Trustee Leadership Team, a priest of the diocese, a parent and the Bursars of each Centre. The

Directors will normally be invited to attend its meetings for relevant matters on the agenda.

Role of Director.

The Governing Body delegates the daily management and operation of the Centre to the Director in accordance with the Job Specification for Director.

Both Teams will work in co-operation and where appropriate and feasible the two Directors may arrange for the two teams to deliver a pastoral day to a large group or to do so on a school premises.

5. Premises.

The premises will be those of the De La Salle Brothers, 4 Stream Street, Downpatrick. On the ground floor the Centre has three rooms, an Office space and an oratory. The entire first floor will be private to the Brothers' Community at all times. The ground floor is still available to the Brothers' Community. There will be an outdoor recreation space for the students.

6. Finance.

The Centre will be funded by the Trustees i.e. the De La Salle Brothers. It will be a private and voluntary project. The annual Budget will be set by the Trustees and managed by the Bursar of the Governing Body and the Director of the Centre. Some funding will be raised through subscriptions from schools.

10. De la salle pastoral centre, Castletown

(Br. Benet Conroy)

I visited the centre on Monday 20th February 2006 and spent the day following a Transition Year retreat for 37 girls from Sacred Heart School Tullamore.

Before they arrived I met the team and was taken on a tour of the Centre. I was impressed by the décor they had created and the atmosphere of the place, especially the chapel and the prayer room. I found the team well balanced with complementary personalities and skills and an obvious enthusiasm for their ministry. We prayed together before the arrival of the students and focused on the ministry of the day and our need to be tuned to the Spirit and to what God was asking of us.

When the students arrived they were welcomed in a warm and friendly way, and were offered refreshments and made to feel at home. The team was very much at home with the young people who soon settled in.

Announcements were made which included welcome and the basic house rules for the day, and they were done in a way that was straightforward, respectful and non-threatening. The introductory session which took place in the chapel gave the students a chance to express their hopes and fears for the day (they did this in writing and anonymously) and the team read these out loud while the general trends were recorded on the whiteboard. The fears were dealt with sympathetically without making a big deal of them; it was a fine piece of reassurance which was later put into practice during the rest of the retreat.

Students were encouraged to be themselves and to respond to invitations; they were assured that they would not be obliged to do anything they did not wish to do (for example, to have to speak personally in front of the whole group). I felt they were put at ease in a skilful and understanding way.

From what I heard in groups and speaking to students individually, many of them were not church-goers and formal religion did not feature high on their agenda or that of their families. However, the team took this on board and found ways of making it normal to think and speak of God, spirituality, what they believed and what they were exploring. Some of the small group work, and the meditation I experienced, gently encouraged them to believe that God loved them unconditionally and that if they only looked they would find God already within them.

A very practical and tangible experience of social (in)justice was offered in a role play offered to the whole group. Each one was asked to take on a particular role of a person described on a small card they were given. By a series of instructions and directions the group soon demonstrated the gulf that exists in our society between the rich and the poor, the privileged and the ignored, the influential and those with no power to effect change. The physical "mapping" of these divisions emphasised their reality; each was then invited to consider what response to make to these injustices and to share their suggestions.

The students were divided into three groups to prepare the final para-liturgy and the work was done in such a way that each group's contribution was a surprise for the others. Students were actively involved in singing, dance, drama, sharing, laughter, the exchange of friendship bracelets (which one group had made during their preparation). It was a very tangible expression of the day and their increased friendship together. The chapel was attractively arranged with a central motif, candles and dimmed lighting.

Before they departed, the students were asked to fill out a detailed retreat evaluation form, which the team assured them would be used to help improve and develop the retreat programme.

The emphasis of the day was on the quality of relationships in our lives, and the team tried to model the nature of these relationships. I felt they were very much at home with the students and the students with them. The group was "top drawer" as far as their behaviour and response were concerned, but this hid a real need for the spiritual in their lives to become overt; many were spiritual but didn't know it, and the way the team presented this to them was readily accepted. The other half of the year group from Sacred Heart will be coming on Monday 27th. The school is for-

tunate to be able to have the chance to provide such a coherent experience for all their Transition Year students.

This last aspect highlighted a key response to another of the Trustees' criteria, namely that there is a need among young people for the Centre. Without the Centre the students would miss out on key spiritual experiences which school does not (and, I feel, cannot) offer them. They are being offered something invaluable for themselves and for their future children. (Many of them have no experience of formal religion e.g. Mass, from their parents, and by implication little informal either except for weddings, funerals and Christmas - on their own admission). The centre offered them a chance to see where God figured in their lives (and what kind of God), how they related to God, to other people and to our world.

The team ended with an evaluation meeting themselves, to consider the day and their response to it. I found them honest and open to suggestions with a clear enthusiasm to provide a quality programme and experience for the young people. They affirmed the support they received from the Brothers' community which was expressed by encouragement, practical accommodation, help with maintenance and general good will.

I would like to affirm the Trustees' choice of the team. Derek is an enabling leader, Edel and Marie bring the virtues, insight and sensitivity of the feminine and their being such different persons, John has a prodigious talent for music and for making the spiritual normal, and Michael by his very presence offers affirmation, support and enthusiasm for the project. They are a fine complementary crew.

11. Benildus Pastoral Centre, Kilmacud, Dublin

(Br. Benet Conroy)

I spent Tuesday February 21st at Benildus Pastoral Centre following a retreat offered to a group of 27 students from St Benildus College, Transition Year. Before they arrived the Team spent a period of quiet prayer and reflection in the Oratory.

The retreat was a contrasting experience from Castletown since St Benildus is an all boys school. It was the second visit of this Transition class group, their having come in September at the beginning of their special year.

However, there were a few newcomers to the group and this naturally changed the comfort dynamic in the class, so the team went out of their way to make everyone feel welcome and at home. Each person was acknowledged. Announcements were made gently and clearly and the focus of the day touched upon. Since this was their second visit, the theme was “values” and how these affect our relationships, sense of self and how we live our lives. A gentle brainstorming produced a good handful of ideas: the scene was set. In order to relax them further Ruth and Ciarán organised two active and lively ice-breakers. After these the students were ready to take on whatever was on offer.

Small groups followed; the basis was an opportunity to share, using debating titles as starting points. These covered a range of spiritual, moral and social topics and they elicited thoughtful responses. The students were willing to share personally. I was in the group led by Ruth and she conducted them with an expert touch. She also knew just when to introduce (or invite comment on) things overtly spiritual and God-related. Towards the end of the session they were invited to write a key value in their lives and they responded to this with a will, frequently decorating the statement. I was impressed by their sense of individuality and their freedom and willingness to be so. The morning had been lived in an atmosphere of quiet reflection. I doubt anyone knew they were in the house. Lunch followed.

The afternoon began with a meditation, each led by the team members in their small group room. On this occasion I joined Michèle. The group room was a shade small for the sheer physical bulk of 9 sizeable young men, but Michèle handled them very well, gently quietening them and relaxing them into the guided journey. At one point a few of them got the giggles and were clearly distracting the rest. Michèle dealt with it using gentleness, patience and polite insistence, and quiet and recollection were restored. It was beautifully done. Following the meditation which helped them develop and refine their sense of self, they were asked to create a mandala that expressed this, keeping also the theme of values. Some fine expressions resulted.

The mandalas and their value statements were brought together attractively in a mandala-like arrangement in the Oratory during the final prayer and reflection. During the service each one was invited to say something about their value insights during the day. To their credit, each student shared with the whole group. I think this reflected very well the climate the team had created during the day and the manner in which they had gained the students' confidence. Each team member contributed to the final service through readings, reflection and music. It was a nicely balanced approach. I found this characteristic of the whole day when roles were shared. It was clear also that plenty of thought and planning had gone into the programme.

Before departing, the students were asked to fill in an evaluation form which they did with relish. One asked (out loud) if the group was scheduled to come back again before the end of their Transition Year.

A meeting then followed with the Team (Michèle, Ruth and Brother Ciarán), Margaret (a Manager), Brother Albert O'Driscoll, Brother Francis (Auxiliary Visitor) and Brother Benet.

I found the team lived their ministry in that Lasallian spirit informed what they did, and especially in the way they related to the students and to each other. They showed great care, respect and appreciation. They were aware of the attitude and response of young people to formal religion today and therefore took them "where they are". The students were gently led to encounter God, themselves and others (particularly friends and family). The theme of the day kept them focused on values and how these translated

into life. It encouraged them to explore their relationship with God and the Church, as well as with themselves and their families and friends. It was done creatively and through sharing in small groups. The Team kept them gently on task by relating well to the students, and being politely insistent when necessary. They reaped the rewards of consistent and willing participation - verbal, written and creative. The mandalas and the written value statements clearly expressed the students' individuality and they were willing to share these in the Oratory with everyone. They expressed their thanks enthusiastically, and wanted to return.

Is there a need? The Centre has a waiting list. This speaks volumes. At the same time, I am convinced that the same applies here as at Castletown, namely no school would be able to offer students this quality of spiritual experience or the quality time to reflect and share. They have neither the time, the skills nor the resources within a tight syllabus and curriculum. I believe the kind of experience offered by the Centres should be readily available as a normal part of the curriculum (school mission statements at least imply it and claim a basis on the Gospel) every bit as much as Geography or Drama or History, for example, which take it for granted that experience is part of the education offered.

The Team has many skills and they work well together, sharing responsibilities and ideas. I affirm Michèle's leadership and the contribution of Ruth and Ciarán. I found they related well together, showed a sense of unity and were well tuned to each other.

They are economical in their use of resources and still brought out the creativity of the students and provided attractive décor. They recycle where possible.

The facilities are adequate but not as spacious or numerous as at Castletown. This does limit the numbers that can come to the retreats. It also means that on occasions the group rooms are a shade small. The gathering room is multi-purpose since it functions as the welcome and presentation area, the social room where they take breaks and eat their lunch, and as a group room. This means the décor of the gathering room is probably not as the Team would like it; it has to be able to swap functions quickly. It is also here that the students eat their lunch, and if it is wet where they socialise. This means that the room cannot be set up in advance of the afternoon session which is usually a meditation,

and whoever is using it after lunch has to do a quick sweep to tidy the place.

If it were possible, another largish room which could be used for social time and lunch break would be helpful. It would enable the environment for group work and meditation to be set up in advance, as well as removing food smells and debris from a room used for quiet and recollection.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visits to the Centres, and especially being able to meet the Teams and participate in two quite different retreats. I commend the District for making these places available to young people and for appointing staff who relate warmly and creatively to young people, offering them respect and encouragement. The local communities offer their support, moral and actual, as well as sharing their premises with staff and with students.

12. Young Lasallians on the move: the italian experience

(Claudio Mennini)

The year 2000, the Jubilee year, saw the decisive affirmation of the “morning watchmen”, the young, the main protagonists of the life of the Church in recent years.

We are convinced that it will not be merely a big caravan of colours, songs, slogans, creativity and everything which fits in with youthful enthusiasm; we are convinced that the young Church does not stop at big events. We believe that in “the people of the beatitudes” the Church wishes to reflect its more human, more sympathetic, more missionary face.

The Young Lasallians live their own vocations searching for the face of God among the wounds of the deprived. The defense of the *Rights of the Child* is the mystique which makes the Lasallian mission prophetic: giving back dignity to whoever has had it taken from him or her, by means of the Word, the identity, the face. As Christians we believe that God became man, with a face that we still contemplate today and for this reason we cannot accept that this face should be deprived of its beauty and its dignity among the youngest of our brothers.

The necessity of forming ourselves into a Movement was born from the experience of community, a genuine rediscovery of Christian sharing and the vital sap for the Lasallian charism. In 2002 the Young Lasallian Movement was born without official ceremonies. Some friends, accompanied by two Brothers, decided to unite their own time and their own duties according to **service**, to live their own mission in the company of men, above all the deprived; in **fraternity**, in order to share their own path in communion with the Brothers and with the faith and to discover the face of Christ in that of their youngest brothers.

Every big road begins with small but decisive steps. We can recount this journey through the fundamental themes around which, year by year, the Movement has built its own axis.

The first national congress took place in Rome at the Mother House of the Brothers, where the following three also took place. The youngest especially were invited to participate, the highest percentage being aimed at students in the first years of senior school. The audience did not let itself be scared by the title of the meeting: *The Gospel and Globalization*. Each young Lasallian was helped to re-read the present-day world by means of the light of the Gospel and at the same time to discover the presence of God in the 'wounded' of the world. This was an unusual beginning which, more than giving an identity, seemed to pick out points of reference. In reality, each young person was pushed towards a maturing of a common awareness of a radical and conscious belonging to the world, by forcing himself beyond his own private world to become passionate about the shared history of humanity.

We can say that, from the beginning, the Italian young Lasallian experience has been a continuous attempt to "pass beyond", an overcoming of the oneness of one's own anthropological perspective, in the discovery of the existence of otherness and therefore of the Other. Becoming passionate about the idea that God takes refuge in places which are uncommon, marginalized, on the periphery, "outside the walls of the city".

The second and third National Congresses were definitely an attempt at feedback, at an introspective look, even if still unilateral, at the Movement itself. In 2003 it reflected on the theme *Inside a story*: the wish of young Lasallians to feel themselves as part of a common story, which already someone had begun to call by its name: "charism". The Lasallian awareness presents itself as a vocation towards putting oneself "in situations" in regard to things which seem not to concern us because they are found outside 'our house'. In 2004 there was a more "technical" flavour with the title: *Under Construction*. After having thrown more light on our own discernment as young people, but above all as Lasallians, we were laying the foundations for the concrete construction of the Movement, with the signing of the Constitution Document, the founding document, for now, of the Movement. The Document reached this Congress after a long period of work, drawn up in the first place by the young persons themselves. We were trying to express briefly not identity but the principles which held united together all the persons who would add their signatures to this

document. This Congress was also the occasion of the formation of the first National Council of the Young Lasallian Movement, with a mandate of two years and made up of representatives of the Italian groups which were beginning to dream up for the Movement a future with great prospects.

2005 was the year of the World Youth Days in Cologne, in which the Church had invited the young people to follow in the footsteps of the Magi, the searchers for and adorers of the one God. For this reason the 3rd National Convention was entitled *Stars like You* where the metaphor of the star accompanied the Italian Young Lasallians in greatly deepening their own duty on the *Rights of the Child*. Already in the message to the Young Lasallians of Europe, in Poland, the Superior General had underlined the trust which the Lasallian world was nourishing in them through their duty in the defense of the rights of the child; a phrase used by Br. Álvaro has remained since then indelibly marked in the hearts of all Lasallians: **children are our founders**, a few words which unsettle by their simplicity and at the same time by their revolutionary force.

For that reason 2005 was the year in which the Movement made a start on the project "**Children and rights**" an interactive journey which illustrates the matrix of the commitment of the Young Lasallians: the defense of the rights of the child through education. The exhibition first appeared at the National Eucharistic Congress at Bari and for a year and a half has been moving through the length and breadth of Italy in the Brothers' communities. 2005 was also the year of the beginning of the youth experience of **Neighbourhood 'Afterschools'**, the concrete answer which the Italian Young Lasallian Movement wished to give to the problems of child poverty in the big cities. After the example of Milan and Turin where these 'afterschools' have existed for over 25 years, Naples, Catania and Rome, where three have been started, have undertaken this adventure in the search for the face of Christ on the fringes of the urban sitting-rooms.

The 2006 Convention was born, therefore, in an atmosphere which was certainly different from that of the preceding years. Contact with real poverty, the radical choices of many young people of dedicating their own time to the marginalized, the confrontation with the Gospel as the fundamental pre-requisite for the

journey, have brought to light a sharing which is more open and attentive to a more coherent updating of the charism of the Founder. All this against a background of reflection on the demands of “fare casa” (making a home) today. For the future, the Movement entrusts itself to the Word of God. A group of Italian Young Lasallians has decided to outline the prospects for the future in a text which, perhaps, speaks in a clearer manner to the sensitivity of each Lasallian educator: *the healing of the deaf-mute* (Mk.7, 31-37). At the end of the cycle of Lectio meetings, we will ‘write the icon’ which represents the Movement’s path for 2007.

Like Jesus, who put himself on the fringes of the city, far from everyone, to give back the Word to those from whom it had been taken, each Young Lasallian in this mission finds his own call to give back dignity to humans, to give back a face to the invisible God, to raise his eyes to heaven and discover his own openness to the action of the Spirit, but above all, to carry out each day the infinite gesture of Creation, to make everything *beautiful*, so that Christianity may be truly a salvational experience of beauty.

Live Jesus in our hearts. For ever.

13. The pastoral ministry of lasallian students (Portoalegre)

(Br. Mauricio Perondi)

One of the privileged means of working with adolescents and young people in our schools is by means of **youth groups**. They are spaces for growing and maturing in a personal and community perspective.

The principal **objective** of the youth groups is to **awaken and form leaders** starting from the following perspectives: growing in faith, community living, educational activities with the poor, the role of young people, and drawing up a life program.

In our Province the **name** of this youth organization is the Pastoral Ministry of Lasallian Students. This is the name we give it because of the participation that we have in terms of the organization of the overall Pastoral Ministry outreach of the Church in Brazil, which is called the Pastoral Ministry of Brazilian youth.⁹ One of the pastoral ministry activities is that of the Pastoral Ministry of Student Youth and we are part of that activity.

The **methodology and pedagogy** used by the Pastoral Ministry of Brazilian Youth, along with Lasallian practices frame the way we work. The method used is that of Seeing – Acting – Reviewing – Celebrating. This methodology provides for the maturity and the role of persons involved starting from a liberating process, one that helps to overcome the fragmentation

⁹ The PJB (Pastoral Ministry of Brazilian Youth) involves activities organized for young people in the Church, along with their pastors and communities, to take an in-depth look at living their faith and evangelizing other young people, for the purpose of transforming them into “new” men and women and agents in building a New Society, guided by Gospel criteria. These are global activities, coordinated by the Church in the midst of the young, animated by General Directives of the Evangelizing Activities of the Church in Brazil. It is made up of Youth Pastoral Ministry (PJ), the Pastoral Ministry of Student Youth (PJE), the Pastoral Ministry of Popular Media (PJM), and the Pastoral Ministry of Rural Youth (PJR). The PJB is an integral and official activity of the Church in Brazil as represented on the National Bishops’ Conference of Brazil (CNBB).

between faith and life. It is believed that this method is not just a practical instrument, but that it constitutes a lifestyle and a way of acting in the world.

All of this helps us to promote a process of **integrated formation** that attends to all of life's dimensions for the young student: personalization, integration, sexuality, critical and political awareness, spirituality, technical ability, and the issue of vocation. This process favors student awareness as regards his or her potential in transforming the reality in which they live; a strengthening of friendships and deepening of relationships; helping the young draw up their own life plan.¹⁰

One of the principal dynamics in the PJEL process is the Provincial Youth Team, which we will now describe.

The Provincial youth team

To articulate and energize the process of the Lasallian youth groups a formation and articulation section was established so that the group leaders could collect their projects, desires, and dreams. It is this articulation and formation section that we call the Provincial Youth Team (EPJ) and it plays a fundamental role in the entire PJEL process.

3.1 A short history.

The Provincial Youth Team emerged in the Province in view of some needs in the 1990s. Among these needs was that of systematic accompaniment, on the part of advisors, for the process of education in the faith for groups of Lasallian youth, starting from the exercise of the roles of students in Lasallian educational communities.

What we had on the provincial level were meetings with leaders, retreats and meetings with youth group coordinators and formation for Pastoral ministry personnel. The creation of a regular space for the organization of youth groups where the young student could play a leadership role was the challenge to be embraced and built upon.

¹⁰ Based on the Handbook of the Pastoral Ministry of Young Students, page 3.

3.2 Objectives.

The objectives were written jointly by youth representatives and advisors of the Lasallian educational communities. They are:

- 1. To share and exchange experiences between Lasallian youth groups, starting from community experience.*
- 2. To strengthen integral and continuing formation of leaders, especially among the poor, seeking their active participation in society.*
- 3. To articulate and energize the Pastoral Ministry of Lasallian Student Youth, with each young representative as the link between educational communities and the Lasallian Province of Porto Alegre.*
- 4. To cultivate Lasallian Spirituality as appropriate for the young.*

3.3 Representation.

The election of representatives who participate in the Provincial Youth Team is done by a selection process in the group itself, where criteria have been set up among students themselves. Those criteria are set up based on the attributes set up by the EPJ. The young person selected is not always the group coordinator as we work under the assumption that we need to involve a good number of leaders in formation.

The young representative is on the Provincial Youth Team for a period of two years and he or she can continue for one more year to work in formation for leadership ministry in his or her own group. This continuance is done by dialoguing with the person, the advisors in charge of the EPJ, along with the group advisor of the young person's group of origin. Kept in mind during this process is the track record of the young person over the course of his or her two years on the EPJ.

3.4 Content – The Idea of Processes.

Some of the content that we sense is important to be worked on among the representatives and which have generated processes are: The dynamics of insertion of new participants in the EPJ process; sharing and reality of the youth groups; identity and mission of the EPJ; Lasallian identity and Lasallian presence in the world; RODA: reflection, prayer, play, action; the memory of the Pastoral Ministry of Lasallian Students and their activities in the

overall pastoral ministry program of the CNBB; systemization of the processes of faith education in view of building a formative life journey for the PJEL; a study of the processes of integral formation; self-awareness; personal and family history; ecclesiology; a prayerful reading of the Bible; building a life program; guidelines for action; a laboratory of youth group meetings; a week on citizenship; work methodologies with adolescents; a study on the reality of adolescents and young people to be done in the youth groups; a study on the culture of communication means and young people; the rights of children and adolescents; human rights; politics; social inclusion; education; a presentation and discussion on the research of the citizenship Institute: Brazilian, the week of the student; Lasallian youth: faith, fraternity, and service.

3.5 Outcomes achieved.

- a) Living together and what it means to be a Lasallian youth and the experience of what it means to be and to form a community.
- b) Greater articulation between youth groups and the Province, participation in overall Pastoral Ministry groups, how to energize Pastoral Ministry.
- c) Analysis of the reality of the groups in order to unleash a formative process, on the group level and on the level of representatives among Lasallian leaders.
- d) Representative adolescents and young people in the schools, developing many youth groups, greater quality in action planning, along with advisors, especially as regards formation processes.
- e) Systemization and study on educational teaching practices for faith education, as lived out by groups of young people, starting from the socialization of reality of representative leaders of each Lasallian educational community.
- f) Propagation of and understanding the scope of the Lasallian mission in Brazil and in the world.
- g) The content studied is brought to the groups in schools, which makes them even more broad.
- h) Drawing up an outline of the life program, with the leaders.
- l) Mobilizing students in the school with a view to greater clarity about what integral formation is and thereby

demanding greater quality of action, as well as those who accompany them.

- j) Having a week for citizenship and a week of the student and a national youth day in different Lasallian schools, taking up the proposal of the Pastoral Ministry programs of the youth of Brazil (PJB).
- k) Coordination of the Encounter Process of Lasallian Youth (annual meeting of all the groups of young people and financing preparation work, extraordinary meetings of planning and execution).
- l) Drawing up, planning and coordinating the Youth Mission, to be carried out as a constituent part of the formation process of this group of leaders.

3.6 Advisors.

The Provincial Youth Team is accompanied by a team of advisors. The main objective is to develop accompaniment for the group process, as well as personalized formation of each one of the young people in the group.

14. Pastoral care of Lasallian youth. Youth in quest of transcendence (Lasallian province of Sao Paulo, Brazil)

(Br. Roque Amorim)

Introduction.

In all the Educational Communities in the Lasallian Province of Sao Paulo, there exists what we call “Youth Groups” which form part of the Pastoral Care of Lasallian Youth (PAJULA). Each group meets every week for times of human and Christian education and to prepare apostolic activities. These training meetings are prepared and directed by the young Lasallians themselves, with the help of those walking with them and offering assistance, who are called Assessors

Groups of 15 to 25, sometimes even 50 members, are made up of adolescent students, from the age of 13-14, and also of young former students who have already been members of PAJULA and who subsequently take on the functions of Junior Assessors; likewise there are some young Brothers and a few teachers of Religion or some other speciality.

Periodically, the Province provides for the Assessors, Senior and Junior, a “training course for PAJULA Assessors”, and even offers the possibility of participating in a “Lasallian Formation Course”, organised in three stages, and which is open to Brothers, teachers, persons in positions of responsibility, volunteers and the *animators* of the Province.

The Province has a reference document, the “Plan for Juvenile Pastoral Care and the Pastoral Care of Vocations”, which is the foundation for PAJULA and puts forward practical directions for its organisation and its functioning

Provincial PAJULA meeting.

Every year, the Provincial PAJULA Meeting takes place. It gathers

together representatives from all the Educational communities in the Province and a few persons, invitees, from the Province of Porto Alegre, making up a group of nearly 150 young people.

This Provincial Meeting is prepared by the Pastoral Sector of the Province (SEP), which is composed of former students, teachers and Brothers. The general objective of this meeting is, besides strengthening the bonds of fraternity, to promote, in a more or less intense manner, the integral formation of the young Lasallian. The themes for reflection and the workshops include content ranging from the ethics of human relationships to the spirituality of the young Lasallian even to the political and vocational commitment of the young. For 2006, the theme chosen by SEP revolves around affectivity and sexuality in building up the personality and the plan of life and mission of the young person. The themes will be focussed by PAJULA Assessors and invited experts.

Over the last three years, the "Common Project" has been introduced into the PAJULA dynamic; and, as a consequence, into the Juvenile Groups. This project constitutes, in reality, an activity for the educational service of the poor. During the Annual Meeting, the young people have a segment during which they decide what kind of service they will give to those most in need, and to which social group.

The Annual PAJULA Assembly unfolds in three steps:

In the first, information is presented on the work done since the previous Assembly.

Then, there is discussion on the exposition, and especially, on new involvements or the continuation of some actions which seem worth the trouble of maintaining.

Finally, the young people decide, by vote, on the "Common Project" for everybody, until the following Assembly.

Since the beginning of the "Common Project", they have worked with numerous needy children in different situations each year. Thus, for example, in 2005, the young people worked with children in after-school child-minding facilities or in refuges. In 2006, they gave their attention to children in after-school facilities or in schools for the needy. This attention includes food support, recreational activities (games, theatre, story-telling...), teaching reading, etc... Each group enjoys the benefit of direction by some

School professional in preparing the activities they are to carry out with the children. All PAJULA groups perform the same service, weekly or each fortnight, according to the circumstances they are dealing with.

Lasallian Youth Mission.

Another formative activity and a service of great importance, carried out by the PAJULA youths and assessors is the “Lasallian Youth Mission”. It is carried out each year during the holidays and volunteer youths, teachers and young Brothers take part. These activities develop in the very poor regions in the north-east of Brazil. Each year one or two representatives of each PAJULA group take part and, as far as possible, they cover their own expenses. Certain journeys to the site of the Mission take from thirty to fifty hours of bus travel or some two hours by aircraft plus a long bus ride to the interior.

This Mission is prepared for throughout a whole semester and is part of the training process of the young leader. To accomplish this, use is made of participative and creative group teaching, supported by meetings or they have to be present at other virtual meetings, reading documents, pooling suggestions, working out plans to be carried out with the children, youths and adults... through celebrations, visits to needy families, radio programmes and various training and recreational activities, with the children, adolescents and youths. The length of the Youth Mission is generally between a week and ten days.

Those taking part in the Mission are chosen from among those who volunteer, and they are counselled and accompanied by the assessors of their own Group.

PAJULA in the overall School group.

These formation activities, although carried out exclusively outside the school atmosphere and the training provided by the subjects taught, have helped the youths in PAJULA to be transforming agents in the Educational Community itself. And they are so, not only because they are close to the genuine purpose of the Lasallian school, but, above all, because they succeed in irradiating others with a fresh vision of the reality and the social involvement they are living. This witness of the young missionaries arous-

es lively interest among the colleagues and teachers, and these manage to discover in it the very clear characteristics of the Lasallian Charism and of youth involved in building a different and possible world.

It is noticed, in general, that PAJULA youths are likewise among the most loyal to the student movement in their school and are bridges for dialogue between the administration group of the college and the other students.

In each school, those who take part in PAJULA have a notice board to advertise their activities and also to display their reflections. Thus, each month, besides photos of what they have done, the educational community is enriched by short articles on some topic connected with the life of the school, the town or even the country. This wall-mounted board is called their "Communication Centre" and, in each group, two youths are directly responsible for this task. It is also youths who take on the implementation, design and updating of the PAJULA website: www.pajula.com.br

The PAJULA experience has shown that youths, when they are inspired and supported in their search for an ideal transcending the self and when they put into practice what they have reflected on, are susceptible to human and Christian values and to the suggestion to follow Jesus Christ. Within the Educational Community, they are the first ones, and spontaneously, to become interested in formative activities and the welfare work flowing from them. And the interest is still greater when they can become involved in the process and feel duly supported by the witness and action of adults involved in building the Civilisation of Love.

15. Inter-religious dialogue - integral to our pastoral programme?

(Br. John D'Cruz)

Increasingly, it is becoming clear that both in our formal school programmes and in our non-formal educational set-ups all over the world, we are getting more and more multi-racial and multi-religious students. And in giving a holistic education we have to create pastoral programmes that help our students to consider spiritual development as an essential element in their lives. In this short article, I would like to share some ways of making inter-religious dialogue possible within our pastoral programmes especially in an Asian context in general, and Malaysia in particular.

Vatican II offered us Catholics in Asia, and particularly, members of religious congregations, a wonderful way forward in terms of integration with people of other religions. Most of us active Religious work in environments in which Christianity is a very small minority. Many of us, in fact, feel very uncomfortable trying to evangelise non-Christians who seem to live meaningful, devout and exemplary lives.

The Declaration on Non-Christian Religions made it quite clear that all people comprise a single common unity fully engaged in various ways to find answers to the profound riddles of human existence. Further, in order to understand even the context of the basic responses of religions to these questions, we are encouraged to expose ourselves to each religion as a whole, and understand that each religion is an expression of a collective response to the total human situation.

However, the Church also points out that such an understanding cannot be based solely on a comparison of ideas, by detaching theories or doctrines of thought and action from the living experience that has given rise to them. We are urged to move away from a mere comparison of theoretical matters and move forward to new forms of dialogue that allow us to really encounter those of other religions and live and learn from each other.

The Asian Bishops studied this question more thoroughly, and claimed that the Church is not only:

- a. In serious **theological dialogue** with other religions, but also:
- b. in a constant **dialogue of life** with them, since we often live next to each other and meet each other in various daily circumstances that help us observe and learn from, and accept each other;
- c. in working together – **dialogue of deeds** – on various projects organized by one group or another or by an Non-Government Organization that has no real religious affiliation;
- d. through the coming together of individuals from both sides in a spirit of friendship and mutual learning through a **dialogue of sharing spiritual life and practices**.

This ongoing process is given great importance by the Bishops when they suggest that Christian existence is constitutively dialogical, and they go even further to state that the Church is called to be a community of dialogue and that this dialogical model is in fact, a new way of being Church. It would seem, then, that ongoing dialogue between members of the Church and those of other religions in the four different ways enunciated above, can be an integral part of our pastoral programmes as a meaningful extension of the Church's move towards greater inter-religious dialogue.

Against the background of my experience of pastoral work in Asia in general, and in Malaysia in particular, let me share a few ways in which 'inter-religious dialogue' as explained by the Asian Bishops can take place.

General Openness in Admissions.

In general, we have been very open to all children in our schools. From very early, the Government realized that we were intent on giving good education with an emphasis on character-formation rather than on evangelization and conversions. This has been true not only in the recruitment of teachers, but also in accepting the non-Christian teachers sent to our schools by the Government. Also, more recently, it has been the practice of the Government to send so-called 'weak or troublesome teachers' to our schools. Even though we have grumbled, especially when teachers trained in the Lasallian spirit have been transferred away from our schools, we have always been open to teachers sent to us.

Openness to Government Policy.

In particular, we have taught our own religion “outside school hours” (at great inconvenience to our non-Muslim students), we have allowed the building of a ‘surau’ (prayer-room) within the school premises, allowed Muslim teachers and students to go for prayer at the exact times (even if they coincided with regular lessons), not to put examinations during their regular prayer hours, not to invite Muslims to Christian open sessions. It would seem that contrary to the time when we enjoyed great freedom in our schools under the British, we begin to see things “from the other side” and at least to appreciate how the Muslims felt when being in the majority, they were ruled by a minority Christian group.

Respect for the Dignity of Persons as Persons.

This was emphasized in our Lasallian practices from the very beginning, that we respect the dignity of all persons in our schools even if we did not believe in their religions or that we considered our religion to be superior to that of all others. I remember the great feeling of surprise and to a small measure, of shock when it was announced in 1960 in our oldest school, St. Xavier’s Institution, Penang, that the Head Prefect of the school would be a Muslim. And I remember well, his tribute to the work of the Brothers on the feast day of St. La Salle. While those of other faiths might have had some problems accepting “Saint Francis Xavier” or “Saint La Salle”, they had great admiration for Lasallians as ‘good educators’ and as ‘persons of integrity’.

Celebration of Religious Feast days.

All important religious feast days are recognized by the Government, and it has always been customary to celebrate these days with some inter-cultural event within the school, and visits to each other’s houses for ‘open day’ feasting. I remember, in particular, on one occasion, visiting a Chinese teacher on Chinese New Year day, and finding that while I was with him, his wife and children at the table, we were served by none other than his second wife, a Muslim, and her children who also lived in the same house. It was a true example of typical Malaysian celebration of a feast day.

Moral Education in a wider sense.

Even though we are not allowed to teach Religion as such, we have had Scripture as an exam subject and Moral Education as a regular feature in the timetable. And the latter includes such topics as: making good choices, appreciating common values, sharing of spiritual experiences, development of conscience, and in some cases, a study of the main religions. In connection with these, there is the sharing of stories and legends from the various religious traditions in the same vein as Anthony de Mello's collection of stories in "The Song of the Bird" and "The Prayer of the Frog". Thus, all students get a feel of the essences and essentials of all religions and cultures which are their response to the problems and difficulties of the world.

Staff Development Programmes.

Many attempts have been made to foster a community spirit among the members of the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and among our Headmasters who are not all Christians. Staff development programmes are directed towards the building up of a 'learning community' among the teachers, parents, past pupils and students irrespective of race, religion or culture. Often, these are centred on studying together the values that we want to promote in our students, values that are common to all religions and cultures. I have personally conducted sessions where there were serious attempts to discover through sharing, certain values that we could agree upon as the basis of our educational programme. Definitely, this is one area of ongoing dialogue regarding our historical, cultural and religious roots. Moreover, this is also a way of building up a truly civic-minded society capable of meaningful participative democracy in spite of differences in race and religion and a Government dominated by one religion.

Projects based on Common Values.

This is one area where the Church's Social Teachings are accepted, and we are developing a pastorally-inclined methodology among the students and teachers: SEE-JUDGE-ACT. Often, students on leadership courses are encouraged to 'see' for themselves a social problematic situation (e.g. exposure to the situation of poverty among the different races) through exposure-immersion for a few days. Then, they are helped to analyse the situation

with the help of suitable tools, and to discover the root causes of the problem. Then, with the help of input from the various religious traditions the participants are helped to see the values emphasized in these religions. Invariably, the participants begin to understand the call for justice, peace and love among all people and with these common values, it is wonderful to see the different religions planning and working together in the 'dialogue of deeds'.

New Initiatives in Education.

It is also meaningful to see Lasallian Educational Communities being built around Educational projects in favour of the poor other than our schools. Again, like the schools, we are building these new ventures around the Lasallian core of Brothers, teachers, past pupils and parents from all religions and cultures, and helping the Malaysian public realize that creative forms of development and education are within their hands if only they will work from within a common spirituality based on educational service of the poor and done in "association" with those who are sustained by a spirit of faith in God and in human beings.

Negotiation with the Government.

One form of inter-cultural and inter-religious movement that is taking place in more recent times is that all Catholic educational institutions are coming together to negotiate as a common body of Catholic citizens for the good of education in this country and for the rights of all to a spiritual education. And further, all Christian bodies are coming together in another single group to talk with the mainly Islamic-government and ask for support and cooperation for the betterment of education. It would seem that we, Christians and Malaysian citizens need to take the initiative to dialogue with the essentially Muslim Government and help them see the reality of occasional religious intolerance and ask for a greater openness to the spiritual needs of others.

Formation for Spirituality rather than Religion.

In our formation programmes both for teachers and students, there seems to be a slow but definite movement towards encouraging the growth of a deep spiritual life rather than on a very authority-centred, institutionalized practice of religion. In particular, there

is a stress on the need for interiority in their lives, especially through:

- the need for solitude, silence and reflection on a personal level: this includes the practice of silence and meditation (even by leaders of other religions) to help students become familiar with the spiritual world which is beyond the man-made material world, beyond the world of Nature, beyond the world of relationships between people, to a world where basic human values form the basis of all life and activity;
- the power of prayer: sometimes, a Day of Prayer is encouraged (especially at the beginning of the school year, or before the exams, or at some important event) during which leaders of the various religions are invited to the school to hold prayer sessions at various locations in the school, before coming together to pray for various intentions.

The witness of a true Lasallian educator.

It seems to me that it is here that there is a need to move away from the traditional understanding of a Lasallian educator as one of “a Christian missionary, a scholar, an educator” to that of one who is truly involved in the “human and spiritual education of youth, especially the poor”. In this inter-religious world, we are called to be witnesses to the Spirit of the Founder:

- a spirit of Faith – that believes in the building of God’s Kingdom of justice, peace and love, and in the basic dignity of all people as people who are all endowed with the power to have “life, and have it to the full”.
- a spirit of Community – that works in “association” with people of all cultures and religions for the common good of all people, a true unity in diversity through meaningful dialogue at all levels;
- a spirit of Service – that encourages all people who work with us to bring life to all through educational service, especially to the poor and marginalized of society rather than focus on academic studies and preparation for only an economically viable career.

Sharing personal experiences.

In a particular way, I have come to see that in running pastoral programmes, especially for teachers, if we respond concretely to their 'expectations' and maintain a good **relationship** with the participants, sooner or later, they will feel free enough to move to a more personal level and ask you **questions** regarding the values you profess. It is at this juncture, pastoral programmes tend towards the more serious topics of one's inner life. And if one shares one's spiritual/faith experiences and life-values, there will occur moments of silence. And allowing the **silence** to 'reign' tends to encourage people of different faiths to share a bit more comfortably what they believe, and be open enough to listen to what others share about their inner life.

Conclusion.

The best of what it means to be a full human being is discovered not in confrontation and opposition but in a spirit of listening, of comfortableness and of harmony. It is in such an atmosphere that we can also share the Gospel. Indeed, there is much time, space and opportunity for us to live Lasallian life to the full in our mission of 'human and spiritual education' through meaningful pastoral programmes.

16. Everyday Friendship

(Br. Jean-Claude Hérault)

In Middle-East society, the presence of a multitude of minorities can be looked upon as an opportunity for mutual enrichment, but also as a source of constant conflicts. And undoubtedly, the latter situation is attempting to dominate at the present time. For their voice to be heard, to exist, it seems to some that the most effective way is opposition, exclusion, ignorance, excessive strengthening of distinctive identities and finally violence in all its forms. In such a context, Lasallian works, established in the region for decades, offer a quite different way, more difficult for sure, but more reliable in the long run. They have great usefulness by reason of the space for openness, dialogue and calm they offer to young people and adults. By tireless, daily practice, they sow in the hearts of people the seeds essential for setting up a society which is tolerant and open to others.

The Lasallian presence appeared in the middle of the 19th century, first of all in Turkey then in Egypt before expanding into other neighbouring countries: Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Lebanon. Vocations, plentiful in those days, favoured the creation and growth of institutions, some small, others more imposing, but always careful to serve the young without any discrimination. Right from their origins up to the present time, they have always cultivated the practice of dialogue and respect, without discrimination against any community. They have tried to be welcoming to all whatever their religious or social adherence and offer each one the respect that is his due as well as the possibility of being involved in listening to, discovering and serving others. All the educational and pedagogical initiatives presented accommodated this point of view.

One characteristic of Lasallian establishments in the Near-East is the co-existence of all religions and all rites: Christians (Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant), Muslims (Sunni, Shiite and Druze) and Jews (devout or from the diaspora). All these young people, left in our care by parents who recognise the quality of the education

provided, grow up together throughout their school course spanning several years. During this period, everything is done to enable brotherhood to develop.

In Turkey, a general mobilisation of teachers, students and parents enabled a primary school to be built in a village devastated by the 1999 earthquake. Bonds were forged on that occasion and still persist beyond the event. A hunger for solidarity and awareness of others, whoever they are, has been evident since then, leading to other initiatives, more modest it is true, but indicative of the spirit of openness and tolerance instilled from that time: sponsorship of classes, making places available for street kids and programmes for technical education for girls excluded from the ordinary school system.

In Lebanon, the month of Ramadan is the occasion for teachers and students to have inter-community meetings, within the school or with young people from Islamic establishments. Sharing food and joy gives birth to acts of friendship. As for the mums, Christian or Muslim, they meet each other again to exchange news and then discover that the preoccupations of the ones are also those of the others. From this flows the possibility of reciprocal visits in this country bloodied by 15 years of civil war, during which closed communities were set up. These mutual visits enable reluctance and fears to be overcome and bring about the discovery of the vitality of the institutions, Muslim or Christian, in which the mums can be involved.

In the Holy Land, the Jaffa establishment brings hope of a fraternal society. Firstly, through the school population in which several races and numerous nationalities mingle. Then, through the varied membership of different religions which each one respects and discovers by means of a religious culture programme offered to all: learning about and discovering the other in his way of invoking God dispels and replaces a kind of ignorance always keen to nourish fears. It is a way of enlightening minds and fighting against stereotypes and discriminatory talk. With regard to the teaching body, it also reflects this mosaic of beliefs. Working together for the same mission takes them beyond political divides and religious affiliations. All the religious feasts proper to each community are respected and often marked with a holiday or a friendly gesture.

In Egypt, the establishments are likewise open to dialogue and the development of dialogue. Besides the inter-community activities favoured during the month of Ramadan, lectures with several speakers (Christian and Muslim) on social topics or everyday life are presented to the students. A prayer centre for Muslim students, exclusively for use within the establishment, is provided. Visits on the occasion of a marriage or death are encouraged. A planned opportunity for openness and social involvement is presented to the students and the teachers. Living together a commitment to serving others, whoever they are, develops solidarity and civic sense and gives rise to strong friendships.

The parents, Christian and non-Christian, recognise the pursuit of excellence in teaching and education that our Christian establishments present. They also recognise that they are places which support human values which they want to inculcate in their children. Thus, all those who spend time in Lasallian establishments receive the foundation on which they will be able to build a pluralist society and in which the other person will not be looked upon as an enemy but as a potential friend opening a treasure which he is sharing.

17. Praying with young people

(Christina Hu is a Lasallian Volunteer working in her 2nd year at the San Miguel School in Providence, Rhode Island)

A visitor may assume that the pale green concrete walls of our assembly room are much like any other. They might assume that the art projects hanging askew and the bulletin boards touting perfect attendance sum up the purpose of those four walls. But our walls at San Miguel School in Providence have been witness to many miracles. The words of prayer may not always be perfected, but the feelings that come from them are unquestionable. Those four pale green walls create a home for prayer in our tiny school in Providence.

San Miguel School in Providence is home to 64 young men in the 5th through 8th grade. All come from challenging circumstances and all are searching for a way to belong. Each young man struggles to find his identity when he is being pulled in so many different directions. Family, school, friends, and society seem to demand different senses of self. San Miguel, for over 13 years, has consistently tried to foster a sense of purpose in all who walk through its doors. For our students, that sense begins with remembering that we are in the holy presence of God.

Our students understand that giving to others is a good deed. However, it is that feeling that others are totally unlike that can sometimes be an obstacle. Where does giving really start? And how can I relay that message to our students? San Miguel has been connected with Rongai Agricultural and Technical School in Kenya for much of our history. During Lent, our students collect coins to raise money for their fellow Lasallian students at Rongai. In the week leading up to Lent, I tried to create a thought process for our boys that began with taking a look at ourselves and recognizing the goodness of God is there. The week would lead them from a deeper awareness of self to awareness of those around them. The spiritual epiphany would come if I could only get them to see themselves in those around them and know that both are embraced by God's love.

I believe that the success of San Miguel, Providence is rooted in the unfailing affirmations given by the faculty and staff on a daily basis. But those affirmations can only spark change when the boys begin to believe them and see themselves as good and loved: I began the week by sharing with them a quote often attributed to Nelson Mandela, prefaced by the sense of self he held on to throughout his 28 years in prison. Nelson Mandela's belief in justice and his willingness to take action is an example to all who are searching for goodness in themselves:

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world.”

Our boys were left with those words as they went through their day.

On Ash Wednesday, I opened prayer by asking if any of the young men had ever done something wrong in their lives. All hands went up, including those of the adults. I continued by asking if any of them had done something wrong and didn't feel like anyone could ever understand. Once again, all hands went up. I told everyone to look around and see the faces of their peers and teachers. Were we really all so different? The truth is, we would all like to believe that we are so different from each other because it is easier than recognizing ourselves in those around us. I explained to them that in the Christian tradition it is okay to ask for forgiveness. Forgiveness is a sign of God's love and a gift we can offer to the world. They continued their day with the knowledge that through forgiveness, they could become stepping-stones to others and God.

We spend most of our lives highlighting our differences when we could be rejoicing in our likeness. Our actions take a toll on all those around us. But even if we can see that the people around us are not so different, how do we reach out to them? On Friday, I left them with the words of a Hopi Elder taken from a Lasallian prayer book,

“This could be a good time!
Push off into the middle of the river,

Keep our eyes open, and our heads above water.
And I say see who is in there with you and celebrate.
At this time in history, we are to take nothing personally,
Least of all ourselves.
For the moment we do,
Our spiritual journey comes to a halt.
The time of the lone wolf is over. Gather yourselves!
All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and
in celebration.
We are the ones we have been waiting for.”

I tried to convey to them the idea that even if we recognize that those around us are more similar than we once thought, the idea means nothing if we do not use the awareness of our togetherness properly. We are so quick to judge, compete, even hate. All of our energy can be used in a positive way. Why not celebrate our togetherness? After all, Jesus lives in our hearts and his love unites us all—that is the reason to celebrate. Our students left morning prayer with the thought that it just might be easier to love than to hate.

As a Lasallian educator, I have the privilege to show our students that their world can be broadened if they are willing to look in the right places. As an adult, I know that self-examination is difficult but necessary. The reality is that young people have not necessarily developed the long view. For prayer that week, the long view became the responsibility we had to ourselves to help fellow Lasallians at Rongai. Our prayers didn't center around the dropping of coins into jars, but the meaning behind that action. We received a deeper understanding of who we are and the meaning of love as we gave to Lasallians at Rongai. I tried to create a process where our students could understand that life is a celebration. It begins in our own hearts when we recognize our goodness, but it should not stop there. We give of ourselves because life should be a celebration for all. This Lent, San Miguel School in Providence will celebrate the goodness in all those who come within our four green walls and the goodness of the students at Rongai Agricultural and Technical School. That is our commitment to our Lasallian brothers and sisters, to our human family, and to ourselves.

18. Pastoral vision as a collaborating priest

(José Miguel de Zavala)

I am a priest (a Religious of the Sacred Hearts) who is collaborating with the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the District of Madrid in Spain. I will try to reply, hopefully with brevity, to a request to write something about My Pastoral Vision with the De La Salle Brothers. You, the readers, will be interested in knowing that I am collaborating with Them, being someone from outside La Salle, but I believe I am sufficiently integrated into their pastoral work.

Personally I have to say that in the years that I have spent collaborating in this work, I have felt myself welcomed and loved and this has helped me to live my Sense of Faith and Commitment, while at the same time it serves me as a break from the work I do as chaplain to a hospital. Of course there are moments of tension, but I believe that they are being solved.

I believe that my work should have Three Fundamental Objectives: 1) Collaboration between different Congregations; 2) Collaboration in the development of respect for all types of persons (at personal, social and religious levels....); 3) Collaboration in transmitting the Christian sense of the Lasallian Centres, helping in the better understanding of the Significance of Religious Celebrations, trying to make them part of the Daily life of persons and showing that they carry with them a Commitment.

In relation to these Objectives I believe that the work of the priest in a La Salle Centre or District, assuming that one is not involved directly in material questions of organization, is to create an environment which makes it possible for those who are involved in these material questions to see that these types of collaboration indicated, are possible.

There are many positive elements in my work: availability, understanding, affection, collaboration, making programs, spontaneity, communication..... Key elements in carrying out my work have

been feeling myself accepted and loved by the Brothers, parents, pupils and those working in pastoral ministry. I am convinced that my work is very well regarded by all these persons. There also exist at times certain negative elements, which I feel sure are being resolved. Those which most affect me personally are lack of communication, lack of programming at concrete times and seeing times of disagreement between those working in pastoral ministry. I believe these are elements that we should be very careful about.

Looking towards the future and taking into account that from my point of view in our society we are becoming very materialistic and we frequently put to one side human and religious aspects, we ought, between us all (the work of the priest can have a lot of influence) to encourage human values between pupils, families, teachers and pastoral workers....I sincerely believe that the Religious element will be valued in the measure that we give meaning to human relations between persons.

What will be fundamental for me will be encouraging every type of activity which helps with human relations. I think the key element in Our Society is to arrive at real communication between persons. In a world in which the means of communication are increasing, I believe that there is a lack of interpersonal communication. I dream of a world in which we persons can communicate to get to really know each other. One serious problem in our society is that we do not know the persons with whom we live and we have no idea of the hopes and problems of the persons who live with us. This happens in families, Congregations, at work and in all types of groups.

Looking towards the future, I would now like to indicate - even if I am repeating some things and if they appear Utopias - some aspects in which, in my opinion, a priest (who is not a member of the De La Salle Order) can collaborate: 1) by giving a vision of a person who is near, cheerful, understanding, available and committed; 2) by encouraging unity between De La Salle Brothers, Pastoral ministers, families and pupils; 3) by helping to make religious celebrations alive with hope, with commitment and with meaning for daily life; 4) by helping the Christians of Our Centres to be capable of accepting persons of other Religions and Cultures.

On the other hand , as a priest, I would ask from the De La Salle Brothers: 1) *Acceptance, affection and understanding*; 2) *Programming* allowing sufficient time for organizing other activities; 3) *Consultation* in those matters in which I have to participate as a priest.

Table of Contents

Presentation	5
1. What the Evangelising Mission is	7
2. Reflecting on the meaning of "Pastoral Care"	13
3. The Lasallian school: what we promise, we live!	19
4. The education offer of the human and faith process	23
5. Lasallian higher education in the USA and its responsibility in preparing religious educators and pastoral ministers	31
6. The Lasallian school in view of religious-cultural pluralism. The experience in CSEULS - Madrid	35
7. Pastoral activity at the youth impact centre	41
8. Pastoral care at the Notre Dame de La Rouge centre	47
9. An overview of Miguel pastoral day centre Downpatrick	51
10. De La Salle Pastoral Centre, Castletown	55
11. Benildus Pastoral Centre, Kilmacud, Dublin	59
12. Young Lasallians on the move: the italian experience	63
13. The pastoral ministry of Lasallian students (Portoalegre)	67
14. Pastoral care of Lasallian youth. Youth in quest of transcendence (Lasallian province of Sao Paulo, Brazil)	73
15. Inter-religious dialogue - integral to our pastoral programme?	77
16. Everyday Friendship	85
17. Praying with young people	89
18. Pastoral vision as a collaborating priest	93