

Proyecto Adrián Nyel
Adrien Nyel Project
Projet Adrian Nyel

COMMUNITY OF MOLENBEEK

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October 2021



"BEYOND THE BORDERS"

The Lasallian community of Molenbeek would like to thank those who have made it possible to initiate this new response, within the framework of our commitment as a Lasallian Institute and Family to go "beyond borders".

Undoubtedly, the renovation of the house and Covid-19 have conditioned the start of our mission in this new community.

Having overcome these conditioning factors and others of a legal nature, and awaiting the arrival of Br. Yacouba Jacob from Burkina Faso who is working on obtaining his visa, the community has been at work there since the beginning of October of this year.

Allow us to share with you all the most significant aspects of our first month of life.

United in prayer, life and Lasallian mission.

A MONTH OF WALKING TOGETHER



Our community was formed a little over a month ago. During these weeks we have got to know each other, we have shared our work, our dreams, our research, our faith, our joys, our fears and our hopes... We are aware of the commitment we have made, on a personal and community level, to the Lasallian mission, to the Lasallian family, the Church and the Institute and to civil society. By accepting to be part of the Adrien Nyel project, which is part of the "Brothers beyond the borders" (BTB) programme. We now share with you our most significant experiences during this first month of walking together.

125 Years later



It is now 125 years since the Lasallian community of Molenbeek was founded.

La Salle has had in Molenbeek an active and flourishing presence with some educational institutions including the neighbouring Saint John's College, which is still in operation today. For various reasons, the Brothers decided to sell some of these institutions and to close the community.

Grateful for all they did, we are now resuming our presence in the community with new objectives, a new mission, in a new social and religious context, but with the same enthusiasm to share our life in Molenbeek with the people that God will put on our path.



Getting to know each other and getting to know ourselves



Molenbeek, located in the west of Brussels, has 97,979 inhabitants. It is one of the fastest growing neighbourhoods, with 49.82% men and 50.18% women and a population density of 16,331 people per square kilometre, with an average age of 35 years. The vast majority of this population is Muslim.

Unfortunately, the name Molenbeek is known for its links with terrorism. Indeed, the Madrid bombings in 2004, the Brussels Jewish Museum attack in 2014, and the most deadly in Paris in 2015 were prepared in this neighbourhood. However, it is a peaceful place to live amidst the bustle of the streets. It feels like Morocco.

It's about getting to know, little by little, the reality in which we find ourselves, the concerns and needs of the people so that we can respond to them. These are the challenges we face in our mission.

Of course, we also have to get to know each other, we Brothers who come from different cultures, countries, experiences and realities: India, Colombia, Spain, and Burkina Faso.



The richness of the associations

One of the riches of Molenbeek are the social, cultural and solidarity associations that work in the city. Public and private associations, ecclesiastical and secular, all with the common objective of working for the inhabitants of Molenbeek in order to meet their many needs and contribute to their personal and family well-being.

On 5 October, a meeting was held in our community with the heads of several of these associations. It was an opportunity to get to know each other and to make ourselves known, to welcome and to open our doors.

Meeting of the associations



Adult literacy

One of the commitments that the community has taken on as part of its mission is the collaboration with the Catholic association "La Porte Verte", which has been operating since 1975 and which has, among other commitments, a crèche, a soup kitchen, school support and adult literacy, as well as a housing centre.

In the photo, we can see Brother Edwin in his literacy mission.



A garden for all

We are lucky to have a beautiful garden in our house, a new mission space. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the pupils of our school, St. John of Molenbeek, use it systematically to develop their environmental project. Part of this garden will soon be used as an urban garden for the people of the neighbourhood.



DEEPENING

Throughout this month, we have devoted part of our community time to formation in order to get to know each other. For this purpose, we have developed a plan which covers the fundamental aspects of the reality of Belgium at the social, ecclesial and Lasallian level, as well as all that can foster the development of our Personal and Community Project.



History of Belgium

Cécile Lannoy, delegate of Young Lasallians of Belgium, shared some of her time with us to present two important topics: the history of Belgium and the most significant characteristics of its educational system.

Knowing the most important features of the history of the country in which we already live and which, for all of us, was unknown, gives us new points of reference to better understand and appreciate it. Undoubtedly, the knowledge of its educational system will help us to establish the map from which we can better target part of our mission.



Diversity and complementary

On the 21st and 22nd, Brother Paco Chiva, with his characteristic creativity, presented to us the personal and community attitudes necessary to be creative in the mission.

He asked us to be "empty vessels" but receptive to all the new things we receive and to forget the pre-established patterns with which we are used to working. He based these attitudes on the "12 virtues" of today's Lasallians for the new mission.



Consecrated life

On 25 October, Sister Marie-Catherine Pétiau (Sister of the Child Jesus) visited our community. She is the Delegate for Consecrated Life of the Archdiocese of Malines-Brussels. With her, we were able to familiarise ourselves with the reality of consecrated life in Brussels and to deepen its different aspects. Her intervention allowed us to better situate ourselves in the context in which we live and to discover aspects of mutual cooperation between religious.



Insertion

On the 25th and 26th, Brother Enrico Muller, director of the community of Scampia (Naples, Italy), was with us. He shared with us his experience of insertion in Scampia and how, little by little, this project of service to children and young people has been implemented with the collaboration of the Lasallian world, the volunteers and the Christian and religious communities of the area. In talking with him, we discovered the attitudes that have guided him during these 15 years of presence in the neighbourhood.

We are grateful for his simple and close presence, his encouragement and his invitation to live with confidence and patience this new journey that we have just begun.



T E R N A T



The community went to the famous "Lasallian castle of Ternat", headquarters of the Lasallian Delegation of Belgium-North, to share the organisational and operational aspects of our mission with Brother Alberto Gomez, Delegate of the Superior General. Earlier we had the opportunity to discuss with Br. Aidan Kilty the expectations of the Region regarding the Community. We were also able to share with Father Joseph (former parish priest of Ternat) who now lives in the community, and with Brother Jacques d'Huitem (President of the La Salle Foundation of Belgium-North).

SHARING



On 24 October we had a second meeting with the Little Sisters of Jesus (Charles de Foucauld). They have founded a community in 2019 in the neighbourhood, right next to our house. Our two houses are the only two communities of consecrated life in Molenbeek. We took the opportunity for a time of prayer and dinner with them to share our expectations and our future.



We are in contact with our parish of St John the Baptist, which has a large number of faithful of African origin. We would like to participate in the life of the parish and to know its needs. We hope to have a meeting with the priests there in order to begin our collaboration with them.

A TIME OF RETREAT

Rafa Matas who has been explaining the expectations that the Institute has for our community. A fundamental aspect that he pointed out is the importance of the community considered as the source of the mission.

With him, we have also experienced two days of retreat in which we have begun to design our personal and community project.

October has been a time to put in order all the information we have received, all the experiences we have shared, to continue to move forward incorporating other aspects foreseen in this initial plan for the formation and constitution of the community.

Our thanks to the people who are making this possible. Finally, in a special way, to the General Council, to the Conference of Brothers Visitors, to the Delegation and to the La Salle Foundation of North Belgium.

