



a publication
by and for
Young Lasallians



You are the *light* of the world (Mt 5:13)

December 2016



Dear Lasallian,

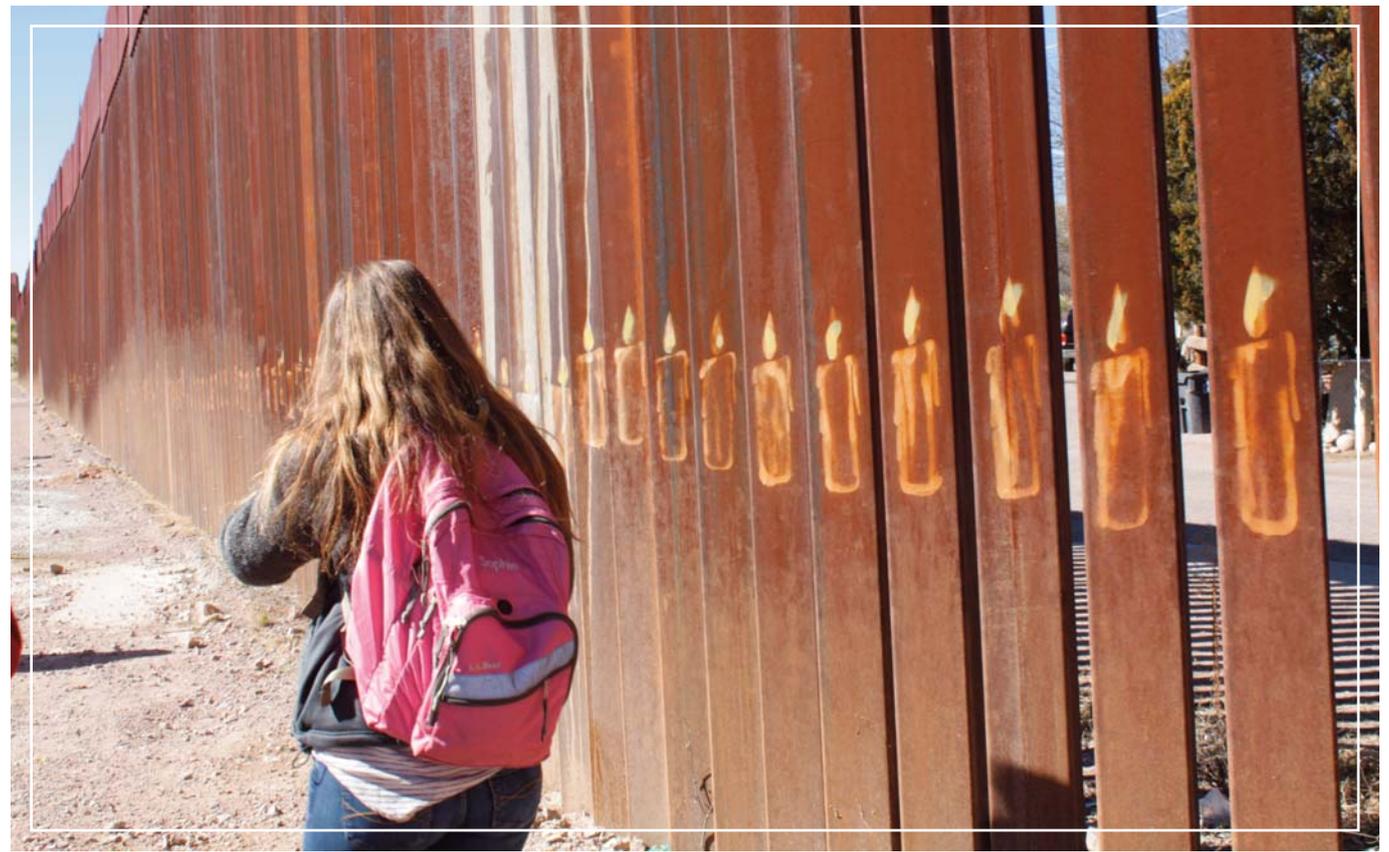
Here is the second of a special series of four issues of your newsletter LUMEN related to the four areas of priority of the Young Lasallians Movement. This issue's theme is "Service with the Poor"

You will find in the next pages a synthesis on the importance of the theme for Young Lasallians today, but also for the founding charism of the Institute. You will then find five articles, one for each Region, on activities or programs of service, volunteering or immersion organized by Young Lasallians. In addition, at the end of each article, some questions will feed your personal reflection or a community discussion. You can use these questions with your students, your colleagues, your

friends, etc. There are also important announcements at the end of this issue that should be shared with all Lasallians.

Have a good reading!

Antoine,
International Coordinator for Young Lasallians



Service with the poor



The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was born in France more than 300 years ago to address the blatant needs of the children of the artisans and the poor, whom didn't have the chance to receive an appropriate education. The situation of the poor and the marginalized is thus the kick-starter of our charism, of which the flame still shines today.

However, as many of our ministries now serve well-off communities and that we simultaneously live in a world where the educational needs of the imperiled youth are as great as before, a world where injustice and inequalities are growing, we

are right to ask ourselves: What does our charism say to us today?

In one of his Meditations, our Founder show us the way: *"Because you are under the obligation to instruct the children of the poor, you must, consequently, cultivate a very special tenderness for them [...] because they are the living images of Jesus Christ"* (Med. 80.3). The experience of the encounter of Jesus in the face of those who are entrusted to our care leads us to think our relationship with them in a way that recognizes their dignity fully.

We therefore speak of service "with" the poor, in order to make explicit the mutual relationship that binds us to the people who are entrusted to our care and the communities in which we are present. We understand that these people often times bring us as much good as we bring to them, and we respect their rightful place in their own stories of salvation. These relationships are thus exempt of any sense of superiority.

By embracing this perspective, we approach those who are entrusted to us with a real care to listen to them, know them and be attentive to their situation and needs. We open our eyes and heart to discern which place God wants for us in their life. To achieve this, we need to go towards them, sit with them, make community with them, eat, pray and live with them.

The Young Lasallians consider that developing this perspective of service and put it into practice in our Lasallian Family is a priority. Through numerous volunteer and immersion programs, thousands of young people each year encounter Jesus Christ through the poor and the marginalized and open their heart to their reality.



Those young people, moved by these very significant experiences, then go on and commit themselves to becoming agents of change in their community, in the Lasallian Family and in the world. They thereby become the next stewards of our Lasallian charism.

El Otro Lado – The Other Side

My hometown Tucson, Arizona is just 71.1 miles from the border of Nogales, Mexico. This trip from my hometown, in the United States, to Mexico, a completely different country, is only an hour. When you think about it, one hour is not very far. Millions of people make the dangerous journey to cross over every year. Often times they cross over without any help, aide or resources. This is one of the many reasons why I decided to get involved with the El Otro Lado program at my school.

This program, El Otro Lado, started at San Miguel High School a few years ago and it is continuing to grow. El Otro Lado invites students from Lasallian schools all over the nation to come to San Miguel to learn and experience the immigration issues right in the environment. During this five day immersion experience, students and advisors visit the Border Patrol office in Nogales, AZ and Operation Streamline in downtown Tucson. The participants hike the trail in the desert that migrants cross in Arivaca, AZ and Green Valley, AZ. On one of the last days, the toughest day to get through, the group travels across the border to Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, to help serve food to migrants in the *comedor* run by the Kino Border Initiative (KBI). The participants have the opportunity to talk and interact with the migrants. Many of their stories are heartbreaking, but yet one is able to still see hope in their eyes.

It was through the program, El Otro Lado, that I began to get more involved with the immigration issue in my community. During the summer, I went on another immersion experience but this time with KBI. There were participants from across the nation. During the program we helped serve at the *comedor* and we also learned more in depth about immigration issues.

I am currently a senior in high school and I continue to participate in the El Otro Lado program at San Miguel, and I am trying to initiate a Kino Teens Club. This would enable us to become more involved with helping the KBI. We would go and help at the *comedor* as well as help fundraise for things that the migrants may need. I hope that this will happen, thanks to my efforts and the efforts of others.

Pilar, student at San Miguel Tucson, Arizona



Question 1: What issues related to immigration deserve attention in your community?

Hope in Malvinas



Right in the center of Argentina is the province of Córdoba, the third most important in the country economically and demographically. Twelve kilometers north-east of its capital is the city of Malvinas Argentinas, which should not be mistaken with the Malvinas Islands, or Falkland Islands, renown for the war with the United Kingdom that took place in 1982.

The rurality of the population and the lack of resources and livings means created in Malvinas a peripheral community whose inhabitants mostly live in poverty with their basic needs unmet. In one part of the city, the increased growth of population and the stagnation of the material life conditions made the situation even worse.



It is in there that in 2001, when the Argentinean crisis was aggravating things a little more, the District of Argentina-Paraguay decided to open a formation community for the postulants. At the same time, the community received the mandate to start the establishment of a new educational ministry. Called Hector Valdivieso School, the ministry aims at accompanying the growth, organization and the human and Christian development of the poor sectors of Malvina Argentinas and the surrounding areas through educational and pastoral processes.

Fifteen years later, 500 kids attend kindergarten and the primary school section. They do not pay any tuition and have also access to the cafeteria, catechesis and lessons of computer science, English, literature and theater. In addition, in order to provide more opportunities for the population to study and work, we opened free programs in Advanced Computer Network Technique and Gerontology. 60 youth and adults will receive an official certification through those courses.

We have also been working with groups of adolescents and youth of the neighborhood ever since we have arrived in Malvinas. This accompaniment originated from the creation of a Youth Center, a place where we propose to them an alternative education that highly values artistic expression, sport, leisure activities and technical formation. It is in this spirit that we also recently opened a Technical Formation Center that 50 youth attend. Moreover, the greatest challenge that we face today is the implementation of a high school technical program, which will open at the beginning of next year.

Teachers and Brothers who contribute to this Lasallian ministry are working every day to increase the efforts of social support and educational and pastoral promotion for the community of Malvinas.

Brother Alejandro Bruni

**Question 2: How can you deepen your involvement in your community?
Are there any specific concrete actions that would benefit your community?**

A new horizon for young people's future



“Nou Horitzó” (New Horizon in Catalan) is a project consisting of flats of emancipation for youth at risk. The “La Salle welcomes” foundation manages five floors of flats in the Valencia-Palma Sector, in Spain, three in Mallorca, two in Paterna, and another one in Benicarló.

Between 10 and 15 young people live on each of those floors, usually referred by childcare centers or having a difficult family situation. Through a process of two to five years, they prepare themselves to integrate the adult world in a normal way. Each youth is

accompanied in this process by an adult mentor. Issues such as personal autonomy, social skills, self-awareness and emotional intelligence are discussed, with the objective of giving them all the tools they will need for a smooth transition into the adult world. To participate in the project, it is mandatory for them to either be studying or working and they all contribute financially and personally to the project. The community aspect is also very important and the youth, as a group, are in charge of the daily chores, such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, etc.

When they first join the project, the youth sign a contract in which they commit themselves to abide by the rules of the flats and take advantage of the opportunities provided by the “La Salle welcomes” foundation. At the same time each one of them drafts a personal project that includes objectives in various areas such as personal and social growth, studies, work or health, and a concrete plan to achieve them. The youth regularly meet with their mentors to discuss their personal progression.

This project is functions thanks to many Lasallian educators who volunteer to dedicate part of their time to accompany the youth and coordinate a project that responds fully to the Lasallian charism and spirituality. It certainly embodies the commitment to justice and solidarity that the Sector of Valencia-Palma is making.

Brother Miguel Angel Sáenz Chavarria



Question 3: What is the most vulnerable population in your community?

Step Up, Step Out



Secondary School students from the Philippines and Singapore came together as a community during the Lasallian Leadership Training Camp (LLTC) 2016 from October 7th to 10th at St. Joseph's Institution, Singapore. The bi-annual program aims to inculcate the Lasallian brand of leadership in student leaders and provide them a framework to guide their actions in their respective co-curricular activities. In addition, the Camp exposed participants to the social realities which the last, lost and least face in Singapore and the Philippines.

Centred on the theme "Step Up, Step Out", the Camp introduced a total of 118 students (101 from Singapore, 17 from the Philippines) to the Leadership Challenge Framework by Kouzes and Posner consisting of the five practices of exemplary leadership. In this context, the different sessions and activities shed light on the life of Saint John Baptist De La Salle and how he stepped out of his comfort zone to confront the realities of his time. While the Organising Team was mostly in charge of running these activities and group discussions, the participants also had the opportunity to serve one

another through designated roles. Staff members and LYNKsters (Volunteers from the Lasallian Youth Network) also played an integral role by facilitating sessions and ensuring that logistical requirements were met.

One activity in particular, called "Journey with a Dream", gave participants a first-hand experience of serving with the poor. They were dispersed to different locations to complete tasks such as distributing food, painting and cleaning houses for elderly who lived in one-room flats. Though some were anxious as it was their first time doing such an activity, their hearts of service and spirit of community ultimately empowered them to embark on this journey. Many participants reflected that this was an eye-opening experience that allowed them to understand the plight of the poor and the varied responses that the elderly had towards their situations. Through their heartfelt sharing, participants came to realize that by serving the poor, they also learned valuable lessons such as being more grateful for what they have. Indeed, the young Lasallian leaders recognized that they had been in service with the poor, an elevated form of service that focuses on building and growing through relationships.



During the Commissioning ceremony, participants were invested by LYNKsters who were present as mentors throughout the camp and presented the Lasallian Leader collar pin, one that symbolises their commitment to serving the last, lost and the least. These students were encouraged to apply the skills and values they have acquired and forward the Lasallian Mission through the spirit of Faith, Service and Community. While

LLTC 2016 may have come to an end, it is only the beginning of their journeys to realizing their potential as leaders who will change the world they live in by stepping up and stepping out.

Ed-Linddi Ong

Question 4 : How can you mobilize other young people to serve with the poor?

The Lasallian Volunteers of Cameroon



We, the Lasallian Volunteers of Cameroon (VLC) have been working in the town of Mbalmayo, in the District of Central Africa, for close to 12 years now. Guided by Saint John Baptist de La Salle and the Brothers of the Christian Schools, our actions are focused on the educational service of the young, especially the neediest. We dedicate our time to them and we support them so that they can learn a profession, integrate themselves in society and know and love God.

We serve at the Saint Mutien-Marie Center and we attend today about 280 youth and 50 adults. The Saint Mutien Marie Center is made up of a college (general and technical education) and a Technical Formation Center for adults. Because the high tuition fees are too high for the poor town of Mbalmayo, it is not easy for young people to have access to education: they are therefore our priority. We also teach them catechesis and we prepare them to the new sacraments. Moreover, we teach them the Christian maxims, since we are very true to our Lasallian values.

The Association of the VLC has over 80 members, associates and aspirants. A good number of the members who are present in our ministries are taking turns for the responsibilities that guarantee the accomplishment of our mission. Some live in the community and others do not. Our community life is paced by the morning and evening prayers and by our commitment to live as a small welcoming Lasallian community. Each member of the association also has a positive impact on the reputation of the association by promoting its values in his or her midst.

We participate in the activities organized by the District of Central Africa, other Lasallian ministries and the Catholic chaplaincy of the Diocesan youth. In addition, during the summer vacations, we receive a group of Spanish Lasallian Volunteers that we accompany together with PROYDE (a Lasallian NGO); they come to live and share the Lasallian Mission through construction work and learning, sharing and having fun with the youth, as well as visits to orphanages and the central jail of Mbalmayo.



Our enthusiasm is great, and our group is still growing and learning. If you are stopping by Cameroon, come visit us! We will welcome you.

Quentin Tago Kue and the Lasallian Volunteers of Cameroon

Question 5 : What initiative, perhaps one that would have you step out of your comfort zone, could you launch to better help your community?

To finish off, here are a few announcements



First, the Young Lasallians now have an Instagram account! The profile is called "Young Lasallians", so follow us and discover photos from youth groups and activities from around the world!

Furthermore, the first edition of the Lasallian Volunteers Celebration Campaign, which aims at celebrating the extraordinary contribution of volunteers to the Lasallian Educational Mission, will be held from December 5th to 10th. December 5th is the International Day of Volunteers, while December 10th is Human Rights Day. We invite you to celebrate in your ministry the great work of your volunteers and to share testimonies and photos on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using the hashtag #LaSalleVol.

The next issue of LUMEN will be published in March 2017, and will focus on the third area of priority of the Young Lasallians Movement: Communications and Networking.

Until then, let's keep in touch!

Live Jesus in our Hearts... Forever!

LASALLIAN VOLUNTEERS CELEBRATION CAMPAIGN



#LASALLEVOL

An invitation from the International Council of Young Lasallians

December 5th - 10th 2016