

tary who keeps in touch with the various bodies whose task it will be to implement the decisions that are taken.

### Regional schemes

Over five years ago, the scheme to start a private school was launched. The committee that was formed at the time, studied the possibility of the scheme, the steps that would have to be taken, the size of premises and the number of staff that would be needed, the underlying policy of the school and its feasibility. The school was opened in 1987. It is a Lasallian school with all that implies: collaboration between Brothers and lay staff, stress on religious aspects and vocation, help for the underprivileged, etc. The Quebec Ministry of Education sanctioned the scheme and helps with the funding.

The organisation of District retreats and participation in them is another area where there has been collaboration. Brothers from Spain, France, Mexico and elsewhere have been invited to direct these inter-District retreats.

Many Brothers have taken part in a session on De La Salle and his first Brothers as part of their ongoing formation programme. The idea of this was to stimulate them to become more actively involved in working with young people. The session was run by Br. Patrice Marey. The second part, which lasted four days, provided a great deal of new biological, psychological, sociological and spiritual information that has a bearing on commitment to the service of the Church and of society. The fruits of this session can be seen already. Other similar sessions took place in 1989 under the direction of the Regional Coordinator of France, Br. Jean Marie Thouard.

Another session is planned for 1991.

Another session was centred on the Bible and was run by Brother Theophile Penndu. He concentrated in particular on the miracles of Jesus. All who took part found much inspiration in his faith and energy.

In spite of the fact that our own needs are considerable, we have contributed both money and personnel to missionary Districts. A similar contribution has been made to the Generalate where there are five Canadian Brothers working at present, and to other less well-off Districts throughout the Institute.

Our four French-speaking Districts have recently been studying how to make better use of all their resources. Is the solution to maintain the Districts as they are and give the Region greater powers? Or is it to join up and form two Districts, an east and a west one? Or is the solution to create one single District out of the four existing ones?

All these options have many advantages, but these advantages are not of equal value. We have to make a choice and if necessary make all the changes that this entails. The choice we make depends on a number of factors: on what we want to concentrate on; on the values that we hold dear; on the possibility of working increasingly more with young people; on what we want the Institute to be in French Canada; and on many other factors. All this will entail also bringing about a change in our thinking so as to increase our efficiency within the bounds of our existing resources.

On October 20th and 21st 1990, the four District Councils will hold a special meeting to discuss the whole question of restructuring the Canadian French-speaking Districts. Districts will then be informed of the conclusions reached at this meeting.

**Br. Gabriel Dube, FSC**

**HAITI:** Brothers from the Region of Canada are doing marvellous work on this large island in the West Indies, spreading the Gospel and improving the quality of life of the local population.



# INTERDEPENDENCE IN THE LASALLIAN REGION OF CENTRAL EUROPE (RELEC)

The Lasallian Region of Central Europe is a somewhat misleading name since events of the past year have made us more aware of the historical and geographical complexities of terms such as **central Europe** or **eastern Europe**. But since the formation of Regions in the Institute after 1976, the following six districts form the Lasallian Region known as **RELEC**: Holland, South Belgium, North Belgium, Germany, Austria and Poland. The political events since December 1989 allow RELEC a much closer relation with what has now been designated in the Institute as the **Delegation of Czech-Slovakia**, and the foundations in **Hungary** and **Romania** which form part of the district of Austria.

RELEC is thus a Region of startling heterogeneity with each country having its distinctive language and culture. Communication remains a constant problem. Even though French remains the common language for Brothers of a certain age and formation, it is less known among the young Brothers. Nevertheless, the progress noted **by the Visitors themselves** in recent RELEC reports has been attributed to the better knowledge gained by scheduling the annual meeting in different countries. Better understanding has been promoted at all levels by a number of common activities which can be grouped around the 1986 General Chapter's concept of **interdependence**.

## Interdependence at the level of structures...

The already noted differences in languages, cultures, countries, school legislation and so on have led RELEC to see the role of their **Regional** as that of a coordinator. His "job description" indicates that he "is the link between the Region and the General Council, he invites the Brothers Visitor to the annual meeting or other meetings, develops **cooperation** and **interdependence** within the Region. As the

meetings take place in turn in different districts, the Brother Visitor of the place where the meeting is held holds the presidency for that meeting.

## Interdependence in sharing study sessions and retreats...

Brothers from both Belgium Districts attended various kinds of sessions organised by the French Region:

— Sessions for Brothers coming to retirement age;

— Sessions organised by the **Centre Lasallien Français** to help form others in Lasallian educational principles and in Lasallian spirituality. As a result, it has been possible to open a similar Lasallian Centre in **Ciney**, for the continuing formation of Brothers and many Lasallian teachers.

A number of Brothers from the Region have worked on a number of significant Lasallian pedagogical activities e.g. the document on The Characteristics of a Lasallian School, and the preparation of the Ostia conference on The Lasallian School in Europe 1993.

## Interdependence and missionary activity...

All the RELEC countries have a long history of missionary involvement. In his opening address to the historical meeting of many of our Eastern Europe Brothers in Vienna in July 1990, Brother Superior noted the extraordinary involvement of the Brothers from Czechoslovakia after it was made a separate District in 1920. Even today, the majority of our CSFR Brothers are working outside their native land. The German Brothers were great missionaries both to Asia and to the near East, the Belgians in Af-

rica, especially in Zaire and Rwanda, the Dutch in the Carribean at Aruba and also in Africa. The Austrian District, the foundation District for the foundations in Hungary, Bohemia, Slovakia, Poland and Romania, sent many of its young Brothers to South America after 1938. The Polish District, blessed by many vocations in the past 25 years, has already prepared and sent Brothers to Africa and is preparing for missionary activity in Russia.

It is not surprising that RELEC is heavily involved in missionary activity through the Brothers who are still working in various lands. At home, each District has an active missionary secretariat to support the work in other lands through fund-raising and other activities. Belgium North and Belgium South have their own signed conventions with Zaire and Rwanda and support them in a variety of ways through money, medicine, and bursaries for studies. Germany in recent years has made substantial allocations to the Institute's Sharing Fund, as well as finding regular help for our Brothers in Burma and the Holy Land. As Brother Superior commented in the July meeting in Vienna already referred to, the Austria District has been the great benefactor of our Brothers in eastern Europe during the long years of persecution, helping with money and medicine and supportive visits.

### Interdependence and the Christian school...

A common problem of the Institute, faced throughout RELEC with the exception of Poland is the ageing of the Brothers and the lack of young Brothers in formation. This has given RELEC a special impetus in seeking to maintain the Christian schools by helping to share our Lasallian heritage with our lay colleagues. As already noted, the situation of the schools in each member country is sufficiently different to make any detailed common policy impossible to implement. But there has been a great deal of activity in involving both Brothers and lay teachers in a deeper study of the religious and pedagogical principles which characterise a Lasallian school. The use of the **Centre Lasallien Français** and the development of the centre at Ciney have already been referred to. Typical of the general policy being pursued throughout RELEC is the following **DECLARATION OF INTENT** by the Brothers of North-Belgium in their District Chapter of 1989.

“By this **DECLARATION OF INTENT**, THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS ADDRESS TO THEIR LAY COLLEAGUES OF CHRISTIAN INSPIRATION A NEW APPEAL to take on posts

of Management and Direction. The appeal is addressed

— to those who live and work with their faith in Jesus Christ;

— to those who are ready to deepen their understanding of the inspiration of De La Salle and the spirit of Christian schools;

— to those who deeply love young people;

— to those who are willing to be fully available to young people.

In the course of their more than three hundred years, the Brothers of the Christian Schools have built up a tradition based on experience, successfully passed on from generation to generation. Such a treasure of educational wisdom is not to be lost: it is a source of wealth for the Church and Society. The Brothers and their collaborators are convinced that they are replying in a just and flexible way to the needs of young people”.

Similar statements have been drawn up by some other RELEC members. There are two elements to be kept in mind. One is the sense of being able to recognise the value of the heritage which we have received: the other is the importance that this tradition can be the foundation for an even greater participation of lay colleagues in the work of Christian Education. This is an even broader concept of **interdependence** which attempts to meet the challenge of **Rule 17: A Shared Mission** where “The Brothers gladly associate lay persons with them in their educational mission... They co-operate in forming Christian teachers. They help them to develop their professional competence and also to become increasingly involved in the work of the Church and in the field of education”.

### Interdependence: “together and by association”

These words from the Brothers' formula of consecration by vow point to a long-established tradition of the Institute. It is part of the uniqueness of the Institute as a lay congregation of men, consecrated to God for the ministry of Christian education. It is the Gospel invitation lived out in a particular way in the service of others. It is marked in these days of an ageing Institute and a dearth of vocations, by a certain quiet urgency among RELEC members to live deeply with that spirit of faith which characterised the foundation and growth of the Institute. “Lord”, De La Salle would have said, “it is **your work**”. This was the spirit of **RELEC** in Vienna in July 1990 where Brothers from Czech-Slovakia and Romania, confessors of the faith who have well merited their retirement, met together to **re-found communities** and **re-launch** their Institute's catechetical mission. **FLOREAT!**

# THE REGION OF IRELAND/GREAT BRITAIN, MALTA

## 1. Interdependence with other Regions

### *Sharing of personnel and finance:*

There is a large number of Brothers (100 or more) from the Region working in other Regions of the Institute: the Generalate, Bethlehem University, Nigeria, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Perú, South Africa, Papua New Guinea, United States of America.

A number of these Brothers do not contribute financially to their own Region: hence this represents a considerable investment by the Region in the Mission of the Institute in other parts of the world.

The Region contributes financial aid on a regular basis to Initial Formation in other sectors of the Institute.

Fund-raising in schools is organised to provide help for other Regions and to sensitise the students to the needs of their brothers and sisters in other countries. The students are made aware also of the international character of the Institute because a lot of this money collected goes towards Secoli mini-projects.

### *Cultural and Apostolic co-operation:*

The Region organises summer Third World projects for volunteers. The volunteers are students and lay teachers from the Brothers' and other schools in the Region. The groups are organised and lead by Brothers. One Brother works full-time in planning and organising the projects. The purpose is to sensitise the students to conditions and needs in the Third World by being present there and sharing in the life of the people and working alongside them in the projects. Many students return realising that they have received much more than they have given. The projects take place during the summer vacation and consist in helping to construct classrooms and other buildings. The hope is that the students will be encouraged to become increasingly sensitive to needs at home and in other countries.

The scheme began five years ago. Some students as a result of the experience have returned to give a year or more of service. This year 1990 there were groups in Togo, Kenya and Jamaica. The projects

are organised in co-operation with Brothers in the other Regions.

A number of Brothers from the Region go to other Regions for study, and conversely the Region welcomes many Brothers who come for study or to learn English. The Region has given hospitality to a number of young Brothers who have come to learn English as a part of their Formation programme.

## 2. Interdependence within the Region

There are many courses, retreats organised on a Regional basis. There has also been sharing of resources in the formation of lay teachers. Formation of the Brothers also takes place on a Regional basis, with postulancy and novitiate situated in different Districts and personnel responsible come from the Region rather than from one or other sector of the Region. There is a difficulty, because of differing school systems in the three sectors, in sharing personnel at the level of apostolic activity.

There is sharing also in the care of the infirm and elderly Brothers.

## 3. Interdependence in the future

The decrease in number of vocations makes it difficult to continue with the long tradition of missionary activity coming from the Region. Nevertheless even in recent years Brothers have continued to give at least some few years of their lives to work outside the Region. This is encouraged. It is the intention of the Region to continue to open out to the other Regions of the Institute in whatever ways are possible. This will become more necessary in Europe in the near future; but it is not the intention of the Region to confine development in interdependence to Europe alone.

Within the Region interdependence will become more necessary particularly in formation and the pastoral care of the young. The Region continues to study how best to tackle the question of the pastoral ministry of vocations and initial formation. The pastoral care of the young is common to all cultures and co-operation here is easier since it depends less on differences in cultural and educational systems.

# INTERDEPENDENCE A RELATIONSHIP OF FRATERNITY THROUGH JUSTICE

Dominic Berardelli, F.S.C.

Since our last General Chapter, we have used the term INTERDEPENDENCE frequently. It has found a favored niche in the Institute's vocabulary.

But, while it is a recognizable word to most of us, its meaning remains somewhat mysterious. It is a term and a concept which needs a great deal of reflection in order to understand exactly what it means and how it functions.

The meaning of the word INTERDEPENDENCE is quite simple. It implies a close relationship, more or less formal, having for its object a mutual gain between several parties; it also implies a "dependent-reciprocity" through association. For our Institute the operative words are "mutual gain" and "dependent reciprocity".

The 41st General Chapter's use of this word, in practically every instance, conveys this sense of cooperation for a reciprocal good, for example:

**Community Mission:** "Each Brother *exercises* his apostolate as a member of a community *by whom* he knows he is accepted, supported and entrusted with his mission (Rule 16).

**The Region:** "Sending Brothers to the Young Churches or to sectors that are lacking in vocations, together with sharing of material or spiritual resources, constitutes a most significant form that regional cooperation can take. (Rule 127 H).

**The District:** "The District is called to establish and to maintain relationships with other Districts or Delegations and to strengthen those which unite it with the center of the Institute. (Rule 124).

These are but a few examples to show the prevailing concepts of cooperation and relationship coming out of our last Chapter.

The several years following the Chapter have wit-

nessed a strong movement among the Brothers to respond and enliven the call to interdependence. This has been done on a personal as well as a Community and District level. Brothers have been more open to share their talents in areas of greater need and to work with people who have more urgent needs (Rule 19a). Districts, on the other hand, have shared their resources of material goods and, more importantly, personnel, with greater openness and generosity (Rule 139). The spirit of interdependence among the Regions and solidarity within the Institute, is growing and strengthening.

However, it seems to me that the fulness of interdependence is yet to be effected. Past efforts, as good and meritorious as they are, basically reflect a "one-direction" movement within the Institute. The *mutual* benefits, for both the giver and the receiver, have not kept pace with the singular benefit achieved by the recipients.

Today the attention and emphasis of the Institute is focused on the issues of poverty and justice for peace. Interdependence must be intricately interwoven into these issues and truly cannot exist outside of them. But, interdependence must be allowed to grow and nurture only in the atmosphere of mutuality. Without mutuality, we run a great risk of intensifying a division between the rich and the poor, the "haves" and the "have-nots".

Donor Districts/Regions/communities and institutions must exercise prudence and caution in giving their donations. The donor must take care to protect the integrity and self-respect of the recipient. In supporting projects of a larger variety, agencies (and the Institute, SECOLI, Regions) must take care to avoid any "westernizing influence" or harming local culture in a rush for growth and efficiency. While the

advancement of peoples is meritorious, caution must be exercised to promote self-sufficiency and the protection of human dignity. Questions always arise and need answers. Are bigger buildings better? Do large academic institutions answer the needs of a specific sector of people? What should be the guidelines for construction of community and formation houses in developing sectors of the Institute? How can donors meet immediate needs while also enabling long range planning?

Recipient Districts/Regions/communities and institutions must exercise prudence and caution in accepting donations. Foremost in the mind of the receiver must be the basic respect for his self-dignity in accepting material gifts. Answers to questions must also be found by the recipients. Is there a real and clear need for a request for funding? Does acceptance of foreign aid make us more dependent upon others or does it assist us towards self-sufficiency? Does our expansion create a higher status of living and place us on a different economic level from the people we serve? Do our "bigger and better" institutions foster a mentality among the Brothers that "the more we have, the better we can do our work"? What, *REALLY*, can we do to "reimburse" a donor for his gift?

As I offer these personal reflections on giving and receiving through a spirit of interdependence, I also admit a paucity of answers to the questions posed. Interdependence and collegiality among all the local communities of De La Salle Brothers is the richness of an international Institute. How, then, can Brothers from western countries, rich in academic and technological resources, receive the much needed gifts of relational resources, community and hospitality which are the riches of our African and Asian Brothers. How, too, can Brothers in the developed world learn about solidarity and the preferential option for the poor lived so forcefully by many of our Latin American confrères?

It is, in my opinion, only when we can answer these and similar questions that we will find the key to an authentic spirit of interdependence.

In this context, the words of Walbert Bühlmann, author of many books on missiology and the Third Age, can be applied easily to the Institute and our practice of INTERDEPENDENCE. He says, in his most recent book *WITH EYES TO SEE*, "Everyone must come to see that no people can any longer solve the problems of our time on its own...All peoples together must seize control of humanity's past, present and future".

## THE SHARING FUND

by: Brother Dominic Berardelli, F.S.C.

"Sending Brothers to the Young Churches or to sectors that are lacking in vocations, together with the sharing of material or spiritual resources, constitutes a most significant form that Regional cooperation can take...

The Regions also make it possible for Brothers with particular aptitudes to be made available temporarily to give assistance where needed" (Rule 127 h).

The Sharing Fund was inaugurated by the 39th General Chapter in its proposition expressing a more

equitable distribution of goods between Districts, the less poor making a spontaneous promise to send a sum periodically to a fund in Rome to support and assist the poor sectors of the Institute.

Some sectors of the Institute have been dependent upon the generosity of other Districts, especially in the area of expenses for initial and continuing formation. Until the 41st General Chapter, these donations made were on a purely voluntary basis and at the discretion of the donating Districts. This gave rise to difficulties in proper financial planning

of budgets for the care of the poorer areas and, also, difficulties in providing adequately for emergency needs in other parts on the Institute. This became a dilemma since the growing areas in the Institute were centered, in many cases, in the poorer sectors of the Institute (for example: Asia and Africa) while the less poor areas were facing a decrease in the number of vocations to the Institute and a growing need to support their older Brothers. The 41st General Chapter gave direction to the Superior General and his Council to seek ways to solidify and to provide a more balanced financial situation relative to the Sharing Fund.

After several meetings of the Council and the Superior, it was recommended that an annual "tax" be placed upon the Districts in categories 5, 4 and 3 for the support of the Brothers in developing parts of the world. Further, it was recommended that SECOLI, the Servizio Coordinazione Lasalliana Internazionale, be responsible for the operation of the Sharing Fund, both in the collection of donations and the distribution of money to various sectors of the Institute.

Brother Superior General wrote to the Visitors and their Councils of the Districts (categories 5, 4, 3), asking for their opinions and responses to the suggested contribution tax. All Districts and Regions replied positively and affirmatively. The contributory taxation went into effect in 1988. SECOLI, at this point, assumed the responsibility for the distribution of the funds, dependent upon final approval of the annual budget by the Superior General and his Council.

The Sharing Fund is dedicated exclusively to Brothers' communities and Districts which are in need of special assistance, because of local difficulties, government restrictions upon the freedom and work of the Brothers, poverty situations within the country, etc.. In particular, this money is used for the maintenance and support of initial and continuing formation programs within the District or in the Institute. For example, the C.I.L./S.I.E.L. Programs receive support from this Sharing Fund for those Brothers attending from developing countries. In addition, some "on-site" programs on initial and continuing formation are often fully or partially supported through this Fund. RELAF (Africa) and PARC (Asia) receive assistance in providing programs for pre-profession retreats, spiritual renewal for young Brothers, workshops for formators, and catechetical/apostolic training.

The Sharing Fund is a very definite example of interdependence within the Institute. The generosity

of many Districts, who themselves may be undergoing difficulties of personnel and finances, nonetheless assists those sectors which are encountering difficulties because of their commitments in service to the poor. This fraternal sharing expresses clearly, and in a real way, the mind of several past General Chapters for a more enlightened sharing of Institute goods. It is possible to formulate priorities and to employ financial strategies in the poor and growing areas of the Institute. The Sharing Fund, as it is developing, also implies a rejection of the "mendicant system" of appeals for funding, which sometimes in the past has led to less than equal distribution of funds, as well as a subservient role placed upon some Districts in relation to their sponsors and benefactors.

Great care needs to be exercised in future planning of monies in the Sharing Fund. Progress towards self-sufficiency in many of the developing sectors of the world is a priority, if the local Institute is to survive. Total and complete dependence upon outside resources, no matter who the donors are, is an undesirable situation which should not be allowed to continue over an extended period of time. Imagination and ingenuity must be forthcoming to find avenues for the provision of present and future needs in such sectors, especially in the area of formation. A close scrutiny of requested funds also is important if we are to properly assist the developing sectors to grow in self-sufficiency and to become less and less dependent on external sources of support. Of course, in this matter, emergency situations can never be foreseen and in these particular cases, the Institute, through its many Districts and sub-Districts, must stand prepared to assist as these particular needs arise. In the past, Districts and sub-Districts have always responded generously when catastrophies and severe difficulties are encountered by our confrères in various sectors of the world.

Presented below are two samples of the actual requests and costs for two years, 1988-89 and 1989-90. These figures express, for themselves, the areas of need, the volume of the aid, and the generosity of the donating Districts and Sub-Districts not only for the "survival" of some sectors, but especially for the future development of the Institute. However, these figures do not reflect the many other donations made by various Districts at the request of the Superior General for "special needs", and also by many Districts who have begun the practice of "tithing" themselves as a way of expressing their INTERDEPENDENCE and fraternity with their confrères throughout the Institute.

# SHARING FUND

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1988-1989

*Dear Brother Visitor and Brother Bursar,*

The following report of the SHARING FUND covers the period from 1 October, 1988 to 30 September, 1989.

The donations indicated were received from various sources: private, Districts/Sub-Districts, schools, communities, etc..

### ON HAND

1 October 1988:	US \$ 26,941.74
RECEIVED:	US \$ 378,425.30
EXPENDED:	US \$ 289,672.42

— Region Africa:	US \$ 10,285.32
— Madagascar:	19,145.24
— Ethiopia:	39,561.00
— Rwanda:	24,965.00
— Zaire:	17,128.38
— Region Asia:	12,979.64
— India:	62,438.00
— Pakistan:	13,049.00
— Burma:	7,800.00
— Sri Lanka:	61,617.63
— Special Demands:	4,444.88
— Other (CIL, Medical)	16,258.32

### ON HAND

30 September 1989:	US \$ 115,694.62
--------------------	------------------

### REQUESTS MADE TO SHARING FUND FOR Year October 1989-September 1990

Sector	Requested	Granted
	in US dollars	
— Region Africa	29,000	29,000
— Madagascar	18,585	9,185
— Ethiopia	91,145	50,000
— Rwanda	26,000	26,000
— Zaire	11,396	11,396

— Region Asia	48,500	39,250
— India	56,830	55,560
— Pakistan	12,639	12,639
— Burma (Myanmar)	19,800	18,800
— Sri Lanka	22,708	22,708
— Special Demands (C.I.L./Third Age/etc.)	114,808	114,808
— Other (special workshops, etc.)	28,200	28,200
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>471.611</b>	<b>417.546</b>

### THE BUDGET FOR 1989-1990

Participation of the Districts .....	US \$ 358.000
Possible Supplementary gifts .....	15,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME POSSIBLE .....</b>	<b>373.000</b>
Projected expenses .....	417.546
<b>DEFICIT .....</b>	<b>44,546</b>
Remaining funds 1988-89 .....	115.694
<b>FUNDS FOR INVESTMENT .....</b>	<b>71.148</b>
(minus deficit)	

*Submitted: Bro. Dominic Berardelli, F.S.C.  
S.E.C.O.L.I.*

**BATA (Equatorial Guinea):** The offering of the postulants on the feast of St. J.B. de La Salle.





# THE SECOLI FUND

THE BROTHERS ARE IN **SOLIDARITY**  
WITH THEIR COMMUNITY,  
WITH THEIR DISTRICT AND  
WITH THE INSTITUTE AS A WHOLE. (Rule 16)

EACH LOCAL COMMUNITY IS CONSCIOUS OF ITS  
**SOLIDARITY...**  
WITH... THE INSTITUTE AS A WHOLE. (Rule 64)

SECOLI receives and administers funds in order to provide support for the work being done by our Brothers in the Third World.

In Brother Superior's annual letter, dated December 8th 1981, we read the following:

"With no claim to a monopoly, and with due respect to local or personal initiative, I would like to insist on the undoubted advantage of the centralization of our subsidies through a world wide service such as Secoli.

— Better distribution according to a scale of priorities which can be established only from complete information.

— More balanced and enlightened criteria in determining priorities.

— Rejection of the "mendicant system" where the cleverest and most importunate in making requests are often better served than those who really are in need of more assistance". (pp. 50, 51).

## **SECOLI Fund: for whom? for what?**

This Fund is intended, therefore, to help our needy establishments in the Third World, and not the administration of poor Districts. The needs of the latter are the object of the Sharing Fund.

It is possible, however, for Districts to submit certain needs to non-Government organisations through Secoli. Such needs could be, for example, the purchase of a car, study scholarships for young

Brothers, books for a house of formation, etc.. Money obtained in this way goes into the Secoli Fund.

## **How to benefit from the SECOLI Fund?**

This entails Brothers who need help submitting a project, that is, a well-documented written description of their specific situation and of their specific need in their service of the poor.

In 1989, for example, 96 projects were submitted to Secoli from different continents:

Asia	38	Africa	33
Latin America	7	Central America	14
Oceania	4		

Requests vary in amount: 57 projects amounted to 5,000 US dollars and less; 20, between 5,000 and 10,000; 16, between 10,000 and 50,000; and 3 amounted to more than 50,000 US dollars each.

Requests submitted to Secoli have to be approved by the Visitor. Secoli expects to be sent a report subsequently showing how the grant was used and what has been achieved as a result.

## **Who contributes to the SECOLI Fund?**

Money comes from two sources:

1) The Institute: gifts from Brothers, establishments, Districts. In 1989, Secoli was able to distribute 346,179 US dollars contributed by Brothers from 30 better-off Districts who wished to help their poorer brethren.

2) Non-government organisations: Grants from these enabled Secoli to distribute 270,971 US dollars in 1989.

"Mini-projects" — amounting to less than 3,000-4,000 US dollars — are generally sent to Districts or to establishments that request them. These specific projects help to create a greater awareness among Brothers, pupils, parents of pupils and former students, of missionary and development activities. They help us to know one another better, "to live in relation to one another... for interdependence is the

living expression of association” (Br. John Johnston, Superior General).

Other projects are submitted to international aid agencies. Secoli keeps in touch with a certain number of these agencies in Europe and North America, and regularly obtains grants from them.

**Distribution of SECOLI Funds in 1989  
(617,150 US dollars):**

Poor children:	
orphans, refugees, lepers	25 %
Boys' Towns and Boys' Village	
Schools:	
equipment, staff, repairs	21.5%
FSC training:	
study scholarships, books, equipment	19.5%
Catechising & social work:	12.5%
Youth pastoral care:	
premises, recollections, ...	10.5%
Water:	
wells, pumps, reservoirs, ...	5 %
Disasters:	
hurricanes, war, fire	3.5%
FSC communities:	
building, repairs, ...	2.5%
	100 %

One could quote any number of examples of Brothers or their friends who show particular concern for sharing their goods with their less fortunate Brethren and for communicating this concern to others. Here are a few examples that have come to light in the last few months:

— a Brother goes around the local parishes giving talks on the help needed by missionaries and appealing to the generosity of people. This activity can raise substantial sums of money for the Secoli Fund.

— For many years now, a Brother in one of our schools has taken it upon himself to make pupils of all ages aware of our missionary work in Asia. He sends in regular contributions resulting from his activities.

— A Brothers' community uses 90% of its savings to fund study scholarships in its own university and to finance four Secoli mini-projects.

— A Brother gave Secoli his inheritance to fund a drinking-water project in a poor school in India. This water will make it possible also to use the land near the well and bring self-sufficiency that much closer for the local Brothers.

— Two Brothers' retirement homes send Secoli a considerable sum to help fund its projects.

— A very old Brother regularly sends his pocket money to help fund the training of young Brothers in Sri Lanka.

— In one of our schools, whenever there is a feastday, a Lasallian Family group organises a collection “for Brothers who are working in precarious circumstances far from their homeland”.

— And from all over the world, there are the anonymous gifts that reflect a wish to share with others.

*“Brothers, we are one. We are an international religious institute at the service of the Church. While it is perfectly normal and necessary that we function as Regions, Districts, sub-Districts and Delegations, this Chapter has consistently reminded us that we are one, calling us to association and interdependence, calling us to fight against “provincialism”. Brothers, we have to help our Brothers appreciate the power for God that we possess if we really live and work together and by association as an international religious family. This commitment will require us to know one another better and to be disposed to share our personnel, our finances, and even to make ourselves available personally for service in areas with special needs”.*

**Brother John Johnston, Superior General**  
(Closing Address 41st General Chapter)

**Br. Maurice Richit, FSC**  
Co-Director SECOLI

**HARAR (Ethiopia):** Two expatriate Brothers are in charge of the schools of the diocese of Harar.





ETHIOPIA: The situation is very serious because of the war, drought and famine. Lasallians have been very generous with their help.

## ETHIOPIA

### Help for the displaced families of Shinnara (Eritrea)

SHINNARA is a village on the Eritrean plateau (alt. 1,600m), in a valley where there are ten other villages. The land is dry and there are very few wells. The peasant population raises goats, sheep and cows. Donkeys and camels provide transport.

Because of the war which has been going on for 30 years, many families have had to move from their home villages to set up home elsewhere. Originally there were 150 families in Shinnara and they were 95% Catholic. These have now been joined by another 500 families.

One can easily imagine what new needs this situation has created. Our Brothers run a primary school in Shinnara, and its numbers have gone up by a hundred. Help is needed to provide sanitation, dwellings, drinking water...

Several projects have been submitted to Secoli by Brothers. Thanks to the spirit of interdependence of the De La Salle Brothers, we have been able to send them the following help:

Digging a well for these families:

Contributed by Hong Kong,  
Japan, Germany 7,000 US dollars

Purchase of medicines:

Toronto 950

A new classroom

Region of France 4,470

30 desks:

Germany 2,930

Help to build new dwellings for the families:

Singapore, a friend of the Brothers,

Liverpool, an Italian Brother,  
a school in Austria

3,616

MISSIO (Germany) has given 60.000 D.M.

Further financial help is expected.

## HAITI – ISLAND OF TORTUGA

### Help for 5 Catholic schools run by our Brothers

You could almost say the island belongs to the Brothers of the Christian Schools as our Brothers run most things from east to west over a distance of about 40 kilometres. They have built a 35 kilometre road which enables them to work more closely with the 80 teachers who teach 5,000 pupils. In the evenings, they run adult literacy classes at these same schools.

The aim of this project is to help these schools to run as the fees they charge are minimal. In the small schools, pupils are charged only 3 dollars a year to help pay for school materials. In the 5 big schools pupils are charged 15 dollars per year, but the poorest cannot afford this. In 1989, a thousand pupils were unable to pay the fees for the third term and had to leave.

The 30 literacy centres used to be free. Then they had to charge 4 dollars for the books. Sometimes centres had to be closed through lack of students: they could not afford to pay.

In the light of this, Secoli made a commitment to support these schools and literacy centres for 3 years. Each year we find a donor among the better-off Districts:

1989 3,000 US dollars Midi-Mediterranee District, France

1990 3,000 US dollars San Francisco District, USA;

1991 3,000 US dollars District still to be found.

HAITI: Lasallian schools are very crowded.



## BOLIVIA

### Radio San Gabriel "The Voice of the Aymara People"

**A transmitter belonging to the Archdiocese  
of La Paz, Bolivia  
entrusted to the Brothers in 1977**

**Project:** *Request for a grant to help with the publication of religious pamphlets in the Aymara language for the Bolivian peasants.*

The pastoral side of the transmitting station concentrates in particular on 9 broadcasts per week to the Aymara peasants of the high plateau in Bolivia. They number almost two million (1,500,000 in Bolivia, 400,000 in Peru and some 30,000 in Chile). Audience figures are very high.

We should like to compose and print a series of religious pamphlets for Aymara peasant families. They would be brief, attractive and well-illustrated.

100 pamphlets have been planned. Together they would represent a summary of our faith and of the practice of the Christian faith, bearing in mind all the while the traditions and customs of the Aymara people.

The Aymara *used to have their own religion*, generally referred to as Andean. With the arrival of the Spanish, missionaries set about proselytising the people, and nowadays all the Aymara claim to be Christian.

However, with the coming of independence, the peasants of the high plateau of Bolivia were more or less left to fend for themselves for more than 80 years. A Canadian missionary who lived with them for 30 years wrote a book entitled: "WE THOUGHT THEY WERE CHRISTIANS...".

Nowadays there are very few priests. In the whole of Bolivia there are only 835. Most work in towns with the Whites or those of mixed blood. There are very few priests in the high plateau, and almost all are foreigners. There are only about a dozen deacons in all. Catechists are thought to be the answer, but they are poorly trained, as we have noticed in our short courses, and few in number.

On the other hand, there are a great many sects here. On the high plateau, they create disorder and disorientation — not a very difficult thing to do seeing the tenuous grasp the people have of their religion, their difficulty in defending it, and their desire to hear about God from whatever the source.



**RADIO SAN GABRIEL (Bolivia):** For many years now, the Brothers have run this centre which seeks to spread the Gospel among the Aymara people and to improve their quality of life. It is supported partly by funds from a variety of countries.

What is more, the Aymara have no written culture, only an oral one. The Aymara do not read. Even if they can read, they do not buy books. One is hard put to find a single book in their homes. Simple, brief and attractively produced pamphlets could bring into their homes both reading material and a source of reflection and religion.

When the Pope recently visited Bolivia (May 1988), he said the following to a group of catechists:

"Many children are baptised, but afterwards there is no one to teach them about the unfathomable riches of our faith. Following the lead of your pastors, you must undertake an extensive apostolate which will reach the furthest corners of your country".

Each pamphlet has 32 pages (15cm by 22 cm), a coloured cover and an illustration on each page. The text is in Aymara with a short translation into Spanish at the bottom of the page.

5,000 copies will be printed of each pamphlet at a cost of between 1,800 and 2,050 dollars.

### **Thanks to its benefactors, SECOLI was able to help Radio San Gabriel:**

Centre-East District, France:	25,000 FF
District of Holland:	1,800 \$
District of North Mexico:	3,200 \$
District of Panama (one community):	2,050 \$

## NANBAN

### A home for street children Madurai, South India

Touched by the reality of the vulnerable children and young people in the city of Madurai, in South India, and the injustice perpetrated against them, the Social Service Society of the Diocese, and the De La Salle Brothers have joined hands to promote the care and concern for these destitute persons through NANBAN. The approach of NANBAN is based on the three fundamentals of care, growth, future.

Brother S. James, an Indian Brother, is the inspiration for this multi-purpose response to the needs of the street children in his city. The problems of these young people cannot be seen in isolation, or resolved by single action.

Hence, NANBAN adopts a two-pronged means towards alleviation:

1) it supports the young person in his efforts to grow and integrate himself into his society;

2) it aims at building a movement towards meaningful social and political action capable of challenging those situations that force children into the street.

To achieve the above goals, NANBAN adopts a preventive and a promotive system of education aimed at creating an environment free from the dehumanizing factors so prevalent in the streets, and promoting the full development (spiritual, physical and moral) of the person.

NANBAN also believes that God is non-sectarian, and therefore so must be NANBAN.

NANBAN is now in its first year and being supported by the Diocese and by donors through the SECOLI projects fund. To date four projects have



MADURAI (South India): A street child.

MADURAI (South India): Brother James with a group of street children.



been or are in the process of being funded.

Regular visitation to the street people and the their "homes" (Operation Friendship) will be supported by Bro. Alex of North Belgium for US \$ 4,750.

The schools of the District of Ireland, through the efforts of Brother James Dooley, have adopted the Literacy and Value Education project for US \$ 3,599. The projects for Basic Health Care and for Transportational Needs for the Young People have not yet been placed but we are confident that donors can be found through SECOLI.

NANBAN's motto "To welcome the Unwanted" is a response to a severe need in the city of Madurai. The involvement of the police department, civil authorities, the Church and the De La Salle Brothers, indicates the tremendous potential present for resolving the present epidemic when people of good will, private and public and church, can all work together for the welfare and benefit of the poor and disenfranchised.

# BETHLEHEM UNIVERSITY

## “An example of interdependence in personnel”

(by: Bro. Donald Mansir, FSC, *Dtr. Pontifical Mission, Jerusalem*)

Bethlehem University was founded in 1973 on the existing property and buildings of the Brothers by the Sacred Congregation for Oriental Churches. Protocols of Accord have been signed between the Holy See and the Superior General of the Brothers and between Bethlehem University and the local District of the Brothers.

While it was founded and is sponsored by the Holy See and exists on Church property, the University is open to teachers and students of all religions and carefully respects the individual's religious principles. In every academic and legal sense, Bethlehem University is a private co-educational university open to all qualified students on the West Bank and Gaza. The University maintains full accordance with the system of education in the Middle East.

In 1981, the University was awarded membership in the Association of Arab universities. The degrees and diplomas of the University are officially stamped by the Jordanian Ministry of Education.

The University aims to provide education to those students who can both benefit from higher education and who can best serve their communities. Responsive to the particular social and economic problems of the area, the University sponsors vocational and in service programs to meet these needs. As an immediate response to the Uprising, the University has attempted to address the broader local community needs. These programs and courses are developed in consultation with civic, local church, educational, social service and business leaders in the community. The purpose, then, of Bethlehem University is to extend the advantages of higher education to the young people of the area through the advancement of learning to promote the well-being of the local community.

The University also seeks the development in the students of the highest ethical, moral and spiritual values. The University proposes not to ignore but to enhance individual religious beliefs.

While the University is rigorously non-political in practice and intent, it recognizes the individual's right of freedom and thought and self-expression. Along with this right runs a concurrent responsibility towards and respect for all diverse members of a University community and the public at large.

In the stricter sense, the purpose of the University is to provide a center of higher learning easily accessible to promising students of the Occupied Territories,

thereby making it possible for them to obtain quality higher education without having to go abroad.

### **The basic functions of Bethlehem University are viewed as threefold:**

1) To offer academic programs of excellent quality in the Arts, Education, Sciences, Nursing, Business Administration, Hotel Management, Physiotherapy and other fields so that qualified students may be prepared to assume responsible positions in society.

2) To add to knowledge through research, scholarship and creative activities in both fundamental and applied fields, and to seek ways of applying that knowledge to the betterment and enrichment of the people in the Occupied Territories.

3) To make available to the community the results of the research and the rich heritage of human culture embodied in the arts and sciences.

The office of Campus Concerns has as its goal the enrichment of the Bethlehem University community. The office provides counseling services and coordinate community service programs. The University is available to assist the larger community with community-based initiatives through surveys, research and shared resources in order to contribute to the Palestinian community at large.

The University Administration includes the Chancellor, the assumed position by right of office of the Apostolic Delegate of Jerusalem. He is the nominal head of the University and the direct representative of the Holy See. On behalf of the Holy See and with the nomination of the Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, he appoints the Brother Vice-Chancellor, the chief executive officer of the University.

While Bethlehem University is the responsibility of the North American Region, Brothers from many Districts throughout the world have been members of the staff and administration, including Brothers from Australia, St. Paul-Minneapolis, San Francisco and Great Britain.

Currently, there are eleven Brothers on the Faculty and Administration of Bethlehem University. They include four Brothers from the district of New York, four from the District of Great Britain, one from the District of Ireland and two Palestinians from the local sub-District of the Orient.

# SUMMER PROJECTS IN THE THIRD WORLD LAY VOLUNTEERS

## 1. Beginnings

A group of Brothers from the District of Bilbao were the first to try this project of dedicating a summer to working in the missions, sponsored by the Regions of Spain and Portugal (ARLEP - Lasallian Regional Association of Spain and Portugal). They helped to build "Foyer La Salle" in Togoville, TOGO, and the Center for the Formation of Catechists in Ecuador. This was in the summer of 1981.

Since then the Regional Committee for the Missions has been formed in order to coordinate these summer projects.

In groups of 3 to 8 people, Brothers and lay persons form teams which are suitably trained and which vary in composition according to the nature of the project.

## 2. Philosophy and Criteria

The group is first brought to reflect on those topics which are pertinent to its purpose, selecting from among the many possibilities included in the entire philosophy of these projects those items which will best prepare this particular team for its particular mission.

### a) *The criterion of reality*

- For a group of Christians to attempt what is called "insertion into the world" is not a matter of doing it or not doing it. It is challenge which must be accepted.

- The Church insists upon an evangelisation which transforms the person without establishing dichotomies or ruptures in his existential context:

"... unless it takes into consideration the realities of the people it addresses, unless it answers the questions it raises, it does not get to the depths of real life".

### b) *The criterion of the Church*

"In union with..." represents "the other side of the coin".

"In union with..." gives us definition, gives us identity and makes us apostles of the Church.

### c) *The criterion of "inculturation"*

- Possibly we thought that the message of the Gospel had found its optimum expression in a given culture, and so we communicated that message through the codes and values of that culture.

Consequently, it remained superficial, foreign and alienating for those who were not of that culture.

- Today, "inculturation" is a new focus. It tries to avoid the fixed, acquired model, thus showing that Christian faith is sown as a seed within a given culture, and determined by a personally human condition.

- While planning and evaluating our project, we must question our own attitudes and our fitness to attempt such an "inculturation".

- The Christian team should not ask itself whether it lives in or for the world, but rather if it lives therein totally aware of its social responsibility.

- "Inculturation" enables us to talk with (rather than to) the men and women of today about their problems, needs, hopes and values.

### d) *Criterion as a group*

- We are not trying to be stars that flash by but "teams".

- We commit ourselves to undertake this work as a team.

### e) *Criterion of belonging*

Before throwing ourselves into planning the project or the apostolic work, we must consider our re-

sources and the feasibility of the work.

We must know for certain what can be achieved and what is definitely beyond all probability.

g) *Criterion of "being" over "having"*

It is a mistake to think that Christians can be judged and/or recommended merely on the basis of the work they perform, even though it be of exceptional quality. Their specific contribution is not in this area.

The justification of their existence is to be found in their "vividness as someone to be remembered": they live at the heart of mankind and hold in common hopes and problems, but they "remind it" that through all its great decisions which are written in its flesh and on its heart, in its thoughts and in the organization of its life that the "one thing necessary" is to radiate the message of Christ.

g) *Criterion of "evaluation"*

- Readiness to be evaluated.

Every apostolic activity which is undertaken and completed should be subject to evaluation.

- By evaluation, a greater understanding of the meaning of the mission of the team is achieved, and the degree of penetration into the concrete realities of life can be assessed.

## Objectives of the group

a) *General objectives*

- To be at the service of people.
- To create or further develop the sense of community among the people served. Contribute to a sense of interest in the common good which will foster cooperation and solidarity.
- To become more aware of the new situation and the cultural values encountered with an attitude of openness.

b) *Special objectives*

- Formation of catechetical and social leaders (Guinea and Ecuador).
- Educate and catechize (Guinea, Togo, Ecuador).
- Construction of chapels, schools or homes (Togo, Ivory Coast).

## 4. Results and Completed Projects

### 1981:

*Togoville:*

- Construction of "Foyer La Salle"
- Team: 6 people

### 1982:

*Nazareth:*

- Construction of bathrooms and showers for the Brothers.
- Team: 2 people
- Cost: \$ 5,000

*Bata:*

- Learn about life in Guinea
- Help slow learners among students
- Develop literacy programs and catechetics in 3 towns.
- Publication of a method for phonetic writing.
- Team: 12 people
- Cost: \$ 5,000

*Tami:*

- Construction of a school
- Construction of a church
- Team: 8 people
- Cost: \$ 6,000

*Dapaong:*

- Construction of a school
- Finance a well
- Team: 6 people
- Cost: \$ 12,000

*Togoville:*

- Construction of a home
- Team: 5 people
- Cost: \$ 10,000

### 1983:

*Bata:*

- Human and Christian development of the towns of Sanduma, Bindung Evemban.
- Team: 12 people

*Tami:*

- Construction a chapel at Nanergou.
- Team: 6 people
- Cost: \$ 10,000

*Dapaong:*

- Construction of a school in Pana.
- Team: 6 people
- Cost: \$ 10,000

*Togoville:*

- Finish the building for Aspirants
- Team: 5 people
- Cost: \$ 10,000

### 1984:

*Burkina Faso:*

- Repairs to the Social Center
- Team: 3 people



— Cost: \$ 5,000

*Tami:*

- Construction of a chapel
- Team: 8 people
- Cost: \$ 10,000

*Dapaong:*

- Teacher training
- Team: 5 people
- Cost: \$ 2,000

*Togoville:*

- Construction of 8 classrooms
- Team: 6 people
- Cost: \$ 10,000

*Bata:*

- Remedial classes for students
- Team: 2 people

*Akonibe:*

- Human and Christian growth, literacy, catechetical, hygienic and health programs in 10 towns.
- Team: 20 people
- Cost: \$ 4,000

**1985:**

*Togo:*

- Inservice program for teachers
- Formation of catechists
- Repairs to a clinic
- Construction of a school in Lotogou-Tami.
- Team: 17 people
- Cost: \$ 15,000

*Equatorial Guinea:*

- Remedial classes for students
- Formation of catechists
- Human and Christian development in the towns of Akonibe.
- Team: 42 people
- Cost: \$ 5,000

*Ethiopia:*

- Assistance to the families of 34 native Brothers
- Cost: \$ 10,000

*Ecuador:*

- Growth and Development. Formation of leaders and catechists.
- Team: 4 people

Special objectives of this project:

- a) Awareness of missions in Brothers and lay people.
- b) Bring this experience back to Communities and the District.
- c) An experience of Community living.

d) Awareness of the need for projects in the area of forming teachers, catechists, leaders...

**1986:**

*Daloa:*

- Organize shops in the new school
- Team: 2 Brothers

*Abidjan:*

- Remodelling Scholasticate with help from the Scholastics.
- Team: 2 Brothers
- Cost: \$ 6,000

*Burkina Faso:*

- Remodelling the residence of the Brothers
- Team: 6 people
- Cost: \$ 10,000

*Equatorial Guinea:*

a) *Nsomo:*

- Construction of town school
- Team: 2 Brothers
- Cost: \$ 1,000

b) *Biyabiyán:*

- Finish the parish church
- Team: 3 people

c) *Akonibe:*

- Growth and development of 3 towns
- Team: 26 people
- Cost: \$ 2,000

**1987:**

*Burkina Faso:*

- Remodelling the Brothers' residence
- Team: 6 people
- Cost: \$ 10,000

*Togoville:*

- Construction of a chapel
- Team: 6 people
- Cost: \$ 10,000

*Bata:*

- Remedial work with students
- Team: 3 people

*Bomudi:*

- Work in the town: catechesis, literacy for children and adults, liturgy, repairs to the church.
- Team: 4 people
- Cost: \$ 5,000

*Akonibe:*

- Work for the town: Catechism, adult and child literacy programs, liturgy, hygiene and health.
- Team: 21 people
- Cost: \$ 5,000

## 1988:

### *Togoville:*

- Work with agricultural cooperative of the farmers
- Team: 4 people
- Cost: \$ 5,500

### *Dapaong:*

- Construction of a school
- Team: 6 people
- Cost: \$ 6,000

### *Bomudi:*

- Literacy program and catechetics
- Team: 4 people
- Cost: \$ 1,000

### *Ecuador:*

- Catechesis and leadership formation
- Team: 5 people

### *Bolivia:*

- Projects of Radio "San Gabriel", formation of teachers.
- Team: 8 people

### *Perú:*

- Construction of shops
- Team: 2 people

### *Akonibe:*

- Help in the town
- Team: 15 people

### *Bata:*

- Help in the town
- Team: 8 people

## 1989:

### *Dapaong:*

- Construction of a school in Twaga.
- Team: 6 people
- Cost: \$ 7,000

### *Togoville:*

- Improve 10 agricultural cooperatives.
- Team: 6 people
- Cost: \$ 5,000

### *Bomudi:*

- Literacy program
- Team: 4 people
- Cost: \$ 2,000

### *Akonibe:*

- Help in the town
- Team: 18 people

## 1990:

### *Daloa:*

- Construction of a church
- Team: 5 people
- Cost: \$ 10,000

### *Tami:*

- Reafforestation of a section of the Rural Center of Tami and help in the clinics.
- Team: 8 people
- Cost: \$ 2,000

### *Bomudi:*

- Construction of 2 classrooms and literacy programs.
- Team: 3 people
- Cost: \$ 20,000

### *Akonibe:*

- Help in 6 towns
- Team: 18 people

### *Ahuagarongo-Ecuador:*

- Training of rural catechists
- Team: 3 people

### *Rwanda:*

- Help with some remodelling
- Team: 3 people

### *Paraguay:*

- Help with local projects
- Team: 3 people

### *Bolivia:*

- Help with local projects
- Team: 5 people

## 5. Evaluation

The various projects undertaken during these 10 years have been very satisfactorily completed.

- The Brothers and lay people who participated returned with a much better appreciation for the austerity in which others must live for having tried it themselves. They know from experience that the needy must have help.

The poor can also evangelize us.

- Communities and Districts are better aware of the needs of the Third World, and their commitment to take care of their needs is now more keen.

- Because of their summer experience, Brothers and lay persons have made themselves available to work in the Third World, and some have stayed in the mission.

- The sense of "Church" has grown among the Brothers and lay people who worked together for a summer.

- Interdependence and solidarity with the poor was put into action.

- Lasting ties of friendship were established with Christian missionary communities.

- Towns experienced how cooperation can bring about growth and development for a better life.

It is a worthwhile experience which should be continued.

Brother Jesús Egúsqüiza

# THE ASIAN INTER-DISTRICT NOVITIATE

## SAINT JOSEPH'S NOVITIATE "YAHAPATH ENDERA" (Good Shepherd) SRI LANKA

On 28 January, 1990, the Inter-District Novitiate for Asia was formally blessed and opened, with ten novices beginning their 18 month novitiate. They come from Sri Lanka and Pakistan (District of Colombo). The staff is composed of Brother Patrick Craine, Director, from the District of Saint Paul/Minneapolis, Brothers Henry Dissenayake, District of Colombo, and Brother Lawrence Goh, Delegation of Myanmar (Burma). The Novitiate is situated in a beautiful area about 45 minutes from the capital city of Colombo. At one time it was the Girls' Town for Sri Lanka, conducted by the Good Shepherd Sisters. The buildings have been kept in excellent condition and the peacefulness and beauty of the area is a perfect setting for a novitiate. Several years ago, through the generous assistance of Caritas Denmark, a transfer of the property was made to the Brothers, by the Good Shepherd Sisters. Because they found it necessary to "withdraw" from the work, they desired the Brothers to accept the "Yahapath Endera Farm" from them and continue it as an extension of the Diyagala Boys' Town presently operated by the Brothers in Sri Lanka. This latter enterprise is a very successful apostolate and has served the country well over the past twenty five years.

The Brothers of the Colombo District, and the Administration of Diyagala Boys' Town, generously agreed to make a portion of the property available for use by the District as an Inter-District novitiate. This gift includes the original convent, the main chapel, guest house, and two dormitory houses.

The great generosity of the Colombo District and Diyagala Boys' Town Administration is a fine example of the spirit of INTERDEPENDENCE placed firmly into reality! This fine environment at Halgashena, the accomodation for so many, and the sharing of Brothers as staff have opened new opportunities for many of the Districts, Sub-Districts and Delegations of the Pacific Asia Region in the training and formation of the young Brothers.

Through the continuing generosity of donors, both individual and corporate, some renovations and furnishings were made and obtained for the Noviti-

ate. The District of Ottawa, individual Brothers such as Jan Nijssen from Holland and Matthew in England, made it possible to prepare the new Novitiate for the January start.

The dynamic sharing of personnel and funds and property, in a true authentication of INTERDEPENDENCE, has given renewed hope to so many Brothers and to the Pacific Asian Region. 1991 will see the new postulants arriving for their one year preparation of postulancy for the novitiate. Expectations are that postulants will come from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Thailand and Sabah (District of Malaysia)!! Surely a dynamic result of INTERDEPENDENCE and FRATERNITY!

HALGASHENA (Sri Lanka): The 1990 group of novices during a visit by General Councillor Gerard Rummery and Visitors Emmanuel and Lawrence (Burma).



HALGASHENA (Sri Lanka): The Ya Hapath Endera chapel.



# TORONTO'S REFUGEE CENTERS WILL SOON ASSIST THEIR 100th REFUGEE

(by: Brother George Morgan, FSC, *Director, Lasallian Refugee Centers*)

Le Tranh Tinh was thirteen when his mother sent him and his older brother Le Tranh Tung on a boat across the South China Sea. Six days later their small fishing boat, somewhat battered by the high seas, arrived in Hong Kong. I met Tinh two years later in a refugee camp in Hong Kong and found that he had learned English and was the best student in a school to which Vietnamese students from three refugee camps were bussed each day. "My mother", he told me, "wanted me to have a better life, and I don't want to let her down".

His home in the camp was a simple bunk bed perched on the top of two other bunks. After climbing the narrow rails and bending his body so as to crawl along the small space, he arrived at his bed.

The Brothers in Toronto had previously sponsored Tinh, his brother and their cousin to come to Canada, and I was feeling quite paternalistic, for it was our first experience sponsoring a minor who was not accompanied by his/her parents. Of course, Tinh was full of questions not only about Canada, but also about the Lasallian Refugee Centers where he would be living.

I proceeded to tell my new friend that the Christian Brothers operate two homes in Toronto for refugees from all around the world. Over the past four years we have had eighty one refugees live with us from seventeen different countries. At any one time we have had up to sixteen refugees living with us.

I told Tinh that after a good night's sleep following his arrival at Toronto's International Airport, he would be taken to obtain the food that he enjoys as well as any clothing he may immediately need.

At this time we will also begin the teaching of English to improve his language skills. Two of our senior men, Brother Andrew and Brother Justin, have

both lived in the Refugee Center for two years each, and have given private lessons daily to those needing help in English.

After initial documentation and orientation is complete, we will proceed with his school registration. For other refugees our staff prepare a resume and begin to assist each to find a job. Most refugees have jobs and are self supporting within a month or two. They save as much money as possible so that they can pay the first and last months rent when they move into their own place in four to six months time. ("Your case will be very special", I explained to Tinh, "since you will be going to De La Salle High School, we will let you remain at our Center for a longer period").

Every September and March we must find housing for our residents, in order to accommodate a new group of refugees due to arrive. On moving day, we rent a truck and move used furniture donated to us and stored in the basement of the Brothers' new Retreat Center. Each refugee will receive a bed, a dresser, a kitchen table, lamps, plates, pots and pans and other household items.

Generally, refugees write to us from around the world, asking for our sponsorship, but we are also most anxious to network with other Brothers working with refugees who are seeking resettlement opportunities for them in the Western world. In the spirit of interdependence, we have sponsored sixteen Ethiopians through our Brothers in Rome.

Most of Tinh's questions about Canada concerned the Winter. After I assured him that our Toronto Winters were not very severe, he asked me "but can you go swimming in the Winter?" After a slight pause, I said: "We don't go swimming, but we go ice skating". "Can I try that?", he asked with brightened

eyes. Our visit concluded with a promise that "there will be lots of new things for you to try. See you in Canada".

Three months later, on October 25, Tinh arrived with his brother 21, and his cousin 30 whom we also sponsored in order to keep the family together. After assisting our new arrivals with their initial documentation for Social and Hospital Insurance and a Metropass it was off to the Vietnamese supermarket for food. With the cooling temperatures of Autumn upon us it was not hard to convince our new Canadians that this was not the tropics. So winter coats, scarves, gloves and overshoes were next on the agenda.

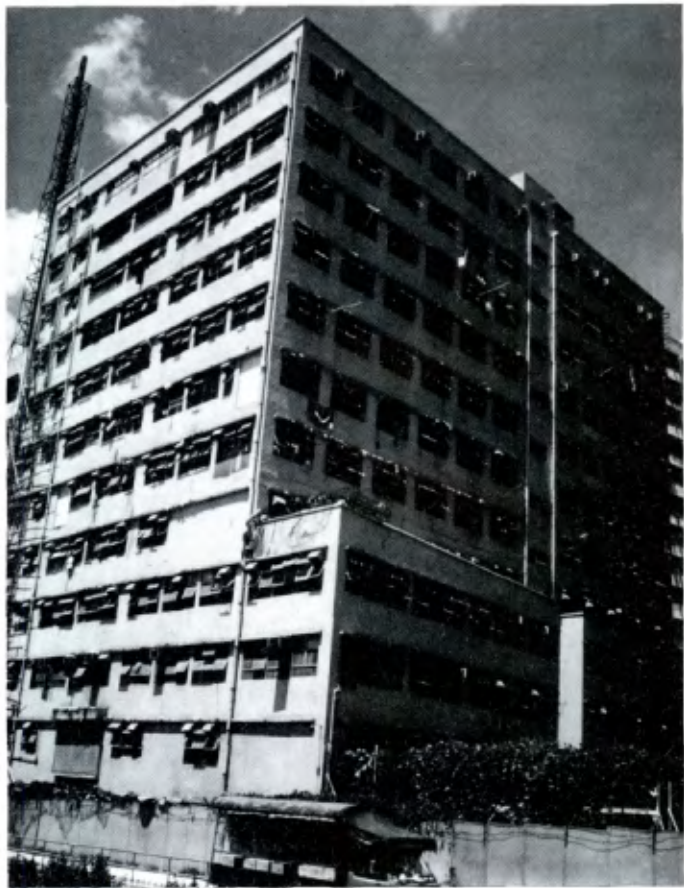
Tinh needed a school uniform and had an appointment at the School Board in order to determine his grade level. In a math test Tinh wrote a perfect paper, and scored at the third level (out of a possible four levels) in English. He was to be granted a full 16 credits for his grade 9 and 10 which he attended in the refugee camp, and stood first in his class each year. A week after his arrival he started classes at De La Salle (Oaklands) in grade 11. Is it not amazing that this young man since leaving Vietnam after grade 8 had not lost a step educationally despite having to learn a new language and complete two years of schooling in a refugee camp? Tinh looks forward to trying out for the school soccer team in the Spring.

This, the fifth year of the Lasallian Refugee Centres will be marked by a number of events. Tinh is the first youngster we have had in the house not accompanied by his parents, and later this year we will welcome the 100th person to live in our Centres.

**The San Yick refugee centre in Hong Kong. The number of refugees there has risen to 3,000.**

**Tung Is, one of the young men cared for by our centres in Toronto.**

**Tung Is is not yet used to working at a desk.**



# THE NEW EUROPE: A CHALLENGE TO LASALLIAN INTERDEPENDENCE

The Church, especially since Vatican II is reminding us of the signs of the times seen from the point of view of faith, to find the will of God which we are to follow. But there are historical moments when changes occur very quickly, in which the signs are clearer and the call of God is more urgent.

More specifically, at the present time in Europe, events are all moving in the same direction, and it is fairly evident that they involve the Lasallian Family of Europe.

During recent years the number of countries in the Common Market has been increasing, and the areas of interdependence and unity are developing to embrace all aspects of continental living: economic, political, cultural, social and military... So the question comes to mind: Are the Church and the Institute moving with the tide?

On the other hand, the events in Eastern Europe also involve the Church and the Institute. The fact that the Pope has thought of convoking a European Synod reveals the current concern to respond with unity and solidarity to the challenges of a New Europe.

With the new and unified structure due to go into effect in 1993, our European Lasallian institutions are looking at the repercussions this will have on education. This was the reason they met at the European Congress of Ostia. There were 476 present, most of them administrators of our European schools, who considered the theme "The Lasallian School in Europe, 1993".

It was a very useful meeting which will influence the future because it faced the questions and issues which must be considered at this time. The European Education Committee will follow up on this excellent beginning.

Other Lasallian Committees are also becoming active in thinking and planning against the background of Europe in transition. The Committee on

Ministry is organizing a Youth Congress to be held in August, 1991.

The Brothers Visitors of Europe are also following the developments and plan to meet in March of 1991.

The Generalate in Rome is lending its support to all these initiatives in the hope that close and strong bonds of interdependence will assure satisfactory results.

There are some definite facts and events which we already know and which can stimulate our creativity, solidarity and interdependence.

## 1. The present situation of our Districts of Europe

These are the statistics for our Lasallian presence in Europe:

Countries	Communities	Brothers	Laypersons	Establishments	Students
Germany	5	41	139	4	2,235
Great Britain	23	159	451	13	13,314
Austria	7	60	336	6	3,318
Belgium	60	420	2,091	54	48,096
Holland	8	56	—	—	—
France	196	1,412	6,705	158	104,256
Spain	155	1,336	3,034	120	85,935
Italy	40	386	668	33	18,316
Greece	4	17	79	4	1,339
Ireland	29	203	556	26	13,696
Poland	18	114	6	—	210
Malta	4	28	126	3	2,807
Romania	—	6	—	—	—
Hungary	—	—	—	—	—
Czechoslovakia	—	16	—	—	—
Luxemburg	1	3	—	1	210
Switzerland	4	19	25	2	332
Portugal	2	14	65	2	568
<i>Total</i>	556	4,290	14,281	426	294,632

Some reflections and questions flow from these numbers.

This represents a considerable Lasallian presence in Europe. The 4,290 Brothers (more than half the Institute) together with 14,281 lay persons educate 294,632 students in 426 educational institutions. These are healthy statistics and hold promise for the future through our mutual collaboration.

De La Salle can, and in our view, must speak authoritatively and with one voice in the world of European Christian education. To do this effectively, it will be necessary that all Lasallians of Europe communicate with each other, share their experiences, establish priorities for action and a creative pedagogy. Then their voice will be at the cutting edge of education for the future of Europe.

If communication and exchange of ideas is to extend beyond the administrative level to the various aspects of the schools, then it will be essential to promote learning the languages of Europe. This is made easier by the fact that we already have established schools in so many nations.

Given our identity and mission, the challenge to the countries of Europe is directly related to our

**Brother Martin Corral has kindly offered to share some of his thoughts with us on the future prospects for Lasallian interdependence in the new Europe. We are very grateful to him.**



“evangelizing presence of the Church in the area of education”. How can the Lasallian schools of Europe respond to this call? What are the implications of what the Pope calls “the new evangelization” as far as we are concerned in the Europe of '93?

The challenge is too great for us to act separately like snipers in a forest.

Serious areas for reflection, sharing and mutual assistance can also extend to other vital questions: fostering vocations, initial formation, continued formation, proper administration...

We can still remember several decades back when the Brothers Directors of the novitiates of Europe met each year and made their retreat together. Today there are new circumstances and therefore new initiatives are in order. Brother Superior General indicated some general lines of action in his letter of Sept. 19, 1989 to the Brothers Visitors of several Regions of Europe in their meetings of Sept. 25-26.

“I have been convinced for some time now that there must be more contact, exchange and collaboration between our Brothers of Europe. You have much to give to one another. Certainly the exchange of ideas and experiences is reason enough for frequent meetings; but there are many other possibilities which can be explored, such as common retreats and study sessions for Visitors, Directors, Formation staffs, Brothers of different age groups and also for lay people who are associated in our mission. We are pleased to hear that the meeting for the administrators of our establishments to be held next March has aroused much enthusiasm”.

There is one factor which the statistics do not take into account and that is the aging of some of our European Districts. We wonder if this is not an area for a concerted effort by the Brothers of Europe. In some countries the situation is so critical that it may eventually entail the disappearance of the Institute itself in some places. This also is a challenge to the fraternal solidarity of the Institute in Europe.

To find an adequate response to all these situations, certainly the Districts and Regions of Europe will find opportunities to meet and to establish the structures which will facilitate coordination, participation and creativity.

## **2. Openness and solidarity with the countries of Eastern Europe**

New opportunities and responsibilities have come to the Common Market countries because of

the fall of the Berlin wall and the democratization of the countries of Eastern Europe.

For the Church as well as the Institute it is really a sign of the times, a grace of God, because of the possibility for evangelization and education in all these countries which now have freedom of religion and whose youth are awaiting the announcement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There are even nations like Poland where the Brothers were obliged to limit their catechetical work to the parishes and now they can exercise their ministry in regular schools.

In Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania the Institute has very few Brothers who remain, and these are mostly retired men whose fidelity under difficult circumstances is really remarkable. Now that it is possible for the Institute to operate openly in these countries, and even to move into previously closed areas, like Russia, we must ask ourselves: What can Lasallian Europe do to provide brotherly support to all these deserving Brothers and also to take advantage of the new opportunities for starting schools in these countries?

When Cardinal Baum addressed the Lasallian Directors in Ostia, he said: "I must make mention of the new opportunities in Eastern Europe which are a clear sign of the times which we must read in faith.

It is a wonderful opportunity for the Church and for all of you who are the presence of the Church in the field of education.

The question now becomes: What response, what initiatives will we give to these countries which are learning to live with liberty and democracy and whose young people now have the opportunity to learn in freedom? How will we evangelize them?"

This is a matter to be examined by the Brothers Visitors of Europe so that together with the central administration of the Institute a proper response may be given to these historic events.

Europe must be the first to respond to this challenge which exists within its sister countries of Eastern Europe.

### **3. Willingness to help and support the Third World**

The Institute in Europe has always had an attitude of concern for the missions and has contributed to the spreading of the Institute to many continents.

Faced with its own problems resulting from so many Brothers of retirement age, and the need for intra-European solidarity, it may yield to the tempta-

tion of retrenching its frontiers. However, the situation in the Third World will not go away but will continue to call for both personnel and economic assistance.

The continent of Africa has a very promising future in which the Church and the Institute should figure. For the moment, however, it needs support and help in many aspects of its life, and in furnishing it, our Institute will more firmly establish itself in certain countries and also establish schools in the new nations which are appearing.

The Institute finds itself in uncertain circumstances in some parts of Asia.

While economic assistance is important, still more so is provision for initial formation by a competent staff.

A united and independent Europe will be expected to broaden its bonds of solidarity with Third World countries. Here again, the Institute in Europe must make plans for adequate responses. Until now, the Districts and Regions of Europe have acted alone with no common policy to resolve the missionary question. Today, our sense of unity and interdependence could bring about concerted action.

These are a few of the incidental reflections which arise from a glance at the statistical chart of Europe and the recent historical events which have taken place there.

The already scheduled meetings for Lasallian Europe will take a deeper look at the issues and we hope provide us with fresh vitality and creativity.

**Brother Martin Corral**  
*General Council*



