



Bulletin of the Brothers of the Christian Schools N° 230
Young people and pastoral care

BULLETIN OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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St. John Baptist de La Salle is our inspiration in our teaching and in our care for young people. Let us ask him for the Spirit of Faith and of Zeal to sustain us in our Work. (Marble statue at Spin di Romano, Italy).

Photo on the front cover: We chose this photo because it illustrates so well the simple trust of young people who need help if they are to fulfil themselves fully.

INTRODUCTION

The General Council wished this issue of the Bulletin of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to be entirely devoted to one topic — "Young People and Pastoral Care". We have included, therefore, a number of the more striking examples of this type of work which is currently going on in the Institute. We thought it would be premature to try to draw any conclusions, and so for the time being, we confine ourselves simply to offering the experiences described for your reflection. We are most grateful to the Brothers who contributed articles and to all the Brothers and members of the Lasallian Family who so generously involve themselves in this apostolate which is so urgent and important for the Church.

The Editorial Committee

YOUNG PEOPLE AND PASTORAL CARE

In the last few years, any number of studies have been made of the situation of young people, in particular, here in the West. Most of these studies conclude that there is a feeling of unease, aimlessness and rejection on the part of most young people. Some studies identify a "youth syndrome", and describe symptoms which they consider universal. Others deny the possibility of making valid generalisations.

What is important to stress first and foremost is that you cannot generalise when you talk about young people. There has been a collapse in what we considered to be a commonly shared culture. The youth of today reflect this. They all think, live and plan for the future in a different way. There is no way in which they will all fit into a single category.

Secondly young people feel they are in some way rejected. In our society there is not enough room for everybody, in the sense that there is not enough work for everybody, not enough room for everybody, nowhere to spread one's wings. A lot of young people feel frustrated, feel they serve no purpose, feel they will never be anybody, do anything useful.

A third aspect is one which is a direct consequence of what has just been said, that is, that young people are prevented from trying out powerful new ideas. Young people, by their very nature, tend to try out new ideas, have scant respect for tradition, and try something different. Their feeling of rejection limits their influence on society around them, and stifles the very gifts which are their contribution to society.

There are many people who wonder whether this rather gloomy picture we have painted of the situation of young people today leads them to search for religious values in life, or for a more intense religious experience. Such a reaction could hardly be automatic, nor in any way constitute a general rule.

Youth groups and movements

One of the most interesting things that has happened to young people in recent times is the sud-

den appearance of groups and movements committed to this or that. It is a sign of hope. In Catholic circles this rich variety of committed groups has aroused a lot of attention by their idealism, mutual loyalty and ability to do things that would have seemed impossible before. Some experts have gone so far as to try to categorise these different groups according to trends they think they represent.

One category has been labelled "spiritualist". These are the ones who lay most stress on prayer, reading the Bible, deepening their understanding of the message of Christ and of the teaching of the Church. There are also non-Catholic "spiritualist" groups, but there are fewer of them. A drawback of these groups is that they do not involve themselves in helping others in a practical way politically or socially.

Another category is labelled "secular". They are at the opposite extreme of the first category because their first concern is for social commitment. These are the "volunteer" groups whose impact is undeniable both in a Church context (Caritas, for example) as well as in a social one.

A third category is one that combines the first and the second. Groups in this category seek to give a striking witness by faith and good works to a life lived according to the Gospel. What you think of these groups depends on your point of view. This is all the more likely as there are both very radical and more moderate groups in this category.

A fourth category could be called the "compromise" groups. These groups lay a great stress on bearing witness to Christian values in a variety of social situations without attempting to destroy values already present. The image these groups project is somewhat subtle and is less attractive to young people, at least at first contact.

What we have described above is obviously a very simplified picture. In reality there are many differences which are difficult to reconcile. What should, however, be a source of rejoicing, is this boundless energy which expresses itself in commitment, freedom and solidarity. However, there is reason to worry when so-called Catholic groups find it

impossible to work together. Quarrels prevent any kind of telling witness to a living Church.

And yet, in spite of a few things which are justifiably puzzling, it is undeniable that these various movements fulfil some kind of need felt by young people: they make possible an intensely felt involvement in the Church; they introduce people to modern religious language; they offer a compelling reason to live; they offer a means of comparison between reality and a variety of suggestions; and they offer the possibility of community interaction. All in all, these groups offer a great opportunity for learning and a means of greater involvement in the life of the Church.

The problems of youth (*Interview*)

We recently had the opportunity to put some questions on this topic to Brother Martin Corral, General Councillor of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who for several years was in charge of youth work in Spain and Portugal. He is concerned now with youth work all over the world.

1. What are really the big problems for young people nowadays?

I think that the problems of young people nowadays are those of our age, our society, the Church. In young people one can see more clearly and understand better certain changes that are taking place in the world of adults. Unemployment is one of the problems young people suffer most from nowadays. They study for a career but they lack any kind of motivation because they do not know when or where they will be able to follow it, or even if they will ever find any work in a society where there are so few jobs. Such a prospect sometimes causes real anguish. Some young people have dropped out of university and are still waiting for their first job, their lives being destroyed by lack of activity. There are other serious problems for young people caught up in a permissive, materialistic and hypocritical society which often drives them to seek satisfaction in sex, drugs and violence. It is a society which calls for peace but which at the same time sells arms; a society which publicly proclaims human dignity but which enslaves people with material goods; a society which speaks of love but offers only sex. If a young person does not come into contact with institutions or people that can help him to discover real human values and to base his life on them, he suffers deep anguish because life has no meaning for him, offers

no points of reference in an ideological psychological and moral jungle.

2. How do you explain the profusion of youth movements?

I think that this second question is closely related to the first. By nature, a young person is never satisfied; he is always looking for values and for something better. When he sees, for example, politicians influenced only by party interests and resorting freely to demagoguery and lies; or when he sees adults making material well-being their only aim in life, he experiences a certain emptiness and frustration, and he feels the need for something more worthwhile to believe in. And so when he comes across people who show by their lives that they believe in something of value, he willingly follows them. That, I think, is what explains the existence of so many youth movements. A young man feels the need for real human values which will give meaning to his life, and values he can base his life on, but life in a community or a group. He feels the need to believe in something stable, to share his own experiences with others, to fight for what he believes in. When he has arrived at this stage, a young person sees a point in doing things, in suffering, in committing himself and in giving life to others. He can experience all this, give expression to it and rejoice over it with others in a group, in some youth movement.

At the same time, youth movements give a sense of belonging, of being part of a section of society. Young people have something to offer to society; they have an important part to play in its future.

3. Which youth movements did you get to know best, and what were the positive things you found about them?

I got to know two organised movements and I helped to run youth groups belonging to them. One was the Focolarini, and the other, diocesan Christian youth groups. What were the positive things about them?

1°) *Faith*. I saw what love these young people had for the Word of God, how they meditated on it, spoke about it, deepened their understanding of it by constant and systematic study, and how they made it part of their lives. I saw them spending a long time in prayer and sharing with each other their experience of God. I saw their liturgical celebrations so vibrant with joy and enthusiasm that they were catching.

2º) *Brotherhood*. These groups of young people form efficient living communities in which they feel totally at ease, and where they appreciate and love each other like brothers. They pool their experiences of life and even sometimes their money. In their songs they rejoice in their brotherhood. They are always ready to extend a helping hand to each other. I think that they feel that by coming together in the name of the Lord, Jesus is in their midst to help them build up brotherhood, to build his Kingdom.

3º) *Service*. I saw how these young people really take the Gospel seriously. They want to live according to it every day in a practical way. When they come out of their meetings they are fully resolved to do just that. They try to be consistent, and their faith leads them to bear witness, to work for others, to commit themselves. This commitment is a personal one, but it can become a group commitment when they uncover in the place where they live urgent needs that they find challenging.

4. *What particularly from your experience of working with young people gives you the greatest joy and satisfaction?*

Not so long ago, I met a young man we had tried to help some years previously because he had great difficulties at home and in his studies. I noticed that he was happy to see me again. He said to me straight-away: "I've often thought about you and how your confidence in me gave me so much strength. You used to say to me with so much conviction: "Come on! I know you can do it!" Those words and the fact I had a friend I could really rely on, gave me wings to overcome obstacles because I had confidence in myself". And then he added: "As you can see, I feel fine now. I'm married and I'm the manager of two cinemas. When I think of the difficulties I experienced when I was young and of the help I got, I'm often led to put on films that I think might help young people. I certainly lose money by doing this, but that's not very important, because I feel the need to do something for these young kids".

Meeting this young man delighted me and strengthened my conviction that the real secret for winning children over is to believe in them, listen to them and give them the self-confidence to achieve their greatest ambitions and to exploit to the full their own potential.



The young people of today are the adults of tomorrow: a cause for hope but also worry. Society strews so many difficulties in their way these days as they strive to reach full maturity as followers of the Good News of Christ.

5. *You have recently had several meetings with groups of young people. What are the questions they asked you most often?*

A short while ago I visited several countries in Latin America, and this enabled me to meet many young people in our schools. There were several questions that came back with striking regularity, as for example:

- How do you think we can free ourselves of poverty and social inequality?
- What do you expect of us? What message are you leaving for the young people of Latin America?
- How do you explain the existence of evil in the world?
- What made you become a Brother?

Sometimes when I listen to these young people asking me questions I think of the young man in the Gospel, who even in those days, seemed worried,

questioning and in a hurry to grow up as he asked Jesus: "What have I to do to inherit eternal life? I have kept all these...". What else must I do?

Please God these young people will meet someone who can answer their questions in a way that will help them to grow, even if sometimes, as was the case of the young man in the Gospel, they feel they do not have the strength to act upon what they hear and leave everything behind. And yet there will certainly be some who will say like the Apostles: "We have left all and followed you".

6. *What do you think are the greatest signs of hope among young people?*

I think there are several signs of hope and life among young people. The following seem to be the most obvious:

- They are cultured and professional as a result of many years of study and experience.
- They are sincere in their search for true values that will give meaning to their lives and their future in society.
- They are idealistic and yet healthily critical in the face of the many inconsistencies and widespread hypocrisy of the adult world.
- They believe in truth and the strength of love.
- Theirs is an attitude which ignores the prejudices and barriers of race, social class and country
- They search for the absolute and transcendent and their liturgies are full of joy.
- They not only desire but also commit themselves to build a society that will be more just, more human and freer.

I really think that, as long as there are young people, there will always be hope for the human race and the Church.

One last word

When we read the Gospel to try and discover what Jesus thought of young people, we often turn to the story of the rich young man and to the parable of the prodigal son. But we should also look more carefully at the fine example of a young man who always stood close to Jesus, John the Evangelist. Jesus loved John to an extraordinary degree and John returned that love to an equal degree. In the Church of today, and following the words and example of John Paul II, we are all called to show special con-

cern for the young. This concern should show itself in our welcoming attitude, in our allowing them to grow and to try things out for themselves, in our teaching by showing respect for the individual and the group. If we do this we can be sure that, following the example of John the Evangelist who was singled out by Jesus, whom Christian tradition has always called the Apostle of Love, and to whom Jesus confided his Mother, our young people too will discover the paths that lead to total commitment to Christ and his Church.

Brother Umberto Marcato

Campus ministry in universities is becoming more and more important for the Brothers and their helpers in the United States. The Brothers are becoming constantly more aware of their role in this ministry.

Saint Mary's College

CAMPUS MINISTRY

1987 - 88



St. Thomas More Chapel

A REPORT ON YOUTH PASTORAL WORK

Pastoral Ministry of Youth programs can be divided into three areas; Campus Ministry Programs, Retreat Programs, Special Programs, i.e. Prayer Groups, Peer Ministry, etc.

1) CAMPUS MINISTRY

Campus Ministry Programs are present in all seven colleges (Higher Education Institutions) of the Region. Each college has a Director of Campus Ministry most of whom are Brothers. In some colleges they see themselves as a Parish, while in others, the spiritual center of the college. They coordinate *liturgical* events, such as the weekly and daily Masses; they offer *special programs* in areas not covered by formal classes, such as Bible studies and women's issues; they organize *service programs*, such as tutoring, assisting at senior citizens' homes, working in soup kitchens, etc.; they are available for *spiritual counseling*. Campus Ministry Programs are also present in most secondary schools.

Samples of Campus Ministry Programs on the university level:

St. Mary's College, Winona (Minnesota):
"Campus Ministry-Big Brother/Big Sister Program".

The Student Volunteer Services Department is an adjunct of the St. Mary's College Campus Ministry Program. It gives the student opportunities to integrate personal spiritual growth, academic learning, and the mission of service to others.

Brother Basil Rothweiler is a member of the Campus Ministry team. He coordinates the students in their volunteer services to the people of the Winona, Minnesota area. He feels that the popular Big Brother/Big Sister program is one of the most satisfying of the variety of student volunteer services to others. It gets the students into pockets of poverty, broken homes, and disrupted families for great experiential learning.

Student volunteers form a one to one relationship with a child or adolescent by meeting him or her at least once a week for fun and activity together. A support group meets every month for an hour of prayer, planning, and sharing.

Practically all the grade school and junior high school students are from single parent and low income families.

Counselors in the Catholic and public schools help in the matching through questionnaire, interests, and interview.

Students seem delighted with the responses of their little brother or sister. The new found insights and experiences seem to help each member of the program in the development of their social conscience, concern for the family, and the love of services to strengthen their potential for future Christian leadership.

Lewis University, Romeoville (Illinois):

Major celebrations of the lenten spirit:

February 17: Ash Wednesday. Masses at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Ashes will be distributed Evening Prayer Service with ashes distributed at 4:30 p.m.

March 17: A Noontime celebration of the feasts of St. Joseph and St. Patrick at 12:00 p.m. at the Chapel.

March 28: On this Monday Evening the community of Lewis University is invited to begin Holy Week with The Solemn Stations of the Cross, a remembrance in Word, Song and movement of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Readings in several voices, a moving spirit and a candlelight procession and recession will mark this service at 9:30 p.m. at the Sancta Alberta Chapel.

The Sundays of Lent:

A series of speakers will provide insight into the Signs of God's promise in their lives. Each reflective witness will be a part of our time of reflection after the Gospel:

February 14: Br. James Gaffney, Christian Brother and our new president.

February 21: Mary Donnelly, from Sarah's Circle program for women on the streets

February 28: Sr. Noel Dreska, professor and sister of St. Francis.

March 6: No speaker because of spring break.

March 13: Frank Palmansani, office of admissions.

March 20: Joelyn Wiley, hall director and public relations officer.

March 27: Br. Tom Clark, Christian Brother and vocation director.

Weekly lenten liturgy and stations of the cross:

Each Thursday of Lent a brief and simple remembrance of the Lord's Passion will take place following the noon Mass.

Weekly residence hall twilight liturgies

Hall Twilight Liturgies will take place in one dormitory each week. These will focus on community building, inviting each hall to enter into the spirit of Lenten prayer.

La Salle University, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania)

American Catholic colleges and universities are/should be acutely aware that their mission includes not only the fostering of an atmosphere in which committed Roman Catholics can both worship and live out their baptismal vows through service to the poor and learning justice, but also

Catholics in the United States are deeply convinced of the importance of promoting social justice. La Salle University, Philadelphia, sets great store by this.

Professing Justice

**Second Annual
Justice Week**

November 8-13, 1987



**La Salle University
Philadelphia, PA 19141**

Social Justice and Ethical Issues in the Professions



providing an atmosphere where members of other religious traditions can do the same. In other words, at their best, Catholic institutions of higher education should be places where, for example, a Jew can learn to be a better Jew!

This is not to say that the ideal atmosphere is gray and neutral as it is to say that it must be so explicitly Catholic as to encourage and nurture the religious search in each member of its pluralistic community.

To this end, La Salle University feels that it is important that groups such as Hillel - the Jewish Student Union and the La Salle Christian Fellowship be supported through its Campus Ministry Center.

We also feel that issues of social justice must be addressed by the university community at large, rather than just through a designated office (e.g., the Campus Ministry). For this reason an annual program such as "Justice Week" is the responsibility of a committee made up of faculty, students and staff from all the schools of the university and not a single office.

Manhattan College, New York City:

Alcohol Awareness Meetings.

Each Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. a group of students meet and discuss questions or concerns about alcohol. Actually, it's a regular A.A. meeting that enables other students to filter in and out, enabling those who desire ongoing help a home base to commence their recovery process. It has proven to be very effective and offers immediate identification for students with alcohol or drug related problems.

Following this meeting, other students gather for an ACOA, Adult Children of Alcoholics, support meeting. Here students who have been victimized by an alcoholic environment are able to share openly their sense of inadequacy without fear or shame. Again the process of recovery begins in a warm environment and encourages the students to seek additional groups in their neighborhoods.

2) RETREATS

Retreat programs are available in most of the academic institutions of the Region. The importance of Retreats is reflected in the number of Retreat Houses and the Brothers assigned to this special ministry. Retreat Houses are found in the Districts of Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis, St. Paul, and San Francisco. The Sangre de Cristo Spiritual Center of the New Orleans/Santa Fe District and the Christian Brothers Center of the Long Island/New England District are both used for Retreats. The Toronto District is building a new Retreat Center to be located on the campus of De La Salle High School in Toronto. Each Retreat Center has its own style and speciality. Listed below are some examples.

Christian Brothers Retreat House St. Helena (California)

Unique to the Junior Retreat is the emphasis on one's deepest human spiritual beliefs. Certain activities (in large and small groups) constantly bring this theme into focus. An

example: the juniors, in the late afternoon of the first day, are invited to engage in a Values Awareness exercise. A number of practical statements touching on moral issues they face in their modern world are presented to them. In silence each junior is asked to reflect on his or her personal understanding and belief relative to the statement. They are then asked to quietly move to one or another designated section of the room to indicate their personal agreement or disagreement with each issue. The activity, as with all activities, is followed by small group discussions for the processing of their choice of a particular stand, of the experiences and values that are behind that choice. Probably no other activity gives the staff a better opportunity to facilitate and draw out from the students the special way God is present in their lives through their values.

On Senior Retreats, the students are asked to reflect upon and to discuss their lives' journeys. They are asked to focus on which experiences in their lives have taught them the most about themselves and about their relationships with their families, their friends, and with God. These subjects emerge over and over again during the three days they are on retreat. The seniors leave these retreats with a bit more personal confidence, a bit more personally supported, and a bit more faithful.

Parent-Teen: "Special" Program - A parent-teen retreat, is a special kind of retreat which brings together parent-teen couples for a weekend. Time is set aside for the parent-teen couple to get to know one another. Activities are intended to assist in communicating, understanding, and appreciating each other. Activities include prayer, liturgy, solitude, leisure, and recreation.

Christian Brothers Spiritual Center Adamstown (Maryland)

Themes for each level are as follows:

Freshman: "Christian connections": connections with self, other, and God... realizing my special place in creation.

Sophomore: Your life as a good news story: "seeing the wonder of creation in each other".

Junior: Wisdom: discovering that my personal relationships are a reflection of my relationship with God.

Senior: "My life's journey": exploring how my actions today affect my personal future.

Bridge, a program for teachers

Is a reflective workshop, an in-service day or two to help the teacher develop in the faith dimension of life. The initial program hopes to aid the teacher in reflecting on his/her life to discover God in the present.

The program aims to help build a bridge from the individual's present situation to a future in which he/she can become a more believing, relating, and faith-oriented person.

Teachers, administrators, and supportive personnel will look upon their roles as ministry, integrating their life's reality with faith in God, others, and themselves, thus enlivening their belief so that they can give more freely.

The focus on Jesus as Teacher is integrated with + your role as a teacher now:



**La Salle
University**
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

A WEEK-END...

A WEEK...

THREE WEEKS...

SIX WEEKS...

ENJOY AN EXCITING SUMMER 1988

**THE ACCENT IS ON
CREATIVE MINISTRY**

GRADUATE PROGRAMS in THEOLOGICAL and MINISTERIAL STUDIES

Concentrations in:
**THEOLOGY • PASTORAL MINISTRY • RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY • LITURGY • YOUTH MINISTRY**

Training in creativity to help people tap hidden sources in themselves which can help them to find new approaches to life's problems in the society of today.

- Scripture
- being Good News
- living the Gospel message, so as
- *To teach as Jesus did.*

There are other types of Retreats being conducted in the schools by members of the local Campus Ministry Programs. Examples include:

Manhattan College, New York City

Encounter Retreat

Are you interested in some quiet time? Perhaps a weekend away in western New Jersey could help you realize it. The weekend of March 25-27, 1988 a group of our students will be heading to Sacred Heart Retreat House in Belvidere, NJ. This spot has its own natural beauty, and it is a place where we can enjoy good meals, company, and a time to



Young Lasallians from the Chicago District with their group leaders, Brothers Thomas Clark (bottom right) and Robert Veselesky (bottom left).

pray and to be.

Some 50 students each semester flock to this retreat with a waiting list each semester.

Lewis University, Romeoville (Illinois)

Getaway retreat Weekend.

A chance to get away with friends from the University to play, pray, share, and reflect.

Queen of Peace High School North Arlington (New Jersey)

A four year mandatory program of sequential communal experiences that develop 1) a growing understanding of community, 2) a maturing understanding of spirituality and God's presence in their lives, and 3) a closer relationship between students and faculty that gives opportunity to witness spiritual values.

Sequence of Themes:

Freshmen: "Awareness of others"

- emphasizes on groups and how individuals are relating in a group.
- peer pressure and Christian values
- different responsibilities in high school.

Sophomores: "Friendship"

- the connection between friendship and Christian love
- the common "vacuum" of Sophomore year, too old to be a child and too young to be a young adult
- emerging self-disciple and identity.

Juniors: "Love"

- the growing emotions of closer friendship and dependence on others
- love of God, love of creation, love of life

- love as the basic Christian message

Seniors: "Faith"

- spirituality as common experiences they may have overlooked
- witness talks on "Why I am a Christian"
- sharing important experiences, e.g. deaths, divorces, disappointments.

The freshmen and sophomore programs will be one day experiences in the spring - 6 or 7 at a time, 9-2 p.m.

The junior program will be two night programs from 3-9 p.m.

The seniors will have overnight retreats.

Other experiences will be: "Daybreak" retreat weekend, students will be invited to share an optional weekend in the second semester to get to relate more intensely: "Peacemaker" overnight in the spring to delve more intensely on how to achieve peace.

Retreat program a success. By Jason Lee

Once a year, every student at Queen of Peace High School participates in a retreat. These retreats are held at several locations: Salesian Retreat House, Goshen, N.Y.; St. Cecilia, Kearny; Caldwell College, Caldwell; Kateri Center, Freehold, and Camp Bernie, Hackettstown.

The students and the faculty are the reasons why the retreat program is so successful.

The upper-classmen usually take an overnight trip so they can look at themselves and their lives from a perspective outside of the usual school setting.

The main purpose of the retreats, the moderators say, is to discover and deepen faith. By strengthening their personal relationship with God through the celebration of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, and participating at Mass, a spirit of unity and good will develops.

One result, is students relax and have time to reflect on their relationships.

Students have time to break away from the usual pressures of school and discuss the complex feelings they have about growing up.

Junior Tina Iamonte said: "It gives me the time and opportunity to grow spiritually and to talk about it with my friends. It is a great time to explore topics that aren't usually covered in our classes. The best part is: everyone really wants to be there!"

Senior Karen Campbell said: "Retreats alleviate some of our tensions; but most importantly, they affirm our relationship with God".

Junior Arne Prato said: "The retreats help me to deal with my emotions and to understand more about myself and my relationship with God".

Senior David Martinez Looked on the retreat as "a welcome relief from the ordinary school day and an opportunity to really discover my faith and share unity and good will".

Maria Da Silva said she "enjoyed reading, meditating on and acting out a parable".

Senior Kathy Anne Corbett said: "The retreat made me

think about myself something I don't always do! I felt happier about who I was and gained more respect for those who shared the retreat with me".

Senior Lisa Savoca said: "It was exciting and unifying".

I also polled some of the faculty members who go with the students regularly. Mr. Kevin Early said: "It is a time for all of us to experience Jesus in a peaceful way".

Father Leo, chaplain, believes, "It is quite a time for growing in community". Sister Ann Jordan said it is "a most positive experience in spiritual growth".

Sister Mary Agnes Casey said: "It is a time for strengthening our relationship with Christ. It is also an opportunity for the students and teachers to experience different aspects of each other".

Junior Dave Puente was asked to solicit negative reactions about the retreat. Maybe he asked the wrong persons, but there was not one respondent.

The faculty dedication and support for the Retreat Program help students realize the importance of growing closer to Christ, increasing their faith, working together, and developing a spirit of community that is ALIVE.

We are all proud to be a part of it.

Toronto District

Organizing retreat programs for the students to be held in their new retreat center. These programs will be for one day and will be geared to assist the students in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

California District

Organizing a district Campus Ministry Retreat for the summer of '88 open to 5 students and 2 faculty from each of their 9 high schools. The purpose is to provide training and retreat time focused in Campus Ministry, as well as to extend the Lasallian association concept already active among the faculty to the students.

3) SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Each school can tell its own story of the special programs that help the students to recognize their personal relationship with God as they serve their neighbor. These programs are generally organized by the Campus Ministry staffs and are participated in by the entire student body either as a large group or by special groups. Collections are taken up regularly to assist the poor and needy. These collections fall into several categories; money, food, clothes, toys, etc. Many of the schools are twinned with Brothers' schools in the Third World, hence there is a personal relationship established between the two schools. Thanksgiving and Christmas are special times for the students to give of themselves to assist others. Listed below are examples of these special projects:

La Salle High School Pasadena (California)

Two La Salles Cross Cultures

For five years La Salle High School in Pasadena, California, has developed a close bond with Centro La Salle in Tijuana, Mexico. On top of collecting money and clothing, which Centro sells to help finance their school, La Salle also sends caravans of students to help with gardening and maintenance work much needed on the expanding school grounds. The trips always lead into informal mingling with the Centro students and Brothers' community. A tour of the rapidly growing border city of Tijuana is included to educate the students in the Mexican culture and the problems they face in being located only 20 minutes from a major U.S. city, San Diego, and the vast agricultural lands of Southern California's Imperial Valley. The Brothers of Centro have sent one of their members to La Salle to offer presentations in class of the work of Centro and the changes in Tijuana, as well as how the U.S. affects the daily life of Tijuana through its industrial and tourism interests south of the border. The exchange of cultural, personal, and financial resources has helped develop the perspectives of students and faculty of both schools.

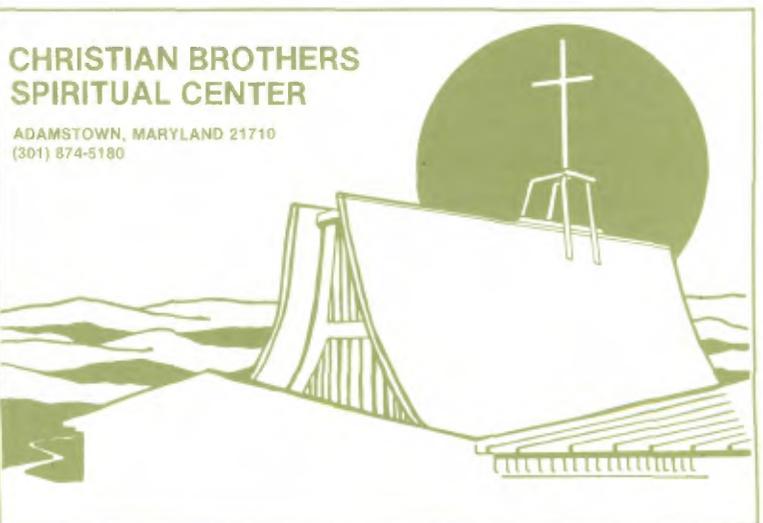
La Salle Academy Providence (Rhode Island)

The Campus Ministry Department has organized a group of high school seniors who call themselves *The La Salle Fools*. Under the direction of Brother Charles Kitson, this group sponsors an annual Easter Mime Experience to raise money for the Brothers' missions in East Africa.

Each year Brother Michael McKenery, Visitor, and Brother Charles write the script and produce this modern enactment of Gospel stories using rock music, dance, and many special visual effects. The show tours a number of the Brothers' schools in several states and makes the Gospel "come alive" for thousands of young people.

Lasallian Youth (Chicago District)

In August 1987, ten students from the Chicago District and Brother Thomas Clark had the good fortune of being able to participate in "QUEBEC '87", the international Lasallian Youth Congress held in St. Ferdinand, Quebec.



Upon returning to our home district, the students set about nurturing the Lasallian Youth movement in their schools, among the Brothers, their teachers and their friends. In the six months that have passed since Quebec '87, the Lasallian Youth of Chicago have doubled the number of their group from ten to twenty, and have begun a number of activities which promote the spirit of St. John Baptist De La Salle among the members of their groups. This spirit is articulated in the theme of Quebec '87, which we have taken as our own, "Faith, Fraternity and Service".

A Newsletter, "The Lasalle Star", serves as a vehicle for communication among the students of the Lasallian schools in the Chicago District.

A Lasallian Youth retreat

The theme of the retreat was "Lasallian Youth: Building a Dream". During the retreat we looked at our own dreams for ourselves, De La Salle's dream of service of the poor and the young (particularly as expressed in his *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*), and God's dream for us as Lasallian Youth.

Regular service projects

Our task is to assist in the Providence of God parish soup kitchen which is opened for the street people of the neighborhood. In the near future, we will begin some catechetical projects in a rural parish south of Chicago.

Regular meetings

Held twice a month, at which we pray, share our faith experiences, and plan our various activities. These meetings take place at the different Brothers' houses in the Chicago District, and often include a celebration of liturgy with the Brothers.

Perhaps the spirit behind all of these activities is best articulated in the "Lasallian Creed" which the students composed on their retreat:

"We believe in God the Father,
in Jesus Christ, His Son and our Brother,
in the Holy Spirit living among us,
and in the Church, the people of God
gathered in Jesus' name.

"We believe in the ideal of St. John Baptist de La Salle:
We believe that the fraternity and friendship that we share
can bring peace to a troubled world.

We believe that in our acts of service, we are God's instruments,
helping to build the Kingdom of God among our
brothers and sisters.

And we believe that our faith binds together our acts of fraternity
and service and gives meaning to these and every
other aspect of our lives".

"Bridges" (New Orleans/Santa Fe District)

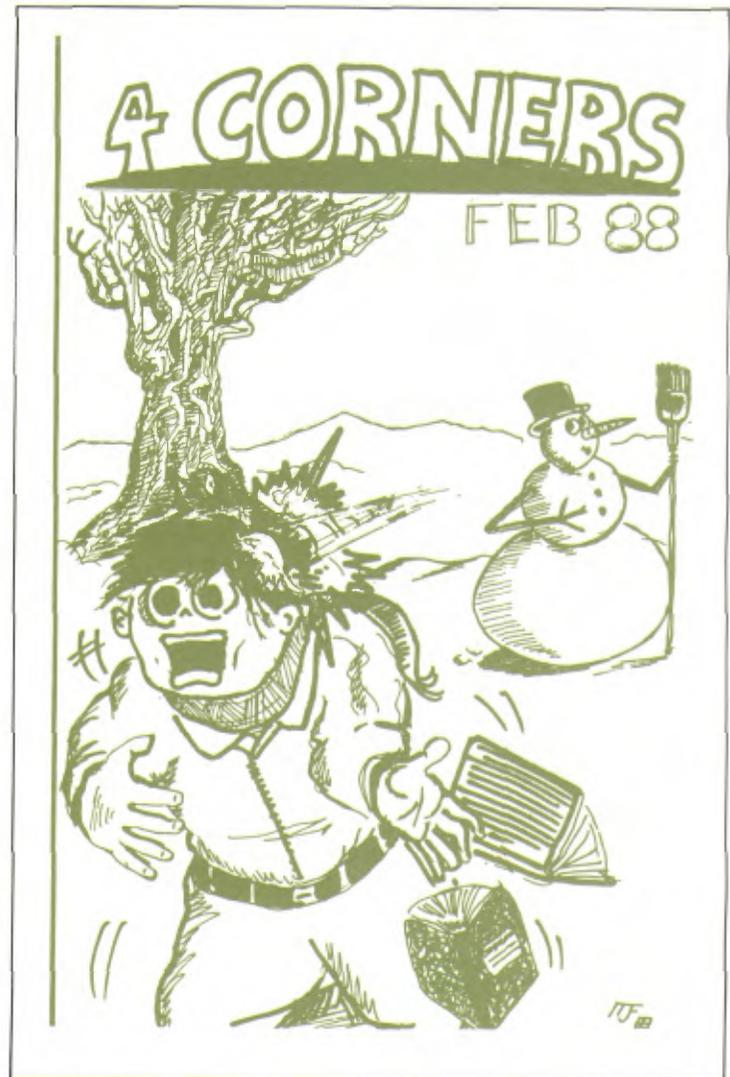
This is a program initiated to allow the poor to teach others about the poor. Groups of teachers and students spend time living in an inner city project and being a part of the life of the residents.

Students from the St. Paul-Minneapolis, Chicago, and St. Louis District have participated in this program in New Orleans.

A similar project in New York City is in effect for the students from the Long Island-New England and New York Districts.

Brother Robert McCann,
Secretary of Education

Each term, fifty or so students go on retreat: the Center is snowed under by applications. (Cornerstone, Campus Ministry Center, Manhattan Hall).



CATECHISTS' TRAINING CENTRE CUM BENILDUS LITERACY CENTRE

These two Institutions are situated in a primitive village called Khushpur in Pakistan. Khushpur was started by a Belgian missionary in 1900. There are 5,000 people in this village. Over 4,000 others from Khushpur are working all over Pakistan as catechists, teachers, cooks and so on. This is the biggest Catholic village in Pakistan.

In Pakistan over 80% of the people are illiterate. Among the Christians this percentage is higher. The Christians are scattered in far flung villages. Normally they are working under Muslim landlords. They are illiterate and are struggling to eke out a miserable existence. On their own they find difficult to get away from the clutches of the rapacious landlords.

The two Institutions situated in Khushpur, the Catechists' Training Centre and the Literacy Centre are interdiocesan. It is meant for the six dioceses of Pakistan. In a two year course, besides catechesis, liturgy and scripture a family training programme is conducted. The catechists come to Khushpur with their families. They are high school graduates and are trained at the catechists' Training Centre. Their wives either literate or illiterate are trained in the Literacy Centre. In the family training programme they are taught to change their attitudes and values and improve their situation in life. The whole programme is geared to justice and peace.

After their training the catechists and their wives are to do team work in the urban or the rural areas. Most of them work in the villages. Each catechist is in charge of twenty to thirty villages. They visit the villages as much as possible, listen to them, teach the children and the adults, and try to change their attitudes and values towards education, health, religion and



Khushpur: During a course at the Literacy Centre.

Khushpur: Two students studying a map.



social life. In a village a catechist acts not only as a catechist but as judge, lawyer, doctor and guide.

The whole social structure of the Church in Pakistan depends on the catechists as the bulk of the work in religion and social life is done by them. Day and night a catechist is with his Christian community animating them, orientating them and helping them to get away from a slavery worse than the Egyptian slavery of old.



Catechists working late into the night.

Brother Emmanuel, Visitor of the District of Colombo, speaking at a meeting in a Buddhist temple.



During their two year course the catechists make a theoretical and practical study of basic Christian communities. It is a historical, psychological and pastoral study of these communities. While making a study of this life they also try to live it at the Training Centre. They have fully realized the inadequacy of the present pastoral structure for an effective life in the far flung villages.

Due to their ignorance and illiteracy the Christians are unable to form living Christian communities without the help of the catechists. The catechists are to initiate them to form communities and continue to animate them regularly. In such communities the Christians can gradually learn to go away from the pathetic social structure they are immersed in due to lack of help and guidance from their non-Christian landlords.

The role of the catechist in the young Church in Pakistan cannot be overestimated. In the pastoral field recently a survey was taken of the work done by the young catechists. Many of them are doing excellent work. An elderly priest who is holding a very high office in ecclesiastical circles said, "that some of the catechists could be ordained at any time". "A sister who has been in the pastoral field for over two decades said", "I am sorry that I did not get the training of a catechist".

All the six dioceses in Pakistan depend on the Catechists' Tr. Centre and the Literacy Centre for the formation of the catechists and their families. The work of the two institutions cannot be overestimated. We need personnel to staff these two institutions.

We have chosen Emmanuel John and Eric Sylvester two young intelligent catechists for further studies abroad. Both have been locally orientated for a few years. They have been accepted for further studies by Carlow College, Ireland. Emmanuel John and Eric Sylvester are to remain two to three years in Carlow College.

They need financial assistance for their travel abroad, board and lodging, tuition, books, clothes and so on.

Bro. Osmund, FSC, Director

AN EXPERIMENTAL CATECHUMENATE: FAITH SUPPORT GROUPS

The pastoral experiment we are going to describe is identical in all its details with one that has taken place in one of the Districts of the Spain-Portugal Region. However, apart from a few slight differences in form and emphasis, it is also basically something that can be found in all the other Districts of the Region.

1. A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIMENT BASED ON THE CATECHUMENATE

We are not referring here in general terms to the District pastoral care programme for young people, but rather to its very heart. This experiment, called either a programme for "Faith Support Groups" or "Christian Groups", is a complete educational programme modelled on the catechumenate, which seeks to provide a *comprehensive initiation to Christian living* in its four aspects:

- initiation into knowledge of the Mystery of Christ,
- initiation into an evangelical lifestyle,
- initiation into religious experience, prayer and the sacraments,
- initiation into apostolic and missionary commitment.

This programme has been devised for pupils and young people who are in touch with our centres, as well as for lay teachers and parents of pupils.

1.1. *Fundamental choices:*

The whole process rests on three choices which include the key-values of the Christian message and the various responses they inspire in a person: conversion, community and the Kingdom of God. These three choices taken together make up an all-inclusive option for the Gospel of the Kingdom.

- **Conversion:** this is a permanent renunciation of the values of the world and a commitment to the values of the Kingdom as personified in Christ, and to the Living God.

- **Community:** this is where the following of Jesus becomes possible. In order to be able to live a life of faith within a community, one has to belong to a faith support group. It is in a group such as this that each member can gradually become converted and committed to the Kingdom of God.

- **The Kingdom of God:** this is a new world, transformed by Salvation which comes from God and finds its fullness in the Resurrection of Jesus. To make this choice means becoming converted and accepting its values, trying to build up oneself and one's world according to them as far as one can. It means reaching a stage where one's whole life becomes a commitment.

1.2. *Stages:*

The whole process takes more or less ten whole school years (more details later), but quite frequently because of the age factor it begins with the Invitation stage:

- *Discovery stage* (pre-adolescence, 3 levels, 11 to 14 years of age). The individual discovers by himself and as part of a group the basic teachings of the Gospel:

- **God loves us and relies on us to change the world.**
- **Jesus calls us to follow him and to imitate him.**
- **Within a group we are part of the Christian community.**

- *Invitation stage* (adolescence, 2 levels, 14 to 16 years of age). The young person is invited to make his faith more personal: to be a person like Jesus and to choose to follow him, the one and only Lord. A study is begun of the meaning of life. The Gospel is presented as offering an alternative style of life by comparison with that of the world. The young person is invited to take on the primary responsibility for building up his personality. A first general introduction to the Kingdom of God with its demands and needs, and to the notion that it concerns us. Belonging to a group is shown to be a

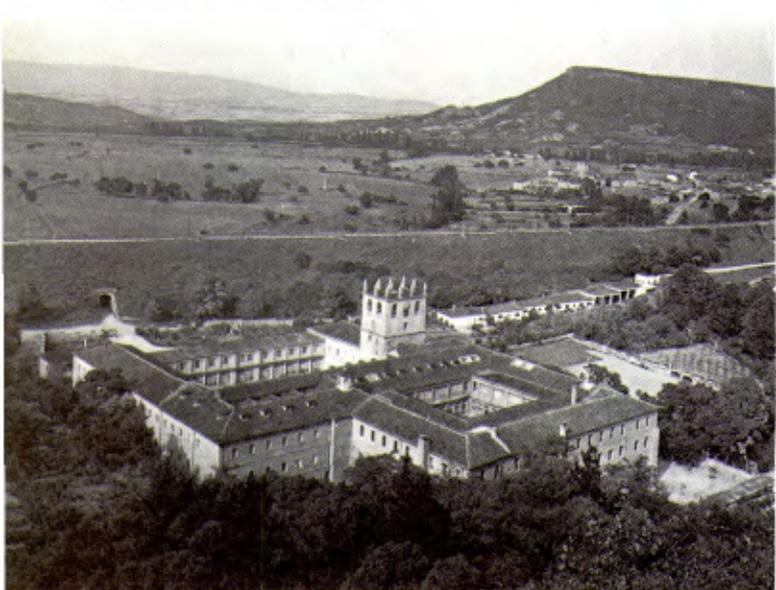


step towards becoming part of the Community, and a means of being able to live one's faith.

— *Catechumenate or foundation stage* (3 levels, 16 to 19 years of age). The catechumenate stage aims to achieve the complete integration of a person and his faith, so that he lives according to it with full awareness and freedom, in the company of others, ready to share it, always willing to learn, always continuing to be converted, accepting the challenges implied, showing his oneness with his faith in all his actions. So through the four fundamental aspects of initiation the young person is initiated organically into the Christian Mysteries. This stage normally includes reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

— *Integration and consolidation stage* (2 levels, 19 years old and more) The primary concern is the full

Bujedo: Retreat and Conference centre used regularly for important renewal meetings.



development of the faith. The idea of commitment becomes reality through involvement in social work or in a Church ministry. This is a time for experimenting with different ways of sharing community life; for organising a Christian community for young people, or becoming part of an existing community; and for seeking to discover one's vocation in life.

Of course, the whole process extends well beyond a person's school years and is completed only when he becomes a part of a Christian community of young people or adults, in which he will live and share his faith.

1.3. *The framework:*

Everything takes place within the framework of a faith support group. This is called a primary group which has a dozen or so members, usually from the same class, and all wishing to deepen their faith or to understand the Christian message more thoroughly. The group, however, is not isolated: it is in constant and increasing contact with other groups on the same level, groups within the same school, from other schools in the District, in the diocese and the universal Church. In this way a young person begins to see the Church as a "communion of communities", and to feel growing within himself an awareness that he belongs to it intimately.

1.4. *Methods:*

As is the case with all catechetics-based on the catechumenate our methods are those of the "catechetics of experience". A great deal of detailed and painstaking work was needed to discover which were the key-experiences of each stage of development, to formulate appropriate questions with their answers, and then relate everything to basic biblical experiences in which God's action can be clearly seen. The Word of God is always the touchstone for judging human experience and providing a context for it. The ultimate aim, as it is indeed of each stage in the process, is to bring about a profession of faith expressed in three ways: the profession of faith, prayer, commitment.

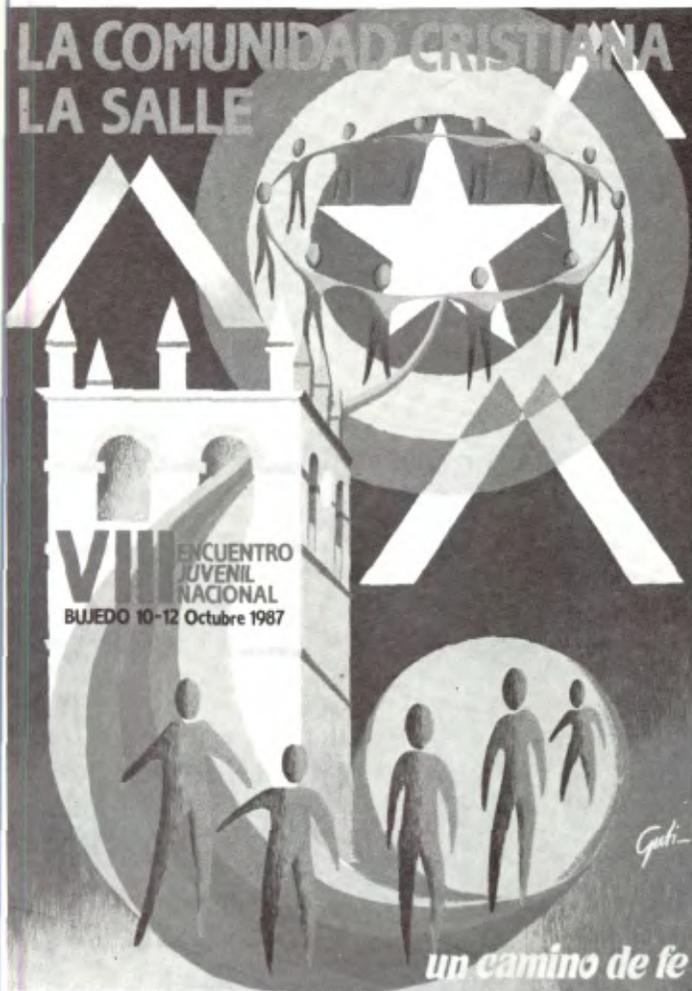
In practice, especially in the case of older groups, four meetings are devoted to each topic: the first seeks to explain the human experience; the second places this experience in the context of the Word of God; the third tries to draw conclusions leading to some form of commitment; the fourth is a time for prayer and liturgical celebration.

1.5. *The implementation*

This takes place on three complementary levels:

— *Personal:*

1. Personal guidance by means of a regular personal interview of each member of the group with the group leader.



Poster announcing the 8th National Youth Meeting at Bujedo in October 1987.

2. A personal project by means of which the young person takes responsibility for his own growth as a person. This work begins at the adolescent stage.

3. Personal development through reading appropriate to each level.

— *Group:*

1. Weekly group meeting which follow a scheme of topics for discussion and reflection. The material prepared for these meetings is used by a great number of religious congregations and parishes in Spain and Latin America.

2. Group project: the process of devising one is a means of building up a community based on the group.

3. Days of recollection, one per term. Great importance is attached to self-assessment.

— *Church and society:*

1. Liturgical celebrations, prayer, retreats:

— At school level all the groups in the school celebrate the high points of the liturgical year together. It is at these gatherings that the catechumenate initiation rites take place.

— Youth Easter for those 17 years old and more.

Celebration of the central Christian mysteries in an atmosphere of recollection (three days retreat) with other Christian groups.

A prayer meeting for those 18 years old and more, at a District level, for three days during the Christmas holidays. There are two levels: those who are taking part for the first time are taught how to pray; the others who have been before share in an intense three days of prayer on a specific topic.

2. Formation meetings:

These take place during the summer and all groups in the District, whatever their level, take part. They last a week, and their aims and organisation are adapted to the level involved. Two sessions are particularly important: the "Christian community session" at the end of the first year in university; and the "vocation discernment session" for those who feel they might have a religious vocation.

3. Help for those in need:

Work camps lasting 12 to 15 days are organised during the summer for certain levels of those over 17 years of age. This contact with the poor and outcasts of society is a very important and challenging experience for these young people.

2. HOW THE SCHEME WAS SET UP

This scheme has now been running for eight years, and during this time it has grown and has been improved thanks largely to the fact we have been able to count on a team of Brothers released by the District to work on pastoral care of young people. This team is supported by the local pastoral co-ordinating commission. A lot of time is devoted periodically to revising and restructuring the scheme.



Basically there were three steps in the setting up of this scheme:

1) *Making communities aware of the scheme*

This was one of our first concerns and it still remains so. It is with this in view that our Pastoral Team visits each community once a term. The object of the exercise is to explain to the community what kind of Church we are trying to build; that it is a Church which is at the very basis of the pastoral teaching of Vatican II, a "communion of communities"; and that it is also a model for the type of group our catechumenate scheme is totally committed to.

2) *Training group leaders*

We began by winning people over one by one. As gradually more and more material appeared to help with the running of the groups, so more and more Brothers volunteered to help. At present there are more than 100 Brothers in the District running groups, in addition to a great many lay teachers, university students and several couples who have followed the catechumenate scheme. Every year at a District or zone level, several days are devoted to the training of group leaders for one level or another of the scheme.

3) *How groups were formed*

To form the various groups of young people, teachers and parents, we did the following:

— **Student groups:** these were formed little by little as a result of days of recollection (spiritual exercises) organised in school on a class basis.

— **Teachers:** we began by running a few days of recollection zone by zone, and as our main topic we had "the problem of being a Christian". During the course of these days of recollection we pointed out to the teachers what a good thing it would be for them as

individuals and as members of a group to deepen their faith. Of course these teachers are a minority among the lay staff but they are a source of inspiration for the educational community.

— **Parents:** Organising parent groups proved more difficult, mostly because Brothers had little experience in running adult groups. The way in which existing groups were formed varies greatly: the incentive came at a Sunday Mass, during talks run for parents whose children were going to make their first communion, from children who belonged to groups...

3. HOW THE SCHEME IS RUN AT PRESENT

At the first level there are the teams that run the groups in the schools. They meet each other regularly to compare notes on how the groups are getting on, and to plan joint activities. These local teams have as co-ordinators one or several Brothers who are part of the District pastoral commission.

At District level, planning and organisation of the scheme is entrusted to three Brothers who form a pastoral team: they lay down guidelines, organise the training of group leaders, run District group meetings, and once a term visit each group in its own school. They provide a link this way between all those involved in the scheme.

4. PRESENT SITUATION

a) *Positive results.*

The fact that more than a third of all the Brothers in the District, including many headmasters, are involved in running these groups has given our mission as catechists a new lease of life, and has had a knock-on effect at District level:

- pastoral practice is catching up more and more with pastoral theory;
- groups no longer collapse when leaders are moved to other schools;
- all this has had a very good effect on community life, on its approach to prayer, and its attitude to young people.

The groups give a lead in their class, and help to run pastoral activities organised by the pupils as a whole.

Thanks to these groups there is a slow but noticeable increase in vocations to religious life and the priesthood.

b) *Difficulties.*

- The number of groups is on the increase and this poses a serious problem when it comes to finding enough leaders. In places where the scheme is more advanced in its development, there is less of a prob-



lem as young people and lay adults can be included in the team of group leaders.

- Training group leaders presents a constant challenge: without it the whole scheme will collapse.
- Keeping groups going once pupils have left the school presents problems. Although some solutions have been found, there are still difficulties in particular in primary schools.

c) *Signs of hope*

- The scheme has great possibilities as a source of inspiration for the “Lasallian Christian Community” which is to be the driving force of the Lasallian Family. We think that all this will become a reality in the not too distant future.
- These Christian groups have an effect on the local Church. They are contributing more and more to the parishes either as trained catechists, pastoral organisers, or leaders of youth or adult communities.

5. THE SCHEME AND FOSTERING VOCATIONS

The catechumenate scheme which we have described and the work of fostering vocations are closely linked both on a theoretical as well as on a practical level:

- First of all, these Christian groups with their religious atmosphere present an ideal opportunity for broaching the question of vocation.
- The scheme itself encourages a search for one’s vocation in life by stressing certain aspects of our faith.
- Throughout the scheme there are moments set aside for dealing with vocation to the consecrated life and in particular to that of the Brother.
- The special programme organised to provide accompaniment for young people seeking their vocation is strongly supported by the schemes for personal reflection and Christian activities of the Christian groups.

6. CATECHUMENATE INITIATION RITES CEREMONIES FULL OF MEANING

Among recent additions to the scheme the “catechumenate initiation rites” deserve special mention because of their great significance.

They are not something we invented, since they are part of the Church’s traditional catechumenate ceremonial. We have simply stressed their importance as initiation rites. Each of these initiations marks a step forward for the individual and is a sign of his progress for the group leaders and for the group. These rites take place in the presence of the whole community and serve as a source of inspiration for younger members.



On the table that follows the meaning of each of these rites is explained as is its connection with the sacrament of Confirmation. What is also explained is what each rite means both to the individual concerned and to his community, and when is the appropriate occasion for the rite to take place.

The series of initiation rites is preceded and rounded off by two ceremonies which are a little less solemn: the “Reading of the Magna Carta” at the beginning, and the “Solemn Go Forth!” at the end.

Brother Antonio Botana
Regional Pastoral Commission



CATECHUMENATE INITIATION

	MEANING OF THE RITE	FOR THE INDIVIDUAL
Reading of the Magna Carta	Rite of welcome to the "Precatechumenate". Statement of the specifically Christian nature of the group.	It expresses the commitment of the group in the presence of the Christian community to become a Christian group with all that this implies.
1st INITIATION THE GOSPELS	Rite of admission to the catechumenate. It stresses the first stage of being a catechumen: Learning about the faith.	It expresses a desire to accept the Gospel, accept its challenge, to get to know it thoroughly, and to live by it.
2nd INITIATION THE CROSS	Symbolises the path a Christian must follow, and also Christian love. The catechumen is called upon upon to model his life on the Gospels.	A reaffirmation of the decision to follow in the steps of Jesus, in spite of all difficulties.
3rd INITIATION THE "OUR FATHER"	Symbolises the contemplative side of the life of a Christian: prayer and liturgical life. It summarises a Christian's attitude to God the Father.	Expresses the commitment to make prayer and liturgical celebrations a part of one's life.
4th INITIATION The "Credo"	The Credo is the Church's summary of Revelation. It is a short history of Salvation. It is a profession of faith , the goal of catechesis.	Expresses an unconditional commitment to the person of Jesus Christ, and a resolve to proclaim this commitment by word and action. The catechumen feels that he is in God's service and sent by him.
CONFIRMATION	This sets the seal on the catechumen's full membership of the community of the Church.	Expresses a willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit, and to be a useful member of the community and of the Kingdom.
The solemn "GO FORTH..."	This marks the end of the catechumenate, the end of "total initiation into Christian life." The catechumen has become an active and mature Christian.	Expresses the desire to become an active member of a specific community, faithful to the particular vocation he has received.

rites & their meaning

FOR THE COMMUNITY	TIMING OF THE RITE
<p>The community welcomes, helps, offers its support.</p>	<p>Invitation stage, level 2 — Vigil of the 1st Sunday in Advent.</p>
<p>The community recognises in the catechumen the beginnings of conversion, willingness to change his life, and that he has a basic experience of Christian spirituality, and a basic knowledge of the Christian message.</p>	<p>End of Invitation stage or beginning of the catechumenate stage. — Vigil of Pentecost. — Vigil of the 1st Sunday in Advent.</p>
<p>The community invites the catechumen to shoulder his cross, and recognises that his life is becoming more closely modelled on the Gospel.</p>	<p>Catechumenate stage, level 1 but after the 4th topic. — Lent — Good Friday</p>
<p>The community recognises that the catechumen has been introduced to prayer which is becoming a normal and familiar part of his life.</p>	<p>Catechumenate stage, level 2. — Prayer meeting, at Christmas.</p>
<p>The community recognises in the catechumen the first signs of a maturity which will enable him to profess his faith, and to proclaim it by his life to the community and the world.</p>	<p>Catechumenate stage, level 2 — Easter vigil. — Vigil of Pentecost.</p>
<p>It recognises that he is now ready to become an active member of the community and to live according to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>Catechumenate stage, level 2 — Pentecost.</p>
<p>It tells him to go forth to profess his faith, live it to the full, and transform this world into the Kingdom of God.</p>	<p>End of catechumenate stage, level 3. — Pentecost.</p>

THE GARGES EXPERIMENT

It is interesting to note that all the Brothers who formed the first Garges community, and those who opened the little school at Epinay first and then at the Oscar Romero Centre, have all been replaced by other Brothers: the initial inspiration has led to a permanent foundation.

For most Brothers who were already working in community a stay at Garges had a significant effect on their vocation, in the same way as other places and circumstances have influenced other Brothers.

I must point out, however, that the young Brothers in formation who spent a year at Garges found it much less beneficial: most probably the fact that they knew they were there for only a year made them hang back when it came to getting to know the locality and becoming involved in it. But it is especially the lack of a clearly structured community prayer life which is seen by as yet immature persons as the greatest drawback of the set-up. It's a problem: if the community has decided it will always be available to anyone who wants to see a Brother or someone else, it's difficult for everyone to be always at prayers. And so community life, community days of recollection (often at the nearby Carmelite convent) become very important.

At District and at Regional level

The work being done at Garges has widespread support. It is quite clear from what goes on there, that looking after young people in trouble, taking a fresh look at education, setting up communities in slum areas can all go hand in hand.

Formerly we did not seem to be capable of undertaking any new venture in concert with teachers in State schools and regional social workers.

What is most interesting is that this kind of school was never envisaged by those who came to set up a community in the Cité des Doucettes. They came to share more closely in the life of ordinary people, and to work with the local priests and nuns. It was young people who could no longer cope with school who led brother Nicholas to start up a school suited to their needs.

Brother Nicholas was on the District Council so he was able to keep us informed at regular intervals about what he saw as the emerging needs of primary education. He received immediate support for his work at both District and Regional level.

On many occasions Brothers have referred to Garges as a sign of hope: something of the vitality of the Institute could be discerned there. It is true, of course, that many Brothers feel they would not be able to cope working in a slum area, but they see in Garges an appeal to them to show more concern for the less privileged children in their class.

After 5 years during which nothing really significant had happened, we were very close to closing it down: what was the point of living in a dormitory suburb and carrying on teaching at St. Denis? It was at that point that the call came from the children for a school, the District Council decided in favour and funds were made available. We quickly set up the little school at Epinay, with the full agreement of Fr. Colonin the then diocesan education director, and kept in close contact with him.

I am convinced that this school came into existence (and will continue) only because the Brothers set up a community in Doucettes: without first-hand knowledge of the youngsters and of their living conditions, there was no way the Brothers could have set up a school suited to their needs.

We asked Brother Nicholas to describe this new venture, so he wrote a few articles for the District Circular, and visited several communities. What he had to say was very favourably received by all the Brothers.

Two opportunities occurred for a wider dissemination of information about this kind of project: the meeting of all the Brothers of France at Beauvais in 1980, on the occasion of the Tercentenary of the foundation of the Institute; and the publication of a white paper (Lasallian Educational Action N° 12a & 12b) at the beginning of the Savary period in office.

I would say that a great many Brothers think the Oscar Romero Centre is a very good idea, but only a few have gone to see it for themselves. The influence of Garges is perhaps as a symbol rather than as an exciting shared experience. Few Brothers have voiced re-

servations about Garges. The only word of caution you might hear would be: "What the Brothers are doing in Garges is obviously quite remarkable, but you have to admit that Brothers Nicholas has a wonderful way of describing what's going on there!".

This gift won him the opportunity to take part in a televised programme on Jules Ferry, and to be interviewed by various publications (*La Vie*, *La Croix*...). At present, when Brother Dominic Dubus speaks about Garges, he gets the same kind of reaction both from students (those preparing the Bep at Passy-Buzenval, for example), and from parents. What the Brothers and lay people are doing at the Oscar Romero Centre is a striking example for us all.

In this a way forward for the Brothers in France?

Around 1980, we said to ourselves: "What we need is a dozen places like Garges in the Paris region". And it is true there is an enormous amount to be done in the city suburbs. But now, seeing how difficult it is to get Brothers to want to come to Garges, we think that in any case it would not be possible to recreate elsewhere what we have seen happen at Garges.

I can see two reasons for this: on the one hand, our communities are growing old fast, and many Brothers no longer seem to have the energy to set out on this journey into the unknown; on the other, and this is the main reason, Garges was not a projet set up by a school, but a community's response to local needs. We have other communities in the "Fourth World" (Beauvais, Rheims, St. Ouen l'Aumône...), but a school like Oscar Romero is not necessarily the need that is felt most: there are other needs that arise, like teaching in the home, centres for the unemployed, teaching itinerants to read and write, and so on.

Does this mean to say that there is no future for an experiment such as Garges? No, not at all. First of all, Garges has made some Brothers more inventive, and has given a new impulse to the study of children for whom school is a disaster area.

And then, the fact that Brothers Nicholas is now part of the Education Secretariat is a result of the work he did at Garges. I would also add that the attitude of several of the Academy Inspectors towards the Brothers has improved considerably.

And so really the importance of Garges lies in its symbolic value rather than as a prototype to be reproduced endlessly.

There are no letters that I can quote from young people saying they want to join the Brothers because of a visit to Garges. On the other hand, I know several who have decided to work among young people who

are in trouble. Some young Brothers have told me that going to Garges has made them realise that what the Institute was saying about the poor was not simply window-dressing. I can think of at least two Brothers who, after visiting Garges, decided not to leave the Institute and join some other congregation more obviously concerned for the poor. I must add, however, that they do not see themselves going to work at Garges: they want to work among the poor while remaining open to whatever the future will bring.

Brother Alain Houry

In his Christian schools, John Baptist de La Salle laid great stress on catechesis. Our work as Christian educators in the society of today with all its new and different circumstances finds its inspiration in the Founder.



PRIVATE TECHNICAL COURSE CATHOLIC MISSION N'DJAMENA

The aim of the Technical Course is to give apprentices working for an employer sufficient theoretical and practical knowledge to enable them to be more than unskilled labourers and so have a chance of some promotion.

In Chad society and culture it would seem that there is no such thing as an apprentice: skills are passed on from father to son and not to strangers. Those who work for them are no more than labourers. One youngster said the following about his employer: "He doesn't want to teach us anything. Whenever he has to tune an engine, he sends us off to do

something else so we won't see what he's doing. He hires us to do all the donkey-work".

We began by running courses in motor-mechanics, but we are thinking of branching out into welding, sheet-metal work, electrical work and perhaps carpentry to answer the needs of so many 20 year olds at present working in small workshops. Many of these young people will never get on courses once State technical education starts up again: at present it is at an embryonic stage of development, following its total destruction during the troubles of 1979 to 1982.

The standard of education of these students varies greatly: some are just beginning to read and write, others have finished their schooling. This, of course, poses quite a few problems where the organisation of courses is concerned. Once those who have completed at least part of their secondary schooling are given places on the new State technical courses, the students that remain will all be more or less of the same standard, and at that point we will have to make our courses more down to earth and practical. We have begun to study Chad Arabic in view of these changes.

At the present time, the 64 young people who study at our centre can do some practical work in our workshop, and follow courses in technology, technical drawing, maths and French. We have the use of the facilities of a Catholic school in the afternoon: in the morning, our students work in a garage. We have been able to build a temporary workshop thanks to the help of Misereor, a German charitable organisation which supports our work here.

The 4 Brothers in our community are involved in this work either full-time or part-time. We have the help also of a professionally trained local person, as well as that of a student in his last year of school and who is also a postulant in our community. With him there is also a French postulant who is doing his military service with us as a helper.

We thought that the training we were giving these lads would lead to some small promotion. In practice, however, our attempt to give them a rudimentary qualification has not helped them financially at



all. Not only does their boss not pay them, (recently, one of the lads asked his boss for a wage, and got the answer: "There are so many unemployed people who'd jump at the chance of having your job, and you want a wage!"), but often they have to pay the employer to give them work, hoping to learn something and perhaps pick up a few tips from the rare customers.

The only way for them to improve their situation slightly is to get a job with some organisation, or set up their own garage. One of them has done just that in the course of the year, and things seem to be working out. A group of 5 or 6 who met up as members of the Young Christian Workers, are trying to do the same thing, but up till now have not had much success through lack of customers. Three or four others have already set themselves up in "business", mending motor cycles. Their outlay? A couple of spanners, a screwdriver and a hammer on a rush mat by the side of the road.

We have been working here since January 1986. For the moment we cannot do much more partly because of the war. But the war has to end some day. Why should the industrialisation of this country not start with these craftsmen?

By our work we can do our share in helping all these young workers, and in giving them the hope of a better future, which they so much need. As for our Christians (they make up 2/3 of our students), we encourage them to pray and to think about their responsibility for their society. We encourage them all also to help each other as a matter of course: for example, one of the students who has a higher standard of education is at present helping us to teach his fellow students.

In our two Young Christian Workers groups we try to encourage the members to have this concern for others, and to commit themselves to their service. The District of Douala, to which we belong, has just held a session on the topic of "Development and Evangelisation", exactly the two areas with which we are most concerned. One of the Brothers of our community attended this session.

Our work here is still at the experimental stage, our presence temporary, but that is how we wish to serve others. We feel we are doing the kind of work the present day Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools wishes us to do, and in an area in which the diocese of N'Djaména has asked us to help.

Brother Jean-Pierre Lauby

PRIVATE TECHNICAL COURSE
Catholic Mission
B.P. 456 - N'DJAMENA
CHAD



N'Djamena: The technical course has now been going for three years and caters for young unskilled labourers. These young people are poor, the outcasts of society in a country bravely trying to overcome its extreme poverty.



THE VILLA



Above: The front entrance of the Villa des Jeunes at St. Augustin de Québec. Below: the "little cafe" and "new lands".

The Villa des Jeunes came into existence because the Brothers of the District of Quebec wished to be directly involved in the teaching of religion especially to young people, but also to adults. It goes some way towards answering a very straightforward question: "We can't teach in school any more: what are we going to do?"

What perhaps is not known is that, for the past 25 years, religious communities in Quebec and Canada have not been directly involved in the day-to-day running of schools. The State has set up a modern educational system which is free, open to all pupils, however far away they may live, and which goes from the kindergarten to the post-secondary level.

Although the State school system is officially Catholic — there is, however, a bill in the pipeline which may soon change all that — and although catechism is taught in all schools (parents can withdraw their children from these lessons on request), the standard of teaching is not particularly high, especially at secondary level, that is, for children between 12 and 17 years of age. What is true also is that there is hardly anywhere where these pupils can seek and obtain further information about their faith, where they can take part in liturgical celebrations which mean something to them, where they can discuss among themselves, with the help of competent and understanding adults, about the problems that face them in present-day society.

The Villa des Jeunes attempts to be just such a place where all these things can go on. It has not found all the answers obviously, but it has been functioning now for more than 10 years, and it is known, appreciated and supported by the bishops of our local Church which includes practically all the people living in and around Quebec, a total of nearly 750,000 people. Although every year the Villa caters for about 12,000 young people and adults, there are still many others who have yet to get to know it.

The Villa has been in existence since 1971. Before that, there was a pastoral centre, running a variety of activities, which the Brothers had set up in the house and grounds of the former St. Foy Juniorate. One can almost say that the Villa des Jeunes already existed then, but under a different name. In fact, when the St.



DES JEUNES

Foy house was sold, all its activities took up where they had left off in the present Villa des Jeunes in October 1971.

The present building had been bought 3 years previously to serve as the new juniorate. It soon became clear, however, that it was no longer possible to run it along juniorate lines: it had become hardly more than a good boarding school. It was closed down for good in June 1971. The Villa des Jeunes was to move in and give the house a new lease of life.

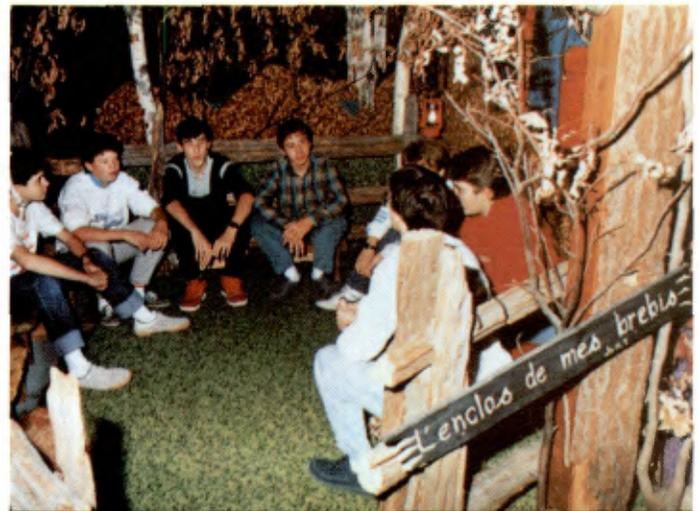
The Villa des Jeunes was never, then, a Brothers' school nor a retreat centre attached to a Brothers' school. In any case, the Brothers of the Quebec District gave up running schools a good 20 years ago. Nor is the Villa a house of formation. Putting it briefly, the Villa is a place which caters for young people (and sometimes for adults), who come for a day, an evening or a weekend to think about their faith. The Villa is available to all schools and youth organisations in the area. As Brother Bruno Blondeau, more than anybody else its founder, wrote in 1975: "The Villa des Jeunes wishes to be considered part of the Church's pastoral ministry to the family and the school on behalf of the Brothers of the Christian Schools". The aims of the Villa have not changed over the years, even if the way it implements them has, in the light of changing circumstances.

As I mentioned earlier, all pupils, whether from private or State schools, have catechism on their timetable, and someone in charge of pastoral care on their staff. If a teacher asks for permission from his headmaster to take a group of pupils to the Villa, it is because he really believes that what they will do there will help to make them want to deepen their understanding of their faith, to witness to it, and possibly to rediscover it. All the groups that come to us during the week are accompanied by teachers, mostly lay, who trust us. Without them, we would have no way of making contact with schools.

Since 1978, a completely new team has been running the Villa des Jeunes. A Brother has been withdrawn from teaching in a State school and he has been joined by two lay colleagues — lay, because there were no Brothers available, and also in order to form a



Villa des Jeunes: Above: "the garden"; Below: "the pen of my sheep", and "Jacob's Well".



team which reflected a wider spectrum of life-style and vocation. If so much trouble was taken over forming a new team, it was because a study made by some Brothers connected with the Villa showed that the project must at all costs continue. The Brothers as a group supported it. So it was with their moral backing that the new team set to work in September 1978. This team included also another Brother who was more concerned with working with adults, and a Capuchin priest who was also chaplain to the community. Since those days, there have been additions to the team: there is now a third Brother, and, at least for this year, two last-year theology students from Laval University. The Brothers' community at the Villa occupies a large part of the building, and is made up of Brothers, several of whom are retired, who either on a full-time or part-time basis, form an important back-up team for those running the youth programmes: they see to the catering, maintenance and repairs, air conditioning, secretarial work, accounts, etc.

So there are two sets of staff at the Villa des Jeunes: one set, made up of Brothers, lay people and a priest, run the youth programmes; the other set form a community, made up of Brothers who run the youth programmes and Brothers who constitute the back-up team for the Villa.

Quite recently, in December 1983, the Villa produced a brochure full of information for those wanting to use its facilities. It has to be said, however, that, while groups have to be charged a certain amount, their contribution makes up only about 20% of the annual running costs, and the District has to provide the rest.

In the paragraphs that follow, I shall reproduce in full what the brochure says, as I think it describes accurately what goes on at the Villa.

Villa des Jeunes: "Elias's cave" and "Peter's boat".



AIMS:

Through its work, the Villa des Jeunes wishes to share in the pastoral work of the Church, especially in its ministry of teaching religion to young people.

It affords a service tailored to the needs of group leaders, parents and religion teachers who ask for help.

Its facilities are also available to adult groups who come to deepen their faith.

ACTIVITIES:

- Week-day days of recollection for secondary school pupils;
- preparation for Confirmation days;
- evenings or weekends to re-examine basics;
- getting-back-to-basics days for adult groups;
- 24 hours of silence and meditation;
- running special days in schools or in the parish;
- hiring out facilities to groups involved in pastoral work.

Sessions are normally run by the Villa des Jeunes team who organise and adapt them to the specific needs of groups.

GENERAL APPROACH:

We assume that the pupils that come to us have the faith and wish to strengthen it. We suggest topics for reflection and offer them activities suited to their age. In this way they are invited to accept the Lord Jesus into their hearts as the Good News for them now.

Means:

- activities, reflection, work in small groups reporting back to the large group
- audiovisual presentations, films, playlets, etc.
- Services of the Word, Reconciliation services, Mass, Free time.

THE TEAM:

There is a team of qualified experts, which runs the sessions at the Villa des Jeunes, and which is made up of religious, lay people and priests, all appointed by the bishop of the local diocese. A community of religious provides an essential back-up service for the Villa.

THE COMMUNITY:

The Brothers of the Christian Schools run the Villa and give it their support. For them it is a way of continuing the work of teaching the faith to young people begun in 1680 by their Founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle.

THE SETTING:

The Villa stands on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, half-way between Cap Rouge and St. Augustin, in a beautiful and tranquil setting, very conducive to quiet thought, so necessary for growth in faith.

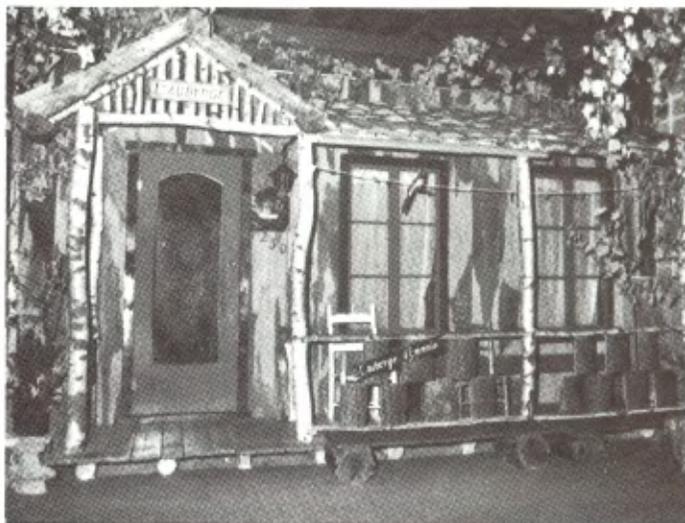
It is a delightful spot, whatever the time of the year.

AN INSPIRING PLACE:

The place where most gatherings take place is quite definitely a large area inside called "The Garden". It is an ideal place for coming together to pray and think: it somehow encourages silence. Its decoration consists of real trees with their leaves, no longer alive but preserved, some remarkable wooden sculptures, and everything is bathed in soft light. Giving on to this central area is a number of small rooms, likewise remarkable for the variety and originality of their decor, and which are used for small group meetings. One of them, called "the Spring", is reserved for personal prayer.

End of brochure.

I stressed earlier that our only contact with schools is through teachers or those in charge of pastoral care: it is only with their cooperation that school groups of boys and girls of secondary school age in particular can come to us on weekdays. This is still true. But, as from this year, there is a whole section of the school population that comes to us for sessions which used to take place in class, and which now take place at the Villa without any school involvement. The children we are talking about are 11 and 12 year olds, in their 6th and last year of primary schooling, and who are preparing for confirmation. They are sent to us by the parish committee in charge of preparing children for confirmation in order to spend some time thinking about the meaning of baptism and of the new sacrament they are going to receive. The Villa team is kept busy with this sort of work for the whole of February, March and most of April. If we allocate so much time to this, it is because the demand is so great: over this period, no fewer than 70 groups, with between 40 and 55 children in each group, will come to us for whole day or evening sessions. Some parishes obtain permission from the headmaster of the schools attended by their children to have a whole day off so that they can spend it, from 9 in the morning to 3 in the afternoon, at the Villa des Jeunes. Other groups come for the afternoon and evening, from 3 to 9, or sometimes till even later, because the day session is fully booked up. Other groups organised by the parish also come in the evening or on Saturday, because they want to ensure that all preparation leading up to the reception of the sacraments takes place outside of a school setting. There is every reason to believe that this latter arrangement will soon



Villa des Jeunes: Above "the Inn at Emmaus" and "the Spring"; Below: "the meeting tent" and "the Inn at Emmaus".





Canada: In addition to the Villa des Jeunes there is also "Rond Point", another youth pastoral scheme which trains groups for the Christian apostolate. The four photos on this page illustrate a variety of meetings which have been held. The work that goes into preparing and running these meetings makes great demands on the organisers.



become the most popular one. Who accompanies these children on these sessions? The parents do, as part of a scheme organised by the parish committee. These parents have to involve themselves personally, specifically and at the cost of a certain amount of effort on their part, in the sacramental preparation of their children: they have to put in a request to the parish, follow closely the preparation of their child, and provide some sort of follow-up afterwards. So from now on, parents are much more involved in their child's preparation for confirmation. This involvement of the parents, however, is something that the Villa des Jeunes had been doing already for some time, by requiring a minimum of parents, at least one per 8 children, to accompany groups following sessions. The decision to do this has proved to be an excellent one: parents have been able to see what kind of religious teaching their children were getting; the parents themselves have found that the occasion became for them a sort of day of recollection (They often say to us: "It was a real retreat for us!"); finally, for us it has become a way of becoming known and appreciated as catechists — we do not advertise, and yet we can only just cope with the demands made on us.

The extensive work we do with the upper end of primary schools is, however, limited to what we have described: most of our work is with the 12 to 17 year olds, an age-range, an expert told us recently, which is in a "pastoral desert" because of the scarcity of facilities available to them.

Of course, the Villa des Jeunes is much more than what I have described. Suffice it to say in conclusion that at the Villa we try to be very flexible, open to new ideas, all the time attempting to adapt to changing circumstances and to stay in touch with the latest developments in pastoral care, all with a view to being able to meet the real needs of young people, needs which are without doubt spiritual.

We follow in the steps of St. La Salle through our concern for teaching religion and the high priority we give to working with young people. It is a work of faith, for none of us can bestow the gift of faith, nor ever fully know the true value of the work we do there. Nor do we have any illusions about the work we do: we realise that what we think is the right approach now may no longer be so in 3 or 5 years to come, and in any case, there might be better and more urgent work to be done then. Finally, it is through love that we try to work and live, and that is what we offer to all the "poor of heart".

Brother Florent Gaudreault,
Villa des Jeunes,
Director

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG FARMERS BASE GROUPS

I. WHERE THE EXPERIMENT TOOK PLACE:

MADAGASCAR, 250 kilometres to the south of ANTANANARIVO, capital of the country, in the province of FIANARANTSOA. The area involved includes FIVONDRONANA (SUB-PREFECTURE) AMBOSITRA, FANDRIANA, AMBATOFINANDRAHANA, and extends over 11,025 square kilometres. In some places, the density of population reaches 120 inhabitants per square kilometre.

II. WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE TOOK PART

For 20 years now courses have been offered to young peasant-farmers in the AMBOSITRA region.

These courses are intended mainly for young people who have left school. The reasons for leaving school are varied: some failed to qualify for secondary education, others could not afford the fees because parents needed the money for their younger brothers and sisters.

Once these young people return to the bush, they soon forget how to read and write, and have no work. So the courses are designed to help them become aware of their own strength and value as peasant-farmers.

Initially the experiment consisted in running courses for 3 whole days in the villages. These courses were essentially practical, but they also tried to instill self-confidence in those taking part, give them something to work for, in a word, make them proud again of being peasant-farmers. This, of course, is opposed to current thinking which considers agricultural work menial and with no future in it.

In conclusion, one could define these courses as an attempt to help young people and young adults, male and female, who find it difficult to come to terms with society, because their family or their school did not prepare them properly, and failed to give them self-confidence.

These courses have been successful in giving some hope to certain families for whom life in the bush was synonymous with being poor and unwanted.

III. THE NEW EXPERIMENT: SETTING-UP BASE GROUPS

The work begun in these village courses can lead to the formation of permanent village groups which can come to grips with local economic and social conditions, and begin to control them.

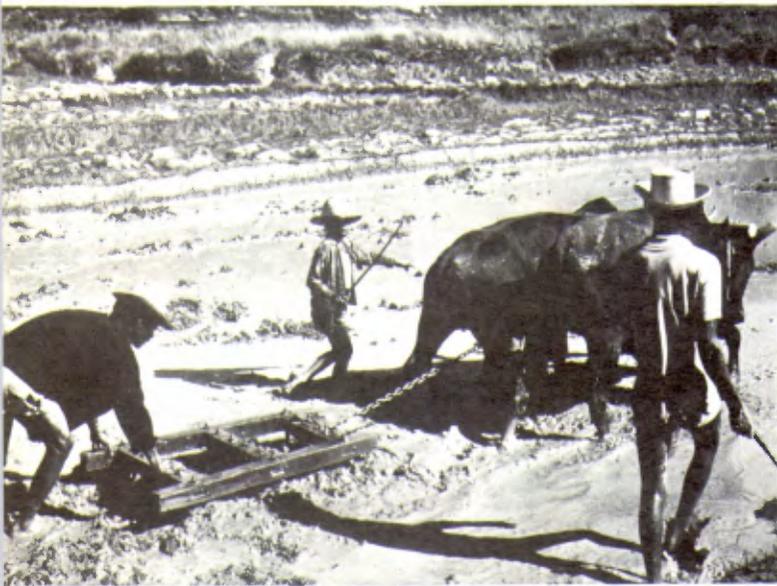
a) *Setting up the first village base groups.*

An opinion poll organised by the Social Coordinating Group of Ambositra and conducted among the organisers of village courses, leads us to believe that a fair amount of good work has been done over the last 20 years. Fr. Chandon-Moet, a sociologist who was asked to draw some conclusions from the poll, said that we could extend our work in some centres.

And so we decided to make a study of local conditions at 5 centres, and provide the necessary stimulus for the formation of small base groups, consisting of 6 to 8 young people, who would take responsibility for their own future, and who would remain in direct contact with the organisers at the Analabe centre. The future of these young people would be in their own hands.

Ambositra: Small gardens, the work of base groups.





Ambositra: A demonstration of the use of a harrow in rice cultivation.

b) *What is a base group?*

A base group is a community which enables its members to take an active part in decision making in areas which are very important for their lives. Its members are thus able to achieve greater autonomy and strengthen their mutual dependence.

We want young people to make decisions about their own future development, which is the key to their survival. Our role in this will be to point out the possible choices they have, and to encourage them to implement these choices in the areas of culture, food and agriculture.

"*Involvement, Autonomy, Solidarity*" are the key words for the future development of these groups which will be responsible for their own lives.

c) *Organisation and methods:*

— **Base groups and courses:** The setting up of base groups does not mean the end of courses, for base groups are the logical outcome of the work done on those courses. In fact the majority of those belonging to the base groups have followed or are following these courses.

For the last 4 years, the Analabe centre has concentrated on setting up village base groups for young farmers. At present, there are about 50 groups in existence.

— **Methods:** It is essential for groups to be capable of organising their own development programmes in the light of local needs. The organisers from Analabe will help them to do this.

Base Groups work out what they intend to do in the course of the agricultural year, as individuals and as a community. When the organisers make their rounds, they will assess the work of the group

on the basis of its plan for the year. The organisers ensure that there is a follow-up.

— **Organisation: developments:** Village base groups can join up with others in the same area, as for example, in the Andina and the Fenoarivo/Fandriana region. At Fenoarivo, 48 families were able to build without outside help a 60 metre long foot-bridge over the Mania river. They also launched a scheme to grow potatoes.

There are various other problems being solved by this kind of cooperation between base groups on a regional level, like for example:

- the destruction of dykes in rice fields by torrential rain;
- repairing roads and paths;
- forest fires and soil conservation;
- rebuilding houses burnt down by bandits.

We now think that life will improve for everybody in the region as a result of this community work done by the base groups, and which is based on traditional Malagasy wisdom, summed-up in the word "Fihavanana" (friendship, brotherhood).

— **Role of the Organisers:** organisers must go out to the villages and surrounding areas, and:

stimulate:

people and the way they think;

popularise:

— the use of selected seed, suitable farming methods, suitable livestock, suitable technology and veterinary and anti-tuberculosis medicines.

Co-ordinate:

— small village groups and agricultural help.

The organisers work in teams of 8 (1 Brother and 7 "monitors"):

- 4 monitors for the courses and the follow-up in the bush;
- 1 monitor for secretarial work;
- 1 technology advisor for the base groups;
- 1 monitor in charge of audiovisual work and driving.

All the organisers take part in the setting up of miniprojects, at least 2 or 3 times a year during the village courses, and each one is responsible for 2 centres.

The team of organisers meets every 2 months:

1. to share their experiences and to plan for the following 2 months.
2. To think about the Christian dimension of what is being done and of what is being planned.
3. To produce technical literature in Malagasy. This is a long term project, begun 10 years ago. What we have done so far is quite impressive.

When we ourselves went on our most recent course, one of our main concerns was to become acquainted with Malagasy customs and traditions, their Wise Sayings, all of which could be useful in forming new groups.

The knowledge of local customs is extremely important as it is often they that constitute the main obstacles to trying out something new. In the face of technical progress the local people will often say: "To change your water-hole is the same as breaking your water pitcher", or "if you change your river-crossing you'll be eaten by the crocodiles".

This same desire to get to know local customs better led us to study together the "kifanomba" and the "Farimbonasa", which describe the traditional communal rice farming and harvesting which is tending to disappear nowadays.

And so, we are trying to recreate this traditional country approach of working together, at a time when economic difficulties have tended to replace this community spirit by the search for individual self-sufficiency.

IV. RESULTS SO FAR

What we are attempting to do is as follows:

- to encourage positive growth in groups.
- To force groups to try, at least initially, to work out together their problems and difficulties.
- To explain technical literature connected with what they are growing at the time, for example, pruning and looking after tomato plants.
- To help them find good quality seed and anti-tuberculosis medicines, both of which things are a sine qua non for success.
- Finally to find somewhere for them to sell their produce, should the need arise.

V. THE LINK BETWEEN THESE EXPERIMENTS & THE FOSTERING OF VOCATIONS: THE JUNIORATE AT ANALABE.

Vocations come to the Analabe juniorate in particular from young farmers who come to our village courses. They tend to be between 18 and 25 years of age. They are not well educated but their high I.Q enables them to make fast progress in their studies.

Recruitment takes place at the regional centres with the help of priests who work in the bush, nuns and monitors.

Conditions for admission:

— the young men have to attend 2 recollection sessions per year. They also have to have completed successfully their primary education. They must have attended village courses for 2 consecutive

years, and have become involved in Christian youth movements. They must also have been accompanied for 2 years by a priest, nun or monitor in contact with the Director of the Juniorate.

Aims of this juniorate: to educate the young farmer without destroying his links with home; to give him a chance to think about his vocation, and to become sufficiently intellectually mature to be able to develop it.

In a word, it is a juniorate for country people. Our job is to train young people who, as Brothers, will be able later on to work in a whole variety of Institute apostolates: working with country people, farming, teaching in vocational schools, taking charge of youth movements, etc.

At the present moment, there are 2 young Brothers who went through the juniorate who are beginning their apostolate, 1 who is in the novitiate, 2 who are postulants. There are 4 young men in the juniorate.

**AGRICULTURAL CENTRE,
Analabe B.P. 20,
306 Ambositra,
MADAGASCAR**

A demonstration in flattening soil in rice fields.



THE UNIVERSITY HOSTEL «VILLA SAN GIUSEPPE»

The modern buildings of the university hostel called the "Villa San Giuseppe" nestle among the trees on a hill overlooking Turin. The building has two wings: one was built at the beginning of this century and was completely renovated about 10 years ago; the other, a much larger building, was built in 1960 and modernised last year. The students' rooms occupy three floors, and almost every student has a very comfortable single room complete with shower. The ground floor is given over to a dining-room, library, chapel and to rooms used for meetings and games.

When it was first built, the hostel was used to lodge boarders studying at the San Giuseppe school. On November 7th 1961, it opened its doors to university students. At present there are 130 students staying there.

This is the maximum number our university hostel can cope with, and every year it's the same clamour by 600 students for the 30 or so rooms that have become available.

The choice of students for admission to the hostel is based on a very clear set of rules, mostly to do with the personal attitudes of the students. Each student is interviewed before a decision is made, and is made to understand what he is committing himself to by wanting to stay at the hostel, and what his responsibilities will be.

At that point it is up to the student to make the choice. He has to accept himself for what he is, with his weaknesses and his strengths and experiences, and above all he must want to improve his quality of life as a person.

SERIOUS STUDIES AND CLOSE FOLLOW-UP

One thing the hostel insists on is that students should take their studies very seriously. It is now established practice that students are accepted only from faculties with a demanding programme of studies, and which insist on high standards. During the course of the academic year a close watch is kept on students' work: when they are successful, everyone celebrates; when there is a problem, the solution becomes everyone's concern. At the

end of every academic year, especially when it comes to signing on at the hostel for the following year, the assessment of the year's work is a very detailed one: it is not simply a question of looking at results, but of trying to discover the reasons and motives which led both to success and to the missed or neglected opportunities. The future of the student as a member of the hostel depends very much on the results of this assessment.

And so there is no room at the hostel for a student who does not want to work. Nor is there any room for anyone who is not prepared to put himself out for others, who does not want to be part of the community, or to get on with others, and who is not convinced that there is more to learn from living with others than by oneself. Those who go along with this kind of community life — and they are very numerous — soon find themselves part of a very lively scene, which is very friendly, where one can find more solutions than one can cope with for one's problems; and which is bubbling over with ideas, plans and hope...

MEN AND WOMEN STUDENTS

As part of a policy to make life in the hostel a little more natural and less narrow, about 20 women students are admitted also. This has been going on for about 15 years now. The women students are not a group apart, cut off from the others with their own timetable and activities: they are full members of the student body, respected and respecting others, sharing in the common desire to make their stay in the hostel an enriching, perhaps unique, but certainly a very rewarding experience.

What binds these 130 students together, what gives them a common purpose and vitality, is the conviction that life must be based on values. That is why we ask the young people who come to us if they are prepared to put themselves out for others, if they believe that working with others in a variety of ways is a way of building up relationships with them, of learning to live in society, of broadening one's outlook, of trying out new things and of coming out of one's shell.

When we ask a student what kind of group or activity has given him support as he grew up, we usually get the worrying answer “none”, or to be perfectly honest, “almost none”.

It is because so many students have lacked support in the past — support they would have welcomed — that we consider it of the greatest importance that they share actively in the life of the group: first, by listening to what is said without comment; and then by learning what the problems are and acquiring a greater ability to formulate solutions which will enable them to play an active role in the running of the group.

While, on the one hand, there are those who do not understand the value of committing oneself, or consider it too much trouble, we find, on the other hand, that the vast majority of young people are attracted by the idea of living together with other young people, and sharing in their sporting, cultural, religious and recreational activities as an enriching background for their studies, their primary concern.

OLD HANDS AND FRESHERS

From the moment a new student arrives he finds company: he finds in fact that he is the centre of attention, as the arrival of a new batch of students each year is the occasion for a “Freshers Fair” which marks their ad-

In boarding schools, time has to be set aside for students to relax and learn to live together. Sports and other student activities help people to cope with other areas of education.



mission to the hostel and their new community which welcomes and celebrates their arrival in the traditional student way.

And so each student, from the moment he crosses the threshold of the hostel, finds he belongs to a community which is very interested in him, an interest shown both by its uproarious welcome, its constant and attentive concern for him that he should never feel isolated, and by helping him to sort out problems in his work and life in general, problems which are now becoming more grown-up. It was the idea of the “old hands” to include in the House Regulations what is now standard practice, namely: “Older students have a duty to help and advise younger students”. It was their idea to act as advisors to the younger students, and they organise some quite demanding courses especially for the freshers.

Sporting activities are another good way to make young people feel that they belong. There is a very energetic sports committee in the hostel which organises a great many different activities in which four traditional groups compete: two engineering faculty groups, one medicine faculty group, and a fourth including students from all the other faculties. For years now there has been an annual — and fierce — competition for a cup, which is awarded to the overall winners of 18 separate competitions which include anything from football to skiing, from high-jump to table-tennis, from long distance walking to a grand relay race... Results are important, but its main value lies in offering students a chance to meet one another, learn the art of organisation, find an incentive to react against laziness which easily becomes apathy, and a chance to get some exercise after all those hours sitting down and studying.

Apart from ensuring the smooth running of the university studies each student has chosen, the hostel undertakes also to arrange cultural occasions, which while adding to what the students learn at university, also complement it.

Since the majority of the students staying in the hostel are studying technological subjects, cultural activities tend to centre on the humanities and religion, and are led by first-class teachers.

And so the hostel organises once a week the “Monday Cultural Evening”, and students meet either in groups or all together. Topics chosen are either dealt with in one evening or spread over several. Sometimes students give talks to the whole group on topics they are particularly familiar with.

The treatment of moral and religious topics is well received, and familiarity with these questions is considered to be a very important part of a young man’s education.

It is in particular the oldest students who give the impetus and the greatest support for these and many other activities. Faced with the imminent prospect of going out

into society all on their own, they feel more acutely than ever the need for even more preparation as they see all the traditional props disappearing — parents, university, college, the constant presence of friends — and they realise they will now have to be responsible for themselves, and that as independent individuals, they will have to make decisions about careers and work and a whole series of choices, and be prepared, in a sense, to face loneliness.

Year after year, it is they in particular who put forward and then discuss with all the others suggestions for the following year's programme and commitments. It is they also who formulate the terms of admission or re-admission to the university hostel for the following year.

THEIR MODEL MIGHT EVEN BE ULYSSES

The intensity of the programme they devise makes all the students so committed and involved in such a variety of activities, that they take in their stride problems which seem enormous, very serious and often impossible to resolve in a society that is apathetic and lacking in ideals. That is why, apart from the studies which benefit greatly from mutual help and competition, there are other activities, organised specifically for the town, and in which a great many students involve themselves on the suggestion of others.

All the students, moreover, show they have a surprising capacity for being hospitable and for organising when the occasion demands, as for example, at the opening of the academic year or on the "Feast of Friendship", run by them with great flair and efficiency.

The way in which the programme is devised, and the whole thrust of its activities demands action, dynamism, the acquisition of vast stores of new knowledge, and an enthusiastic search for daring conquests and a bright, new and demanding future. The one to imitate in all this could very well be Ulysses, the helmsman steering out towards the immense horizon; or a sailing boat, pitching and yawing as the mainsail responds to each new gust of wind, and which an over-rational helm fails to counteract.

Of course, an adventurous boat can run risks that prudence and ancient wisdom would have easily foreseen and avoided. But on the other hand, each age has its faults, the fruit of its own impulsive generosity, and it deserves our respect: it is the age when young people see how far they can go, flex their muscles and discover for themselves how poisonous fruit can be in all its various guises.

It is understandable, if a little worrying for us, to see young people making these mistakes, born of inexperience and a lack of inhibition in their curiosity, so long as

they spring from an excess of youthful energy and an exuberant quest for knowledge.

That is why mistakes, exaggerated behaviour and sometimes thoughtless and wrong acts are discussed in front of the whole group, and lessons are drawn for the future. No one is ever rejected on account of some fault so long as the fault can be seen as part of the growing-up process.

A skid, like a sudden squall that flattens everything, can be very upsetting, but we felt it can be brought under control if the will to do so is there.

What is more difficult to put up with, on the other hand, are those lazy people who are completely apathetic about the life they lead. Those who agree to everything for form's sake and then do not keep their promises or fulfil their commitments are totally out of place with us and are asked to go elsewhere.

TOGETHER...

And so each day is spent, each year with its varied activities goes by against a background of awareness of things and of close educational involvement leading to commitment. Everyone is constantly urged to check whether his lifestyle is conducive to growth or whether he is simply marking time. Especially in June, towards the end of the academic year, each person is asked to reexamine his own position, and ask himself whether it is beneficial for him to stay in the community he has chosen to live in, or whether it might not be better to move on to somewhere else to widen his experience, and have a change. He is asked to make up his mind definitely about whether signing up for another year would be a good thing for him. Figures show that every year the vast majority of the students choose to continue being part of this experiment which continues to grow and to involve people more and more intimately.

We could also say lots of things about the daily timetable, about how the week is organised, where the students come from, which courses they prefer, their results and the means they take to achieve them, the importance given to religious values, the time given for personal reflection and religious practice, the steady growth of mutual help and friendship, and so many other things.

However, a much better and much more positive solution would be, if friends and those interested in seeing the marvellous way these young people are so energetically preparing for their future, were to accept our invitation to come and see how we live from day to day, and to sample the atmosphere in which we pursue our work.

Brother Igino

AN EXPERIMENT IN PASTORAL CARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE PARISH

This is an experiment which the District of Rome has been running for several years. A Brother has been appointed to do this work full-time, and he is completely financed by the District.

1° Young people involved in this experiment

The young people involved at the moment are between 14 and 19, at secondary school, but the experiment is spreading to university students.

We are not dealing here with pupils from our own schools. This experiment is directed at various neglected areas of Sicily where pastoral care is more or less non-existent, and where children never go to Church once they have made their first communion and have been confirmed. At present, there are 11 groups in 5 different areas.

2° Aims of the experiment

The aim of the experiment is to take up the religious education of young people where others have left off at a time when they especially need it. The need for this stems from a variety of reasons but mostly from a lack of well-trained catechists.

3° Methods and organisation

The method we have adopted is to form small groups — 12 to 16 in a group at the most, and with everyone of more or less the same age. These groups meet once a week.

We have worked out a programme for them which avoids as much as possible what they more or less learned the last time they were taught religion. Instead it tries to help them see their present lives in the light of the Gospel.

Depending on the maturity of the group, we organise prayer meetings which are really sessions in which we teach the young people to pray, using even a simplified form of the Founder's method, as well as appropriate songs.

We suggest various things the group can do, like



setting up an exhibition of material to do with the missions or vocations, or organising games for younger children.

In addition to going to these meetings, each week these young people are given a photocopied leaflet which contains the text of the Gospel for the following Sunday, some suggestions for reflection and prayer, and information about the Founder, the Institute and about what other groups are doing.

Another thing we have done recently is to provide them with a small travelling library containing pamphlets written especially for young people. There are about sixty of these pamphlets (LDC Publications), dealing with problems encountered by young people. These have proved to be very popular.

During the Summer holidays, in a house up in the mountains, which has been made available to us, we organise camps for young people from a variety of groups. For those interested, we even organise prayer camps and work camps.

We suggest to the older students to follow a course for group organisers. This course has now been going on for 3 years, and about 30 young people from various groups follow it. It consists of a series of weekend meetings throughout the year and Summer courses. Topics covered include teaching methodology, psychology, Holy Scripture and catechetics. Skills associated with running youth groups are considered very important. Such skills include organising games, discussion groups, singing and all kinds of meetings.

A number of young people who are following this course are already involved in the parishes, teaching religion and other subjects to younger children and in the Summer, they help with the running and organisation of the camps.

4° Group organisers

At the present time, this work can go ahead thanks to the support of the District which has assigned a Brother full-time to it. In practice, however, of the 11 existing groups, only 2 have adults capables of running them. As for the other groups which are spread out over 4 small towns, it is a Brother who has to be there once a week. As the children grow older and more and more groups spring up, so the work-load increases. We must not omit to mention all the Brothers who help to run the courses for group organisers and the Summer camps. Without them none of this would be possible.

The courses for group organisers should produce in time a sufficient number of them for local needs.

5° The background of the experiment

Apart from a Catholic scout troop attached to our school at Acireale, and which, after 20 years of exist-

ence, has its own set of organisers and needs no outside support, all the other groups have been going only a few years and cannot yet stand on their own two feet.

Originally these groups were part of a recruitment drive to find vocations for our juniorate. However, after the first two years (1982/83) of trying to make a go of it, the juniorate was closed down, as we had reached the logical conclusion that it was pointless trying to foster vocations when the children involved had no background of pastoral care. Another thing we were very much aware of was the crying need for catechists and teachers able to provide pastoral care to the young people of Sicilian towns, towns which had suddenly moved from a peasant economy into a completely new socio-economic situation for which neither the clergy nor catechists were prepared.

It certainly was not easy to get this scheme off the ground, mostly because we had no experience of this kind of work. But it is a type of work which seems to answer a present day need and to be very much in line with present trends in the Institute. There is a precedent in our own history in the "Seminary for country schoolmasters"...

6° The number of young people involved

About 150 secondary school children have been directly involved. About 20 of them, from among those who are following the course for group organisers and catechists, run their own groups of younger children. There are about 190 children in these groups.

7° The connection between this experiment and fostering vocations

As has already been said, this experiment arose from a need to recruit vocations. Although subsequently it was directed towards the pastoral care of children in general, its connection with the fostering of vocations still remains.

For example, in all our teaching of religion we speak about God's call to each of us; about the different ways of answering that call (becoming catechists, running work camps, following the courses for group organisers), pointing out that this involves sacrifices and being available to answer that call. We speak about the Founder and his work, and we suggest to those who are more able and willing to become teachers.

Brother Giuseppe Calabretta
Istituto San Luigi - Acireale