

Bulletin of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

Number 238 - April 1993

LA SALLE IN AFRICA

BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Number 238 – April 1993

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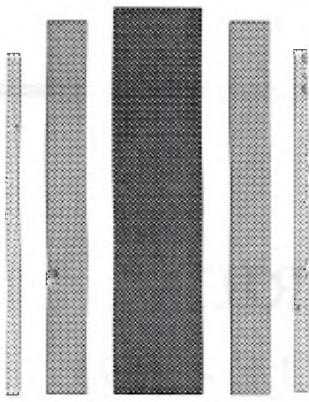
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THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN AFRICA

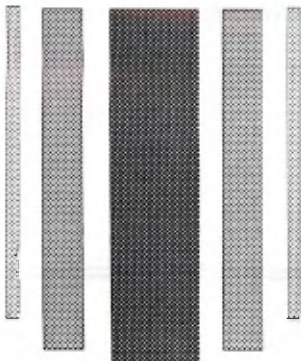
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The Brothers

of the Christian Schools

in AFRICA



«The Institute is particularly conscious of the great design of God who wills that all people should come to the knowledge of the truth. Thus the Institute participates in the missionary activity of the Church whose essential task is to announce the Gospel to everyone and to all cultures.

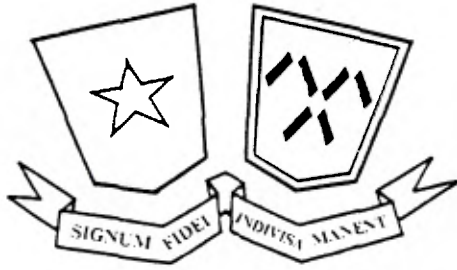
The concern to bring the Church into being among peoples, either unaware of the Good News of Jesus Christ or as yet little informed about it, as well as the evident shortage of people working for the spread of the gospel in certain areas, constitutes a continual challenge to the Institute to make its contribution through its specific ministry.

As a response to this missionary call, the Brothers offer themselves to be sent by the Institute to places where there is a greater need for their services. In such cases it could even happen that a District would need to hand over to others some of its works in order to meet more urgent demands.

In this missionary activity, the Brothers are deeply conscious of the need to cultivate local vocations in order to provide for the growth of the Church and of the Institute.

True to its founding spirit, the Institute also makes its presence felt in those areas where, humanly speaking, there is little or no possibility for it to develop.

The work of the Brothers in such places becomes, especially for non-Christians, a presence of the Church, a witness to the charity of Christ and a centre of dialogue and collaboration.» (*Rule, 19, 19a, 19b*)



AFRICA

LA SALLE - 1993



LASALLIAN REGION OF AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR (RELAF)

Brother Marcellin Rakotofiringa, Regional Coordinator of Africa

1. RELAF (Lasallian Region of Africa and Madagascar)

RELAF includes the entire continent of Africa and extends 5,000 km from north to south and 6,000 km from east to west. The Region includes 431 Brothers, of whom 226 are native born and 204 are expatriates. These latter 204 Brothers come from Vietnam, Poland, Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, Switzerland, Ireland, Great Britain, Canada, the U.S.A., Columbia and Brazil.

This represents, therefore, a vast range of nationalities which highlights the international character of the Institute and is a testimony to the possibility of universal brotherhood within the Church and the world. This diversity puts into practise the ideals of collaboration and interdependence.

Although poor in material goods, the Institute in Africa is indeed rich in its international variety. This richness is somewhat fragile and calls forth a need for conversion, but there is considerable vitality.

a/. The Lasallian Region of Africa includes:

- 4 Districts:

West Africa (Burkina Faso, Niger): 47 Brothers.

Antananarivo (Madagascar): 90 Brothers.

Douala (Cameroon, Chad): 45 Brothers.

Zaire: 50 Brothers.

- 3 Sub-Districts:

South Africa: 16 Brothers.

Gulf of Benin (Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin): 42 Brothers.

Nigeria: 21 Brothers.

- 3 Delegations:

East Africa (Kenya): 28 Brothers.

Ethiopia: 32 Brothers.

Rwanda: 32 Brothers.

- 2 Sectors:

Equatorial Guinea: 13 Brothers.

Mozambique: 4 Brothers.

There are also 2 Delegations attached to the Region of France:

- Egypt.

- Reunion.

Finally, there are two communities in Djibouti.



b/. Our regional services.

These services promote our unity and collaboration. This interdependence produces a stronger association.

- Three novitiates are presently functioning:

Madagascar: 5 novices.

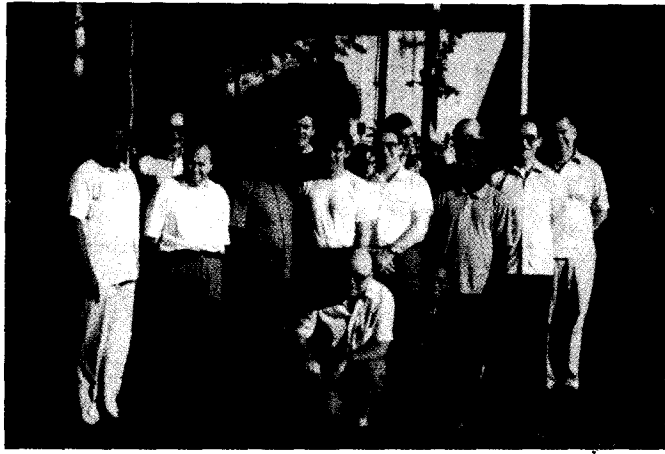
English-speaking interafrican novitiate in Nairobi: 32 novices.

French-speaking interafrican novitiate in Kinshasa: 21 novices.

- Two interafrican scholasticates, one English-speaking, the other French-speaking:

The one in Nairobi, founded as the "Christ the Teacher Centre", is attached to the Tangaza Institute. The students include 6 Brothers of the Christian Schools, plus Brothers and Sisters from other congregations, all of them full-time students. This English-speaking scholasticate opened in August 1992.

The scholasticate in Abidjan, which opened in October 1991, offers courses in theology, education and catechetics to 22 Brothers of the Christian Schools, as well as to other Brothers and Sisters and to lay people. It is affiliated with the Catholic Institute of West Africa (ICAO).



Meeting of RELAF in 1991 in Kinshasa. Certain secretaries from Rome, the Director of CELAF in Abidjan and Brother Martin Corral, General Councillor, are with Brothers Visitors.



CLAF course (Lasallian Centre for Africa), 1990, in Rwanda, for young Brothers preparing for final vows.

2. Statutes of RELAF

Organised in 1977 under its own statutes, RELAF became a Region in 1987 and named its first Regional Coordinator in 1989.

- It conducts one Regional Assembly in the period between two General Chapters.
- The Conference of the Region is held once a year.
- The members of RELAF collaborate in providing common services and in sending Brothers for formation. They appoint Brothers to the various staffs, determine the nature and location of the cooperative programs for initial formation, supervise the novitiates (Nairobi and Kinshasa) and scholasticates (Abidjan and Nairobi), and see to the smooth functioning of the African Lasallian Centre (CLAF) for the continuing formation of Brothers and lay colleagues.
- The Regional Coordinator convokes and presides at the annual Conference of RELAF. He serves as a resource person, responsible for the regional services, but he does not have definite power of authority.
- The Conference of RELAF gives the Regional Coordinator the right of vote during its meetings and directs that he visit all of the Districts and meet with all the communities and every Brother.

3. Vocation ministry and initial formation

A series of phases can be discerned: since 1976, vocation ministry in RELAF has experienced successive phases of "wait-and-see" and uncertainty, of hesitation and experimentation. But a reawakening has occurred, beginning in 1982.

● Awakening to a new dawn:

due in part to the 1982 CLAF session on formation and also to the youth ministry movement which has been growing throughout Africa. Since that time, we have witnessed an increase in vocations, although the number varies from sector to sector. In general, it is an undeniable fact that many Brothers believe in the existence of Lasallian vocations.

● Multiple forms:

the method of carrying out vocation ministry varies from one sector to another. Nevertheless, the Conference of Visitors of RELAF, thanks to an attitude of sharing and a commitment to a common purpose, has frequently given directions to aid all of the units in the Region.

● A unified point of view:

Another element that has evolved is a common core of formation among the various postulancy programmes, which now last at least one year, in order to extend beyond the school period the development of the candidate's sense of vocation.

● There are successes,

for if Africa as a continent is synonymous with endemic maladies, it is also a continent of the young who are committed to give new meaning to its life. In a number of sectors, aspirants are counted in the dozens. This is another reason to build up a solid programme for vocation ministry.

4. Our Institute in the context of African cultures

Africa is a continent of thousands of cultures. Furthermore, every African country is a constellation of many cultures. As new locales for the mission of the Church, these local cultures attract the attention of the Brothers of RELAF. This reality is a common refrain in all Lasallian meetings.

A number of Brothers are called upon to give sessions on inculturation. Our schools are truly places where people from a variety of cultures gather. These schools must, therefore, become effective meeting places for encountering the different cultures. In fact, one can say that RELAF itself is composed of Brothers not only of many different nationalities, but also of a broad range of cultures. This is the challenge for the Brothers of RELAF: the call to be a teacher in dialogue among cultural groups and to incarnate more deeply in local cultures the religious life of the Brothers. The task is immense. Its accomplishment requires of us a solid faith and a keen intelligence.

5. A general outlook on the problems of education and pedagogy in the African schools

Designated by UNESCO as the continent of illiteracy, Africa also faces serious problems in education and, related to these, difficulties in pedagogy.

An African author wrote a book entitled "Educate or Perish" - those are the high stakes, in reality, for education.

● **Education takes place outside the school**, but because it is a question of the education of the young, we limit our remarks here to education in the schools and related to the schools.

– One often hears such remarks as, "the level of learning of the students is low", "they are poorly educated", "the school is in crisis". Many African universities are in a state of tension and conflict. The students resist. All this is a sign of malaise or of hidden discontent.

– The Brothers are called to pay attention to these troubles: to mobilise all their energy and skill to collaborate with society to ensure that the young receive the education which they deserve.

● **Three worrisome problems**

1. Recognition by the State of its duties with respect to private sectarian education. This recognition is nonexistent at the moment. On the contrary, there seems to be a desire to stamp out this form of education. For example, government grants or subsidies are irregularly paid or decreased (by 2/3 within the past five years in some countries).

2. The relative youth of the teaching profession and their inadequate training.

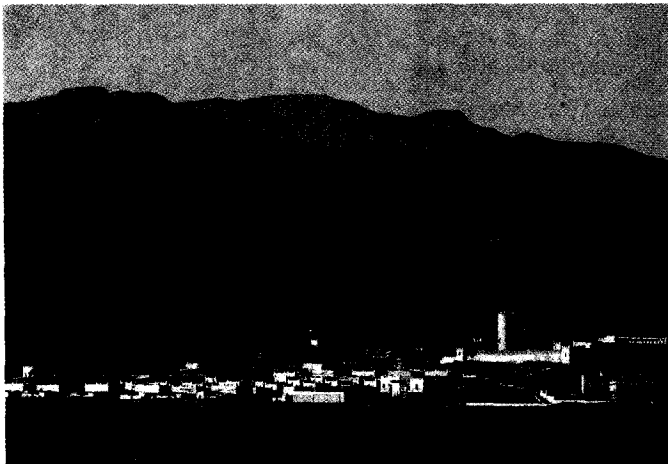
3. Because teachers are so poorly paid, the function of teaching is held in low esteem. This is one of the causes of instability within the corps of teachers.

6. Changes to be implemented

● **Among the Brothers:**

Invest heavily in the training of formation personnel. The Brother of the Christian Schools is called today to be an animator, a coordinator, a unifier. This presupposes a solid, multidisciplinary formation. Our scholasticates in Abidjan and Nairobi hope to accomplish this, nourished and motivated by a strong Lasallian spirituality.

Our mission is a shared mission, "together and by association" with lay people. Within the dynamic possibilities of the Lasallian Family, we must give proof of our creativity: Brothers



and laity are partners. In this domain we have to undergo a conversion.

● **At the level of mentalities:**

The changes in our African educational systems require a realistic and effective sense of purpose which will include an experience of sorrow. What ails Africa today is within the spirit; we must track it down. The changes that must be put into effect require a spirit of innovation and investigation.

7. CLAF

The Institute in Africa has a programme of continuing formation for the Brothers and, eventually, for lay people: the African Lasallian Centre (CLAF). In principle, a session of one month is offered every two years.

During the past three years, CLAF has functioned on an annual basis. Both the need and the desire for formation required this response. The Institute's Sharing Fund has helped us up to the present.

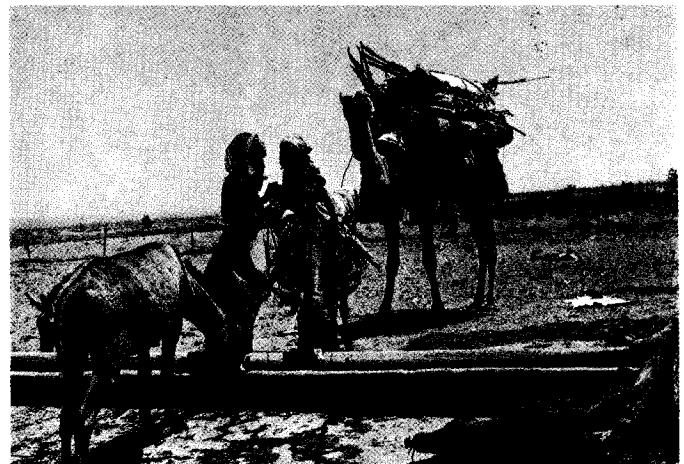
The CLAF sessions have included the following:

1. 1975. Religious Life in Africa (Yaounde, Cameroon)
2. 1978. Catechetics (Kigali, Rwanda)
3. 1980. Education (Kinshasa, Zaire)
4. 1982. Formation (Yaounde, Cameroon)
5. 1984. Community (Koumi, Burkina Faso)
6. 1987. The Rule and the Director of the Community (Kigali, Rwanda)
7. 1990. Thirty Days' Retreat in Preparation for Perpetual Profession (Rutongo, Rwanda)
8. 1991. The Lasallian Family (Kinshasa, Zaire)
9. 1992. Formation and the Guide for Formation (Nakuru, Kenya)

● **Results**

In 17 years: 9 sessions of CLAF; 225 Brothers, about 54% of the Brothers presently at work in the Region, have participated. These sessions have had an overall positive effect, although the impact varies according to the particular theme. As a continuing formation programme, the CLAF experience has been continuously rated positively by the participants.

Two of these CLAF sessions were open to lay people. The session on the Lasallian Family was attended by 13 lay people



Africa is a country of contrasts...We can see this in these two countries situated in the same zone: Djibouti, at the entrance to the Red Sea. At the foot of high mountains, the city of Tadjourah...And very close by, steppe country, lacking water, populated by nomads.

and 17 Brothers, a number of whom are now engaged in the ministry of the Lasallian Family.

8. The Lasallian Family in Africa

● Association of Former Students.

Some associations of former students, which exist here and there throughout the Region, were quite active in the past. In order to develop a more Lasallian identity, these associations are looking again at a better method of organisation. They are in a holding pattern and are awaiting a new role of the Brothers in awakening a new spirit.

● Formation based on facts.

Since 1987, the idea of the Lasallian Family has become more explicit. The Brothers are more aware of this development. Some sectors have initiated specific steps. But it required a CLAF session in 1991 to identify a greater understanding and to arrive at specific commitments for action. The 17 Brothers and 13 lay people at the 1991 CLAF are, for the most part, the principal leaders responsible for the ministry with the Lasallian Family.

● Members of Signum Fidei:

In the RELAF Region there are 8 members of Signum Fidei who have made their consecration. There are 18 other members in Madagascar and Rwanda.

● Lasallian Sisters:

9 postulants of the Lasallian Sisters of Guadalupe are in formation in Madagascar.

● Lasallian Youth:

There are groups of Lasallian youth in six sectors, aided by a number of young Brothers who are interested in this movement.

● Lasallian Centre:

A local Lasallian Centre, known as CLAM, has recently been organised in Madagascar. Thirteen people are participating in the initial group.

● Formation of lay teachers:

There is a need for a more dynamic policy and programme. This is another effort required of the Brothers in RELAF: to develop more systematically the ministry with our teachers and other lay colleagues. Some sessions are provided here



and there, but there are thresholds to be crossed between these occasional sessions and a more extensive and profound programme.

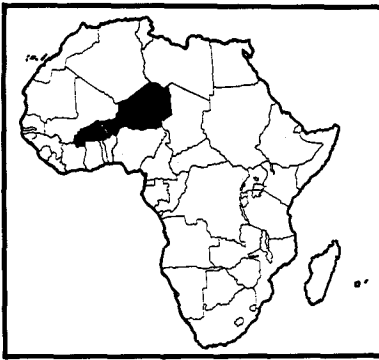
● Need for a regional commission on the Lasallian Family.

It remains truer than ever before that we must have a regional commission on the "Lasallian Family" in order to develop this aspect in Africa.

The shared mission does not come about by itself. It requires of us not only an awareness but also a serious formation. Within RELAF, these two needs are of concern both to the Brothers and to our colleagues. ●



Brothers' schools appear in many corners of Africa surrounded by vegetation, like symbols of a culture taking root among the people. In the photo, St. John of Matha College in Moramanga, Madagascar.



DISTRICT OF WEST AFRICA

1. The Countries.

The District of West Africa consists of ...2 countries: Burkina Faso and the Niger.

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country of 274.000 km². The relief of the country is not strongly marked; the highest point is 747 m.

Situated in the Sudanese region, Burkina Faso has a tropical climate characterized by two seasons: a long dry period and a rainy season.

The climate is hot and dry and very sunny. Its population of 9,5 millions comprises different ethnic groups. The name of Burkina Faso means the country of upright, courageous and honest people, worthy of respect; the new name of the country was adopted on August 4th, 1984. Ouagadougou is the capital and Bobo-Dioulasso is the second city.

Niger is 1,267,000 km², most of which is uninhabited. Like Burkina, it is landlocked. The population is estimated at 8 millions, with Muslims in the majority. The capital is Niamey.

The two countries are similar in many respects: both belong to the Sahel region and various ethnic groups are found in both countries. However, each of them has its own characteristics and distinctive cultural traits.

2. The History of the Institute in the Region.

It is linked to the name of a village: Toussiana! On September 25, 1948, five Brothers arrived in Toussiana to take over from "White Fathers" who ran a Teachers' training college for Christians; Brothers Doncelin-Marie (Guillaume Le Meur), Armel Bernard (Maurice Mathey), Barthelemy Louis (Bernard Jost), Colombien Paul (Paul Dincuff) et Savinien Michel (Louis Pessemesse).

This was the first community. Ouagadougou was founded in 1952, Bobo-Tounouma (1954), Sikasso in Mali (1957), Nouna (1964), Diebougou (1965), Niamey in Niger (1966).

The Juniorate opened in 1955 and the Novitiate in 1958; but even in 1952 there was a postulant, Sylvain Toe, as a letter of sponsorship testifies. The Scholasticate was built in 1965 in Bobo and housed 4 Brothers and six Scholastics. Little by



**Toussiana, March 1991:
Brothers attending the 7th District Chapter.**

little, the sector grew and remained attached to the District of Algeria.

In 1962, North Africa separated from Black Africa; the District of West Africa became independent and Br. Domitien Benilde (Jean Le Guernic) became Visitor. The first native Visitor, Sylvain Toe, was appointed in 1972.

The history of the District of West Africa abounds in tales of epic journeys and hunting trips... Br. Jude (Gilbert Dubois) and other veterans still remember vividly certain adventures and incidents.

Today, the centres of the Brothers' former apostolate have disappeared: the Agricultural Centre at Comoe (CAK) 1968-75; the Literacy Centre for Catechists (CALPHAC) 1969-73; the Centre for the coordination of social projects of development at Dori and Gorum-Gorum: 1973-81; sinking wells project in the region of Diebougou 1975-78; ministry in the prison of Bobo.

The pioneers worked wholeheartedly and have passed on the torch. Bro. Assistant Charles Edmond was correct in saying: "Dear Brothers of Upper Volta and Mali, your Superiors are proud of you". Many of these pioneers have gone to their eternal reward; Br. Emile Velay (13-12-1967), Br. Theophane Elola (27-04-1984) and Br. Sylvain Toe (01-08-1987), all of whom are buried in Burkina Faso.

Today, there are 45 Brothers in the District, 22 of whom are Burkina nationals. There are seven communities; a community of student Brothers opened in 1984 is temporarily empty.

3. Educational Scene.

● In Burkina Faso.

Preschool education is insignificant, limited to urban centres; very few benefit from rural education.

- Primary and secondary education are supported by a network of schools and private establishments, some of which are subsidised by the State. The Catholic Church runs 17 secondary schools, 5 of which are run by the Brothers.
- Technical education is growing rapidly.
- The University of Ouagadougou has limited accommodation facilities and offers a limited number of Courses.
- Literacy campaigns for all ages have been launched.
- The percentage of the school population has significantly increased in the last ten years; nevertheless, it still remains small: 27%; the female school-going population is much smaller than the male.

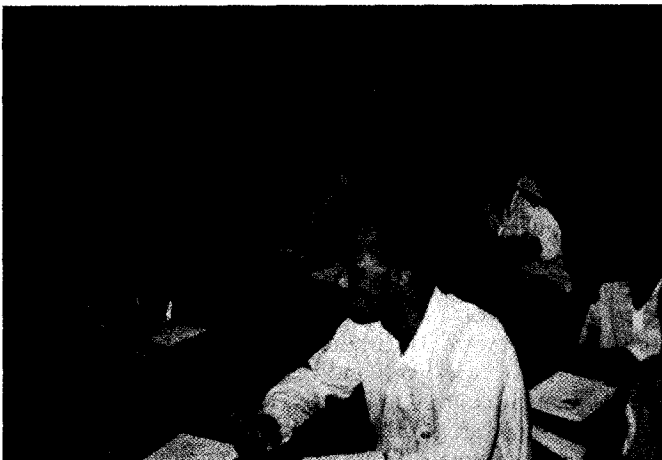
In spite of the efforts of the State and of the parents, the situation in the educational sector fails to meet the demands and expectations of educators and youth. Education is hampered by poor conditions which are shown by:

- the shortage of teachers,
- overcrowded classes (100 students in the lower grades of primary school, 60 in the secondary)
- the lack of or inadequate resources,
- the fall-off in State subsidies to students and schools in need.

● In Niger.

30% of the children go to primary school, 1,2% of whom are educated in Catholic schools where school fees are maintained within parents' means; schooling is free in certain areas and degressive rates are applied in others.

Although the State devotes 14% of its national budget to education, the management of schools is difficult.



Adult literacy programme in Burkina Fasso.

4. The apostolic activity of the District.

For the District, *"the school remains the preferred field for the activity of the Brothers"*. The Brothers manage 5 secondary schools and a technical school. A training school and a literacy centre have been opened to respond to the needs of youth.

● General Education.

- **Three schools -in the Bush-** complement the ordinary school curriculum by offering courses in gardening, animal husbandry, woodwork, mechanical engineering and drawing.

1. Pierre Kule de Diebouogou College.

Established in 1965, it changed its name in 1983 to that of a revered local apostle. The 209 students, 103 of whom are boarders, follow a 4 year program. There are 5 Brothers and 5 lay staff and they prepare the students for the BEPC examination; courses in animal husbandry and gardening are also provided. It is planned to re-introduce mechanical engineering and woodwork, dropped in 1989.

2. Charles Lwanga de Nouna College:

Administered by the Brothers since 1964, apart from a two year period. 5 Brothers and 8 lay teachers look after 173 students; elementary courses, gardening, woodwork, mechanical engineering and drawing; one group learns the flute; two "White Sisters" look after the girls: sewing, etc.

3. Toussiana College.

Set up in the former Juniorate and Novitiate. The number of students has doubled: 369 students, of whom 293 are boarders. Just think of the tons of rice, "gnames" and beans they consume! 6 Brothers, 1 Postulant and 12 lay teachers look after the students and prepare them for the BEPC; many students are keenly interested in manual work: woodwork, engineering, mechanical engineering and mechanical drawing.

- 2 Centres, unable to provide technical subjects, concentrate on literacy programs for the poor.

4. De La Salle College of Ouagadougou:

Opened in 1952; it prepares students for the BEPC and the BAC, C and D. 350 students are taught by 6 Brothers and 15 lay teachers. Senior students are involved in adult literacy programs.

5. College of Tounouma at Bobo Dioulasso.

Opened in 1954, prepares students for the BEPC and the BAC, A and D. 415 students are taught by 6 Brothers and 14 lay teachers. An adult literacy program is one of the many offered by the school.

● Vocational Education.

Issa Beri de Niamey Vocational School (NIGER).

President Hamini Diiori had asked for the Brothers in order "to give students a sense of the Divine, the sense of duty and a sense of professional pride".

He approached Rome and on September 30, 1966, Brothers Paul Rouelle, Francois Duisit and Andres Etchevarria arrived in Niamey. The College Issa Beri opened on October 10 and prepares its students for the BEPC and the BAC, C and D.

Later developments led the school administration to change the curriculum and in 1984 the College became an L.E.P. The new course prepares students for a trade and is intended for all those who experience difficulty with the traditional program.

The students come from all over the country and come from farming stock, for the most part; 315, 30 of whom are girls.

Sections: Computer Science, Accounting, Bilingual Secretariat, Civil Engineering, Electromechanics, Graphic Arts.

It's a two year course with the final year devoted to specialization. The staff is composed of 4 Brothers and 50 lay teachers.

It is the permanent concern of the Administration to monitor closely developments in the country so that they are in a position to adapt the curriculum to meet the changing needs. After careful consideration, it was decided to drop Graphic Arts as students had difficulty finding jobs after leaving school. It has been replaced by Retraining Programs for past pupils and workers in the public sector.

● Primary Education.

In Burkina Faso.

The primary schools were nationalized in 1969. Two Brothers carried on teaching; one Brother has retired.

Niger.

A Brother is in charge of diocesan schools -Mission Schools-; 9 altogether and 4 in Niamey.

His work involves

- supervising educational programs
- and management.

● Other Apostolates.

1. Vocational Centre (CAPA)

The Centre opened in 1988 in Nouna in the premises of the former boarding college; the Centre specializes in multi-purpose, elementary education for young people who were not able to continue their studies after the primary school.

Courses offered by the Centre: Bicycle and Motorbike, Car Maintenance, Woodwork, Brickwork, Technical Drawing.

The trainees have plots in the garden -agricultural science. Religious education is an integral part of the program.

The Courses are given during the dry season when the students have few chores.

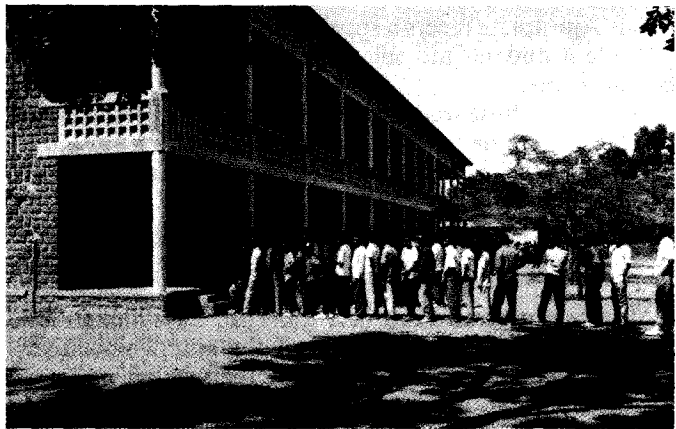
The students pay 2000 FCA monthly (40,00FF, £5 sterling)

The Brothers run the Centre with the help of two lay teachers (one a national of Burkina and the other a volunteer from France) Numbers have risen from 12 to 24, all 18 years old or over; some were sent by the parishes. They come from all over: 13 villages are represented this year.

After finishing their studies, the students have the possibility to buy tools at reasonable prices to enable them to get employment in their villages.

The Centre tries to meet the needs of young people; it is aware that it cannot solve the unemployment problem but in training them to acquire useful skills it is contributing in its own small way.

The Centre endeavours to provide 1) a 2 year Training Program, 2) to define priorities, 3) to train staff to continue the work, 4) to collaborate with local artisans and finally, to look for the necessary funds.



Tounouma College, in Bobo-Dioulasso.

2. Literacy Program.

The program was started at Tounouma College -Bobo- (1978) and at De La Salle Ouagadougou (1976). The school premises were used when classes were over in the afternoon. The pioneers were Bro. Louis Le Labourier and members of his Community; in charge at the moment: Bobo, Miss Jacqueline Robert and Bro. Desire Sanou in Ouagadougou.

The purpose is twofold:

- to teach adults who never attended school: literacy and numeracy; practical hints concerning their trade.
- to increase awareness among the students about their responsibilities in promoting literacy and numeracy.

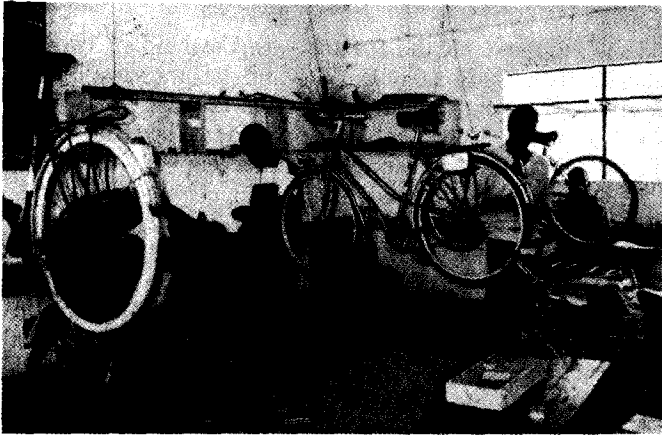
The beneficiaries of the program: shop-keepers, unskilled workers, unemployed youth; young men and women, 18 years old or over. They pay a minimal fee of 1500 CFA per annum (30,00FF, £3 sterling)

The students are divided into 5 or 6 grades and each group has 5 one and a half hour lessons per week. Textbooks are distributed during the lessons (on loan)

This year there are 130 students at Tounouma and 260 at De La Salle.

Literacy Program Lessons are taught by students in secondary schools; in Ouagadougou, some university students help out as well. They are all volunteers.

Results are fairly satisfactory in spite of recurrent attendance problems from one year to the next.



**Nouna, Apprenticeship centre (CAPA).
Apprentices in the bicycle repair workshop.**

- This Apostolate meets a specific need;
- Grade 4 students are able to read newspapers and keep their accounts;
- Every year, those students who have been successful in the CEPE examination have better chances of getting jobs;
- the "monitors" benefit from their experience and improve their teaching skills;
- Past pupils involved in the program meet frequently at the Centre and become increasingly sensitive to the needs of the poor.
- All those involved work in a fraternal, Lasallian atmosphere; a small party at the end of the school year gives everybody ample opportunity to share their experiences.

5. Apostolate of the Institute.

The school is the preferred field of our apostolic activity in the local Church.

In the light of the Gospel and inspired by Lasallian and cultural values of our countries, we endeavour to accompany the young in the fulfillment of God's plan for them.

We try to live with them the fundamental option of "Church-Family" of our Bishops.

● School context.

The spirit of the school and our apostolate by apostolic activity we mean everything capable of awakening our students to discover the love of God and living by this Love. Therefore, we try:

1. to improve living and working conditions by:
 - hostels to provide accommodation for needy students;
 - setting up a Fund to meet poor students' needs;
 - loaning textbooks;
 - remedial teaching.

2. Organization of school based on Christian principles.
 - setting up a committee to animate pastoral activities;
 - choosing a central theme every year which should become the focus of our thinking and efforts;
 - draw up an educational project, rallying point of teachers;
 - religious instruction as integral part of school program;
 - reflection in class every morning "Thought for the day";
 - preparation for reception of the sacraments;
 - celebration of main liturgical feasts, Retreats, collections for the poor etc.
 - vocation week;
 - fraternal spirit in the school between teachers and students, outings, sporting events.

3. The provision of means to improve and further one's education:

- Catholic action groups, prayer groups;
- religious library, biblical exams;
- chapel open to students;
- to encourage students to assume responsibilities for
 - 1) liturgical committee,
 - 2) sports' committee, cultural, etc.
- animating Masses, prayers, catechesis in primary schools, running literacy programs.

4. To participate actively in the life of the local Church.

Although quite difficult, we realize we are making an important contribution through our involvement in catechesis in parishes and our presence in diocesan meetings, especially vocation meetings.

5. Involvement with the locality, listening to their needs and responding to them, for example, by undertaking pastoral work in schools.

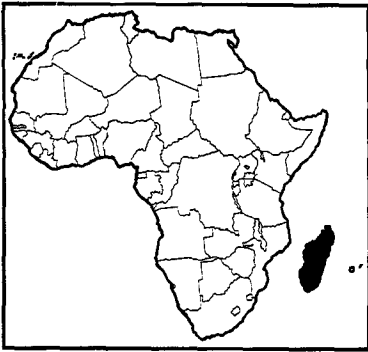
● Outside school.

The task is the same here: working for the human betterment of people, promoting their value as human beings, teaching them spiritual values and, where possible, proclaiming Jesus Christ.

In other words, we work to promote intellectual and cultural advancement, knowing that "to make them aware of the meaning of life, of their responsibilities, of the meaning of love, is already to accomplish the work of God" (Cf. Rule 15c)

● Niamey particular context:

The context does not permit the explicit proclamation of the Gospel. For the Brothers, the Issa Beri College is "a presence of the Church, a witness to the charity of Christ and a center of dialogue and collaboration". (cf. R.19b). ●



DISTRICT OF ANTANANARIVO

I. History of the Brothers in Madagascar

The Brothers of the Christian Schools arrived at Tamatave in 1868. There were three of them: Brothers Gonzalvien, Landolien and Yvon. They came from La Réunion at the invitation of some Jesuit missionaries. 127 years have now passed. What has happened to the work begun by those pioneers?

It is worth looking at how the seeds that were sown in those early years have developed and continue to flourish even now. As we do so, we should remember to see things in a Malagasy context and respect the bonds that link us to our ancestors. Our predecessors and our long history encourage us to feel strong and confident as we face the future.

A visit to the cemetery of Soavimbahoaka (1) where many of our Elders are buried is very instructive. Many of our Brothers, both missionaries and Malagasy, lie here in fraternal peace. Most of the missionaries did not return to Europe, but decided instead to make Madagascar their adopted home. Above all, there are Malagasy Brothers, the first of whom died in 1912. There is also on one side of the cemetery a big mausoleum, a clear indication of inculturation. Finally, there is the tomb of Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa, eminent by his holiness, learning and patriotism, who played such an important part in building up the Church in Madagascar. If we stop to look at some other tombs, we will see the names of some other pioneers whose work continues still to exert an influence on the District: Brother Norbert, who worked to adapt teaching methods to the needs of the Malagasy, and who contributed to the improvement of agriculture and of the life of the peasants; Brother Marcel, who promoted professional training; Brother Nétère, who fostered vocations to religious life and the priesthood; Brother Antoine Rakotobe, called Ranglisy (1916-1975), and Brother Célestin Rasoloarison (1940-1992), who were both eminent teachers and educators.

The four concerns of the founding Brothers

As we think of those who generously devoted their lives to the human and Christian education of Malagasy youth, let us also cast a glance at our history. We will see that these Brothers had four major concerns which remain ours to this day.

1. Their first concern was to work for the Church.

Called to work on the island by the first missionaries, the Brothers humbly played an important part in founding and building up the Church.

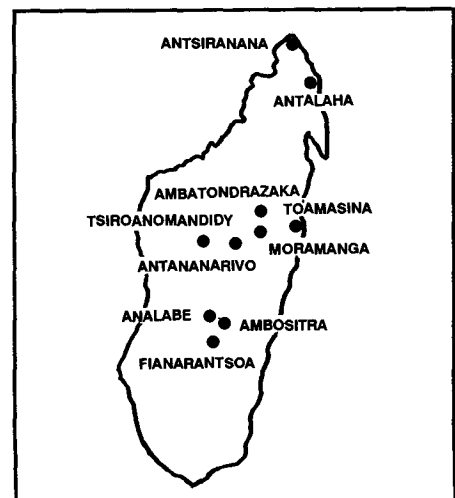
The Brothers' schools - were they already Lasallian schools? - set up in the main areas of missionary activity (Tananarive, Tamatave, Ambositra, Fianarantsoa, etc.), were active centres of evangelisation, the source of many vocations, and a stimulus for an active laity (as early as the 1910's, Brother Raphael Louis ran a Catholic youth club). Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa played a crucial role in the most difficult moments of the life of the Church (1882-1885 and 1894-1895). With all the missionaries absent, the young Church continued to grow and spread its faith through the tireless pastoral work of the first Malagasy religious. The whole Institute can be rightly proud of this holy Brother.

And today, our schools continue along this same path, traced out long ago, by actively pursuing catechesis and ecumenism. How can we forget what the Bishop of Ambositra and member of the synod said: "Brothers, whatever charity and faith I have, I owe to the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle"?

2. Their second concern was to foster local vocations.

Hardly had Brother Raphael Louis renounced his paganism somewhere around 1877 than he became a Brother.

The novitiate opened in 1920 and over the course of many years has trained numerous local vocations. From the very beginning stress was laid on serious and advanced studies: during the colonial period, the Brothers were the first Malagasy to take higher diplomas. This continues to be very im-



Places in Madagascar where Brothers' establishments are found.

portant for us. It is a long time now since the remaining missionaries handed the reins to Malagasy Brothers and gladly retired into the background, offering their help where needed (3).

We are very proud to have been able to play our part as elders in Africa in the persons of Brother Vincent, General Councillor, Marcellin, Regional Coordinator, and Hilaire, Director of CELAF in Abidjan.

3. The third concern was inculturation.

This was a necessary, important and delicate task, which was made easier by the active involvement of many Brothers in the country. Our communities willingly adopted traditional customs, language, relationships and prayer. A vast amount of work has been done on the Malagasy language since the days of Brother Raphael. Our Brothers have made an impressive contribution by composing religious hymns which are used by Christian communities throughout the island. The Brothers of the Christian Schools were and continue to be liturgical pioneers.

4. The final concern was the service of young people in a multitude of forms.

From the beginning, in a country where nothing had been done in this field, the Brothers were enthusiastic and creative in their work with young people.

– Young people were hungry to learn. Thousands of bright-eyed children and young people flocked to our classes, and the Brothers' schools, often with few means at their disposal, made it possible for them to go on to higher studies.

– Many of the young people came from country areas, and so three Rural Centres were set up in Ambositra, Ambohimangakely and Ambatondrazaka. They exerted a great influence by giving rudimentary education in a Christian spirit.

– Young people who were looking for work were trained in the Technical Centres at Ste Famille and Antalaha, and at the production workshops in Tananarive and Tamatave.

Such were the concerns of our predecessors. As our present teams try to be creative and innovative, they are conscious that these Brothers laid the present solid foundations of the District of Madagascar.

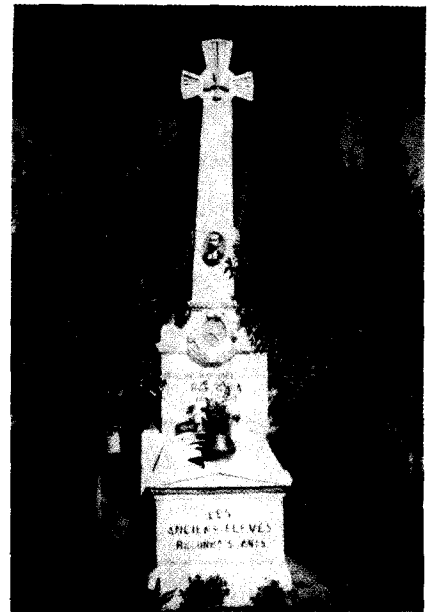
We have weathered many storms. There was the laicisation period 1903-1905, and the cultural revolution in 1972, but the firmly-rooted tree withstood all assaults. Our present time is an integral part of a long historical tradition which has never been broken.

Our large island of Madagascar is an attractive country where the Church retains its influence. An immense harvest field awaits the Lasallian Family. It is preparing itself for it more and more, and provides so many extra Lasallian hands to strengthen the impact of the work of Lasallians on young people.

II A great Brother of the past whose spirit lives on

Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa
(November 13th 1856 - May 19th 1919)

Raphael Rafiringa was born a pagan. His father was the head blacksmith of Queen Rasoherina, Rainiantoandro 10 Honours. Raphael's sister, Ernestine Rasonaviny, who was a



Grave of Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa, at the Provincial House in Soavimbahoaka.

pupil of the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny, would take him to the church at Mahamasina. Raphael liked the religious ceremonies and went to a Catholic school run by Pierre Ratsimba, who would play a major part in establishing the Catholic faith at Fianarantsoa. Father Limozin, the parish priest of St Joseph's parish at Mahamasina, baptised the young Raphael on November 7th 1869.

From that moment onwards, his life changed. He became more pious, more assiduous, applied himself more. It has to be said he was intelligent. In 1871 he came to the notice of Brother Gonzalvien who suggested he continue his studies at the Ecole principale Notre Dame du Sacré Coeur at Andohalo. In 1874 he became a boarder there.

When that same year Brother Yon died and Brother Indrenis went to La Réunion for health reasons, Brother Gonzalvien invited Raphael and three of his companions to join him and Brother Ladolien on the staff of the school at Andohalo. They were happy to accept the invitation and "the four young men proved to be always dedicated and zealous as teachers and educators of their young fellow countrymen".

Brother Raphael's faith was strengthened and developed by the example of Brothers Gonzalvien and Ladolien. Brother Ladolien's catechism lessons and reflections had a great impact on him, for he knew how to communicate his faith by making the pupils meditate on the four last ends of man. The annual 3 day school retreat and membership of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Virgin further strengthened the faith and piety of Raphael.

He was terrified at the time by the thought of Hell. It was clear that he was of a calibre to be something more than an ordinary primary school teacher. He consulted first Brother Ladolien and then Brother Gonzalvien and then decided to join the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. After writing some truly heroic letters to obtain his parents' permission, he was accepted as a postulant on April 16th 1876. On March 1st 1877, he joined the novitiate at Antananarivo and became Brother Raphael Louis.

Brother Gonzalvien was both his Director and Director of novices and made him follow a full formation programme. He never tired of singing his praises: "He has all the necessary gifts to make an excellent Brother of the Christian Schools. Everyone admires and respects him". When he appeared for the first time in public in his habit, everybody in the church said: "He's a man of faith! He deserves it!"

His formation continued beyond what was required by Canon Law: the five years from 1878 to 1883 were a continuation of the novitiate and prepared him to face a time of trial which would call on all his reserves of faith, zeal, humility and mortification.

With the outbreak of the Franco-Malagasy war (1833-1836), the departure of all Catholic missionaries from Madagascar, and the death of the Jesuit Fr. Basilide Rahidy on April 10th 1883, Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa, at the age of 28, remained the only Malagasy religious in Antananarivo.

Once they had recovered from their surprise, the Christians of Antananarivo elected Brother Raphael Louis as their President, "their Prefect".

From then onwards it was his responsibility to organise meetings, preside at liturgical offices, administer the sacrament of baptism, bless marriages, preach retreats, convert Protestants, pagans and agnostics, work with the young people of the Catholic Union - all of whom were either co-disciples or employees in the higher echelons of the royal court - under the official protection of Blessed Victoire Rasoamanarivo, the daughter-in-law of the Prime Minister and a living example of holiness.

He alone was responsible for all the schools both in the town and in the countryside, for the material and spiritual welfare of six novices and postulants of the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny, and for the lepers who needed everything to be done for them.

During the four years of war, he led an exemplary religious life as a Brother, trusting in providence, faithfully fulfilling his exercises of piety and rejecting all reproaches and encouragement to leave the religious life.

When the war ended, he took his place in community once again, taught, wrote educational books, and recorded his own experiences in "Fruits of Four Years of War". Then another but shorter Franco-Malagasy war broke out (1894-1895). Once again Brother Raphael Louis found himself alone. This time the bishop confided the care of the Catholics to him. He became their spiritual head and passed on the bishop's instructions to them. He took special care of the Catholic schools. This made some people very angry with him, and it was only with the protection of St Michael that he escaped an ambush.

When the community returned he took his place in it once again. While he accepted the annexation of Madagascar on the political level, he vigorously opposed cultural colonisation by what one biographer called "linguistic resistance".



Tomb of the Brothers in Soavimbahoaka.

For a time, he was the chief of the Faravohitra district, but his main preoccupation was to foster vocations. He was an adviser to the bishop, priests, and Brothers of the Christian Schools. He was one of the founding members of the Malagasy Academy.

Brother Raphael Louis was a writer. He wrote articles for religious reviews, composed a Malagasy grammar and treatise on poetry, and wrote plays. Whatever he wrote had one aim only: the education of young Malagasy people, and especially religious education and the fostering of vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

He organised youth clubs to which young people flocked to receive training and advice. He was considered to be one of the most influential members of the Catholic Mission. It is not surprising he was involved in the V.V.S. business (Vy, Vato, Sakelika).

The young intellectuals of those days formed a secret society for the preservation of Malagasy civilisation which was under threat from European civilisation. It was decided that this was a political and anti-French society.

And so, on December 24th 1915, at 6.30 in the evening, Brother Raphael was arrested by the police. Various papers of his were taken and he was led off to the prison at Antanimora, in Antananarivo. He offered no resistance. The first thing he did in his cell was to kneel down and thank God.

In prison, he recited his community prayers, said many decades of the rosary, made the stations of the cross using his profession crucifix, spent many hours meditating on the best ways of furthering the Kingdom of God, fostering priestly and religious vocations, and training them. He found he was short of time.

He was the eldest of those arrested. On February 18th 1916, after 58 days in prison, he was declared innocent and released.

Once free, he wrote to the Superior General, saying that God had heard his desire to be a saint in order to work for his glory and the good of souls. He thanked God for his trial.

The last years of his life are astonishingly similar to those of St La Salle. Brother Raphael Louis spent them in obscurity, meditation and prayer.

In 1917, he was sent to Collège St Joseph at Fianarantsoa. Here he supervised, taught catechism, prayed, wrote the lives of everyday saints, and never stopped saying the rosary.

Finally, weakened by his labours and his health undermined by the Spanish flu epidemic, he gave up his soul to God on May 19th 1919, fortified by the sacraments of the Church.

In 1933, his mortal remains were exhumed and found to be incorrupt. They were brought in triumph to Antananarivo. They are now venerated at Soavimbahoaka, in the provincial house, where Brother Raphael Louis continues to help those who ask for his protection.

On May 19th 1989, the Cardinal Archbishop of Antananarivo publicly proclaimed the opening of the cause of beatification of the Servant of God, Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa.

We hope that this cause will soon be successfully concluded, so that once again it can be seen that the Institute founded by St La Salle can bear fruits of sanctity wherever it exists.



May 1992: Students of Holy Family College of Mahamasina, Antananarivo, preparing to begin their annual pilgrimage to Amboltrandriamanitra (Mountain of God). They always take as the theme of their march the "Pope's message to young people".

III The present work of the Brothers

1. The Brothers in the service of the young people of Madagascar

Over the last few years, young people in Madagascar have been sacrificed on the altar of political ideology and ambitions, the victims of the whims of the people in power. Much could be said about this. The Brothers have tried to provide an intellectual and moral education in line with Lasallian guidelines and principles. This they have done in changing circumstances, but always trying to meet the needs expressed by pupils and parents, without infringing official directives too much.

From the very beginning, our work has been predominantly in schools, and this has been in accordance with the missionary policy of Church leaders in Madagascar.

The Brothers work in 6 of the 17 dioceses of the country. They run mainly middle and senior schools. There are about ten of these catering for about 12,000 pupils of various religions: there are Christians, Muslims, and followers of traditional religions.

In the Archdiocese of Antananarivo, one can mention first of all Soavimbahoaka. Here there is the Provincial Centre, where the provincialate community lives, and the house for retired Brothers. Soavimbahoaka, "the people's holy hill", is at present becoming a formation and course centre for men and women religious, as well as a place for prayer and recollection for pupils. In the capital there is also the Collège St Joseph of Andohalo, the birthplace of the Institute in Madagascar, the Collège Frère Raphael Louis Rafiringa at Faravohitra, and the Institution Sainte Famille, which is the leading Lasallian establishment in Madagascar because of its size and reputation.

In the Archdiocese of Fianarantsoa, the Collège St Louis at Ambrosita, which has produced many vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, has played a major part in the establishment of the Church locally. In the suburbs of Ambositra, are to be found the novitiate, postulancy and the Analabe Agricultural Centre.

In the Archdiocese of Antsiranana, there is the Collège St Jean which is somewhat isolated from other District schools. It is the leading institution for the evangelisation of the local population which is still largely ignorant of Jesus Christ.

In the Diocese of Ambatondrazaka there are two schools run by the Brothers: the Collège St Joseph at Ambotondrazaka, and the Collège St Jean de Matha at Moramanga.

Finally, in the Diocese of Tsiroanomandidy, the Brothers are responsible for the Collège Stella Maris, two overcrowded primary schools, and for education in the diocese. The Brothers came to this town 125 years ago, and yet the work of education and evangelisation is only in its early stages.

We should mention also the "satellite" schools in the vicinity of Antananarivo which are supervised by the Brothers. These schools are gradually beginning to call themselves Lasallian schools.

2. Our efforts to adapt and renew

Our schools, which have never had many Brothers working in them, are still called Brothers' schools, and this in spite of the fact that here and there lay teachers are headmasters, prefects of study or section inspectors. These schools follow the official programmes and prepare students for various state examinations. Generally the results obtained at these various examinations are brilliant. This is the main reason why so many pupils come to us. This is doubtlessly a pragmatic motivation, but it needs to be complemented by others just as important: the training and education of the whole person.

Religious education

The preparation of the pupils for the sacraments is one of the principal tasks of the Brothers and their lay colleagues: baptism, first communion, confirmation, reconciliation, and renewal of baptismal promises. Every year, there are numerous candidates in our schools wishing to receive these sacraments, much to the satisfaction of local Church leaders. In the Institution Sainte Famille, all sacraments are administered in the school chapel with the agreement of the competent ecclesiastical authorities.

Youth movements

In almost all our schools the staff organise various kinds of activities suited to the needs and age of the pupils. The aim of these activities is to complement the education given in class by stimulating personal responsibility, a thirst for knowledge and social awareness. And so such things as IKA, Scouts, various clubs, choirs, extra-curricular activities, sport, tend to promote the overall development of young people in a social setting suited to their age and tastes.

Vocational training in school

In the Malagasy context, the Lasallian school is expected to fight not only against illiteracy and ignorance but also against the various forms of unemployment when pupils leave school. In two of our schools courses have been organised to teach pupils manual work. In the Collège St Jean at Antalaba, a vocational studies department has been opened. It teaches pupils fishing, agriculture, animal husbandry, carpentry,

blacksmith's work, and dressmaking. At the Institution Sainte Famille in Antananarivo, for the first 4 years of secondary school, boys have courses in woodwork and ironwork, and girls, dressmaking. From the 5th year onwards, all learn typing and electronics. All this practical teaching is part of the general education offered and leads to the baccalaureate (options A, C, D). Also, the Institution Sainte Famille has opened a technical section (O,M) and an information technology centre which gives advanced teaching in this subject over a period of 3 years.

Other schools also are slowly setting up information technology courses which could provide our youngsters with job opportunities in the future.

It is clear that our Lasallian teachers are responsible for some very useful developments. There is still more to be done. Our hope is that all the schools in the District will gradually become the kind of "renewed and adapted" school mentioned in the Rule.

Agricultural centres

The aim is to train peasant farmers to use common sense methods of farming and so produce better crops. Courses are aimed at both young people and adults. This means that a complex teaching approach is needed which calls for competence, patience and simplicity.

We have centres at Analabe in Ambositra, Ambohimankakely in Antananarivo, and ARTA in Ambatondrazaka. Many peasants have made a lot of progress as a result of these centres and help from foreign NGO's. However, each of the centres is now trying to be self-financing.

A publishing and printing centre (FOFIPA)

Started up by the Brothers in the 70's, this centre was a meeting place for teachers who wanted to provide Malagasy pupils with books suited to their mentality and at a price their meagre resources could afford. By means of its various school textbooks, the FOFIPA provided the necessary support for state education system during the period of "malagasisation" (1972-1989). Recent changes in school programmes, the lack of Brothers writing school textbooks and the economic difficulties of the population unfortunately put the future of FOFIPA at risk. The District is seeking a suitable solution for the problems facing this centre which has served education in Madagascar so well over the years.

Non-educational work

To end this section about the present work of the Brothers in Madagascar, we can mention the farm at Soavimbahoaka and the workshops at Mahamasina and Tamatave.

When the Brothers first came to Madagascar, they acquired many hectares of land. The intention was that by farming this land the Brothers would produce sufficient income to provide for their needs. At the present time, ten or so hectares of vineyards at Soavimbahoaka provide enough income to serve the needs of the retired Brothers and contribute to the needs of the District.

There are workshops also which go back to the establishment of the Institute on the Grande Ile. They make use of the varied and precious kinds of wood to be found in Madagascar, and while training specialised craftsmen, they make a considerable contribution to the coffers of the District. It should be remembered that our schools receive no state aid and the Brothers receive no salaries. They have to live also by the work of their hands.



Provincial House of Soavimbahoaka in Antananarivo.

IV Future prospects and signs of hope

Conscious of its past, the District of Antananarivo looks to the future with confidence. Numerous signs of hope encourage it to renew its confidence and to go forward.

The school population

The first of these signs of the times is without doubt the school population on which our apostolate is centred. Like most countries in the southern hemisphere, Madagascar has a population that is predominantly young. Almost 60% of the population is under the age of 20. All these young people come flocking to our schools, bringing with them their good will, their desire to succeed in life, their thirst for happiness and love. They are our greatest motive for continuing the work of De La Salle so that "all of us come to the knowledge of the truth" (Med 193,1).

Vocations

The District has understood that, in order to respond to the needs of young people, the number of workers must increase in the same way the population is increasing. For five or six years now, there has been much insistence on the pastoral ministry of vocations and on formation, in particular of young Brothers, and much effort has gone into this. Some very active commissions are in charge of this work. A Brother has been appointed full-time coordinator of recruiting activities. The results are now beginning to be felt. Our young aspirants, all secondary school children, are in three "vocation centres" attached to communities which provide accompaniment.

After a year's closure, the postulancy has started up again with eight young men. The enthusiastic members of the formation staff have all followed at least one session on the accompaniment of vocations.

The two year novitiate has proved to be sufficient to lay the foundations of the young Brothers' life and to prepare them for the consecrated life.

It has been working uninterruptedly for the last 15 years. Various ongoing formation sessions are planned well in advance.

The District has set itself the target of 12 novices per year. This involves considerable sacrifice and expense. However, we have made the recruitment and training of young people our priority.

A new foundation by the Guadalupana Sisters

The Lasallian Family is very much alive in our District. 90 Brothers of all ages, closely united to their Visitor-Delegate Brother Vincent Rabemahafaly, form the central core of this great family. They try not to be unworthy of the 126 years of apostolate and evangelical presence in education to which they are heir.

For more than a year now, we have had the joy of having the Guadalupana Sisters among us. There were some girls in our schools who wished to lead a form of religious life inspired by St John Baptist de La Salle. For four years and more before the arrival of the Sisters from Mexico, they had been provided follow up by a group of Brothers. At the present time, there are 9 girls in the postulancy ready to begin their novitiate in September 1993. Four residential girl aspirants are learning languages and getting used to community life.

There are other girl aspirants in various parts of the island waiting to join a house of formation. The three Mexican Sisters have bravely begun a process of inculturation which includes learning Malagasy. The apostolate awaiting them is immense. Girls in other parts of Africa are looking to Madagascar for their formation in Lasallian religious life.

The Malagasy Lasallian Centre

The idea of family implies a certain unity of outlook and a common spirit. In order to acquire this spirit and practise it, we have responded positively to the wish of the Institute and of CLAF in Kinshasa: "The Malagasy Lasallian Centre should be set up this year and its aims and the means to implement them defined. We suggest that it serve both Brothers and lay people so that they can benefit from mutual contact".

We opened the Malagasy Lasallian Centre (CLAM) in September 1992. The aim of the Centre is to promote the Lasallian spirit by means of sessions, recollections and meetings. A dozen or so lay people have taken part. Subsequently, some of them wrote to the Visitor asking if they could join Signum Fidei. The unrest of the last months has slowed down



Madagascar, 1992: Group of postulants of the Guadalupana La Salle Sisters.

activities, but we will pick up where we left off once peace returns.

Lasallian groups

a. Former students

These form the oldest group in the Lasallian Family and their long experience has made them the leaders of this Family. They organise a Mass on the second Sunday of the month, as well as other celebrations. Associations of former students do not exist simply to bring old school friends together; they serve to deepen the faith of their members. They discuss the work they do and help to regularise certain matrimonial situations. Some members give talks and teach in schools.

b. Teachers

The 300 or so men and women teachers are generally speaking remarkably dedicated. In accordance with the 41st General Chapter's guidelines regarding the shared mission of the Institute, many of our teachers not only teach secular subjects and religion, but also occupy positions of responsibility in administration, management and coordination, as already mentioned elsewhere.

Their great desire is to know St John Baptist de La Salle better. Their efforts to put into practice his educational ideas and spiritual insights obviously help the development and growth of Lasallian schools.

The friends of the novitiate

This is an already well-established support-group in particular for houses of formation, made up of parents, friends and supporters of the Brothers. Three or four times a year, they organise events to raise money for the houses of formation. There is always some gift on the feast of the patron saints of the vocation centres, novitiate and scholasticate.

The missionary call

Conscious of its role as "Zoky" or elder in the Region of Africa, the District of Antananarivo has not shirked its responsibilities towards the joint ventures of this part of the Institute.

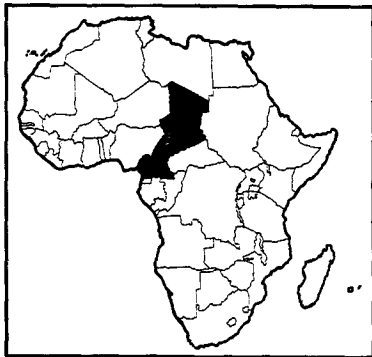
Malagasy Brothers have been on the formation staff of the novitiates at Bobodioulasso and Kinshasa. Others have worked in CELAF, and another is Regional Coordinator. Appeals for help are made to us not only inside our own country, where the bishops are forever putting pressure on the Visitor, but also from outside. The plan to start up the Institute in Congo includes the participation of a Malagasy Brother. We have had appeals also from the faraway islands of Malaysia and Oceania.

May it please God to make this district grow and "bear fruit day after day", so that it can respond adequately to the educational challenges represented by the young people of our country and elsewhere. ●

(1) Soavimbahoaka: "the people's holy hill", the name of the centre where the provincialate is located.

(2) In fact what gives Malagasy families their unity and sense of continuity is the family tomb and its link with traditionally held land.

(3) At the present time, in fact, of the 80 Brothers in the District, only 9 are missionaries.



DISTRICT OF DOUALA

I. Historical Survey

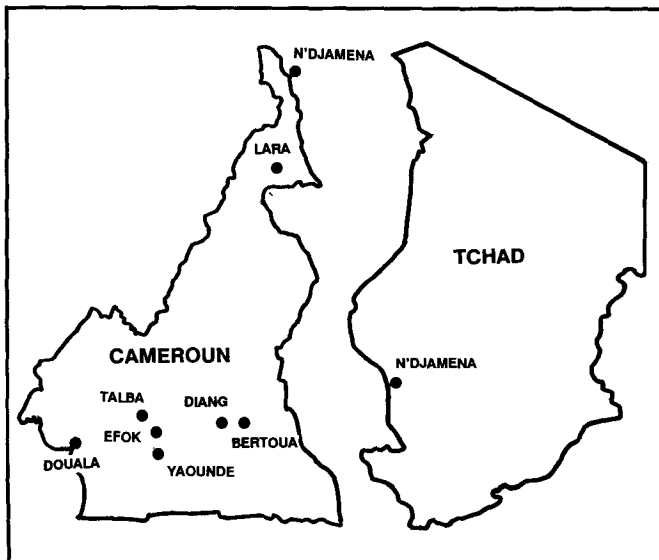
The Church has often attached great importance to the school as a means of evangelisation in what we used to call "mission countries". This was the case in Cameroun. In 1945, after the Second World War, a school network was set up; the many teachers who worked there were characterised more by their good will than by their competence.

In 1948, the first five Brothers arrived from Quebec and established themselves in Mbanga. Two of the original five, Brothers Alfred Guillemette and Justin Blais, are still in the Cameroun. They took over the running of the primary school, then they set up a teacher training college at the beginning of 1949, at the request of the local Bishop. Due to their skill and competence, they were inundated with requests to take over the running of primary schools or to open secondary schools.

In 1958, more Brothers arrived from Holland and settled down in the east of the country. They opened two secondary schools and a technical school.

The primary schools endeavoured to give a basic education to the greatest number of children in the towns and villages. The secondary schools specialised in the preparation of political and administrative executives which the country badly needed. The technical schools trained qualified workers for the ever-expanding industrial sector.

Places in the District of Douala with Lasallian establishments.



In 1974, French Brothers arrived in answer to a call to meet the needs of people living in villages. Finally, the first Polish Brothers arrived in 1981.

2. The communities and the works.

In September 1992, there were 47 Brothers in the District of Douala: 37 working in the Cameroun, 5 in Chad, one studying, 3 at CELAF (the Scholasticate in Abidjan), 1 sub-director of the international novitiate at Kinshasa, 3 novices and 4 postulants.

The 8 communities of the District have an international character due to the various countries of origin of the Brothers: 1 Belgian, 4 Cameroun nationals, 20 Canadians, 1 Spaniard, 13 French, 1 Greek, 3 Dutch, 3 Polish, 1 Vietnamese.

The Apostolic Works.

● Schools.

The Brothers of the District of Douala are involved in 4 educational establishments: 2 secondary schools and 2 technical schools. The Brothers are in charge of the 2 technical schools: De la Salle College, Douala, and St. Joseph's College, Diang.

Diang: St. Joseph's Technical College.

7 Brothers, 1 voluntary worker, 1 Oblate Brother, 482 students, 25 teachers.

The College was opened in the early sixties by the Dutch Brothers. Originally intended to be an agricultural establishment, it soon became a technical school, the first in the eastern province, the biggest and the most forgotten of the country.

The community has always been attentive to the needs of youth, especially those of the surrounding area. It was therefore decided to create departments of metalwork, woodwork, car maintenance and factory production techniques which would enhance the chances of the students of finding employment in the area after finishing their studies. These skills are

very useful in a region where the Forestry Department needs an educated work-force. When electricity was brought to the area, the school created an electricity department.

In spite of very unfavourable school legislation, school fees have been maintained as low as possible to enable the poorest to attend. In order to respond better to the needs of youth, it was decided to build a boarding school; more than two-thirds of the students are boarders.

This school is rather unique, considering its situation in the bush and the total commitment of the Brothers and staff, all inspired by apostolic zeal, which explains the wonderful atmosphere of the place.

Douala: De La Salle Technical College.

10 Brothers, 53 teachers, 650 students.

The Canadian Brothers built this technical school in 1950. At that time, Cameroun, and Douala particularly, the economic capital of the country, were in dire need of qualified workers. In order to meet this demand, the Brothers decided to limit the course of studies to the first four years of the program, i.e., to prepare the students for the CAP certificate; this policy has been pursued up till recently.

Certain factors contributed to this policy: the ever increasing demands of employers, but especially the widespread increase in the time devoted to further education (the students left to study for the BAC. in the colleges).

Now, the college proposes courses -lower level- in electricity, car maintenance and factory production techniques; the students can continue studying these subjects at senior level if they wish. The Brothers responded to a situation and answered a need. The creation of an electronics department followed automatically. A very Lasallian approach!

The excellence of the education in the College was for a long time a "passport" which enabled students to enter the work force immediately. In spite of financial constraints, the educational community tries to respond to the needs of youth: educational needs but also religious ones - a large number of students are baptised every year.

Recently, the Brothers have become greatly involved in prayer groups. The college chapel is the centre for hundreds of students who are members of the Charismatic Renewal Movement.

3 Brothers.

The community of EfoK was opened in 1957. The Novitiate was established and the Archbishop of Yaounde asked the Brothers to take charge of St. Charles primary school.

The Novitiate started with 2 novices and down the years group followed group up to 1982, with a few breaks. After pronouncing first vows, the novices left for the Scholasticate in Yaounde. When the regional Novitiate was set up in Kinshasa, the residence was under-utilised for a time, the community being reduced to 3 Brothers.

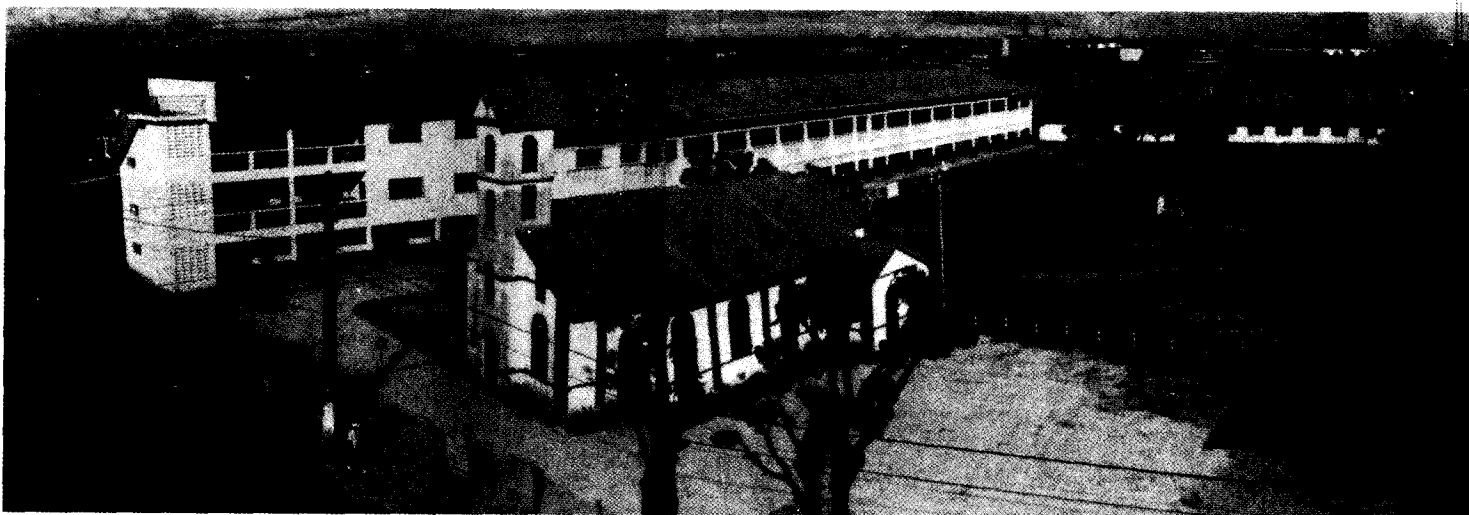
In 1963, at the request of Mgr. Zoa, Archbishop of Yaounde, the Brothers opened John XXIII College and first year students were admitted. The following year a new building housed two first year classes and one fifth year class (secondary school). This new building also incorporated the administrative section. Over the years, new buildings were added. In 1976, the Brothers handed over the running of the school to the diocese. Presently, the college offers second level courses.

Brother Odilon Marceau is a part-time teacher in the college as well as being in charge of book-keeping; he also manages to teach in the local Juniorate. The two remaining Brothers teach religion and prepare students to be received into the Church. They also help out in the pastoral ministry of youth (technical college group, friendship group, the association of Christian Educators); they also help out in the parish, animating prayer groups and participating in the parish council. Since the college was situated in the countryside, it was always a concern of the Brothers to promote agricultural activities and to integrate themselves into this milieu with the help of JAC (Rural Christian Youth Movement), which was set up by the "Farmer's House"; the Brothers have also promoted "First Aid" programs, as well as teaching people how to manage scarce resources; they also helped to create a "Communications Centre".

On September 7th, 1992, prompted by the District Council, a pre-postulancy was launched at EfoK: two young Cameroun boys and another from the "Central African Republic", accompanied by Brothers Pierre Lauby and Claude Grandemange. Brothers Noel Purneau and Hilary Fortin are also part of the formation team. A breath of new life swept through the house and the District.

EfoK: John XXIII College.

Yaounde: Vogt College.



7 Brothers, 1 Brother of St Gabriel, 1 Voluntary worker.

It was in 1951 that the Canadian Brothers arrived in Yaounde to establish a secondary school to train young political and administrative workers which the country sorely needed. Well into the sixties, 15 Brothers undertook the greater part of the teaching program.

As a result of their efforts, the college is considered to be one of the best in Cameroun, where a spirit of "Ora et Labora" prevails even today. In 1972, they handed over the administration of the school to qualified local personnel.

In 1992, only 3 Brothers still work there but the Lasallian spirit remains.

● Works in the countryside.

Over the last 15 years, the attention of the Brothers has been drawn more to the needs of the people -disadvantaged- in the towns and cities. Presently, 15 Brothers are involved full time or part time in running and animating various activities, developmental and educational, outside the normal school curriculum.

Lara.

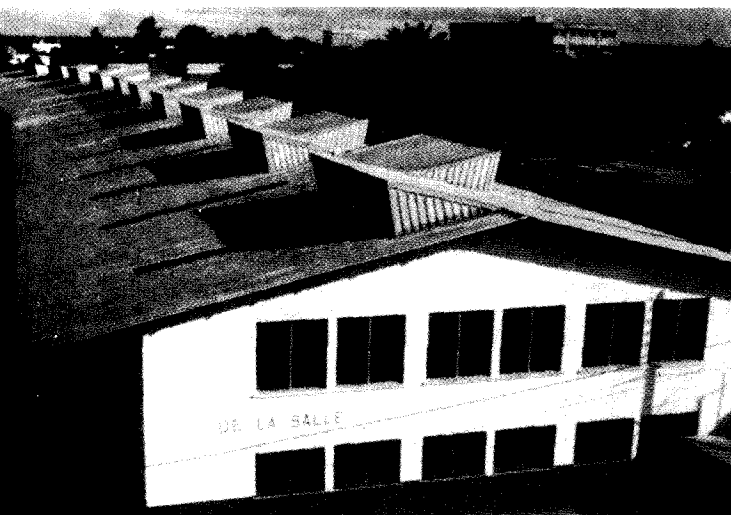
4 Brothers.

The Community is in a village of 2,000 inhabitants which is part of a parish of 20,000 and in a province of 250,000 people. The Brothers' pastoral and educational activities are directed at rural youth who do not go to school or who have stopped going to school. Together with their local partners, they conduct lessons in rural science, organizing sessions in the area and visiting trainees.

Thanks to their dynamic presence in the villages and the increase in skills of the students, the Brothers are able to participate in various projects: providing running water in the villages; environment; agriculture, living conditions, etc.

At the pastoral level, they have taken on the responsibility of forming young Christians, thanks to various movements; Catholic Action Youth Movement; The Young Christian Farmers Movement; etc. They attach great importance to the pastoral ministry of vocations.

Panoramic view of La Salle College, Douala.



Those attending the District of Douala Chapter in December 1991.

The Brothers are confronted by many difficulties: the large number of children who have had no schooling; remedial students who feel rejected by the school system and who are ill at ease in badly organised villages. What kind of education and Christian living should one try to put into place; how to accompany them, how to prepare them for a future which they may not have chosen -namely, to farm the land?

The Brothers coordinate their activities and objectives with the local religious communities, priests and the diocesan authorities. The community of the Brothers wishes to remain open to this milieu by the spirit of welcome and a simple lifestyle, as close as possible to everyday reality.

Talba.

3 Brothers, 1 Priest, 2 postulants, 1 volunteer worker.

Situated 120 km north of Yaounde, the community of Talba is at the service of the migrant populations of the new villages around Mbam. In 1978, at the request of Archbishop Jean Zoa, a Brother visited the area and discovered the anguish and distress of the cocoa planters who were faced with problems of over-population of the region, impoverished soil, tiny plots and malnutrition.

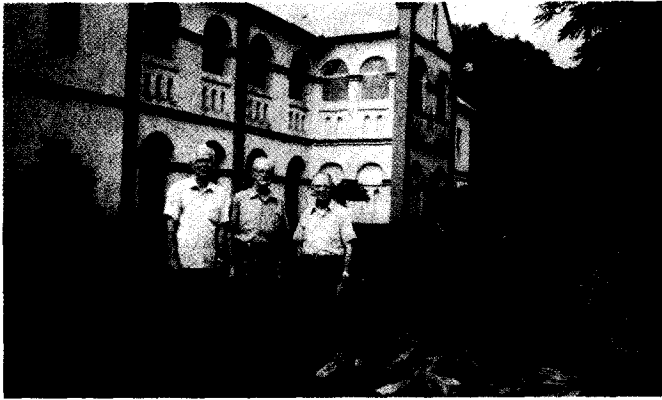
So it was decided to create the village of Mifoumbe for 60 families. Today, these migrant workers have decided to assume responsibility for their own future: plots are more or less the same size; housing has been improved; a school, a small medical centre and a community shop have been built. In short, better living conditions and improved quality of life thanks to a global development policy conducted by the natives.

The Brothers' community became the postulancy centre in 1992. They decided to leave Mifoumbe (1992) and they settled down in Talba, an agglomeration of 12 villages inhabited mostly by migrant workers. There they continue the work of animating and accompanying the local population, youth especially; agriculture, introduction to woodwork, pastoral activities, catechesis, various movements, animating liturgy.

Today, like yesterday, infrastructures must be created, community buildings and schools must be built. A priority at present is the formation of young leaders.

Is it not Lasallian policy to make people, young people especially, aware of their responsibilities?

Bertoua.



College and community of Efok

3 Brothers.

The most recent establishment of the District is engaged in various activities.

Br. Jean-Louis Daneault is in charge of the diocesan "House of Welcome". He provides board and lodgings for missionaries on the move.

Br. Jean-Paul Glevarec is the diocesan Health Officer. He helps to train health workers of 2 dioceses and in the administration of various dispensaries.

Br. Antoine Huysmans devotes all his time to educating the pygmies. He has developed a method to help little children learn French vocabulary, writing and arithmetic. He looks after the educational resources in 30 kindergartens which were set up to cater for the school needs of the pygmies, who had been excluded from the school system up to that point.

• Other original apostolic works.

Ndjamena.

5 Brothers and 2 Postulants.

Work: CTAP (Apprentice and Advanced Level Centre).

A survey revealed that while training in traditional crafts was satisfactory, vocational and technical subjects were hardly taught at all. In response to this need, an Apprentice Centre was created in 1991. Its aim is to train gratuitously young men -18 to 30- in those technical skills which are in high demand and to work closely with those already active in these professions. Having already been accepted into the professions, the young men are highly motivated to perfect their skills in the Centre. They are at the Centre 14 hours a week, and the length of the course of studies is either 30 or 60 weeks, depending on the course. At the end of their training, they are expected to be both competent and to have acquired a sense of pride in their profession.

Based on sound pedagogical principles, the Centre teaches one skill at a time. Consequently, training proceeds step by step with precise objectives being set. This means that, at Ndjamena, competent engineers should be trained in car maintenance, electricity, electromechanical engineering, refrigeration, air-conditioning, welding and plumbing. At present, more than 80 young apprentices at the Centre improve their technical skills. A typical Lasallian response to a specific need!



Brothers of the community of Ndjamena with Brother Visitor, December 1991.

Creating the appropriate means.

Br. Rock Delude has been in charge of the diocesan schools of the Archdiocese of Yaounde for several years. He is in charge of training catechetical teachers and he has produced religion books for the 6 grades in the primary school. These books are now widely used in the 11 dioceses of Cameroun. Br. Delude has already begun to work on producing catechetical material for the secondary schools.

At the request of the Episcopal Conference, he has undertaken for the last 4 years the training of adults (teachers and health workers) to prepare people for Life and Love. The program which Br. Delude and his team have prepared has been accepted by FIDAF (International Federation of Family Planning) and is being used extensively in French-speaking Africa. An Educator's Guide was published in May 1992 by St Paul's Press, Yaounde.

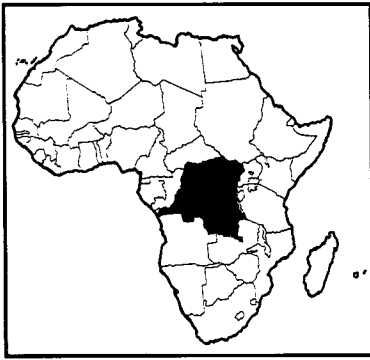
The publication of these pedagogical materials is in the finest tradition of the Institute in general and of the District of Douala in particular.

So, what is the District of Douala? It is a District which has always tried to respond to the needs of the country. When training schools were needed, the Brothers took charge of them; when the need for vocational and technical schools became obvious, the Brothers met the need.

Today, they follow closely the changes in society and offer new subjects in the school curriculum. They endeavour to meet the needs of those who feel abandoned and left out, farmers, pygmies and the young who look to them for quality education.

Although the District may have a few wrinkles, it remains surprisingly youthful. Young people from Cameroun, Chad and the Central African Republic are coming forward to carry on the torch of the Canadian and Dutch founders. African youth still need Christian educators. ●

F. Bernard Collignon.



DISTRICT OF ZAIRE

1. The country

The Republic of Zaire is in the process of going back to its former name of Congo under the form of Federal Republic of Congo.

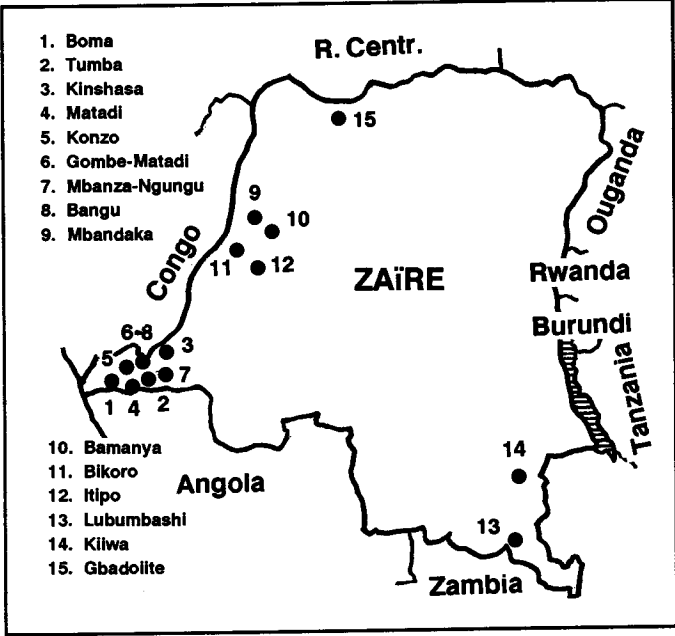
Congo is an immense country in the centre of Africa, straddling the equator, between 520 latitude north and 1327 latitude south. Its area is 2,345,409 square kilometres, 4.5 times the area of France. Two-fifths of the country has an equatorial climate: high temperatures and abundant rainfall all the year round. The rest has a tropical climate with two seasons, one hot and rainy, the other less hot and dry. There are sometimes variations in the climate because of topographical features. Thus, for example, in the east there is a vast area which, because of its altitude, has a Mediterranean climate. The whole of Congo lies in the basin of the Congo river which is 4,700 kilometres long. This river is second only to the Amazon in the volume of its flow which, according to the season, varies between 30 and 80,000 cubic metres per second. It extends 20 kilometres into the sea, and, at the equator, is 15 kilometres wide.

The population of the country numbers 35 million inhabitants and is one of the largest in Africa. 80% of the inhabitants are Bantu, but in all there are 365 ethnic groups. Its growth rate is 2.92%, which means the population will be more than 42 million by the year 2,000. The present population density is 14 persons per square kilometre. However, the population is spread out unevenly. Here the important factor is whether the vegetation in the area is savannah or forest. The extent of the latter makes it the second largest forested area in the world and represents a quarter of all forest land in the world. The percentage of people living in towns is 24%, one of the highest in Africa. More than 70% of the population is under 30 years of age. The country is extremely rich in natural reserves of minerals and agricultural land. Its main resources are as follows:

- copper, cobalt, diamonds, gold, silver, tin, zinc, manganese
- coffee, palm oil, rubber, textile fibres, fruit, tea, sugar cane.

However, like most of Africa, Congo has always been considered by the West as a source of raw materials. It has done little to help the growth of a local processing industry based on these resources. On the economic level, it is always at the mercy of foreign buyers who impose their prices. The local economy remains very fragile therefore.

The population as a whole is very religious and can be divided up according to their beliefs as follows: Catholics



50%, Protestants 20%, Kimbanguists 10%, Muslims 10%, and 10% other religions. There is at present a strong Muslim movement throughout black Africa.

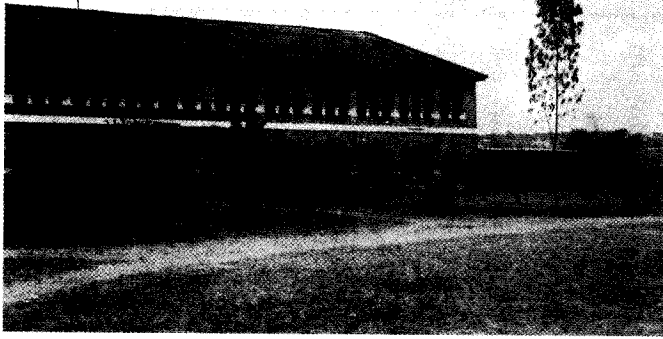
The Supreme National Conference has just decided that the official languages of the Federal Republic of Congo will be the four national languages and French.

2. The District of Zaire. Historical background

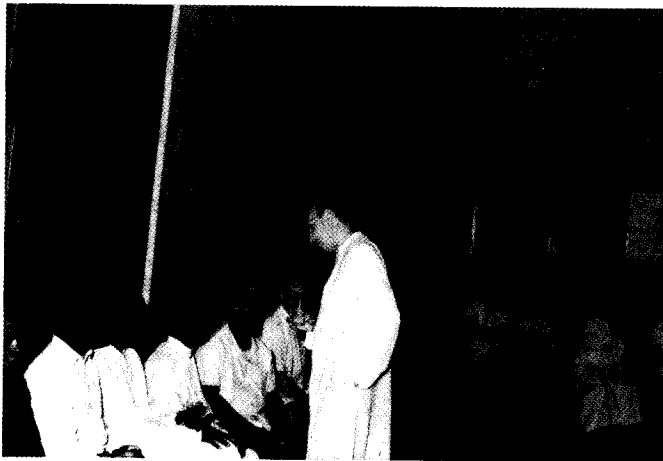
● The beginnings.

In 1888, an official decree gave legal standing to a number of missionary societies. These included the White Fathers, the Scheut Fathers, the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Jesuits.

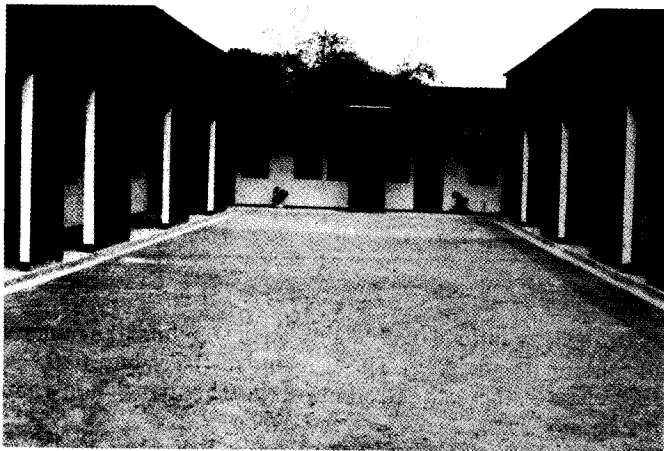
The first Brothers of the Christian Schools arrived on October 7th 1909. They were Belgian and came at the express wish of King Leopold II. They arrived at Boma, a seaport in the estuary of the Congo river and, at that time, the capital of



Kinshasa: old Scholasticate building.



Visit of Brother Superior John Johnston to Zaire, in April 1989.
Chatting with older members of the District.



Scholasticate of Kinshasa: the new 1992 building.

Belgian Congo. They took over responsibility for a state institution for abandoned and semi-delinquent children which had been run along military lines. They soon transformed it into a real educational establishment inspired by the spirit of the Congregation. It can be said that this was the first school worthy of the name in this country.

Although there were many difficulties, the steady stream of Belgian Brothers enabled the work of the Congregation to develop rapidly: Boma 1909, Kinshasa 1910, Tomba 1921 in Lower Zaire; Bamanya 1929 and Mbandaka 1930 on the Equator; Kangu 1934, Gombe Matadi and the Bangu state schools 1936, Matadi 1938 in Lower Zaire.

Expansion was stopped by World War II. From 1945 onwards, however, the arrival of 14 Belgian Brothers gave new life to the work of the Congregation and made further expansion possible: Itipo 1949, Bikoro 1953 on the Equator; Konzo 1953 in Lower Zaire; Kilwa 1956 and Lubumbashi 1964 in Katanga; Gbadolite 1969 on the Equator; Mbanza Ngungu 1974 in Lower Zaire.

Meanwhile, in 1953, the District of Congo had set up houses in Rwanda: Byumba 1953, Nyundo 1955, Ryhengeri 1957, Shiangugu 1963, Butare 1968.

In 1972, the houses in Rwanda were detached from the District of Zaire and formed into a Delegation.

● Educational dynamism.

This chronological list gives no idea of the work involved at the District and community level. Initially, the Brothers took total charge of the teaching, but, following the example of their Founder, they quickly became involved in training teachers whom they used in their own schools and who were much in demand by the Church for its own diocesan schools. It should be said that almost throughout the colonial period all teaching was in the hands of religious denominations, mostly Catholic and Protestant.

In addition to greatly developing primary education, the Brothers quickly created a form of secondary education suited to the priority needs of the country, and which concentrated on craft, professional and technical skills, administration, commerce, teaching skills and, finally, advanced teacher training, art studies, plastic arts and architecture. The Brothers were the first to run courses in river navigation. For many years, most of the Congolese agents recruited by the colonial administration came from their schools.

Special mention must be made of the Bangu state schools. Bangu, the birthplace of Kibanguism, was in revolt against the colonial powers and Catholic missions. One of the Brothers won acceptance among its people and created a whole network of primary and craft schools. This brought peace back to this large region and promoted its development.

● Autochthonic Recruitment.

On the Congregation level, it should be said that ours was the first foreign congregation in the Congo to recruit entirely among the local population. In 1920, it was the first to admit indigenous candidates without any discrimination into its ranks. This was a very brave step, given the existing socio-political situation, and was possible only because the Visitor at

that time, Brother Véron Ignace Tordeur, sought the personal support of Pope Pius X.

And so in 1920 the first two Congolese Brothers, Alingba and Fundi, made their novitiate at Grand Bigard in Belgium. A third Brother followed in 1924. In 1928, a juniorate was opened at Tumba, followed by a local novitiate in 1929 and a scholasticate in 1930. Between 1920 and 1989, 228 young Congolese passed through the novitiate.

● **The District of Congo and political events.**

In 1934, Congo became an independent District. Between 1909 and 1970, there were successively 8 Belgian Visitors at the head of this District. In this period, there occurred the "reign" of Brother Véron Ignace who was Visitor for 32 years from 1926 to 1958. In 1970, the first of the indigenous Visitors was appointed in the person of Brother Zuzu Bola. So far there have been 4 indigenous Visitors: Zuzu Bola 1970-1976, Ntombo Basaula 1976-1985, Mboyo Bakong'Amba 1985-1988 and the present Visitor Nkadilu Malanda (1988-).

In 1953, when the District of Congo opened houses in Rwanda it became the District of Congo-Rwanda. This situation continued till 1972 when Rwanda became an independent Delegation. With the creation of the Third Republic, there is reason to believe it will become again part of the District of Congo.

In 1959, when the 50th anniversary of the District was celebrated, there were 25,852 pupils in the establishments run by the Brothers.

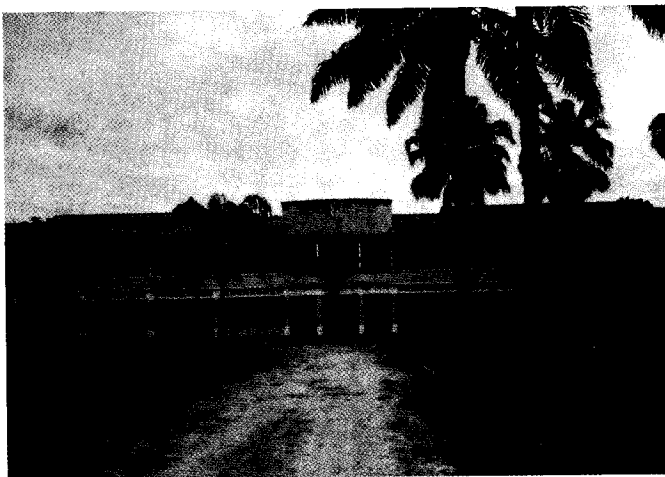
In 1971, the state nationalised all further and university education, grouping all the various institutions into a single National University. Although the Brothers lost the control of the further education establishments they had created and which taught pedagogy, the arts and architecture, three Brothers were appointed as heads of three pedagogical and technical faculties. One of these three became also a member of the university Administrative Council. All the Brothers who had been teaching in further education kept their jobs.

In 1974, primary and secondary education was nationalised, and the Brothers lost all their schools. Most of them no longer had a job. As there was no realistic reaction to this sudden change, 24 missionary Brothers sadly left the country to seek work elsewhere.

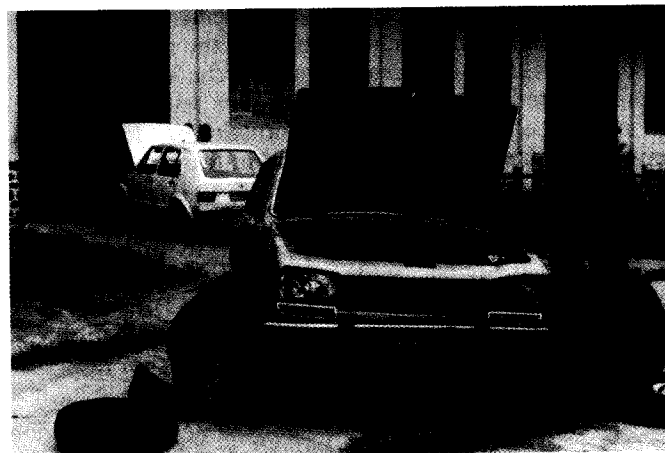
Three years later, in 1977, the State, realising that its scheme had been a disastrous failure, reverted to its former policy and offered to return the schools to the Churches. An agreement was drawn up between the State and the Church. The Brothers, now greatly reduced in number, did not feel they were in a position to take back all their schools - "Lasalianisation" had not been thought of yet. Certain establishments not taken back by the Brothers were taken by the diocese, others were kept by the State.

The Brothers took back 7 schools in Kinshasa - 3 primary and 4 secondary; a secondary school at Matadi; a primary school and a secondary school with boarders at Tumba in Lower Zaire; and 4 schools - 3 primary and 1 secondary - at Mbandaka on the Equator.

The Brothers set up a Central Education Office to administer and advise these schools, and to provide stronger managerial structures for the increasing number of lay teachers and administrators in these schools.



Provincial House of the District of Zaire in Kinshasa.



Young apprentices at the Professional Institute of Gombe, Kinshasa.



Secondary classes of the Tumba Institute.



**Engine workshop
at the Professional Training Institute
of Gombe in Kinshasa.**

● **The present District.**

In 1991, there was another political crisis in the country. This was the case in many other places in Africa where dictatorial regimes were crumbling in the face of people demanding democracy. In Zaire, a Supreme National Conference was set up. It examined in detail the political, economic, cultural and social management of the Second Republic, and wanted to lay the foundations for a better future. The Churches took advantage of the situation to demand the return of all the educational and social institutions created by them and which had been nationalised. In the light of this move, the Brothers have agreed in principle to take back all their establishments from primary schools to further education establishments. This undertaking has its risks because of the lack of Brothers and qualifications in the District. However, since we are strongly committed to the "Lasallianisation" of our schools, we accept this risk as part of our response to the challenge of the times and of the Holy Spirit.

At the present time, there are 47 Brothers in the District. Of these, 37 are Congolese, 9 Belgian and 1 Dutch. 18 indigenous Brothers and 110 missionary Brothers have joined the Founder and protect the District from Heaven. Numbers were highest in 1958 when there were 196 Brothers, 72 of whom were indigenous. The years that immediately followed the independence of the country in 1960, the loss of the houses in Rwanda when it became a Delegation, and the "Zairianisation" of the country were three periods when the number of Brothers in the District fell heavily. There is a great lack of balance in the ages of the Brothers, but in a way that is the opposite of the situation in the Institute as a whole: the majority of the Brothers are young and there is a serious lack of Brothers to take on leadership roles.

3. Characteristics of education in the country

Education in Zaire, from the primary school to higher education, is in the hands of the State. It is therefore administered and funded by the State. However, because of the present economic situation in the country, the teachers are the only ones to be paid. Their salaries are derisory and much too low to live on. All school expenditure, including running costs, is the responsibility of parents and, consequently, infrastructures and equipment are gradually deteriorating.

Since education is in the hands of the State, it is the State that fixes curricula, enrolment conditions, requirements for promotion to a higher class, and minimum and maximum numbers of pupils per class. To open new schools, departments and classes, the authorisation of the State is required. The State also appoints teachers.

Since, however, education is mainly in the hands of religious groups, the State draws up agreements with Churches or associations that want to run groups of schools. This is the case of "The Fraternity", an association of former Brothers of the Christian Schools which, by means of a secular structure, pursues the Christian education of youth as its primary ideal. These agreements define the powers and responsibilities of the two signatories. It should be noted that, because religious freedom is guaranteed by the constitution of the country, this freedom has to be present in all schools.

In certain conditions, the States authorises the creation of private schools. These can exist at all levels from primary to higher education and have to be financed entirely by those who set them up and by those who frequent them. The State reserves the right to check on how schools are run and on the standard of education. Panels are appointed to establish levels of parity between diplomas awarded by such schools and those of the State.

Given the vastness of the country, the high percentage of young people, the high birth rate, the economic situation of a "developing country", the development of education at all the levels needed is far from being achieved, and all children of school age are far from finding a school. This situation will not change for some time still. There is a lack of high quality teacher training and there are not enough teachers. This makes for ineffective education. This lack justifies and makes necessary the presence of societies or congregations specialising in this field, especially in order to give support and direction to lay people who have chosen this fine profession, this apostolate.

4. Establishments maintained by the District

At the present time, the establishments which really belong to the Brothers of the District are a shadow of their former self. As was said earlier, it was the short period of nationalisation which put an end to these establishments. It is difficult to say exactly what will happen to the District in the future. It is certain that all the establishments created and run by the Brothers, from primary schools to higher education institutions will be returned to the Brothers: they have agreed to this in principle. Also, the Brothers have resolutely undertaken to play a new role which concentrates more on training and supporting our lay teachers than on working more or less exclusively with the children in our schools. ●

Brother Nkadilu Malanda

CELAF

(Centre d'Etudes Lasalliennes d'Afrique - Lasallian African Studies Centre)

Purpose of CELAF

The Institute of the De La Salle Brothers has foundations in nineteen countries of Africa, and in everyone of them young men are coming along to join us.

As each group of these young men finishes the different stages in its formation of postulancy and novitiate, there comes the time for training in the professional knowledge and expertise needed for the educational ministry.

The programme has to be serious and of high quality, because the mission these Brothers are going to undertake is demanding. The studies must be recognised by the awarding of a diploma, permitting the Brothers to teach their speciality and religion to the young people God will entrust to them.

Now to attempt to set up an adequate centre in each and every country, would be well-nigh impossible, especially as in each place, you would need a separate team of formators. Moreover, there would not be enough candidates in each country to form a viable group for this kind of training in the apostolate; you also need a largish group as intellectual stimulus. Finally it would not be possible to award a diploma up to the strict standards now required, if the training took place in a multitude of different countries.

It was therefore decided to have one single centre for several countries, which would be supported by those countries and would be the answer to the needs outlined above.

Stages in the project

The Brothers Visitors of Africa, encouraged by the General Council, broached the matter on several occasions and finally came up with a solution which would cater for the linguistic groups of Africa. They decided to set up a centre for French-speaking Africans.

They next had to select a place. We did not have too much choice, since the centre had to be next to an Institute for Higher Education. So finally Abidjan, the capital of Ivory Coast, was selected, where for many years there had existed the ICAO (Catholic Institute of West Africa).

The next move was to consider a course of studies, covering the three aspects a Brother needs as religious educator: theology, pedagogy, and catechetical ministry. This course also needed the backing of the ICAO to obtain the higher diploma.

The problem of finding directors to set the machine in motion and the teachers qualified for the job had next to be tackled.

Finally the centre itself had to be built, and this meant considerable financial investment.

Thus, little by little, CELAF came into being.

From a dream to its fulfilment

The General Council approved the project presented by the Region of Africa, and then a team of Brothers committed themselves definitely to putting the project into effect. They were backed by Brothers Vincent Rabehamafaly, General Councillor, and Marcellin Rakotofiringa, Regional Coordinator for Africa.

The director chosen to take charge of finalising the project, was Brother Hilaire Raharilalao, who would also take over as general director, once the centre was completed.

Thanks to the encouragement of the Institute, and especially to the financial help of the Region of Canada, of Spain and France, land was bought and building began. The property is just outside Abidjan, in an area which will soon be absorbed by the town itself, and is called "Riviera III".

We gave the contract to a reliable firm, which guaranteed to finish the work in seven months, and that is how things in



Buildings of CELAF, African Lasallian Studies Centre in Abidjan.

fact turned out, for having begun in May 1991, they handed over the completed building to us in December of the same year.

The Brothers settled into the new building on 21st December. The final complex will comprise five wings: a teaching area, community residence, service and dining wing, chapel and assembly hall. The last two are not ready yet, since they are part of the second stage. The final stage will include an audiovisual theatre, sports facilities and a workshop.

Opening of CELAF

This took place on 5th January 1992 at an impressive ceremony presided over by Brother Superior General, in the presence of the Regional Coordinators of Africa, France and Spain, and the Brothers Visitors of Africa. Concelebrated Mass was presided over by Cardinal Bernard Yago, Archbishop of Abidjan. Many men and women religious from Abidjan and an impressive number of teachers and students from ICAO were also there for the occasion. Lots of faithful from neighbouring parishes were there as well.

We must mention that several representatives of the local authorities and a Deputy, ex-minister of education, attended the opening.

Both the Cardinal and Brother Superior emphasised the importance of this venture for the future of the Church in Africa.

The Opening Ceremony ended with a buffet and with the signing of the Golden Book by the different authorities.

We should like to take the occasion of this short account in our Bulletin to thank all those who have cooperated in the CELAF project and shared in its completion. Help for the venture has come from the length and breadth of the Institute, which is certainly a sign of interdependence and brotherly spirit. From the Superiors who gave the authorisation right to the builders who laid the bricks, we wish to offer our hearty thanks to all.

Academic organisation

CELAF has adopted a course of higher studies lasting four years. It is based on three areas: The Bible and Theology, Pastoral Ministry and Catechesis, Educational Theory and Practice. The resultant Diploma is a B.A. degree in Religion and Teaching.

In addition to the study centre, the boarding section includes the Scholasticate, where Lasallian formation continues, with instruction on Institute themes: spirituality, mission, history etc.

There is also training in practical matters, especially in teaching and pastoral ministry, as well as seminars, of varied length, on theory.

The formation team has six permanent members, coming from Burkina, Ivory Coast, Spain and Madagascar. Sixteen other teachers are visiting professors. They are mostly De La Salle Brothers, plus priests, men and women religious of



Brother Superior John Johnston
with teachers and students of CELAF.

other orders and some lay people. They come from Belgium, Spain, France, Italy and various African Countries.

The first group of students began their courses on 1st October 1991, and comprised 19 Brothers from Burkina Faso, Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar and Rwanda.

In the academic year 1992-93 there are 21 students. Starting from this year, members of other congregations are among the students, so the number is made up as follows: 1 Dominican Sister, 1 Sister of St. Joseph of Aosta, 3 clerical students of St. Viator, 2 Marianists, 9 Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 5 Brothers of the Christian Schools and 1 Dominican priest; there is also a lay person from the Archdiocese. The students come from Benin, Burkina, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Spain, Conakry Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Rwanda, Togo and Zaire.

The "St. Miguel" Scholasticate

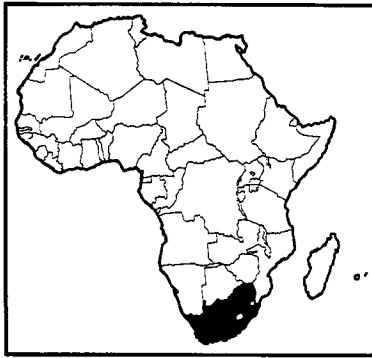
The study Centre is called CELAF, but the De La Salle Student-Brothers live in a scholasticate named after "Saint Brother Miguel Febres Cordero". As the group is rather large, they live in two different communities, called the hostels of "St. Benildus" and "St. Mutien". In charge are Brother Odon (François de Sales Razafindrakoto) who is director; Brother Paul Kaboré, bursar, Brother Hilaire Raharilalao, Director of CELAF, and Brother Emmanuel Bissonnette, in charge of general services.

The Brothers of the Subdistrict of Benin form a group of their own, since they were in Abidjan before the centre was built. They come over for courses each day.

Brothers who collaborate as professors for some period of time stay in the scholasticate house. These are Brothers Felix de Hoyo, Flavio Pajer, J.A, Warletta, Xavier Mulmann, Bernard Ricart and Herman Lombaerts.

As in every beginning, there have been some snags, but little by little, with the confidence we have in Our Lord, daily difficulties are being overcome.

The unexpected visit of Brother Superior General from 7th to 11th October 1992, whilst returning to Rome after his trip to Equatorial Guinea, coincided with the beginning of the academic year, which was a boost to our optimism for this excellent foundation. The Superior's visit is a symbol of the complete backing of the whole of our Institute for the work. ●



SUB-DISTRICT OF SOUTH-AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

Almost a century ago a group of 4 Brothers arrived in a small market town, called King Williams Town (KWT) in the then Cape Colony - the political entity that was South Africa was just emerging from civil war fought by Afrikaaners and British. Only in 1910 was the Union formed as part of the British Commonwealth; fifty years later, driven by Afrikaaner nationalism, white South Africans declared themselves a republic, but so deeply was apartheid entrenched in its constitution, that the country was expelled from the Commonwealth in 1961; it never till recently gained full membership of the United Nations. The black majority, referred to as "the native problem", would be catered for in future homelands. Two of these affect our story directly, Boputhatswana and Lebowa.

The appallingly racist Pretoria regime, soon found its answer to the native problem, in the form of the Bantu Education Act of 1953. This Act, decreeing that blacks be educated only to that level of competence which befits manual labourers, rendered it impossible for the churches to maintain their black schools. When, later, the '76 Riots convulsed the country, the cause was not difficult to establish, least of all by the high school students themselves: inferior education. These events have a direct bearing on our story; and indirectly, as from the watershed date of '76, schooling and education became the cause and source of "the struggle". Slogans such as "Liberation before Education" shamelessly crafted by faceless political leaders, in prison or in exile, ensured that school premises were used as battlegrounds. Disruption of black schools continues to this day. "Aluta continua!" chant the activists, our erstwhile "terrorists"!

Other background developments which relate to our story derive from the Institute at local, provincial and general levels, as well as from the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference. It was only in 1983 that the Brothers in South Africa constituted themselves, with the enthusiastic support of the then Vicar, Brother John Johnston, as a Sub-District. This development befits the regionalisation policy pursued globally by the Institute. Thus the Sub-District of South Africa can now find for itself a more meaningful role within RELAF and so become part of the congregation on the African continent. (While this is being written, Brother Marcellin, Regional for RELAF, has just completed his visit to South Africa - the first visit of its kind within the continent.)

To attempt even a summary outline history such as this, without reference to the educational interventions at national level, by the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference, would be misleading. Always concerned with social justice, the bishops focussed more sharply on education after the riots of '76, and in a move that directly defied the apartheid regime, declared South Africa's small network of Catholic schools open to all races. Convent schools were first to open their doors. In due course, our two De La Salle colleges in Johannesburg followed, thereby incurring the wrath of the government whose threat was nothing less than deregistration of their schools, a threat that was oft repeated.

An overview of our history in the southern extremity of Africa reveals some other interesting features. Few mission fields in the Institute are situated at such geographical remoteness from the mother province, as South Africa is from Ireland. Few missions have been faced with such systematic Calvinist-inspired, anti-Catholic prejudice. Apartheid ideology found its justification in the Bible itself; Catholics were dreaded as "di Roomsgevaar", the Roman Danger, precisely because their schools up to the 1953 take-over provided equal education opportunity for blacks. And of course educated blacks - and Catholic - would pose a real danger to the Calvinist state. Without grants or subsidies of any kind until the late '80s, the Brothers' schools had to rely solely on pupils' fees.

Our story, beginning as it does in 1904, falls neatly within the parameters of the twentieth century - a century that has seen the process of European colonisation of Africa put into reverse. Only in 1990, however, was apartheid declared dead in South Africa; only now has "the native problem", at the end of the long road towards liberation, transformed itself into a ruling majority.

The long years of struggle posed their own challenges to the small group of Irish De La Salle Brothers and their schools. The record will show, however, that they have made their own contribution to the evangelisation of the oppressed in South Africa. And, maybe, in so doing, the oppressed have also helped to evangelise the Brothers!

(To interested overseas readers two films are recommended: "Cry freedom" 1988 and also "Sarafina!" 1992. Donald Woods who features prominently in "Cry freedom" has had long association with the Brothers in East London.)

King Williams Town.

At the invitation of Bishop MacSherry of Port Elizabeth, who had known the Brothers in both Ireland and France, five Irish Brothers set up house and school in the Eastern Cape garrison base of King Williams Town in 1904.

The school, St Joseph's, comprised two sections, the primary and the commercial. Under the capable director, Brother Paul Phelan, St Joseph's, despite its denominational character, soon made its mark. Given the unresolved Latin Question, he had "to sell" the idea of a non-classical secondary education to both the Cape education authorities and the bishop. The handful of parents who wanted Latin, the bishop agreed, could send their boys either to the Marist Brothers or the Jesuits; both schools situated in the diocese, had ample boarding facilities.

It was no small tribute to Brother Paul that he was elected vice-president of the King Williams Town Teachers' Association, a position he filled until his transfer to Australia in 1908.

When the town lost its garrison and went into decline, the school was of course adversely affected. On his official visitation from Paris in 1914, Brother Thomas Kane, Assistant, concluded that the mere 30 pupils did not warrant the presence of 3 Brothers, 6000 miles from their home base. He ruled that the school be closed and the Brothers returned to Ireland. But intervening with the then Sacred Congregation for Propaganda, Bishop MacSherry obtained a reprieve for the primary school. Thus the community of three Brothers, later reduced to two, Brothers Anselm Leahy and Alexius Hanley, were obliged to remain in "King", cut off totally from the Institute, during World War I and for years after till 1927. Only then did help arrive from Ireland.

If King Williams Town did not provide a cradle for the Institute in South Africa, at least it provided a bridgehead – to the bustling port city of East London, 40km away, but still within the diocese of the same ever-supportive bishop, in 1935.

East London.

The task of setting up a new community, and raising funds for the new high school in East London must have been herculean. Soon after arriving, the Brothers were asked to take over the Catholic primary school from the Dominican Sisters, and Brother Boniface became the first principal.

Staffing was another major problem. Apart from salaries which had to come solely from students' fees, the number of quality lay staff, apart altogether from the matter of religion, was always in short supply, and the idea of employing lady teachers was unthinkable.

Both schools moved from their original sites. De La Salle College moved to the more spacious property of Devereux Avenue whose grounds had to be suitably terraced for the two major team games, rugby and cricket. In time, other extra

curriculars had to be provided for cadets, tennis, swimming, and a pipe band. For none of these, any more than for teachers' salaries or for buildings, was a penny forthcoming from the State. In vain did Catholics, at most only about 10% of the white population, complain that they had to pay twice over for their children's education. Thus economic necessity, as much as ecumenical considerations, compelled the Brothers to admit non-Catholics.

In their heyday, the Brothers' school in East London surpassed those in the city, and further afield could compete with the best in the Eastern Cape. Decline, 40 years later, followed on the wake of Vatican II, and in circumstances experienced elsewhere in the Institute. At a diocesan conference in Port Elizabeth, Easter '73, the clergy called publicly on the Sisters and Brothers to leave their white schools, and take on Catechetics in the parishes instead. Soon after, when the Catholic schools in the diocese closed, the bells for De La Salle began to toll.

In the meantime far away in Dublin, Brother Maurice, Visitor, and his council had plans to send some Brothers to the black minor seminary in Hammanskraal, 40km north of Pretoria. This would mark the first major intervention of the Brothers in full-time black education, and staff for the minor seminary would come from East London, it was planned.

Meanwhile two Brothers' schools had been founded in Johannesburg, and so with these I will first deal.

Victory Park

For several years Father Willie Nolan, OMI, tried to get the De La Salle Brothers to open a school in his parish of Victory Park, just north of Johannesburg. The Bishop too was anxious to have the Brothers. They agreed, and finally commenced classes for some small boys in classrooms kindly placed at their disposal by the Holy Cross Sisters in January 1958. The first director and principal was Brother Alpheus Farrell who, for the previous five years, had been similarly employed at St Joseph's College, Curepipe, Mauritius. It was said of him that he could live off the smell of an oil rag. He used every means possible to raise funds. He was a man of great faith, intense charm and had an unusual amount of business acumen. He negotiated long-term loans "with no collateral", he built a school, bought more land for games and



De La Salle - Holy Cross College, at Victory Park.

had the Municipality dump in and level the sloping ground. He surrounded himself with able people who shared his enthusiasm for hard work. Fund-raising was always for him friend-raising as people regarded it as a privilege to work for him.

At the official opening Bishop Boyle spoke of the precarious position of private schools in South Africa. He said: *"If the State were doing its duty here, this building would have been built by public funds and staff paid by the State"*. The situation improved and since those anxious days the school has gone from strength to strength. A grades block, junior school and assembly hall were built. Academic results have been good particularly in physical science, mathematics and advanced mathematics. One notices that Latin gave way to French which in turn gave way to German. The pupils engage in all interschool games and athletics, in debating, public speaking, drama, chess, and with La Salle College, Discovery, have a pipe band.

1986 was a turning point in the history of the school when Holy Cross Convent School and De La Salle College amalgamated, the grades and primary classes being accommodated in Holy Cross and the high school pupils in De La Salle making a total of approximately 800 pupils, black and white, as mentioned in the introduction.

The schools, primary and high, have an active Fellowship Group that collects money, food and clothes for the poor. A

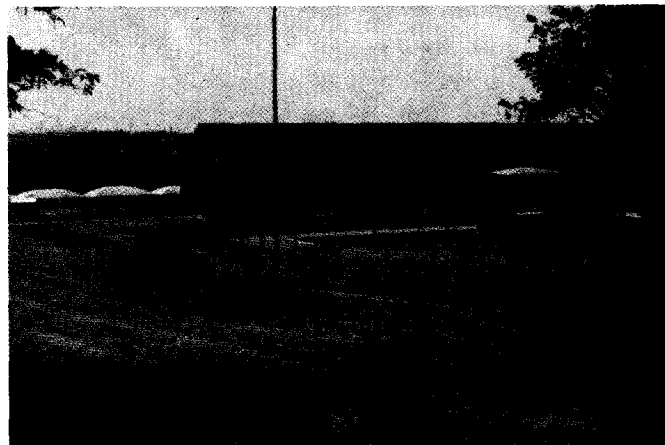
government grant has enabled the senior school to build domestic science rooms and a sports pavilion, while the yearly grant makes a contribution towards the payment of teachers' salaries and those of the support staff.

Senior school classrooms are being used for the instruction of outside groups, for Confirmation classes for pupils of the parish who attend government schools and for adult education classes. In the evenings, classes are held for about 400 young black adults, men and women, wanting to further their education and more specifically to prepare for the Matriculation examination. In June 1993 the first group under this State-funded programme write Matriculation.

In January 1993 a group of three black young men begin their postulancy at Victory Park. In charge will be Brother Timothy McLaughlin who will be assisted by one Brother full-time and others as the need arises.

Discovery.

The Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union built a convent school in the West Rand at Discovery about eight miles from Johannesburg in an area where there were already two convent schools but no Catholic school for boys. The Ursuline provincial saw the mistake and informed Bishop Boyle, who seeing in the Sisters' predicament a blessing in disguise asked the De La Salle Brothers to take over the new convent school. This they agreed to do. And once again it was Brother Alpheus Farrell who was asked to fill the posts of director and principal as he had done so successfully at Victory Park. The early problems were very similar, with this difference that, whereas he started at Victory with a house but no school, now at Discovery he started with a school but no house. For



La Salle College at Discovery.

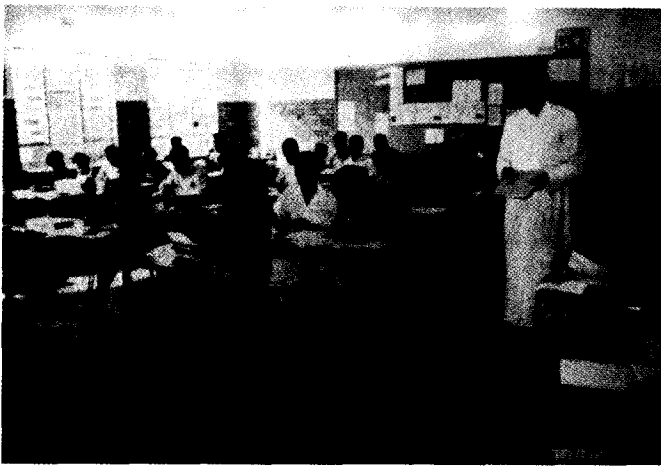
the next five years the Brothers lived in the music rooms beneath the school until in 1971 a monastery was built. At the same time four large classrooms were built to cater for the youth of the highly industrialised area of Roodepoort.

The pupils are coached in a variety of sports and athletics and have a regular schedule of games with other schools. They prefer soccer to rugby and enjoy swimming especially since they have their own swimming bath. They likewise participate in debating, public speaking and drama festivals and chess. They share membership of a Scottish Pipe Band with their colleagues in Victory Park. The approximately 350 pupils of the school value participation more than winning and one notes the courage, endeavour and perseverance they display in their sporting and cultural engagements against their peers from other schools.

In the late '79s the initiative was taken, on the advice of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, to open Catholic schools to all races. They emphasised: "We are hypocrites if we condemn apartheid in South African society and condone it in our own institutions." La Salle College accepts blacks and coloureds from the locations of Fleurhros, Bosmont and Coronationville. 47% of their pupils are either black or coloured. The experience of interracial working and socialising is both beneficial and natural. Above all they get to know each other with the finest of results.

The Brothers at Discovery play an active role in the life of the Roodepoort parish as animators for faith-sharing groups such as the Legion of Mary and Renew; Renew is a spiritual movement leading to the formation of Small Christian Communities. The groups assemble in the comparative security of the College.

The ethos of the school is Christian, run on Lasallian lines. Senior pupils have an annual retreat at La Verna Retreat Centre, junior pupils one-day retreat at school conducted by their very devoted school Chaplain OMI who celebrates class Masses and monthly First Friday Masses for the school; he is available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. And mindful of the needs of the poor the pupils collect money, food and clothing on a regular basis.



A class in the secondary school at Phokeng.

Hammanskraal

The two-and-a-half-year history of the Brothers in St Paul's Minor Seminary, Hammanskraal must be unique in the records of the Institute. The story contains a lot of agony and little ecstasy.

Starting in mid-1974, work went on smoothly enough for the next two years in the seminary, which was really a well-run boarding school for some 180 township boys. The racial mix must be noted. The student body and majority of the staff were black. The only whites, all of them new in South Africa and total strangers to black culture, were the 4 Brothers and 2 Selly Park Sisters. The Brothers were in charge.

Then the Soweto riots struck – 16 June 1974.

Ovenight the mentality of black youth was radicalised. St Paul's students had to be seen to be active in the great patriotic struggle – or risk, as "sell-outs", having their homes burnt down in their absence. Discipline became a problem in St Paul's. Being in charge, the Brothers were exposed to the racial tensions which were now convulsing South African society. Yet despite several attempts at arson and a serious student boycott in October, the Brothers held the fort and effectively rounded off that nerve-wracking academic year.

After a meeting with parents, 4 December, chaired by the Archbishop of Pretoria, the Brothers decided unanimously to withdraw from St Paul's.

Sixteen years of hindsight allow the events of '76, and the Brothers' experiences on St Paul's, to be placed in perspective. The riots marked the beginning of a youth-driven, nation-wide onslaught on the apartheid establishment. Schools were perceived, correctly, by black youth as nothing more than vehicles of inferior Bantu education.

Few of the Church's white hierarchy fathomed the depth and scale of the revolution. Fortunately, St Paul's as a Church school, following an apartheid syllabus, and administered by raw, white expatriates somehow compounded many complex contradictions. Given the collective African consciousness, it would have been miraculous – and maybe unfair – had the school escaped the fury engulfing the townships.

The Brothers found themselves in the middle – caught between the demands of the radicalised students who were egged on by local black clergy, and the legitimate expectations of parents and Church hierarchy. After 70 years in South Africa, how odd an outcome from the first Lasallian intervention in black education!

At any rate for the Brothers concerned, St Paul's had provided them with a baptism of fire. Born-again Brothers, and much better prepared, they would re-enter a more gentle part of the black world – this time in the sunny and windy Western Transvaal, at Phokeng, and at the invitation of Monsignor Hallett in 1977.

Phokeng

In February 1977, three Brothers who had been in Hammanskraal, took up teaching posts in Bafokeng High School, a local State school in Phokeng, in the homeland of Boputhatswana. In a large staff under a kindly black principal, the Brothers were the only whites.

Unlike now, black graduates were few; this meant that the Brothers covered nearly all subjects for the Matric classes.

This novel racial situation flouted apartheid laws which forbade whites to work under blacks. Perhaps it set new standards in race relations; at any rate the Brothers got away with it!

But there were other bridges to be crossed – bridges of religion, culture, ethnicity and, maybe, age! Local non-Catholic pastors whose children attended the school feared the Brothers had come "to make Catholics out of our children". Such fears were groundless. Given the delicacy of their position the Brothers had already decided to forego all mention of overtly Catholic dogma; they would stick instead to broadly Biblical truths.

After six months, a delegation of local black teachers approached the Brothers asking them to organise evening classes at Matric level, in such subjects as English, biology, geography and history. These classes proved successful. In a short time significant numbers of teachers were gaining Matric exemption, and entering for university courses by correspondence.

A year later, the educational authorities pressed the Brothers to take over the administration of the school. To comply would have been a great mistake. We would no longer be seen as Brothers working alongside our colleagues, but as bosses – white bosses – lording it over blacks. Apartheid one more!

In 1980 the Brothers were invited to work in a local college of education – further proof of acceptance.

A few years ago, when a Brother was invited and pressed to be principal of a new high school nearby, our community's response was the same. Brotherhood is about service – this has been our unspoken message.

Since 1980, some Sisters of the Christian Schools have joined the community while pursuing their own apostolates – usually teaching and nursing.

The community has been deeply committed to several social projects, and over the years has always been creative. Presently, the focus is on youth work, both at diocesan and Lasallian level.

Today, just one of the original trio, a maths education specialist, continues to work in Bafokeng High School. Another works outside of school with a voluntary community organisation which helps unemployed school leavers.

In 1992, the Brothers' community in Phokeng was disestablished, but they still continue to work in the Rustenburg Diocese, in closest collaboration with the new Bishop.

Dwars River.

St Brendan's School in Dwars River, on the Tropic of Capricorn, in the Homeland of Lebowa, was founded by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in 1951 for the primary education of children of the neighbouring villages. By 1985 it had become a co-educational boarding school for about 400 pupils drawn mostly from unrest townships such as Soweto, Alexandra and Springs. When the then principal, a Benedictine Sister, resigned, an unqualified black teacher took her place. It was then that Bishop Slatter asked for a De La Salle Brother "to supervise and to see where he could help". It was Brother Alpheus Farrell – the same Brother who had pioneered the openings in Victory Park and Discovery – who answered the call. "Physically slower... he never lost his delightful sense of humour... laughter and encouragement."

During that year the decision was taken to make of St Brendan's a high school. Three more Brothers joined Alpheus who even still taught Afrikaans and Religious Education and kept the accounts. A major building programme was begun to include residences for the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Benedictine Sisters and the Brothers, a school, hostels, kitchen, a water storage tank, water purification system, an imposing entrance. The grounds were properly drained and the playing fields laid out.



Students of St. Brendan's School, Dwars River.

At the commencement of 1993 that staff consists of eleven white teachers (2 Daughters of O.L.S.H. from Australia, 7 Brothers of whom one is Australian, and 2 Georgetown (USA) volunteers) and fifteen black teachers. The Benedictine Sisters look after the kitchen, the girls' hostel and the female support staff. The school has a Parent-Teachers-Student Association and a Board of Management of which the Bishop of the Diocese is permanent chairman.

Courses taught at the school include Religious Education, North Sotho, Venda, Afrikaans, English, mathematics, history, geography, home economics, physical science, agricultural science, business economics, biology and typing. The final examination is Matriculation, or failing that a Senior Certificate granted by the Department of Education and Training. Facilities are provided for netball, football, softball, volleyball, tennis and athletics. Each year the school competes with other Catholic schools in the Northern Transvaal, in athletics.

There are 450 boarders, boys and girls, of whom 78% are Catholics. Among the pupils there is a strong sense of community and their Liturgical celebrations would gladden the heart of David as they sing and dance to the accompaniment of guitars, marimbas, drums. The pupils get regular Religious instruction and two zealous priests celebrate Holy Mass and the Sacraments.

Discipline is sensible but pupils know where they stand with regard to serious breaches of rule. Relations between staff and pupils are friendly, and the black teachers, mostly young, gaining in experience, commitment, loyalty as their examination results improve. Nothing succeeds like success.

The school has a huge waiting list, but it is school policy to give preference to Catholic pupils from within the diocese and to pupils from diocesan Catholic primary schools. The Venda language has been introduced to meet the needs of one such primary school, that of St Scholastica, in the independent Homeland of Venda.

A close personal interest is taken in past pupils of the school.

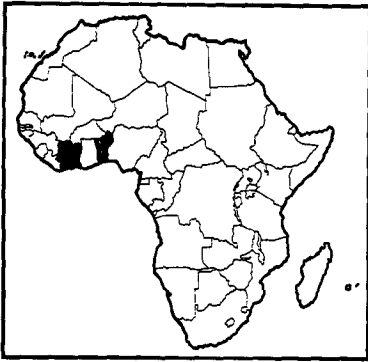
Vision statement.

At the final session of the Chapter of the Sub-District of South Africa, the Brothers drew up a Vision Statement (December 1992) which they signed. Following is the text of that statement:

«We as a Community of De La Salle Brothers in South Africa, finding inspiration in how God has lovingly entered our lives, wish to share this love and be brother to all God's people.

We are committed to evangelisation of our society, especially by the witness of our lives and through the Human and Christian Education of young people, particularly those who are poor, or those who suffer because of injustice.

We share this mission of building God's Kingdom on earth with all who are associated with us.» ●



SUB-DISTRICT OF THE GULF OF BENIN

I Background information about the countries

1. Benin

Benin, formerly Dahomey, has an area of 112,622 square kilometres, measures 750 kilometres from north to south, has common frontiers with Nigeria, Togo, Burkina Faso and Niger, and a coastline of 125 kilometres. The country is mostly flat. The sandy coastal plain is bordered by lagoons. Further inland there is a low undulating clay plateau with many palm plantations, and another formed of ancient rocks.

Benin has two climatic zones: one is sub-equatorial and the other tropical.

It has a population of 4 million inhabitants giving a density of 30 inhabitants per square kilometre. There are 30 different ethnic groups and a great many different languages. French is the official language. The capital, Porto Novo, and other towns are growing fast.

68% of the population follow traditional religions, 15% are Muslims, 20% are Christians. Of these latter 14% are Catholics.

The economy depends mainly on agriculture. Commercial agriculture concentrates mostly on oil-bearing plants which constitute 90% of all exports. Fishing is an important activity. There are relatively few mineral deposits. For the most part, industry is devoted to processing agricultural products.

Foreign trade is limited mostly to the export of unprocessed agricultural products and the import of manufactured goods.

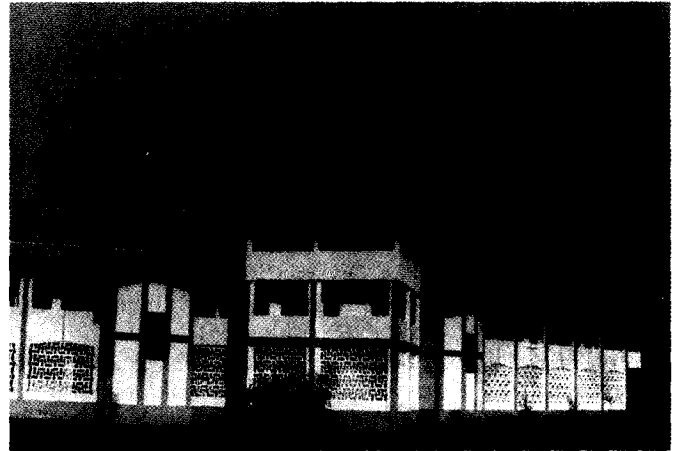
In 1989, after 17 years of marxist-leninist rule, the country became a democracy.

2. Ivory Coast

It has an area of 322,463 square kilometres and shares frontiers with Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana.

The country consists of a plateau with occasional small mountain chains, and a low marshy coastal plain bordered by lagoons and cut off by part of the coast. The climate of the country is sub-equatorial, tropical in the rainy season, and Sudanese.

Vegetation includes rain forests, the country's principal source of wealth, and savannah with occasional forests and clumps of trees.



Provincial House of the Subdistrict of the Gulf of Benin at Lome, opened at the end of 1992.

Ivory Coast has a population of 8,570,000 inhabitants giving a density of 27 inhabitants per square kilometre. There are about a dozen ethnic groups which include 32 distinct tribes. There are as many languages as there are ethnic groups, but French is the official language and the main means of communication.

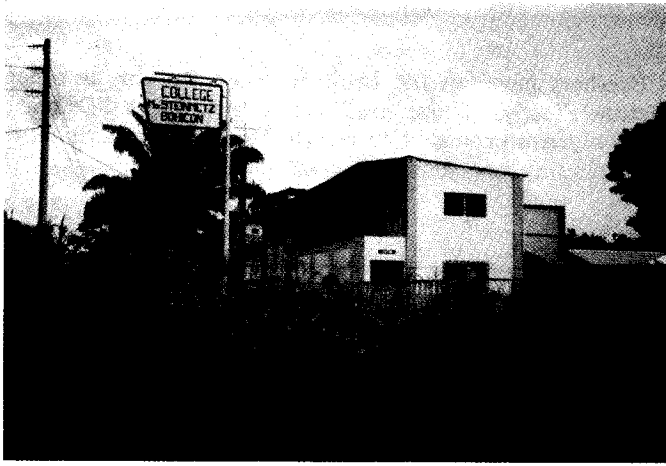
The foreign contingent is very strong, numbering about a million people of French, Syrian-Lebanese and Italian origin, and including also African workers from a variety of countries. Abidjan is the capital with a million inhabitants. 65% of the population follow traditional religions, 23% are Muslims, and 12% Christians. The country has a well-developed communication network.

The economy seems to be the most healthy and dynamic in French-speaking West Africa and is built on diversified exports. 65% of the exports are agricultural (much coffee and cocoa are produced), and 20% wood. Despite the existence of rich mineral deposits, priority has been given to agricultural produce processing industries.

As far as the political system is concerned, there is a presidential form of government which at present is moving towards pluralistic democracy.

3. Togo

Togo became independent on April 27th 1960. It has an area of 56,000 square kilometres, confined to a 600 kilometre long corridor running from north to south. It has a 55 kilometre coastline giving onto the Gulf of Benin. Its immediate neighbours are Ghana, Burkina Faso and Benin.



Mgr. Steinmetz College, the first establishment of the Brothers at Bohicon, Benin. Years afterwards the Government confiscated the establishment. At present the Brothers are working there again.

Togo is a country characterised by the great variety of its geography and population. A journey across the country is a delightful experience, made so by a succession of plains, hills and plateaux enhanced by the changing seasons. One can go the length of the country, north to south, on an asphalt road which runs parallel to the Greenwich meridian 10 kilometres away.

Togo has three distinct climatic zones: in the south a tropical climate but less wet; in the centre, a dry climate; and in the North a Sudanese type climate. Togo lies in three river basins. These different zones are characterised by wooded savannah, mountains covered in forests, the Guinea savannah plain, and the forests that follow the course of the rivers. The coastal plain ends at a sandy coastline where coconut palm trees are cultivated.

The country has a population of 3.5 million inhabitants belonging to about 40 different ethnic groups derived from three main tribes. The diversity of the population and its history has led to the creation of a great many different languages. French is the official language.

The economy is basically agricultural. Its greatest assets are phosphates and iron. 50% of exports are agricultural (coffee, cotton, peanuts). Most of the processing industries use agricultural produce grown in the country.

Since 1990, the country has been experiencing political instability. This has been due to the unwillingness of the former single party dictatorial regime to step down in favour of a democratic regime. Murders are frequent at Lome, the capital, and in other towns inland.

This situation has seriously damaged the economy which has now an external debt amounting to 300,000 million C.F.A., and an internal debt of 57,000 million.

II History of the sub-District

The Canadian Brothers.

Togoville, the first community.

Three Brothers of the Christian Schools arrived in Togo in 1952. They were Brothers Etienne Libanos Lecuena, the Director, from the District of Bordeaux, and two Canadians, Camille Maclou and André Messien. They took over the Togoville teacher training college. Their arrival in Togo was

the result of long negotiations between Mgr Joseph Strebler and the Superior General, Brother Athanase Emile.

Initially they worked with the White Fathers. A year later, with the arrival of four more Brothers, they took complete charge of the establishment. In 1955, there were 4 classes and 148 students from Dahomey and Togo.

Bohicon, Benin (former Dahomey)

In 1956, the Canadian Brothers opened a similar community. The communities in charge of the training colleges belonged to the District of Douala. In 1966, the training colleges became schools offering a general education. 41 Brothers were involved in this work.

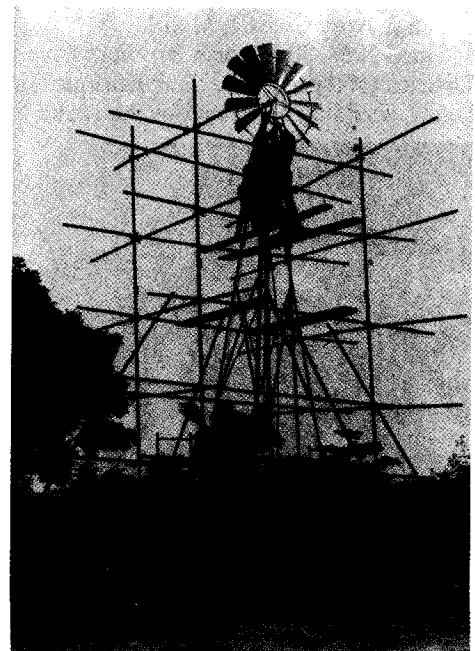
The Spanish Brothers

The first Spanish Brother, Francisco Martinez, arrived in Bohicon in 1968. The following year he was joined by Brothers Jaime Pou, Olegario Pena, Francisco Alert and Enrique Garcia. The latter Brother died in a motorcycle accident.

Two other Spanish Brothers, Martin Zubillaga and Fernando Martorell, went to Togoville. Two Canadian Brothers remained in Togoville to work with the Spanish Brothers. These were Victorin Bélanger (1965-1977) and Emile Lari-vière (1969-1981).

Early developments

On January 12th 1971, an agreement was reached between the Assistant, Brother Fernando Izaguirre, and Mgr Barthélemy Hanrion, to open an agricultural centre at Tami. While waiting for it to be set up, Brother Jaime Gody came to Dapaong to represent the Institute in the diocese. He was involved in Catholic education. With Brother Patricio Arce he formed the first community in Dapaong. Brother Patricio had come to oversee the work of setting up the centre at Tami. Soon they were joined by Brother Felix Fernandez. The continuation of the community at Dapaong was necessary to counteract the isolation of Tami. This explains why a group of Brothers was working in technical education before the opening of the Collège St Athanase.



Togoville: a windmill for drawing water from a well. The Brothers have helped in excavating numbers of wells and exploiting them with windmills throughout the region.

The African Brothers

In 1974, it was realised that it was necessary to recruit local vocations. Three candidates were taken to Porto Novo in Benin by Brothers Francisco Alert and Manuel Plumed. They did not stay long. The community was closed in 1975. A vocation programme has to be carefully planned.

In 1977, a community was opened at Lome to provide follow-up for youngsters who had left Togoville because they were attracted by the Brothers' life. This was the beginning of the postulancy.

Second period of growth

In 1978, Brother Fernando Izaguirre was appointed auxiliary Visitor. The following year, three Brothers came to Ivory Coast to found a community at Daloa. They began by working in a secondary school, in the hope of being able to open a professional training centre.

In 1982, Brother Manuel Plumed was appointed auxiliary Visitor. There were now five communities in the sector composed of Togo, Benin and Ivory Coast. It was time to examine its status.

And so, in 1985, the Council requested the Spanish Visitors' Conference to recognise the sector as a sub-District. Provisional permission was given. On September 12th 1987, the status of sub-District was studied and given definitive approval by the Superior General and his Council. That same year, in December, the first sub-District Chapter took place. The second was to have taken place in December 1991, but external difficulties prevented it happening.

At the present time

Brother Enrique Cepero has been auxiliary Visitor since June 1st 1992.

The sub-District covers three countries and has 8 communities. There are 38 Brothers with vows. Of these 11 are African and 27 Spanish.

The Africans come from a variety of countries: Togo 7, Benin 2, Ivory Coast 1, Mali 1.

Since 1968, 70 Spanish Brothers have worked in the sub-District. Of these 5 have died: Enrique Garcia, Martin Zubilaga, Luis Palacios, Francisco Alert and Fernando Izaguirre.



Benin: students of a class in Bohican College.

8 Brothers have left the Institute. 5 are working in other sectors. Finally, 25 have gone back to their original District, some of them promising to return. On an average, Spanish Brothers stay for 8 years.

III The situation regarding education

1. Legal position

Educational legislation makes education compulsory from the age of 2 to 15. As a rule, education is free. Pluralism is recognised in education (state, private non-denominational, private denominational) and is available for children of both sexes. Education is intended to be available to all without discrimination and to offer equal opportunity. Educational legislation is in agreement with the United Nations Convention on the rights of children. More means need to be made available, however. Education is concerned also with restoring importance to local culture. In Togo, for example, national languages are taught.

2. The school situation

There are many schools but they do not cater for all the children of school age.

Education is organised as follows: pre-school, primary school, middle school (including the first 4 classes of secondary and leading to the Brevet d'Etudes), secondary school (5th year to school leaving and the baccalaureat). There is also technical education and higher education which includes university, advanced teacher training, administration courses.

In addition, there exist art schools, state nursing schools, courses for agricultural engineers, teachers...

There are available also alternative forms of education for young people:

- Teaching centres offering courses not available in schools (mechanics, carpentry, electronics, dressmaking...)
- Agricultural training centres (introduction to farming methods, animal husbandry)
- Literacy centres.

3. The financial situation

State education is free apart from a small contribution from pupils. Denominational schools receive a grant from the State which does not cover expenditures. That is why pupils in private schools pay much more than those in State schools. Also, some teachers working in State schools work also in denominational schools and are paid by the State.

International organisations provide financial aid to these countries.

4. On the family level

Families receive a grant from the State for each child in school. Campaigns are run to make parents aware of their duties regarding the education of their children. Parents join associations and take part in the life of schools. There are so many children that there are not enough resources to provide

schooling for all of them. Not all parents, especially in rural areas, see any value in education. Likewise the lack of stability in marital relationships has a disastrous effect on the education of children.

5. On the social level

Children from rural areas start school late if at all. Certain isolated places have no schools.

6. Obstacles to education

Climatic conditions (the rainy season...) cut down the number of children attending school. In rural areas, children stop attending school in order to go and work in the fields when this is necessary. Very many children have to repeat classes or give up schooling altogether.

There is a lack of resources, textbooks, teaching materials, suitable premises and training centres. Many schools are overcrowded.

7. The teaching staff

While there are competent and conscientious teachers, it is nevertheless true that many others need basic training or refresher courses. It is the responsibility of the State to provide sufficient teacher training centres.

IV Establishments run by the sub-District

A. In Togo

1. Togoville

Togoville is about 60 kilometres from Lome. Togo is named after Togoville, which means "on the other side of the river".

The Brothers run a school there with 8 classes offering general education, and a secondary school with 9 classes. In all, there are about 700 pupils.

Pupils come from the various parts of the sub-region and from towns in Togo. Boarding accommodation for boys and girls is provided by the schools. The Brothers recently handed over the direction and administration of the girls' hostel to a female diocesan congregation.

Inspired by their preferential option for the poor, the Brothers vary tuition fees according to where pupils come from. The ones who receive most help come from the Togoville area.

On the outskirts of Togoville there are peasant farmers who have left their native village. The land they work on does not belong to them: they gain their livelihood by share-cropping. This puts them into the power of the landowners. The Brothers, seeing their insecurity and problems with finding food in bad seasons, set up a farmers' cooperative in 1987.

The farmers do market gardening. This keeps them employed and enables them to save money for when times are hard.

The basic thinking behind the project is not only to promote their wellbeing, but also to teach them to take responsibility for their own lives.

The cooperative tries to help the general human development of the farmers, and so it offers also literacy courses, fish farming (just starting) and first aid.

The overall director of this socio-cultural centre is a Brother. He is helped in his work by three other Brothers, a former student with qualifications from an agricultural college, and a farmer with some education.

2. Lome

The community of Lome was set up in 1977 in order to have a base in the capital from which to recruit vocations. Up to 1989 it served as a postulancy. At the present time it is the Provincialate and a house for students. The Brothers who founded the community give lessons and teach religion in the Collège St Joseph.



Togoville: Brother Director gives weekly work to a group of students of La Salle College.

3. Dapaong

This is the last town in the north of the country. The Brothers there run a senior secondary school belonging to the diocese. Their services are of great benefit to the young people. The diocesan school adviser and inspector is a Brother.

4. Tami

In this small village some 20 kilometres from Dapaong the Brothers run an agricultural training centre. The aim of the centre is to train married couples in farming methods so that when they finish their training they can go back to their villages and help them develop. They will do this by using and encouraging others to use modern farming methods. Every two years 24 couples are admitted to the centre.

The courses followed by the men teach both agricultural theory and practice. Training is of 3 kinds: theory (introduction to the principles of modern farming, general education, hygiene); practice (using animals to pull equipment, fertiliser and selected seeds); working in a cooperative, commercial exploitation.

There is follow-up so that former course members can be given advice and helped to solve the problems they en-

counter. From time to time, meetings and sessions are organised in order to enable them to share their successes and their failures. In addition, couples following courses and former course members have two INADES sessions on important topics.

All the produce harvested during the two year period of training goes to the course members.

In addition to some training in farming, the women also have courses in child care, cooking and hygiene.

In addition to giving courses at the centre, the Brothers also offer their services elsewhere. Because the whole area is short of water, the centre helps villages to dig wells on their request. The centre provides the villagers with materials, cement and a specialised worker to take charge. It is the responsibility of the village to provide the work force. The centre offers other services also like the dispensary at Tami and Naki Ouest. The Brothers are available to help the nurse transport seriously ill patients to the hospital at Dapaong.

B. Benin

There is only one community and that is in Bohicon.

The Mgr Steinmetz secondary school run by the Brothers was closed by the State revolutionary government in 1978. It was reopened in time for the 1991 school year. Classes are being added on as time goes by.

A classroom equipped with typewriters has been made available to local youngsters wishing to learn typing.

C. Ivory Coast

1. Abidjan

The house at Abidjan has been a scholasticate for the sub-District ever since it was founded. Formation staff teach in a local Catholic school.

2. Daloa

Daloa is 400 kilometres from Abidjan. The Brothers there run a professional training centre. They take in young people who have difficulties with general education and have not been able to complete their studies.

They follow courses in mechanics, electricity and electronics. They receive no officially recognised diploma at the end. However, the Brothers give them a certificate when they complete their courses. More capable students are helped to study for their C.A.P. on a voluntary basis.

The centre helps young people find a job easily. A way of making them form a cooperative is being studied.

V. Apostolic work in the sub-District

The Brothers attach much importance to catechesis in school. In our schools and centres this catechesis is well-organised and allocated two hours per week. Brothers who work in non-Brothers' schools play their part in this.



The first Brothers born in the country of the Subdistrict of the Gulf of Benin.

A pastoral and catechetical commission coordinates all activities. At the beginning of every school year, it decides upon a certain number of guidelines and allocates responsibility for liturgy, youth group work, preparation of young people for the sacraments and basic catechesis.

Certain Brothers are responsible for catechesis in the parishes.

An effort has been made to make the Lasallian Family a reality. Each community has someone in charge of vocations. There is a postulancy in Togoville to support this work, and each community has structures for the accompaniment of young aspirants.

There is a monthly newsletter called UNION. It keeps the Brothers informed about life in the sub-District. The sub-District has produced a number of publications to help Brothers in their apostolate. These deal with teaching, spirituality and vocations:

- Educating, loving and serving
 - Brothers of the Christian Schools, why not me?
 - La Salle living in our midst.
 - If you knew the gift of God.
- There is also a brief history of the sub-District.

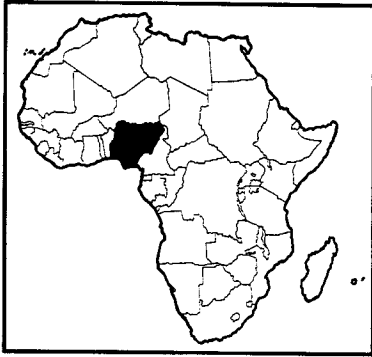
VI Difficulties and future prospects

The main problem about keeping our schools running is our almost total dependence on outside help. We are obliged to follow the directives of the organisations that fund us.

Certain schools run at a loss every year. Training centres lack staff. We wonder, consequently, about the future prospects and survival of certain establishments.

On the pastoral level, there are obstacles that make it difficult for pupils to become involved in works of charity (literacy programmes, solidarity with the poor).

For the moment, we must make a special effort regarding the pastoral ministry of vocations, and we need also to set up establishments that are both self-financing and characterised by a preferential option for the poor. ●



SUB-DISTRICT OF NIGERIA

I. Some impressions of Nigeria.

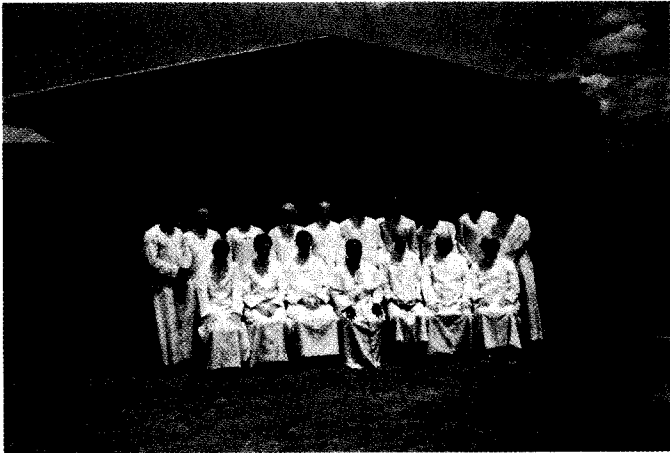
● The country.

...I write as a North American of European heritage, a Catholic Christian and a Brother of the Christian Schools. From this viewpoint what does Africa and Nigeria mean to me?

As a North American of European heritage, I am glad to be in contact with black people among whom many of the twenty million Afro-Americans of my country have their roots.

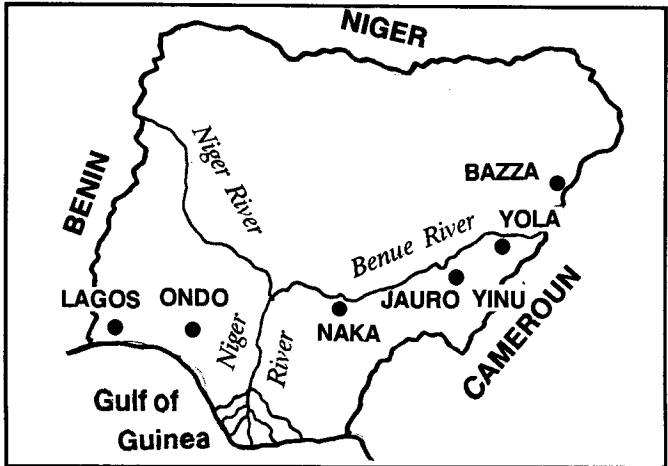
As a Catholic Christian, I rejoice to be in a country where the Church is being firmly rooted. Although under British colonial rule, Anglicanism was largely responsible for bringing Christianity to Nigeria, in the last two centuries, in the last seventy-five years the Catholic Church has grown to be an important component of Christian Nigeria. A conservative estimate of over seven million Catholics in thirty-three dioceses constitute the Catholic Church in Nigeria...

So, as a Brother of the Christian Schools, I realize that the Brothers are a small minority. There are twenty-one De La Salle Brothers in the sub-District of Nigeria and three novices. The parent District of Toronto, Canada, has two Brothers in Nigeria; The District of Great Britain has one; the District of New-Orleans-Santa Fe has one; the District of Ireland has eight and there are nine Nigerian De La Salle Brothers.



Participants at the Assembly of the Subdistrict of Nigeria,
April 1991

Places in Nigeria with Lasallian establishments.



● The Brothers in Nigeria.

De La Salle Brothers first came to Nigeria in 1956 at the invitation of the Bishop of the Diocese of Ondo. Brothers were sent from the District of Toronto. This was the first overseas mission established by Brother Nicet Joseph as Superior. Brother Bernard Broderick who was the pioneer just died on May first, 1992. The mission of the Brothers was to take over the direction of a teacher training college in Akure, the capital city of Ondo State. The mission expanded to Ondo Town. A formation programme was started in 1963. Brothers from Great Britain joined in the effort in Ilorin in 1970. The District of Ireland answered a call from the Bishop of Maiduguri in northern Nigeria in 1972. During this history of thirty-six-years, fifty-five De La Salle Brothers have worked in the Church in Nigeria...

...Originally called to conduct Teacher Training Colleges, the Brothers have had to adapt with changing times. Nationalization of schools, changing education policies, restricting conditions for employment of teachers, aging of the original contingent of Brothers, fewer new volunteers, have brought about disappointment and the end of successful institutions.

The constant endeavour since 1963 to have a Formation Programme has not always yielded results. But two recent developments have given new courage to the Brothers. Two schools now exist in which the Brothers are able to work "together and by association" and a third is projected. With the establishment of a two year postulancy programme in Ondo and the two year Novitiate in Nairobi Kenya for English speaking Africans, the vocation picture looks brighter than it has for years. In the last six years, eight Nigerian Brothers have taken first vows. There are three in the Novitiate at the present time. The two finally professed Nigerian Brothers will soon be joined by others and in ten years, the Nigerian contingent should be able to stand on its own.

We De La Salle Brothers can be part of a larger picture described in an article by Father J. Sherrin, Vocation Director of the first mission-sending seminary in Nigeria:

«The vocation position in Nigeria has changed so much in the last 30 years that it calls for a lot of reflection. During that time Nigerian vocations have been multiplied more than ten times. At the beginning of 1957, there was one Nigerian bishop and less than 100 priests. Today we have something like 1,350 Nigerian priests; 1,300 religious sisters and 160 religious brothers. About 65% of the priests, 70% of the sisters and 80% of the brothers come from the ecclesiastical province of Onitsha. Of the 2,000 Nigerian major seminarians about 50% from the dioceses of the Province of Onitsha, 15% from the Province of Kaduna, 10% from the Province of Lagos and 25% for societies, religious congregations and one formation centre for religious brothers. There were three formation centres for reverend sisters. Today, there are 23 major seminaries and formation centres for men and over thirty for women.»

So, it is because of

- the past: surely the work is rooted in the Cross;
- the present: surely the work is Lasallian and serves the Church
- and the future: with the blessing of God, the Institute will be implanted

that I thank God I have the privilege of being a part of the mission of the De La Salle Brothers in Nigeria.

II. Various Lasallian Undertakings in Nigeria.

1. Ondo.

We are in Ondo Town and we enter the compound of St. Joseph's College. The De La Salle Brothers had the direction and partially staffed St. Joseph's from 1958 until 1973, when lack of personnel and other circumstances made it necessary to give up the direction of this boys' secondary school. We pass through the compound and are immediately at De La Salle Centre. This is a Formation House. We meet three Brothers who staff this Centre, three young scholastics who attend the local University and the group of Aspirants and postulants.

Shortly after taking over St. Joseph's College, the Brothers from the Toronto District decided to open a house of Formation with a view to training young Nigerians to enter the Institute. By 1963 a group of boys were in a Junior Novitiate living on the St. Joseph's College compound. By 1969 the adjoining property had been developed and a separate institution soon developed into a Postulancy and a Novitiate. It functioned as such until 1985 when it became strictly and Aspirancy-Postulancy programme of two years' duration. The Novitiate that functioned until 1985 saw four successive Directors and over a dozen novices entered, of whom eight made first vows but only one of whom went on to Final Profession. Brother Evaristus Agbachi was professed in 1983 but died in 1986, the first and only Nigerian Brother to die.

The present phase in Formation in Ondo since 1985 has produced fourteen novices for Kinshasa or Nairobi, of whom seven are in temporary vows at this time and the first are finishing the scholasticate this year.

On to Naka.

Ondo is some 175 kilometres from Lagos. To reach the next community it takes six hours. You leave the tropical forest and the hilly region, and enter the savannah, which is typical of Benue State, where our house is situated.

The first town after Ondo is Akure, the capital of the State and of the Catholic Diocese of Ondo. It was here that the Brothers opened their first foundation in Nigeria in November, 1956. Br. Bernard Broderick and Br. Cyprien Gagnon arrived there to work in the Teacher Training College called St. Peter's under the S.M.A. Principal Father Patrick Kelly. In a few years there were seven Canadian Brothers working in the country. Soon the Brothers were directing the College. It is from St. Peter's that the Brothers expanded their work to Ondo.

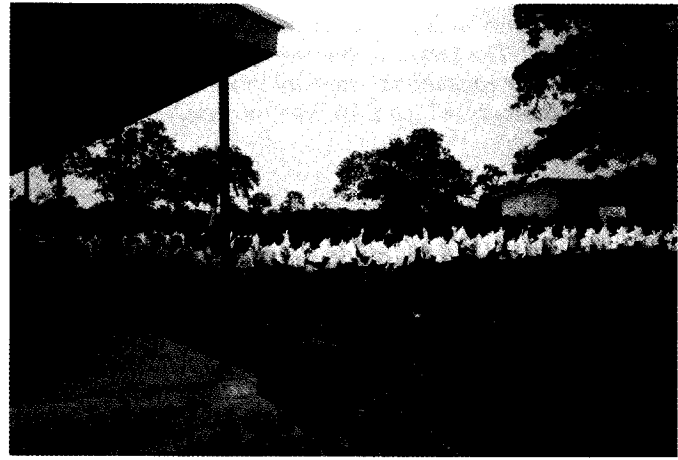
Independence came to Nigeria in 1960; diverse political winds blew; a deadly Civil War was fought; government policy changed in regard to teacher education and in 1992, after twenty-six years of very fruitful work, the Brothers were obliged to give up St. Peter's. De La Salle Hall stands as a lasting memorial.



Naka: Brother Peter, Director, with a group of students.



Blessing of the new dormitory building at Naka, October 1992.



Students meeting before beginning the day's classes, presided over by Brother Director.

At northeast of Akure there is another place in which the Brothers worked. In 1972, the Brothers of Great Britain accepted the offer of the first Bishop of Ilorin to help staff Mount Carmel Teachers College. Two English Brothers and a Canadian started this work and there was a Brother presence in that school until 1985. Once again, changing circumstances, lack of new personnel led to the withdrawal of the Brothers from Ilorin in 1985.

Following our route, after crossing the River Niger, you enter the Savannah region. Some five hundred kilometers from Ondo is a Tiv village called Nada, in Benue State. Here the Brothers conduct a secondary school.

Mount La Salle College, Naka, is situated in a remote rural area of Benue State, and the indigenous are, for the most part, subsistence farmers. The College caters for poor children, boys and girls, from Naka and the surrounding rural areas.

The school was initiated and founded by Fr. J. Hunter, C.S.Sp. in 1982 and named Bishop Kirsten College. It had a difficult start and often frustrating times, so much so, that Fr. Hunter began looking for a religious teaching order to run the school.

So the De La Salle Brothers took over in 1988. They inherited two classroom-blocks and an Admin/laboratory block, solidly built but not finished. The Brothers, thanks to enormous financial help from the District of Toronto, were able to complete the building and add a third classroom-block. Brother Fred Sherrer, who was A. V. at the time, and Brother Peter, the Pincipal, completely rebuilt the school over a period of several years.

And Intro/Tech workshop was paid for and built by a group of Lasallian volunteers from Ireland in July/August 1991. A new administration building was completed in November 1991. Further buildings that have been erected are two dormitories, kitchen and shower area for weekly boarders. It is hoped that with the introduction of boarding, greater discipline among students will result and the final exam grades will improve so that qualified pupils from within and without the Tyosin district will be attracted to the school.

The College was renamed in 1990. It became Mount La Salle College with the motto "Faith and Zeal". The community serves as the community of the post novitiate year during which time young Brothers prepare for entrance exams into the University level, or other tertiary education.

A Nigerian Holy Rosary Sister joined the staff in November 1992 and we trust that other Sisters from that Institute will join her later.

We look forward to the day when Naka, the College and the Brothers' community will have electricity furnished by the Nigeria Electrification Project Authority and pipe-borne water. In spite of inconveniences of isolation and primitive resources, the reputation of the school continues to improve as does the quality of its graduates. The work of the Brothers in Nada is certainly an option for the poor.

Naka is not the first venture of the Brothers in Benue State. Two Canadian Brothers taught in government schools for a few years at Otukpo and Utonkon. That was before the letter of the Brother Superior of 15 January 1987 urging the sub-



District to set up "at least one educational work supported by a community. The future of the sub-District needs a precise mission for our educational ministry in which to help initiate our young Brothers in their Lasallian mission."

Jauro-Yinu.

From Benue State, we pass into the area of Nigeria which has been largely the work of the Brothers from the District of Ireland.

In 1972, the Irish Brothers accepted the invitation of the Bishop of the diocese of Maiduguri to take over a Teacher Training College in Bazza. Brother Michael Fergus, who died in Nigeria in 1986, became the first Brother Principal of St. Augustine's Teachers' College. Although the Government replaced the Brother in Administration by a Nigerian, after six years, there was an FSC presence in Bazza until 1989.

While at St. Augustine's in Bazza, some Brothers helped out on weekends at the minor seminary in Yola. In 1984, Bishop Sheehan of Yola Diocese asked the Brothers to administer the Seminary. This junior seminary is a small secondary boarding school for possible aspirants to the priesthood and the rector of the seminary is a Brother. A community furnishes staff.

The most recent community is at Jauro Yinu near Jalingo where three Irish Brothers run the Youth Development Project for the Diocese of Yola. Young men who are drop-outs from the regular school system are trained in useful job-related skills to enable them to earn their living.

Much of the accomodation in Jauro Yinu is the work of the Brothers directing the students in carpentry, masonry and construction work. The fine community centre/Chapel building is the work of a second Irish volunteer group during the summer of 1992.

Yola.

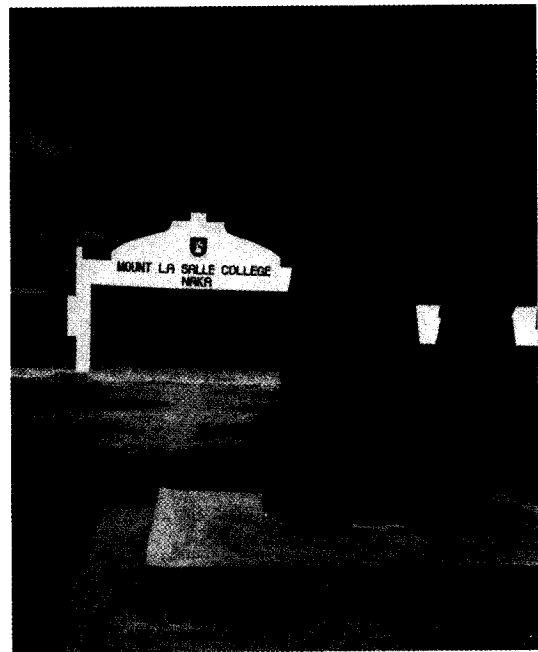
There are also some Irish Brothers who work in the Junior Seminary of Yola. Two scholastics also live in the community, and follow classes in the Teacher Training College.

There have also been admitted to the Seminary for studies, some young members of C.S.Sp. and some aspirants to the Mercy Sisters or Infant Jesus Sisters. The teaching staff is 15 Strong, 2 of whom are Sisters. The rector and Vice_-Rector are Brothers.

During the past five years some important improvements have been made: a new dining room, a classroom block and the chapel completely restored, since the old one was in danger of collapse. The Brothers residence has also been completed.

Some three hours from Yola, towards the North West, we find Bazza, where there used to be a Brothers Community.

All that remains at this time is a house with no community. Only during a period of some few weeks when the Junior Professed hold their annual Workshop is there a De La Salle presence in Bazza.



Monument to John Baptist de La Salle
in front of the main entrance to La Salle College, Naka.

III. The Sub-District future.

The sub-District has been blessed with a good number of Canadian, English and Irish volunteers over the years. But the original ones are getting older and many have returned to their countries. The source in Toronto is drying up. Ireland is making valiant efforts to send all available men. But the future is in the hands of the dozen or so Nigerians and all of them but two are young and still in studies. In ten years or so they must be ready to take over. That is our hope. And it is a main concern. At the end of December, the Brothers will meet in a first session of the sub-District Chapter and the one question will be our Mission. What do we want to go into, in our educational service to the poor? What are we preparing our young Brothers to do? What can we offer to the Church in Nigeria?

Who supports the sub-District? At the beginning when Brothers held government teaching jobs, the call on outside finances was minimal. With the nationalization of schools and the compulsory retirement of so many Brothers, and the decision to have a private school, the sub-District picks up the total costs of Formation and heavily subsidizes both the capital outlays and the running expenses of Mount La Salle College in Naka. The constant support of the Toronto Brothers has been most admirable and even heroic. At present the formula is simple: Toronto for money; Ireland for men. The challenge to the Nigerian Brothers is to eventually become independent and self subsistent. ●

Brother Raphael Bodin.

FORMATION IN AFRICA. A PIONEERING PRIORITY

Brother Bernardo Villar and Brother William Mann,
Formation Secretaries

Formation is a priority which is being tackled with enthusiasm throughout the Institute, and the Region of Africa-Madagascar is no exception to this trend.

The courage shown in making a series of decisions and then following them through in the period between the 1986 and 1993 Chapters, as well as earlier initiatives concerning formation, are indications of our determination to give this matter first place.

There is great interest in formation, contrasting occasionally with the opposite sentiment, and which can be seen at every level in the Region of Africa-Madagascar, and a strong and sensible dynamism is evident in plans, programmes, structures and persons connected with formation there.

In this we are at one with the Church which looks on Africa with hope and optimism, concern and care, pain and faith.

Let us begin by giving a few relevant facts about our Institute in Africa. There are today 352 Brothers working there: 4.34% of the Brothers in the Institute. They are grouped in 4 Districts, 3 sub-Districts, 3 Delegations and 2 sectors, and 2 others Delegations and Djibouti, linked to France, covering 19 African countries.



Africa is a land of hope...A future which must be looked on with faith and with open-heartedness.

Of all the Brothers in Africa, 109 have temporary vows, that is 30.9% of the Brothers of that continent and representing 19.49% of all the Brothers in the Institute with temporary vows. In addition there are 51 novices, representing 31.8% of the Novices in the Institute.

Simply to read these bare facts places us in a complex, fragile, varied situation, which is nevertheless full of vitality and promise of growth. We could say that the Institute is in unison with the continent and with its society and Church, which want to become great and to help the small and weak to reach greatness. It makes one think of a small plant pushing its way through the soil to reach the light. Now as in all beginnings, difficulties are plentiful.

I believe that RELAF has taken to heart article 19a of the Rule: "...the Brothers are deeply conscious of the need to cultivate local vocations in order to provide for the growth of the Church and of the Institute" in the countries of the Region. We must make a distinction between encouraging vocations and the formation of those who join. Now in the period between chapters, greater efforts and investments have been made in the training of the Brothers who are with us than in encouraging others to join. All this can be explained, but let us take one step at a time.

The pastoral ministry of vocations.

Because of the complexity of the Region with its 15 Districts, sub-Districts, Delegations and sectors, all differing in situation and strategy, it is not easy to generalise; we can however notice certain common elements.

We are working among new Christians who live their faith with generosity and sometimes uncertainty. Religious Congregations have played and are playing an active role in the early evangelisation of the continent. Vocations are arriving. In Africa young men have joined us and others are joining us. Until recently our strategy has perhaps been chiefly to receive young men who came knocking at our door.

It is in this last matter that the thinking of the Brothers has been changing in the past few years. It is not the same thing to wait for and receive those who present themselves, as to go out and search for our needs: waiting for vocations or looking for the kind we need.

The way of expressing these things is meaningful: "take to heart the desire for local vocations", or in the words of the Guide to Formation, go out like Ananias to find Saul, who had already been called by Our Lord: "Saul, my brother, it is the Lord who has sent me" (54)

This is the period in which one or other method of the pastoral ministry of vocations is being lived in RELAF, in which a change is taking place from an attitude of waiting for vocations to come, into one of organising different forms of dynamic action to go out and meet young men who are there and whom the Lord is calling. To be among young men in the place where they are, in an active manner, even boldly asking the right questions, is what we are talking about. Community and personal presence is a silent witness; we have the force of prophetic and ministerial presence: we are ministers and ambassadors of Jesus Christ; we have the strength to arouse, to find and to accompany vocations.

"They present in a clear way the vocational possibilities to be found in the various ministries, in the life of a Brother, and in other forms of the consecrated life. They do not hesitate to extend an explicit invitation for this purpose." (R.85b)

It is in this transition stage that the Region of Africa is at present living. It is to be hoped that the period following the next Chapter will be one giving priority to the pastoral ministry of vocations, just as after the 41st Chapter we witnessed a concentration on initial formation. This priority must not depend simply on encouragement from the centre of the Institute, but on each community which should realise that it has the capacity to *"stimulate, to welcome and to accompany vocations in their early stages"* (R.85a)

Initial formation.

I would say that RELAF at this time is an example to the whole Institute of how a Region can organise its projects and structures for formation by itself, whilst being open to suggestions from elsewhere.

It would be interesting and enlightening to give a panoramic view of the various experiences of formation in previous periods of the Region right up to the present time, and to study what are the forces and reasons for the change.

A new period for initial formation has begun in the Region, with success sometimes, with difficulties at other times. One thing is certain, we have had the courage to relegate the urgent and immediate to second place in favour of what is really important: building the future. Deciding on a serious and long formation is the seed which grows slowly, but which will give fruit. Both in French-speaking and in English-speaking Africa, inter-District novitiate programmes (in Kinshasa and Nairobi) are now functioning excellently, as are those of the inter-District scholasticates (Abidjan and Nairobi), which after only two years of existence are building the foundations upon which the future of the Region can be raised.

I believe that these endeavours show the excellent way in which all kinds of resources are being shared at Institute level. This is an example of solidarity and a unified venture, to create in the heart of Africa, first class formation centres, which in spite of initial difficulties, are giving our young African Brothers a feeling of pride in being trained there. If the Institute must inculcate itself in Africa, it is by bringing to Africa all the resources needed to those who are actually in formation there, instead of taking our young Brothers out of Africa for their formation. Without doubt, the 42nd General Chapter will give new impetus to this policy of solidarity and inculturation.

The attention of RELAF is at present centred on three aspects of formation:

1. THE PREPARATION OF FORMATORS.

There is still a lack of African Brother Formators. The collaboration of non-African formators is therefore at the moment an important and necessary factor. The Region began a programme for the training of Formators in the summer of 1992 and it is intended to continue with it.

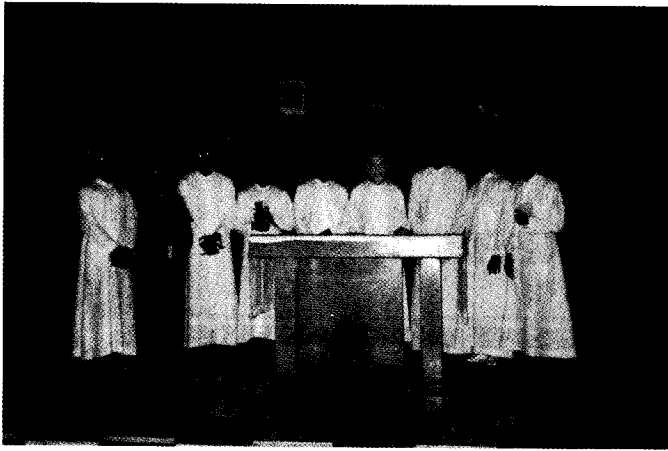
A good number of our African Brothers are still young. Among them there are, thank God, future formators. We shall no doubt very soon have to put aside certain other urgent matters in order to concentrate on the training of teams of the necessary African formators.



"...A great crowd of people...had come to hear him and to be cured of their infirmities" (Lk 6,17).

2. POSTULANCY.

This is perhaps the aspect of formation which is making the greatest progress at this time. This first stage of initial formation takes place in each of the Districts, Subdistricts or Delegations. To organise it is not easy and requires the administrations to sacrifice other aspects of their ministry. The areas are very diverse, however, at the meeting of formators in Nakuru, Kenya, in the summer of 1992, a great enthusiasm to continue studying this matter and to carry on the interdistrict dialogue in spite of the difficulties of communication in the continent, was apparent, in order that the adaptation of our Postulancy programmes might fit the needs of the young men who join us.



Novitiate of Kinshasa.
Group of novices with some of their formation directors.



Abidjan: Students of CELAF
in the inside courtyard of ICAO.

The point of departure for initial formation does not lie in aspects of our programmes; it lies in the reality of the young men who join us, and we have to adapt to that fact. We have to accompany these young men so that they will be able to follow with profit the kind of novitiate which we shall propose to them later on. The Postulancy is hard work, for it is not always understood that the first stage of initial formation is a transitional stage towards the novitiate. It should be clearly understood that in the Postulancy lies the key either to making the novitiate worthwhile or to making it second rate.

3. PERIOD OF TEMPORARY VOWS.

This is another rather difficult stage in RELAF. If we return to the facts we outlined at the beginning of this article, we can make a guess at the situation of the communities where many of our young Brothers live.

The fact that two inter-District Scholasticates, Abidjan and Nairobi, have been established in the Region, is a first important step in introducing our young men to community life.

I should like to mention a few recent facts which will help to clarify what I mean. Two Brother Administrators asked that some retired Brothers from Europe be sent to accompany members of some of their communities composed exclusively, or almost so, of Brothers with temporary vows: a remarkable thing for our times. Then there was another District, which in the 32 years of its existence, has had 50 Brothers who made temporary vows, of whom there now remain only four, and they still with temporary vows. These facts make one think.

People are sensitive to the situation. The nature of the subject involves us all. The Region itself should reflect seriously on it. The Institute, now called to the General Chapter, will no doubt have its own reflections to make on the kind of community life we are living. Initial formation by its nature now goes beyond the traditional concept of "House of formation": we are all involved. To choose a certain style of formation means being ready to accept the consequences of that

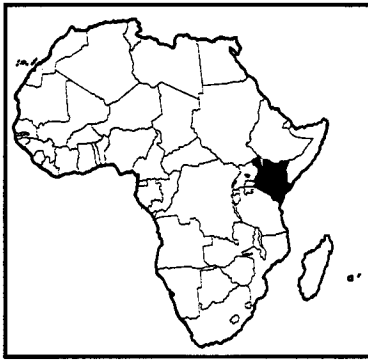
decision with the young Brothers who join us in community. They have the right, and we have the duty, to become immersed in this more realistic, mature, objective kind of formation based within our communities and which arises from putting into practice the dynamic ideas of the Rule, with which the young men began their formation in the Novitiate and Scholasticate: this is quite a challenge.

These times in Africa are very important for initial formation. The way we have begun is encouraging and we are pursuing it with vigour, in spite of difficulties. The next few years will be decisive. Interregional cooperation is essential. The preparation of local formators speaking the language of the young Brothers is vital.

We look to the future with faith and optimism and with the care and love which all formation work requires. The presence of many young African Brothers is the first fruit announcing much more, as these fine men mature and encourage others to join them as Brothers. ●



Novitiate of Kinshasa: inside courtyard and chapel tower.



DELEGATION OF EAST AFRICA

● The colonial countries.

The power of colonial empire was still strong in East Africa, but the winds of freedom and independence had already begun to blow with growing strength. In 1958 Bishop Charles Cavallera, of Nyeri Diocese, Kenya, which extended from just north of Nairobi to the Ethiopian border, approached Brother Superior Nicet Joseph for English-speaking Brothers to teach in his diocese. Brother Superior referred him to Brothers Charles Henry Buttimer and Anthony John Halpin, Visitors of the newly divided and thriving Districts of Long-Island/New England and New York.

Novitiates and Scholasticates of NY and LI-NE were bursting with promising vocations. Pope Pius XI had called on apostolic Congregations to devote ten percent of their active personnel to foreign missionary work. In response to calls from these several directions, NY and LI-NE Districts undertook to provide four Brothers for Kamwenja Teachers College, in Nyeri, Kenya, in late 1958, and an additional four Brothers each succeeding year.

This program went on for several years, to 1965, leading to the Brothers taking on additional schools, in Moshi and Musoma in Tanganyika, and in Nyahururu in Kenya. Also, during this time, Brothers from NY and LI-NE assisted in taking on administration and teaching in the Ethiopian schools founded by the French Brothers in Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa.

Tanganyika achieved independence from Britain in 1962 and Kenya in 1963. But these developments brought little change in the status of schools in the early years of independence. Services of the Europeans (the all-inclusive term used by Africans to designate white people) were welcomed by the African leaders just as well as by the English officers of colonial times.

● The Sub-District of Ethiopia-East Africa.

By 1965 there were nearly twenty NY and LI-NE Brothers in Kenya-Tanganyika, and the same number of French, NY, and LI-NE Brothers in Ethiopia. It was thought well to unite these Brothers into one sub-district of Ethiopia-East Africa, under one local superior, who would be Auxiliary Visitor from NY or LI-NE Districts, but stationed in Ethiopia or East Africa full time. This status continued for nearly six years. By the end of that time it had become clear that unity of the two countries was only a paper-fiction and not a reality. Concerns of the one area had little or no bearing on the other. In a series



of meetings at the end of 1970 and early 1971, the combined Sub-District Council voted unanimously, 12-zero, for separation into distinct areas. This has continued to the present. Among the reasons for the separation was not only the realization that efforts through six years to achieve a unified operation were fruitless, but also the expense involved in transportation between Ethiopia and East Africa for six of the twelve members of the council each year or even several times per year was intolerable.

Among the primary concerns of the early Brothers in both Ethiopia and East Africa was recruitment and formation of young Africans to the De La Salle Brotherhood. In Addis Ababa property was first rented, then purchased, for establishment of Gebre Mikael Centre – a postulancy at first and later a novitiate for young Ethiopians. Direction of the formation program was by Brothers with long experience in teaching Ethiopian boys. Investigations were made in the Nairobi-Langata area for a formation centre, and suitable property was located. The Archbishop of Nairobi, John McCarthy, welcomed the Brothers. The Dominican Fathers directing the St. Thomas Aquinas National Major Seminary at Langata welcomed the Brothers, and offered such services as they might be able to give towards our Brothers' formation.

But quite rapidly the picture changed as nationalism took over.

Through the late 1960's the Brothers' schools in Kenya and Tanzania prospered. Their reputation as true religious-educational centres was widespread, and the Brothers were being asked for their services by many of the Bishops of Kenya and Tanzania (the new name for Tanganyika/Zanzibar).

● **Dark days.**

But more ominously, through these same years, as the new nations were preparing their own talented young men in professional areas, sentiment against the European control of professional institutions grew strong. Political leaders were being pressed to hasten the speed of Africanization of responsible positions. Educational leaders, speaking directly to the Brothers, or through the members of Episcopal Conferences, let out the word that the African leaders appreciated the past services of European missionary personnel but that these services must come to an early end, and every effort must be made to replace Europeans with Africans. Some leaders spoke of three or four years as the outside limit of tenure of foreign missionaries in Kenya and Tanzania. With such developments arising, the Brothers put on hold their plans for recruitment and training of African Brothers. They figured that it would probably take twenty years to recruit, train, and give necessary experience to a sufficient number of young Africans for them to be able to sustain themselves independently. Twenty years was the figure given to the Brothers by earlier religious as the minimum for such development.

Along with the doubts thus arising about the Brothers' future, these years of the late sixties and early seventies, following Vatican II, saw numerous departures of the Brothers—some from the missions to the home district, and many others to secularization in the lay state. Five or six widely scattered Brothers held on to works in which they were occupied which they considered still to be of value. But there seemed little likelihood of foundation of the Institute among East African Brothers.

However, three further apostolates gave promise of ongoing influence: work among school drop-outs in Arusha, Tanzania, and long term dedication of the Brothers to training young men for the priesthood—more than twenty years at Musoma, Tanzania, and eight years at Maralal, Kenya.

The small number of Brothers scattered through East Africa continued their work, somewhat in community situations, and somewhat in individual apostolates, through the nineteen-seventies and into the nineteen-eighties. Though scattered, and often living alone, these Brothers developed a deep sense of community relationships with one another. The one, living perhaps a hundred or two hundred kilometres from another, yet developed a close sense of community with them—the precious presence to one another, though not continuous, yet deep and supporting and sustaining. Their infrequent meetings were occasions of joy, of celebration, of mutual regard—giving strength through the lean weeks, months to follow.

● **New formation plans.**

A radical change of attitude developed among the Brothers in 1983 and 1984. They had been in Kenya and Tanzania now for quite a long time, about twenty years. Through many of these years the community of Rongai Secondary School not only educated their students but served as centre for the Brothers of Kenya in all their activities. Conditions in Kenya seemed quite stable, and there seemed little likelihood of any

political pressure to drive the Brothers and other European missionaries from the country. Why not, then, the question arose, seriously consider the possibility of inviting our students and other well-disposed young African men to consider embracing the Brothers' life? The more the Brothers thought of the matter, the more convinced they became that this was the moment for decision. Contacts with the home districts were made and encouraging words came in response. Interests of the Kenyan Brothers spread, through the home districts and to the Institute Centre. Naturally their support was necessary if invitations to young Africans were to be followed up with the necessary formation to enable them to form themselves into true Brothers, inspired by the spirit and ideals of the Founder.

Brothers experienced in religious formation worked with the Brothers of long experience on the scene. Support for the East African missions was put onto a much broader base by the invitation, even urging, of all the Districts of USA and Toronto to supply additional Brothers to the apostolate in East Africa, and to help provide the necessary financial support for the formation needs of the African aspirants, postulants, novices and scholastics of the area. First a postulancy was set up in Rongai for the first candidates, then the international novitiate for the entire English-speaking sector of Africa, and finally the East Africa Scholasticate in Nairobi. In collaboration with other congregations of religious men and women the "Christ the Teacher Centre" was spearheaded by our Brothers in Nairobi for the training in religious studies for our young Brothers.

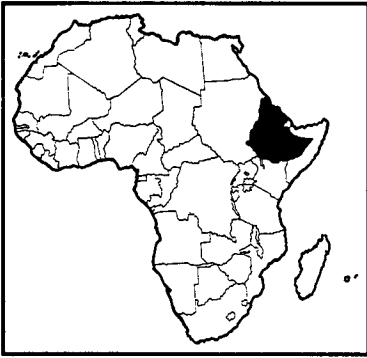
● **The last years.**

Simultaneously, the educational work of the Brothers was advanced by the Brothers taking responsibility for a well-established school at Nyeri, Kenya, and the establishment of a new school for boys of northern Kenyan nomadic families, at Marsabit in the north desert region of Kenya. With the new year, 1993, the Brothers have undertaken the Mwangaza Bishop Ndingi Skills Development Centre to train school leavers, men and women, for useful employment in the arts and crafts.

Thus, in these past several years the Brothers in Kenya have moved from a holding operation, however valuable it might have been, but eventually terminable, to a new vibrant, growing and fruitful apostolate, full of promise of a new spring in Kenya. A listing of the Brothers of Kenya and their works may help towards an understanding of the great developments underway in Kenya. Figures given are as of the end of the calendar year 1992:

Teaching Brothers	10	Scholastics	4
Recruiting and		Second-year novices	10
Formation staff	8	First-year novices	6
Delegation		Lasallian volunteers	
Administration		from USA	3
and Service	3	Postulants	8

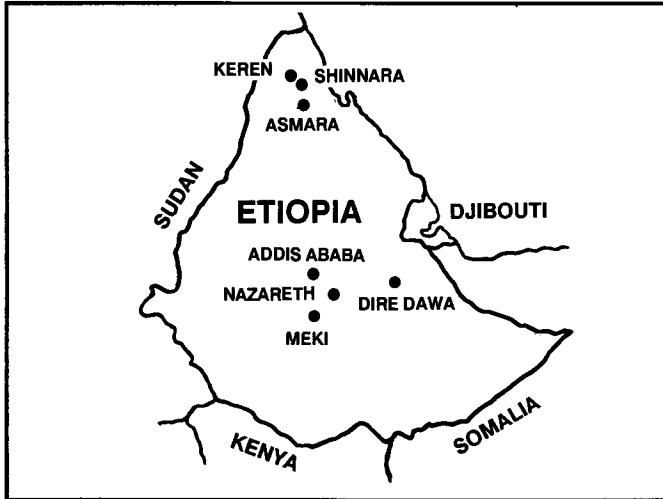
Brother Peter Dougherty



DELEGATION OF ETHIOPIA – ERITREA

● The beginnings.

In 1993 the Delegation of Ethiopia/Eritrea will mark its fifty-fifth anniversary. At the end of 1938 four Italian Brothers, under the leadership of Brother Virgilio Alibani, arrived in Asmara. They rented rooms from the Capuchins and began a school in the Latin Cathedral compound. Also, four Italian Brothers began a minor seminary in Addis Ababa at the



request of the Papal Nuncio.

Within twenty years more Brothers, now from France, Spain and the United States, experienced the growth of the Lasallian educational ministry in Ethiopia: St. Joseph School and a Juniorate in Keren, Collegio La Salle in Asmara, the staffing of a mission school in Dire Dawa which would become Besrate Gabriel School, and Cathedral Nativity Boys School in Addis Ababa. In 1959 St. Joseph School in Addis Ababa was opened on land donated by Emperor Haile Selassie.

The number of American Brothers increased substantially. Brother Michael Reynolds was the first American Brother to be the Headmaster of St. Joseph School (1961-1965). He initiated the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat.

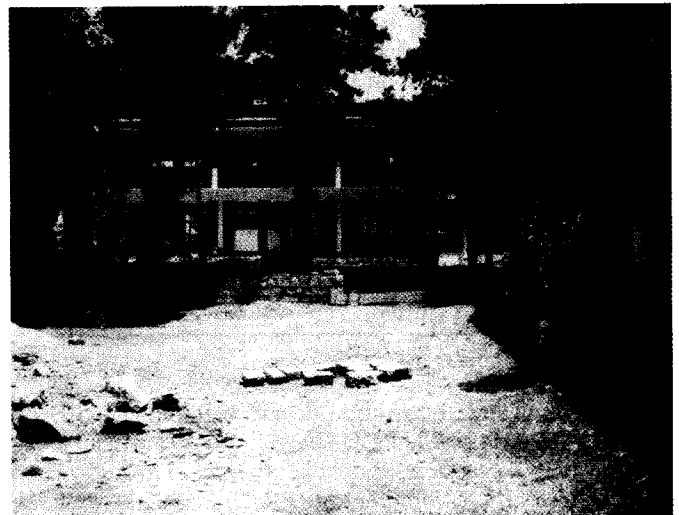
● The sub-District of Ethiopia and East Africa.

In 1965 Brother Peter Dougherty was named the first Auxiliary Visitor for Ethiopia and East Africa; Eritrea remained under the direct responsibility of the District of Rome.

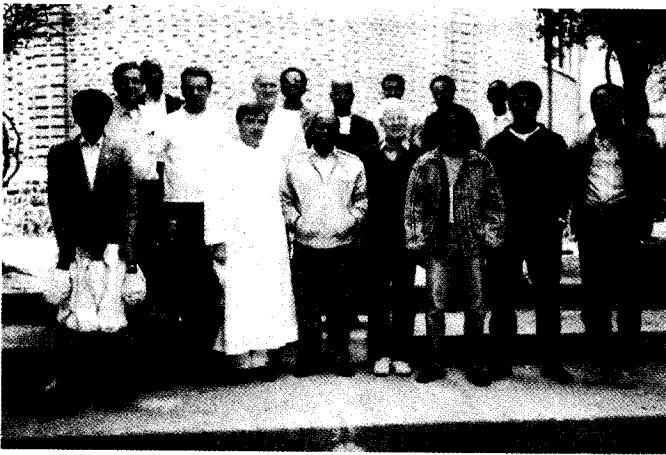
The formation of young Ethiopians, after the juniorate and postulancy, was in a succession of novitiates: Bordighera, Rome, Beirut. Brothers Mikael Kelete and Ghebretensae Ghebrecristos are the oldest active Brothers from those days.

Growth, strengthening and formation continued during the sixties into the early seventies. Collegio La Salle added elementary grades. In Massawa, a port city on the Red Sea, land was purchased and a house built for vacationing. In 1968 a novitiate opened in Keren, and a year later a scholasticate. In 1971 Ghebre Mikael Center, as a house of formation, was opened in Addis Ababa, but was closed in 1974. The St. Joseph School community moved from the school compound to an apartment in the Piassa, and eventually to G.M.C. Meanwhile, to strengthen relations between North and South, an exchange of Brothers between Eritrea and Ethiopia was approved. Many American Brothers were active in the schools and formation. Of the two Italian Brothers remaining in Eritrea, Brother Ovidio Pavan died in 1976, and Brother Amilcare Boccuccia is now the President of the Delegation.

The political unrest that began in the early seventies was accompanied by military action. In Eritrea an independence movement took special energy and sacrifice, which is quite strong and enthusiastic as the spring 1993 referendum nears. The property in Massawa was severely damaged. Collegio La Salle was taken by the Mengistu government, and it is presently a residence and treatment center for injured soldiers. The school and formation center in Keren were damaged, and these ministries were interrupted.



**Addis Ababa: Ghebre Mikael Centre.
The postulancy building.**



Members of the Delegation Chapter of Ethiopia, September 1992.



Ethiopia: Building of a "tukul", a typical Ethiopian house.

● The Delegation of Ethiopia.

On 15 August 1981 Brother Pablo, Superior General, wrote to the Brothers living and working in Ethiopia: «I declare the establishment of a delegation in Ethiopia. This new administrative unit will be formed by the communities existing today and those to be founded in the near future in this country.»

His letter expressed great hope towards the foundation of a District. It expressed the enthusiasm he experienced when he visited. In those days Ethiopia was the name of the country and Eritrea a province. There is a singularity to that province, particularly so by the presence of Italians. A new sense of identity and purpose, throughout all of Ethiopia, will be expressed by its peoples in a referendum in April 1993.

In the early eighties, the scholasticate and school communities were moved to the Comboni residence in Asmara. There was expansion, too: an elementary school in the village of Shinnara, a village school in Dekemhara, where the juniors were transferred, the staffing of St. Joseph elementary, secondary and evening schools in Nazareth, and the staffing and educational leadership of the diocesan elementary and secondary schools in Meki, and the initiating of a pedagogical center in Dire Dawa / Harrar. The ventures in Dekemhara and Harrar were closed in 1991; the school in Shinnara is supervised by the Brothers.

The recent ten years have been marked by the loss of many young Brothers. Military activity has ceased and the political setting is in transition to a democracy. Even though the country is exceptionally poor, the Brothers are expressing a

vitality. The formation programs (contact programs – 3, juniorates – 2, postulancies – 2, the international novitiate and scholastic in Nairobi, Kenya) are on a sound basis, well staffed and many good candidates. Educational ministries, while experiencing a lack of Brothers, are developing well because of qualified teachers (k–12 schools – 3, k–8 elementary schools – 2, k–6 elementary – 1). All of these in-country programs are staffed in part by 12 Eritrean, 2 Ethiopian and 10 expatriate Brothers. In formation are twenty juniors in Keren and Nazareth, twenty postulants in Asmara and Addis Ababa, fourteen novices and three scholastics in Nairobi, and four Brothers studying for graduate degrees. Also, there are contacts in Dire Dawa, Nazareth and Asmara.

● The future.

The challenges to the Ethiopia / Eritrea Delegation are in staffing, finances and formation. For the next few years there will be the experience of an extended formation through the certificate and degree programs, the staffing of the present educational and formation ministries, the vision of growth and development in educational leadership for the poor, and the generation of income. A new sense of interdependence is being experienced with the USA/Toronto Region, neighboring countries, other Districts and new leadership in Brother Dominic Ehrmantraut and within the Delegation. ●

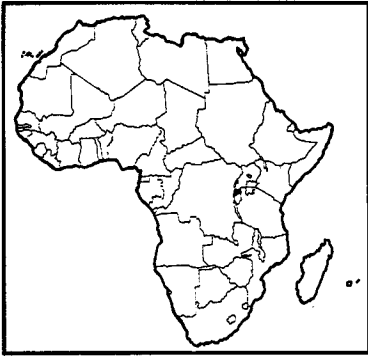
Brother Raymund Davey



Nazareth: Aspirancy and Brothers' community.



Keren: view of the region's landscape. In the foreground, the Brothers' house.



DELEGATION OF RWANDA

Introduction

The Brothers came to Rwanda on February 14th 1953. Rwanda was part of the District of Belgian Congo till 1972 when it became a Delegation. The Brothers were asked to come to Rwanda by the first Rwandan Bishop and the first Belgian Congo bishop, Mgr Aloys Bigirumwami.

Before the war of October 1990, there were 5 communities in the Delegation: the De La Salle School at Byumba, the art school at Nyundo, the Our Lady of the Poor community at Kisaró, the De La Salle Fraternity at Butare, which is a student Brothers' community, and the St Paul community (postulancy) at Rukomo. Because of the war, this latter community moved to Kisaró where our Brothers run an agricultural training centre. In the meantime this has become one of the camps for people displaced by the war and gives shelter to 30,000 persons. The school at Byumba could not open last September because of the war. The 600 pupils are either at home (if not in a war zone), or lodged in secondary schools without attending lessons, or live in refugee camps in "blindés" which are little huts made with branches from trees covered with grass and plastic sheeting.

At present there are 31 Brothers in the Delegation from 7 different countries: Rwanda 18, Zaire 3, Belgium 5, Switzerland 1, Spain 1, Colombia 1, France 2. There are 4 novices, 3 postulants and 18 aspirants including 2 girls. The Delegation has 2 secondary schools, 2 houses of formation, and an agricultural centre. One Brother is in charge of a scheme to help street children. (Cf. description below)

Apostolic activities of the Brothers.

1. The country

Rwanda is a small country (26,338 square kilometres) situated in the heart of central Africa. Its population numbers 7.5 million inhabitants, giving a population density of 280 persons

per square kilometre. Natural growth rate is 3.7% Annual income per capita is \$ 260. The country faces galloping demographic growth with inadequate economic resources.

It is hoped that the Arusha negotiations (Tanzania) will lead to the signing of peace agreements.

60% of the population are Christian (50% Catholic, 10% Protestant), 40% are Animist and about 1% are Muslim. The latter are found in certain towns.

95% of the present population is rural, and 85% of these earn their livelihood by farming. Almost all the land is under cultivation, hence the name given to the country "a little garden of fields". Rwanda is completely hemmed in by other countries and it depends on them. It is 1,800 kilometres from the port of Mombasa in Kenya, and 2,000 from the port of Matadi in Zaire.

2. The work of the Brothers

• De La Salle School, Byumba

This is an establishment that offers a general education and professional training. It has 600 students following courses in



Brother Superior John Johnston with Brothers of the Delegation of Rwanda, during his visit in July 1991.

one or other of the 4 sections. Each section awards either a diploma in the humanities or teaching qualifications.

The 4 sections are as follows:

- a general education section (maths and physics)
- 3 professional training sections:
 - primary school teacher qualification
 - business studies and accounting
 - economics
- There are 45 members of staff and a team of 7 Brothers.

● **The Art School, Nyundo**

There are 270 students following courses in one or other of 3 sections: graphic arts, sculpture, teaching of art.

The staff consists of 14 teachers and 5 Brothers. There is no other school like it in the country.

The courses are being revised at present so as to enable the school to qualify as an art school that can award the A2 Diploma (Diploma of Artistic Humanities). This diploma would qualify candidates for entry to further education and university.

● **The CPA (Agricultural Centre), Kisaro**

The CPA is a centre for the improvement of agricultural methods.

- It has promoted the use of terraces throughout the country as a means to avoid soil erosion.
- It has publicised various agricultural and animal husbandry methods: the selection of seed (potatoes, haricot beans, wheat); the raising of she-goats for milk, and pigs.
- Since 1991 it has looked after people displaced by the war. There is a displaced persons' camp at Kisaro with about 30.000 people. Brothers work in this camp with the Sisters of Saint Catherine and the Red Cross.

There are 6 Brothers in the Kisaro community and 3 postulants. They look after 20 or so young people studying agriculture, and about a thousand other people from the surrounding area, by offering various services (welding workshop, garage, mills). The Centre was started by Brother Cyrille Wieme.

● **The INTIGANDA Project, Butare**

This is a scheme to help street children in the parish of Butare. The Brothers of the Christian Schools are the driving force behind this project. INTIGANDA means "brave and daring people who never give up or become discouraged"

After several months spent gathering information and studying the question, we moved on to the planning stage. The project began its work rather timidly in autumn 1988, but by September 1989 it was in full swing, and it has never ceased expanding since. There are 5 persons, including two women, working there full-time and three part-time volunteers. Brother Othmar Wurth, the Director of the De La Salle Fraternity, is in charge of the project.

The main aim of the project is to return children to their families and schools, teach them a craft, help them to find paid work. The approach used is to maintain regular contact



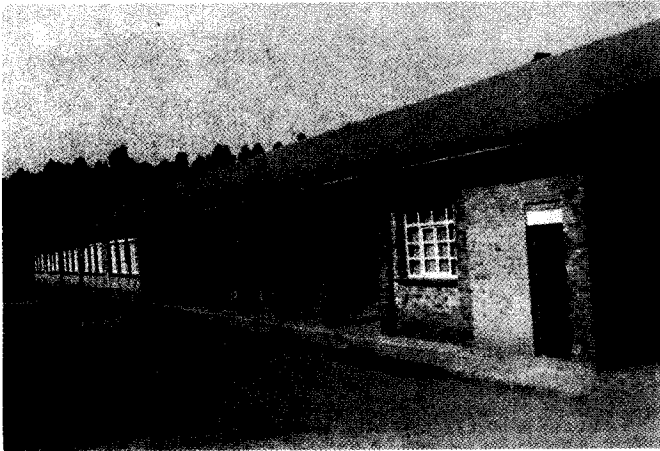
**4th Chapter of the Rwanda Delegation
which took place in Byumba.**



**Kisaro: Community of Our Lady of the Poor.
Terracing project for hillside cultivation.**

with the children in places where they congregate (near restaurants, in the market, the train station), run literacy and remedial courses, visit homes, teach them about personal hygiene and looking after clothes, offer free health care, cover the costs of sending children back into state schools, help with food in certain cases, ensure systematic follow-up of children back at school or home and, of course, catechesis. Obviously from time to time the project comes into contact with the judicial authorities. There is more contact with the town and Prefecture authorities.

At present, the INTIGANDA Project is looking after about 120 children. Boarding accommodation is not offered except to a dozen or so whose situation is particularly desperate. For a certain number of children who have become accustomed to living in the streets over too long a period of time, all we can do is to maintain friendly relations. After all, freedom is probably their most precious asset!



Byumba: one of the school buildings at de La Salle. This building was damaged during the war.



A group of street children resting: the mattress is banana leaves; blankets empty sugar bags.

Regarding teaching a craft, we make the most of existing opportunities. These depend on the number of useful contacts the head of the project can develop. Help is given also by the numerous religious houses of formation in Butare. Those in charge have been made aware of the needs of the street children, and so we have many helpers from these houses who come to work with us for a time. The project is financed to a large extent by Caritas Holland.

Although the Parish Committee is ultimately responsible, the INTIGANDA Project is a part of the much wider context offered by the Association for the support of helpers working with street children in Rwanda, whose president is Brother Othmar. This Association brings together projects run by the Salesian Fathers, a secular priest, a Dominican priest, a layman, a pastor of the Presbyterian Church, a Sister of Our Lady of Africa, and a lay NGO.

The Association is involved in 8 projects to help street children in the following towns: Butare, Gisenyi, Gitarama, Kigali (4), Musha and Kigeme (Gikongoro). In the near future, there will be another project run by the Episcopalian Church of Rwanda.

The aims of the Association are as follows:

- to promote exchange of information
- to ensure the ongoing training of helpers
- to speak with one voice when dealing with state authorities
- support new projects where this is necessary
- defend the rights of children as defined in the UN Convention.

The following congregations in Butare have supported the INTIGANDA Project: Brothers of the Christian Schools, Brothers of St Gabriel, Brothers of Charity, Brothers of Ste Croix, the Carmelite Fathers, the Salesian Fathers, the White Fathers, the White Sisters, the Bernadine Sisters, the Benebikira Sisters, the Auxiliary Sisters, the Little Sisters of Jesus, the Assumption Sisters, the Sacred Heart Fathers, the Holy Ghost Oblates.

Wanting to resolve the problems of a street child is often a very complicated business. This realisation has convinced us that we need to open a Social Care Office in Butare in which all the people and institutions involved in social work will be represented. The legal position of this Social Care Office would be that of a non-profit-making association. Its aim would be to analyse situations, coordinate the efforts of

different contributors and to assess them. The staff of the Social Care Office will have to be well qualified.

Struck by the plight of these abandoned children, we wanted to create, after the example of St John Baptist de La Salle, a new educational response to existing needs. The first Meditations for the Time of Retreat became real for us, and the conclusion of the 3rd point of the Meditation for Christmas Day took on new meaning. The creation of the INTIGANDA Project called for much effort and perseverance...but the active presence of God was evident. Every day we witness God's love for abandoned young people, and slowly "one commitment has led to another". (Br. Othmar Wurth).

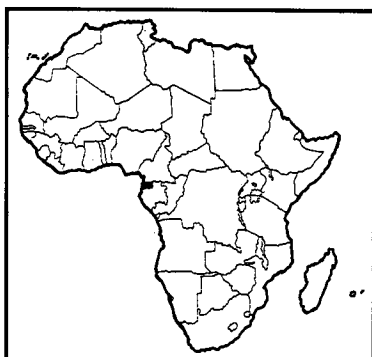
● **The St Paul community, Rukomo**

This a postulancy community. It is attached to a newly created farm. The Brothers wish to help the local young people also. This community has been closed since May 1991 because of the war. ●

Br. Aloys Ndimukihe



A street educator contacting children in the town.



DE LA SALLE BROTHERS IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA

The country

Equatorial Guinea is a small country on the Gulf of Guinea, in between Gabon on the south and east, and Cameroon on the north. Its area is only 28,051 square kilometres and its population between 300,000 and 350,000. It has a high birth-rate of 18% per annum. The soil is rich but insufficiently cultivated. Products are wood, cocoa, coffee, citric fruits, manioc and bananas., and some live stock: cattle, sheep and poultry.

The population is 90% Catholic, with 10% devotees of traditional religions. The official language is Spanish.

Guinea was colonised by Spain until 1968, then on 12th October of that year, it gained independence, though local government had been in existence since 21st July 1964.

Some history

Under the tutelage of Spain, this small nation came to be one of the countries with the highest annual per capita income in Africa. But a short time after independence, the government turned anti-foreigner, took over all their property and expelled all ex-patriots. Once the Spanish management and expertise had vanished, the local economy came to a standstill, so it only took a few years for the country to be reduced to dire poverty. Public buildings began to fall into disrepair and could not be used. The country had retrograded by decades.

The above situation lasted until 1979, when a coup d'état toppled Dictator Macias. The new government immediately asked for Spanish help, and since that year Spain has been offering economic and technical assistance of some proportions. However, inspite of these efforts, the small country has not managed to catch up with the technological times.

The Brothers in Equatorial Guinea

From the short outline given above, one can see that there have been two Lasallian periods in Equatorial Guinea. The first stretches from 1958 to 1969; the second from 1980 to the present time.

The Brothers were called to the country by the High Commissioner of the territory when it was a Spanish dependency. The suggestion had come from Mr. Leandro Blanco, Mr. Faustino Ruiz, a former student of the Brothers in San Fernando, and Mgr. Francisco Gómez Marijuán, then Vicar Apostolic and later Bishop of Fernando Po.

The Brothers arrived at Bata on 15th February 1958, to take over a completely non-fee-paying school, funded by the High Commission. In the following year, 1959, they opened a technical school. In 1963, the Brothers took the teacher training college under their wing, as well as the Institute "Carlos Lwanga" which was a middle school. The technical school soon evolved into a whole polytechnical complex called "La Salle". By 1966 there were 20 Brothers and 1055 students. That same year, a new centre was opened on the island of Santa Isabel, and in 1967 a high school at Ebebiyin was opened next to Cameroon.

A bright future seemed possible, when all of a sudden everything was shattered in a what seemed like a couple of hours. All the establishments were taken over by the army, and the Brothers had to leave the country with all other foreigners with just the clothes they stood up in.

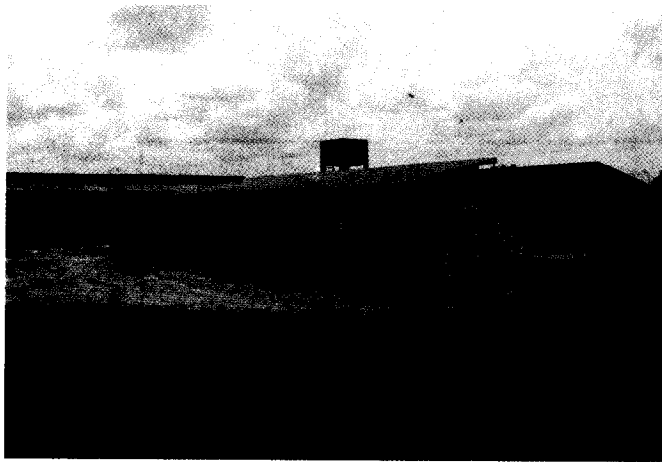
When Dictator Macias was deposed in 1979, the new government asked all religious to come back to take over the places they had run before being expelled. Practically all the congregations agreed, but found most of their former buildings, even schools and hospitals, in ruins.

The Brothers received an official request to return at the end of 1979, so a small group got ready to go back, and finally reached the country in 1980, only to find their buildings were in a disastrous state; it was a matter of starting from zero.

However from then on, they began again to take part in running the teacher training college and the middle school at Bata, inspite of the untold difficulties still found everywhere.

Today in Equatorial Guinea, the Brothers also have a house of formation, because several young men feel they are called to serve God in our Institute. The new postulancy programme takes place near Bata, at Bomudi. Next to it, we have also a small school for children of the nearby villages.

Besides their work at the teacher training college and in the middle school, they also do a lot of other apostolic work. This work includes the school for catechists, where people



Bomudi: Postulancy building in Equatorial Guinea.

are trained to be Christian leaders in their villages. From time to time these leaders come back to school for refresher courses.

Fortunately the Brothers' work is not done in isolation, because quite a number of men and women religious are in charge of various undertakings up and down the country, and they all help and encourage one another. Bit by bit, lost time is being made up, all in the hope that there will not be a recurrence of earlier troubles.

Summer projects in Equatorial Guinea

For several years a very fine venture has been taking place each summer, when religious and lay volunteers from Spain spend their holiday time in Equatorial Guinea, helping to repair buildings and giving lessons and medical help free of charge. Literacy programmes have been run, and schools, churches, dispensaries and homes have been rebuilt.

THE CATECHIST SCHOOL: A DREAM COME TRUE, AND NOW A YEAR OLD.

(Brother Manuel Carreira in June 1992)

The catechist school at Bata began on 4th November 1991, with a group of 30 catechists from villages, mostly situated in surrounding forests. It is a joint venture by religious orders and the diocese, and is managed by religious men and women and some diocesan priests. It is organised as a boarding college for adults, who follow a series of two-week-long courses each month; the rest of each month, the students are needed for work at home.

Fortnight by fortnight, we have at last now reached June (1992), the month when school ends in these parts. The programme finished with a little course on matrimony. Men with their ladies were seated together on school benches, whilst they listened to the lessons and discussed the implica-

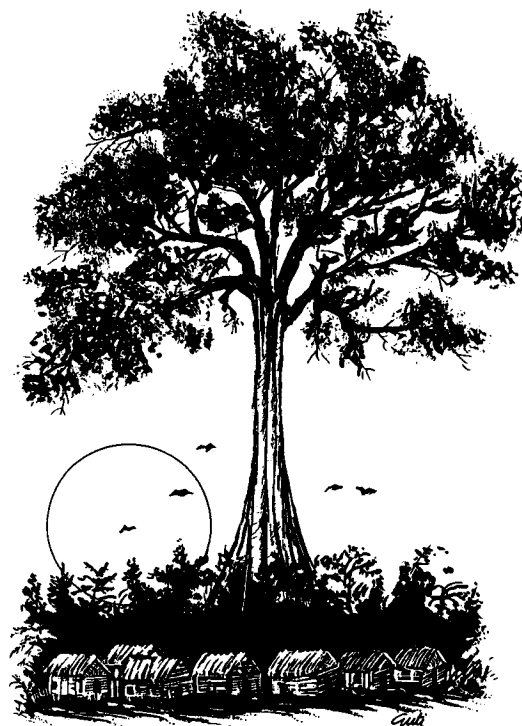
tions of marriage, and how to bring up their children. Not everything by any means could be covered this time, but other courses will follow, since couples have indicated that they want to think things over together and to have a new perspective on marriage; I hope Our Lord will bless the work we have begun.

The Eucharist which ended the school year was full of symbols. The couples joined a procession each with their youngest child, and went towards the altar, where, at the offertory, they presented to Our Lord the long list of the children he had blessed them with. They heartily joined in the hymn and sang: "We shall be messengers of the Kingdom of God".

It was excellent to see the wives with their husbands at this ceremony, for by this symbolic gesture, the women realised their importance as educators, spouses and mothers.

That night we had a special dinner to end the school year, with students, their wives, teachers and our bishop present. In Africa festivities seem to go on for ever; there is music, plenty to eat, new clothes and lots of fun, interspersed with singing, clapping and jokes. At the end, came the moment for the message. The college gave each couple a card, with a plan for their spiritual life that summer. Each student in turn said a couple of words to sum up his or her impressions of the school year.

By this time we had reached midnight. The babies which each mother was holding, were still awake, with their beautiful dark eyes on the alert, taken up by all this noise and happiness, not of course aware that the following day, we Brothers had quite a journey to make: a three-day one in fact, to Akonibne. So those final days were full of activity, joy, festivity, which of course will continue to be recounted night after night around their village fires by the people who followed the year's course. The women students will recall it all,



as they sit on their bamboo chairs, with the mothers among them repeating in unison from time to time: "um...um...akiiiiieeee"

At 6 o'clock the next morning, we set off from the door of the cathedral, still singing the songs of the night before. The trip was not primarily a picnic nor a prize for the work we had done in the school. We wanted to find out about details which we would know more about by seeing them than by being told about them. Our objectives were:

1. To get to know the places where the Church in Guinea began. We wanted to become aware that we were the descendants of those who had begun to spread the Gospel, descendants of our Fathers in the faith, wanting to know about the places where they had begun their work. The important towns in this connection in Guinea are Nkue, San José de Evinayong, Akonibe, Neifang among others.

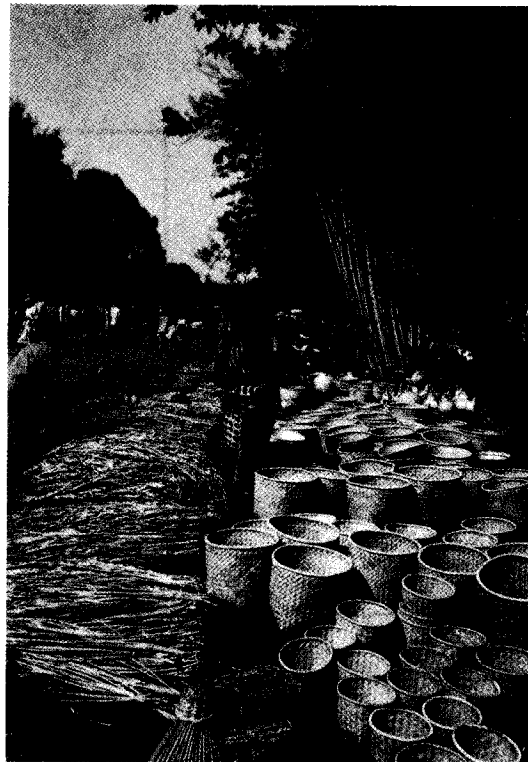
2. To meet the catechists of Evinayong and Akonibe to share ideas and experiences.

3. To visit the Monastery of contemplative life in Akonibe and to hear from the sisters there the significance of their presence in that region.

4. To visit the property of those contemplative sisters and the Escolapian Fathers, in order to learn how they manage to cultivate the same piece of land year in and year out.

5. To visit the property at Eton: this is a large project which consists in building a new township of adobe, whilst preserving traditional aspects of life, not excluding "fang" cooking.

The objective of the Catechist school is not only to train teachers and catechists. We also want to prepare leaders in the life of faith for the villages and among the families. We believe that the best way to make progress in this, is to train couples to become leaders, who will initiate necessary changes in their own family life, in their way of living, in the care of their children, in hygiene etc. That is why we considered it important to include wives in the training and in the venture we were beginning. Women, with their sense of hard work and perseverance, will support any initiative and animate it in the way only they know.



Anyone who knows this area of the globe, this climate and this situation, will readily realise that the people's wooden houses rot away after a few years. Bearing this and other things in mind, we would like to get the catechists and their spouses interested in every aspect of life, like having a tidy, if poor, house; being aware of hygiene for themselves and their children; living an exemplary married life, so that their words will be followed by example.

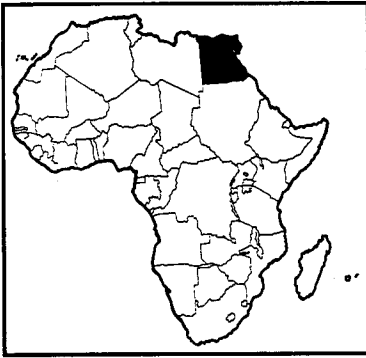
The poverty they are used to, day after day, seems to shatter their dreams of overcoming the difficulties which they do not have the income to cope with. But with a first little push, they soon manage to achieve at least something.

We are trusting in Providence and in people who are helping us in lots of ways and from many areas. For example, we have gone ahead and promised any couple who dries the adobe bricks for their house, that we shall supply roofing and flooring to finish the job.

They all want a house that is strong enough not to be in danger of collapsing every rainy season..., and we of course want the same. If in each village, one family begins to improve in any direction, others will be encouraged to follow suit, so that a chain reaction for much improvement in living standards will result for all these children of God, who, after all, were created to be happy in this world and in the next.

When it comes to dreaming, we want to be the last in a line of dreamers: if you who are reading this know of any other dreamers who live in a more hospitable and friendly world, will you please tell them to take note that:

Many small things,
done by many small people,
in many small places
can change the world. ●

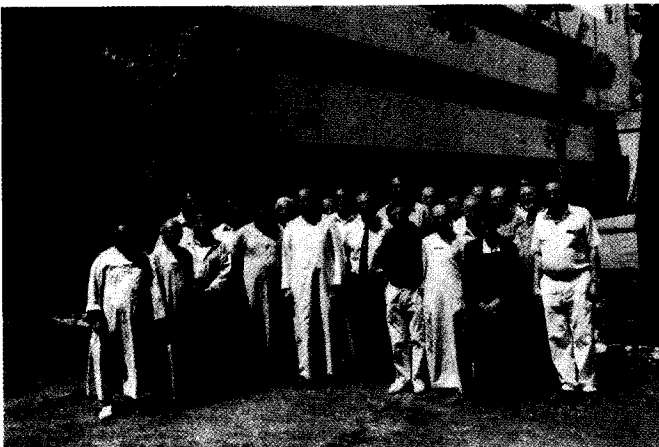


DELEGATION OF EGYPT

The country

It is a state in northeast Africa with an area of a million square kilometres and 56 million inhabitants. The population is increasing by one million inhabitants every 10 months. It is concentrated in the Nile valley which constitutes one-third of the total area of the country. The rest consists of desert with a few scattered oases. Some bold planning policies have led to the construction of new towns, in particular in the desert area around Cairo, in an attempt to ease the congestion in the capital.

Cairo, the capital, is one of the great conurbations of the world and, with a current population of 14 million, it is the largest city in Africa. The high dam and the uninterrupted irrigation it permits make commercial farming and the irrigation of new land possible, and it furnishes energy as well. However, with the flooding of the Nile under control, the land worked by the peasants is losing its fertility. The main resources of Egypt are the Suez Canal, the tourist industry, emigration, oil, cotton, etc.



Cairo, 4th December 1992, gathering of the Brothers' Egypt Delegation at the opening of the new building of the secondary section of Bab el Louk College.

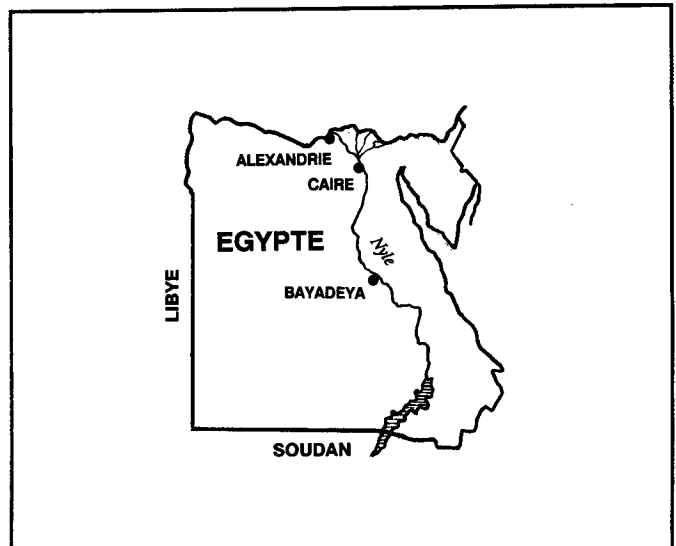
Lasallian history

The Brothers arrived in Egypt in 1847. With the Lazarist Fathers, they founded the Collège Sainte Catherine in Alexandria. In 1926, this became St. Mark's. In 1854, the Collège de Saint Joseph de Khoronfish was founded in Cairo.

The District used to be very flourishing. In 1932, it had 281 Brothers teaching in 32 schools in Cairo, Alexandria, in the Delta, the Canal Zone and Upper Egypt. There were 8,730 pupils, 2,781 of whom paid no tuition fees.

Our present apostolate

At the present time there are 24 Brothers and 5 communities (3 in Cairo, 1 in Alexandria and 1 in Upper Egypt). There are 6 "Lasallian" schools with a total of 8,200 pupils.



While the work of the Brothers in the schools is important, some of them are involved also in apostolic or social work outside the school in professional training centres, literacy programmes, Catholic Action movements, collaborating with Caritas Egypt, the MEJ, etc.

The Delegation concentrates its efforts in three main areas:

- the small group of ageing Brothers who are in the schools as a Lasallian presence, bearing witness, sharing the work of running the school with lay people;
- the group of lay people, some of whom are in charge of schools or apostolic movements;
- pastoral work with young people and vocation work, through which we try to foster Lasallian vocations among our young Egyptians.

Our Lasallian apostolate in Egypt has the following 3 characteristics:

1. Our educational service is directed towards young people of different faiths, to Christians and Muslims together.
2. Wherever we work, our main interest is in underprivileged children and young people.
3. Since the 70's, we have sought to give greater responsibilities to our lay colleagues.

In most of our schools, Christians and Muslims grow up and live together. This shows the confidence parents have in institutions or groups which are clearly Christian.

One result is that young people grow up with attitudes that are not influenced by the fundamentalist tendencies which are at present threatening Egypt.

Joint undertakings like giving blood or providing aid to the victims of the earthquake which struck the country on October 12th 1992 reinforce the kind of educational approach we have.

Several of our schools cater for relatively well-off children, but they still involve themselves in the educational service of the poor in collaboration with local organisations like Caritas

Egypt and the Christian Association for Upper Egypt. They train "monitors" to work with the handicapped, work with the Ecumenical Literacy Committee and, more recently, have set up professional training centres for young people living in the part of town where the traditional Brothers' school is located.

We are trying to develop the shared mission. In this connection, our headmasters (4 lay persons and 2 Brothers) meet more or less every two months to discuss their work.

In the schools themselves, Brothers and lay people share the responsibility of running the various committees which help the school to function well, like for example, the pastoral, educational, social and management committees, etc.

Over the last 5 years, our Lasallian Centre has run sessions for teachers from our schools in Cairo and Alexandria. In all, some 80 teachers have attended. Although this scheme has been very limited in its scope, it has enabled us to set up a few small groups of Lasallian lay teachers. An example of their work is the aid they have provided Khoronfish.

Finally, we are in the process of setting up a Lasallian Schools Association in preparation for whatever the future may bring Lasallians in Egypt.

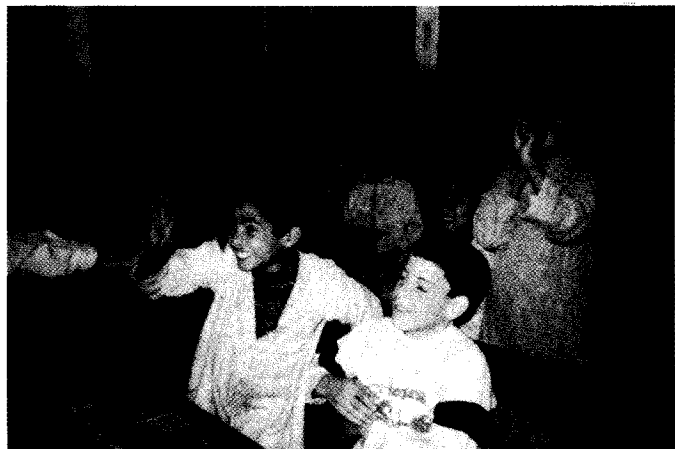
A special example of working with the poor

The Delegation of Egypt wanted to do something specific for the very poor, so it sent three Brothers to Bayadeya, situated some 300 kilometres south of Cairo in one of the loops of the Nile. There are many very poor people there. Education is in the hands of the Christian Association of Upper Egypt, and the Brothers work with this Association in the school. At the same time they involve themselves in the pastoral care of the young Christians of the parish. ●

Br. Didier Albo, President



Professional training centre at Choubra.



Students of Bayadeya College, Upper Nile region.



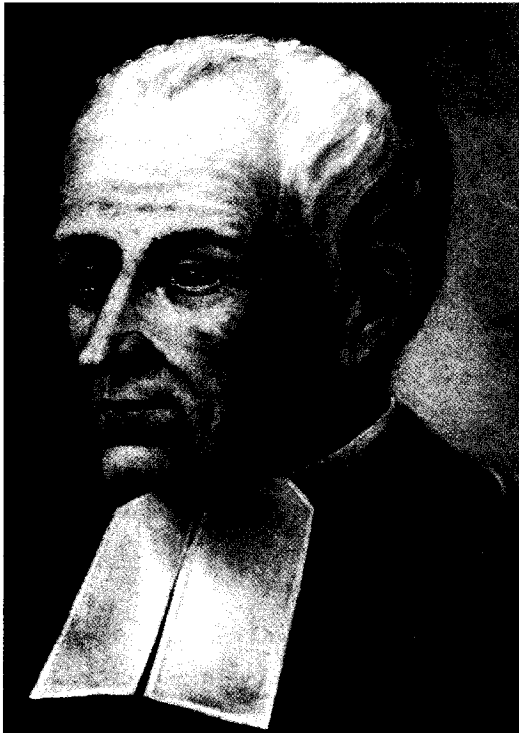
DELEGATION OF LA REUNION



La Réunion

La Réunion, like Mauritius and Rodrigues, is one of the Mascarene Islands in the Indian Ocean. It lies 800 kilometres east of Madagascar and was discovered in 1517 by the Portuguese explorer, Pedro Mascarenhas. It is 90 kilometres long and between 30 and 40 wide. It is a volcanic island (the Piton de la Fournaise, 2025 m. is still active), very mountainous, with plateaux and some coastal plains on its periphery.

When France took possession of it in 1642 it became known as Ile Bourbon. After being a French colony throughout the 18th and 19th century, it became a French overseas department in 1946. The population consists of the white descendants of colonists and various kinds of Creoles (African, Chinese, Indian). They form a multicoloured population that lives in harmony. It has doubled in the last 30 years and now numbers 600,000 inhabitants, 40% of whom are under 20 years of age. Although mainland France has invested heavily in these last 30 years, unemployment is high, with over 30% of the active population out of work.



Blessed Brother Scubilion (John Bernard Rousseau), apostle of La Reunion.

The Brothers in La Réunion

The Institute came to La Réunion in 1817 and has been there ever since except for a short period between 1824 and 1826. Its development was rapid. Up to 1881, the Brothers and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny ran all the primary schools on the island. They ran evening courses for adults and, up to 1848, when slavery was abolished, they taught and catechised the slaves.

The most striking figure involved in this work of evangelisation was Brother Scubilion, Jean Bernard Rousseau, who came to the island in 1837 and died there at Sainte Marie in 1867. He was beatified on May 2nd 1989 by Pope John Paul II in La Réunion itself during a visit to the island.

When the laicisation laws were passed in 1881, there were 125 Brothers running 26 schools. In 1835, they had opened a novitiate for the training of indigenous candidates. The three

Brothers who brought the Institute to Madagascar in 1867 came from La Réunion. Others had already gone to the Seychelles and Mauritius.

After the last war, responsibility for the schools in Mauritius passed to the District of Ireland. In 1991 the Brothers withdrew from the island. La Réunion became successively part of the District of Madagascar, a District in its own right and finally in 1966 a Delegation.

For a long time, the Brothers were responsible for the A.P.C.A., an innovative centre for young delinquents and young people with family or social problems in the Plaine des Cafres. Changes made by the Minister responsible and the lack of vocations led to the closure of the centre and the withdrawal of the Brothers.

Our schools today

At present there are 38 Brothers, 15 of whom are from mainland France. 17 of them, including 8 retired Brothers, work in schools.

The Brothers are responsible for 4 schools: Collège Saint Michel at Saint Denis, the provincial capital, with 1,200 students; Collège de Maison Blanche at Guillaume, with 230 students, including 80 boarders who need special help pastorally and with their studies; 2 schools at St. Pierre: a college with 900 students and a lycée with 700 students. Both these latter schools have lay headmasters. At St. Pierre also the Brothers are still officially connected with Foyer 150 which they founded and which is a residential care unit for about 30 young persons with family or social problems who have been sent there by the Social services. For the last year, two Brothers have been working in a poor Diocesan primary school at Saint Paul.

A Brother works in the Diocesan Catholic Education Council with the responsibility of overseeing primary schools and acting as educational adviser. On the island of Rodrigues, which depends on Mauritius, a retired Mauritian Brother has set up and runs a centre to teach literacy and farming to 20 or so young people who do not attend schools.

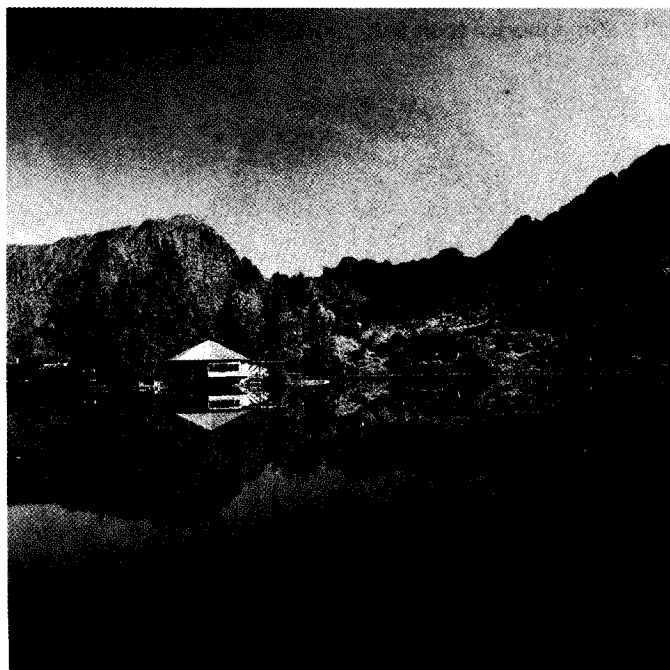
Most of the Brothers working in schools teach catechism and try to help lay teachers to become involved in this pastoral work. In these schools, time and means are allocated to help backward pupils.

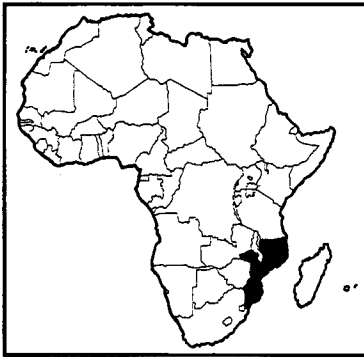
Not many teachers are involved in the Lasallian movement. In the near future, another of the schools will have a lay headmaster. Some Brothers do vocation work but without results for our Institute. There has been only one novice since 1980. He made his profession in 1991. At the present time, the Delegation has one postulant. And yet, there are so many young people clearly waiting for good teachers! ●

Brother Maxime Ferland, Delegate



La Reunion is of outstanding natural beauty: its coastline, lakes, and especially its famous, still active volcano Le Piton de la Fournaise.





DE LA SALLE IN MOZAMBIQUE

A bit of History

De La Salle Community in Beira is the answer to four important questions, which we expect are God's will:

- appeals from the 1986 General Chapter
- stipulations of the 1987 New Rule
- The constant call of the church, especially through the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* of John Paul II
- Frequent requests from Superiors in letters to the RELAL Provinces to show real interdependence by giving to missions "ad gentes" 10% of our manpower.

The Districts of Brazil decided to pay back a bit of the debt they had incurred from the European Brothers who came from France, Belgium, Germany, Spain and Portugal to found the Brazilian districts.

So they decided on a joint effort to send Brothers to a part of Africa where they spoke Portuguese: this would be instead of their share of manpower usually given to Cuba, in which all Latin America took part. Since Portuguese-speaking Af-



rica meant either Mozambique or Angola, one of these had to be chosen.

In the 5th Assembly of RELAL in Bogota, April 1990, the choice was made. The two Brazilian Provincials came out of the Assembly with a firm resolve to take on something, and this they told their Brothers.

Meanwhile, discussions took place with the General Council, especially Brothers Genaro de Ugarte Sáenz and Martin Corral, who had mentioned the matter in their 1990 visit and in their subsequent letter and recommendations dated September 1990.

The two Provincial Councils met on 26th April 1991 and studied a plan and dates etc. It was approved, and things went ahead: informing the Brothers in communities, choosing the personnel, preparation and training of those chosen, and finally the setting up of the first community from the second term of 1993.

8th May 1991, Brother Vincent Rabemahafaly, General Councillor, sent to the two Brazilian Provincials several proposals for work in Mozambique. Mgr Jaime Pedro Gonçalves, Archbishop of Beira, had suggested the following to Brother Superior General on 23rd April 1991:

- a) Colégio João XXIII in Sao Benedito de Manga;
- b) Colégio Santo António, in the parish of Barrada;
- c) Colégio Sao Carlos Lwanga, in Murraça.

Shortly afterwards Mgr Gonçalves was in Rome and visited the Mother House. He preferred to have Colégio Joao XXIII reopened in Sao Benedito da Manga, in the outskirts of Beira.

Once more Brothers Genaro and Vincent contacted the provincials of Brazil and suggested that the African mission could begin in February 1992, in the diocese of Beira, Mozambique, with the support of Mgr Gonçalves, the date depending on the school year.

The answer of the two provincials expressed hesitation on such a sudden undertaking, since they had to choose the Brothers and train them.

Therefore, the two provincials were asked by the General Council to contact the Archbishop of Beira directly. Both of

them went to Mozambique from 2nd to 11th October 1991 to study the situation personally.

On their return they proposed the opening of John XXIII for 1992, which plan they communicated to Brother Superior General with a report on their visit. In deciding to start work in January 1992, they wanted the whole Brazilian Lasallian family to have some part in the project.

The General Council authorised the founding of the new community of three Brothers from Porto Alegre and one from Sao Paolo to reopen the school we have mentioned.

The following were chosen for the work: Brothers Roque Seibert, Jerônimo Brandelero and Henrique Longo of Porto Alegre, and Francisco de Pinho, from Sao Paolo. On 16th January 1992, accompanied by Brother Marcos Corbellini, Visitor of Porto Alegre, they set out for their post. The new community was established on 18th January.

John XXIII school

Our school is in the San Benedito mission. It is a compound built by the missionaries of Africa, (White Fathers), around 1950. There are a church, three classroom wings, a girls' boarding house and one for boys, residence for the Fathers and sisters, a hall for training women, offices, a cinema hall, social club, football field with lighting.

After 15 years of war for independence the National Government in power was Marxist-Leninist and it took over all Church works. Civil war then continued for 16 years. The result is a country in ruins, utterly devastated.

Mozambique has 16 million inhabitants, 7 and a half millions of whom are refugees or homeless. According to statistics supplied by the World Bank of UNO, it is the poorest

country on the planet, with \$80 average annual income per capita; three neighbouring countries follow: Tanzania: \$120; Ethiopia: \$130; Somalia: \$170. To add to the wretchedness, there has been drought for the past few months.

The suburb where our school is, is 15 kilometres from the centre of Beira, and most of the students are displaced through war.

Everything in the mission is damaged, some items irreparably. With the help of the Diocese and the White Fathers we set up three classrooms to begin school, so we have three groups with 46 students in each. They are all poor. Among them are about 20 aspirants to the priesthood or religious life. The three present classes are 8th grade, and for 1993 we hope to have two of 9th, two of 8th, two of 6th grade and one primary. So other rooms are being set up for teaching.

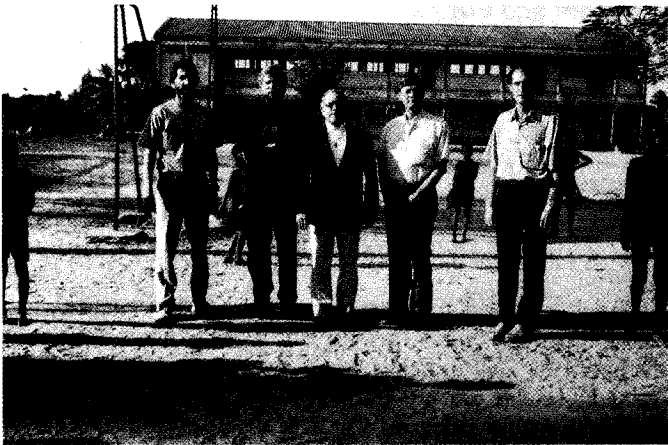
We have been greatly helped this year by the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady. One of them, who has been in the country for 30 years, took over as head of the school.

In addition to school work, one Brother teaches in the seminary and another helps with youth work in the parish, preparing liturgy and giving catechism lessons.

In April, one member of the community, Brother Jerônimo, had to return to Brazil for health reasons. But he was replaced in November by Brother Antonio Cantelli.

In March, April and May we had a really hard time of it, in company with people all around the town. The reason was attacks by guerrillas, who at night used to steal family property, take hostages and occasionally killed. At this time we had to sleep in the city and families went to safer places at nightfall.

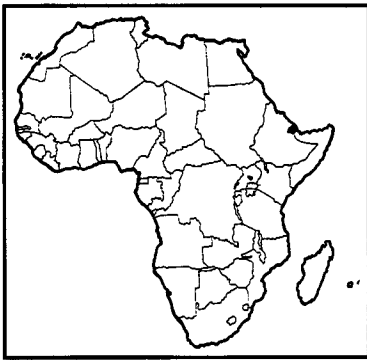
Often, during the night we heard shots, the rattle of machine guns, the boom of bazookas and even the thunder of heavy guns. Fortunately our mission survived, but the people suffered a lot from robbery, rape...death; in addition to the "small" disadvantage of not being able to spend the night in their own house. ●



Brothers of John XXIII College in Sao Benedito de Manga, with Brother José Israel Nery, Visitor of Sao Paolo.



Brothers of John XXIII College with a group of students. In the background: classroom wing.



DE LA SALLE IN DJIBOUTI

De La Salle establishments in Djibouti depend directly on the District of France, however, since they are in Africa, we naturally include them in this Bulletin on Africa.

The Republic of Djibouti

It is a small republic of 23,000 square kilometres situated between Ethiopia and Somalia jutting out to the Gulf of Aden in the Red Sea.

The soil is volcanic, generally of steppe appearance. Temperatures are high, usually a level 45 Centigrade, (103 F), never falling below 19C (66F) even at night; relative humidity being 90%.

Agriculture is poor, chiefly through lack of water. Animal life is desertlike, lots of dromedaries and gazelles, whilst hyenas are typical.

Population is around 400,000, half of whom live in the capital, Djibouti.

Because of its geography it is a transit place, so lots of different races are found there: Arabs, Indians, Malagachis, Vietnamese, Pakistanis. But two ethnic groups predominate, the "Afars" in the north and the "Isas" in the south, where the capital is. An ancestral rivalry exists between the last two, resulting recently in armed conflict which added to the general poverty.

Religion is predominantly Sunni Muslim: 97%; Christianity counts 3%; a small minority in a Muslim majority.

Djibouti was a French colony until 1977, the date of independence. It was a entreport en route to the Far East, whilst now, thanks to its position, it is a centre of intercommunication and operations for multinational companies.

The country has experienced big changes and has moved from nomadism to settled life. Its economy is almost totally

dependent on foreign countries, since it produces almost nothing of itself.

The Brothers in Djibouti

The Institute went to Djibouti in 1951 at the invitation of Mgr Bernardin Hoffmann, Prefect Apostolic. The Brothers began in Charles de Foucauld school, with 600 students, mostly Muslims. In 1962, they opened the small De La Salle School in a shanty town suburb, and taught children of families moving from rural areas to the capital.

In 1977, with the independence of the country, the Brothers left Charles de Foucauld school to take over an "approved school", where they gave professional training to marginalised, often homeless children.

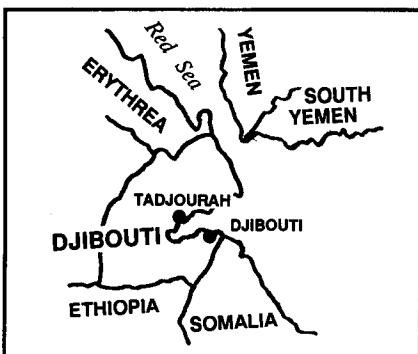
In 1983 the Brothers took charge of the "Apprenticeship Centre of Joseph Cardijn", a professional school, this time in Tayura, in the north of the country, just opposite Djibouti on the other side of the bay.

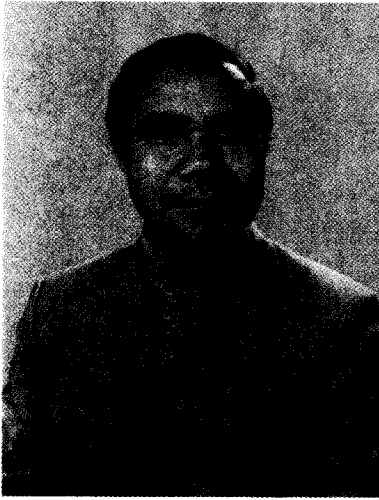
This school was for the professional formation of youngsters, so that they would stay put, not emigrate, but remain in the north, which was too dependent on the capital. It looks after students who have dropped out of ordinary schooling and just wander around the streets after primary school.

Present and Future

Today apostolic activity in La Salle Djibouti is centred on two places: De La Salle school in the capital, a primary school with professional school attached, and the Joseph Cardijn Centre in Tayura. However, political unrest and armed conflict has put question marks after the latter, since it is at present abandoned and the students have left for their villages.

The presence of the Brothers in the Muslim majority has value as witness. Silent, persevering work can give results in the long run. But apostolic work is very hard. However, the Brothers realise that the hardest soil is the one which needs the hardest ploughing. In this region, in addition, there is extreme poverty, so it is an especially worthy place where the poor are everywhere present, so we want to remain there: we were made for the poor. ●





INTERVIEW WITH
BRO. VINCENT RABEMAHAFALY,
GENERAL COUNCILLOR

– Africa, with its great number and variety of countries is the "continent of hope". At present, Africa has problems some of which are common to the whole continent. What are the problems and what effect do they have on African society?

Africa is at one and the same time a single entity and a multiplicity of elements. From the outside it looks like a homogeneous geographical unit. In fact, it is divided up into more than 50 independent states and its population is formed of a multiplicity of tribes and peoples. It is difficult, not to say dangerous, to speak of Africa in general terms, because situations vary so much from place to place.

Having said that, I shall try to describe what I think are the problems common to the whole of Africa.

The most obvious problem is, first of all, poverty and deprivation of all kinds. Many people lead a precarious existence. Hunger, however, is rarely the result of climatic conditions alone. It is often a consequence of social disintegration caused by conflicts.

The terrible price in human terms of these chronic conflicts is incalculable. Millions of people have been displaced as a result and have joined the vast numbers forced to emigrate because of droughts and other natural calamities.

Political instability and economic depression are common to many African countries and account for the periodical outbursts of civil disturbances and mass movements which occur in various parts of the continent. In practice, it is difficult if not impossible to establish peace when whole nations are driven to despair, not only by poverty, but also by the vast disparity of situations, the disregard for the most elementary personal rights, and by the restriction put on the free expression of opinions.

Famine and all forms of insecurity have forced Africans to leave their homes and seek refuge elsewhere. They constitute a vast mass of men, women and children, scattered all over Africa in the course of the last few remaining years of the 20th century. The statistics normally quoted indicate that there are

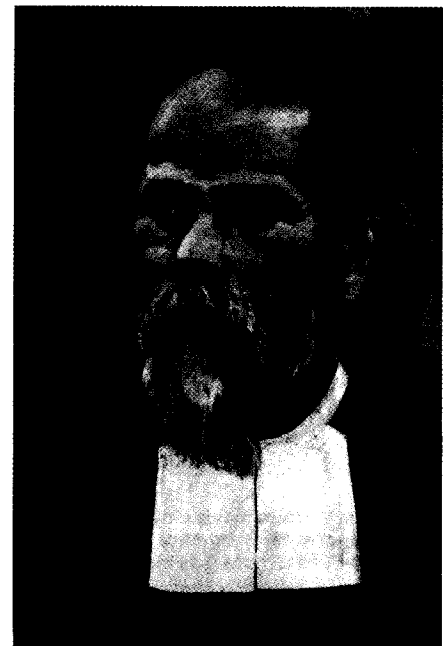
in all six million refugees and 16 million persons displaced in their own countries.

Problems concerning education, health and work are equally serious. Illiteracy seems to be on the increase in Africa. Students receive no support from their families and there are no jobs waiting for them. Workers are unemployed and peasants are exploited, abandoned and left to fend for themselves. Thousands of people are ill with Aids or other even older diseases which still exist in Africa.

I must mention also problems of a psychological or spiritual nature. In the traditional culture of African people there is a certain measure of fear:

- * fear of ancestors to whom one has not been faithful,
- * fear of sorcerers
- * fear of greegrees.

The people of Africa need to be told that they have been freed by Christ from all the forms of evil that afflict humanity.



Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa, the first Malagachi to join a religious order (1854-1919)
He was a pillar of the Faith among his people at a time when missionaries were forbidden entry to the country.
His cause for beatification has been introduced.
He was a model both as apostle and of holiness through education.

- However, apart from the problems, there are also enormous possibilities. Can you tell us about these riches which can have a positive influence on the future of Africa?

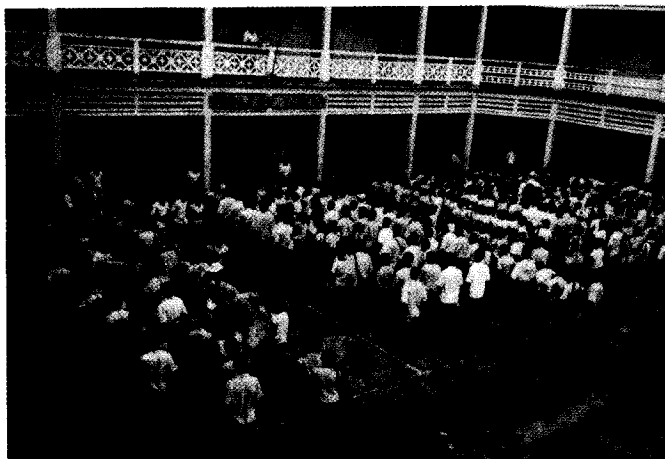
There is more to Africa than its problems, however big and numerous they might be. It is aware of its difficulties and deficiencies and is seeking ways of overcoming them. Extensive and profound changes are taking place in all African countries, although at varying speeds. What I find positive, however, is that the people of Africa are showing signs of a new sense of responsibility regarding their own future, and a desire to find, and follow their own model for growth and development. And so, in a number of countries on the African continent, the people have forced by their demonstrations more than one dictatorial regime to change direction or to resign. It seems as if the spring of democracy is coming to Africa.

Africa has great natural resources which could rescue it from the impasse in which it finds itself, if they were equitably managed at both a national and international level. But Africa has also great human riches which constitute one of its great assets. The population of Africa is constantly growing and successive generations seem to improve.

Traditional values are still to be found in many African societies. Such values include a sense of hospitality, mutual help and solidarity, great patience helped by a willingness to talk things over, and they represent an effective asset for the solution of many problems.

The extraordinary capacity that Africans have to observe and assimilate what they see makes them students that learn quickly. They have a facility for imitation, and this gift could help them to make progress and develop.

Finally I should mention a spiritual wealth that is common to the whole of Africa, whether Christian, Moslem or belonging to traditional religions. There is an awareness of God, of the world beyond and, in the words of the Pope, "a living sense of the spiritual dimension of human life".



Africa is bursting with children and young people who crowd educational establishments. But there are not enough places, so many children cannot go to school. Without training how are they going to change things for the better?
In the photo: St. John's College at Antalaha, Madagascar.



Education is an excellent means of social progress and betterment.
Students of the Professional training school of Toussiana.

- How do you envisage the mission of the Institute in the Africa of today? And in the Africa of tomorrow?

The evangelisation of Africa goes back to the very beginning of Christianity, at least, in certain northern parts of the continent. In the 17th century there was a new missionary effort which was not successful. Present missionary activity which seems to be successful dates from the last century. In its missionary activities in Africa, the Church has always tried to make human development a part of its work of evangelisation: it has involved itself actively in education, health care, and in the improvement of the living standards of the African people.

One could say that the Institute was not slow to collaborate in the missionary effort of the Church in Africa. From the very beginning, it was involved in the primary evangelisation of children and young adults who frequented the first Christian schools.

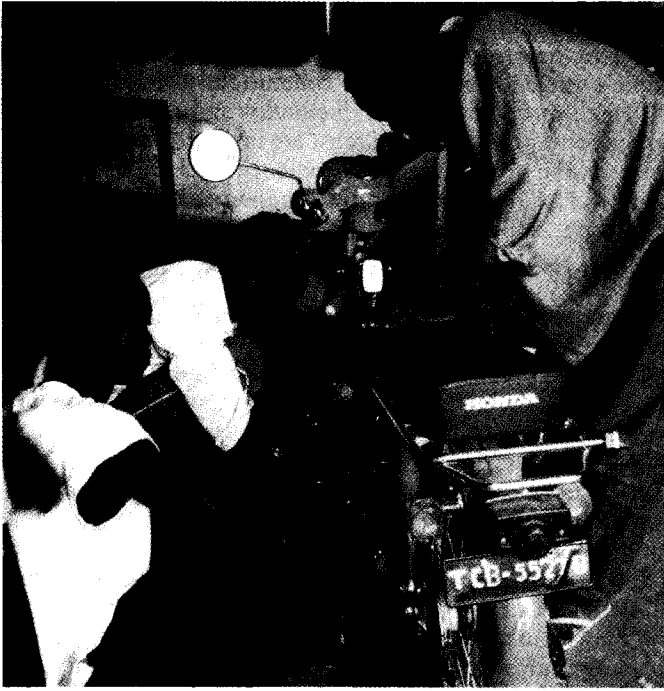
The need of young Africans for education remains a great challenge for the Institute.

In 1991, UNESCO released the following information: out of the 631 million inhabitants of Africa (excluding South Africa), children of school age (6-17) represented 31% of the total population. However, of this 31%, more than 20% either did not go to school, were repeating classes, or had given up their studies.

The importance of all kinds of schools in Africa is beyond doubt. With the Founder we can say that there is a great need for the Institute there. There are innumerable children of peasants, craftsmen and poor people: they all need teachers. The Institute has a role to play here.

- And what about tomorrow?

Regular evaluation of any undertaking is a means of renewal, improvement and updating. I am convinced that the Brothers in Africa must constantly re-assess their current apostolic commitments, in order to see and plan what needs to be renewed and what needs to be adapted. What should our response be, for example, in the face of increasing illiteracy, the worrying decrease of school teaching, and the devaluation of the religious and moral training of young people?



Students working in the mechanics department of the La salle institution of N'Djamena, Chad.

While there is a need for continued effort to maintain the quality of what already exists, it is necessary also to try to respond to the specific needs of underprivileged groups, sectors in difficulty, and children without schools. Taking such needs seriously should lead to the progressive modification of our present schools. Some have already tried to make the necessary changes, but more need to do so. The aim must be to establish schools which are not satisfied with using things, but which contribute to social development through the manual work of the pupils.

– What role can our Institute play in the development of Africa?

Our school apostolate is far from being out of date in Africa. To have doubts about the role of schools in Africa is, I think, to ignore facts; and to give up education through schools is to ignore the deepest needs of this continent.

There is also one other dysfunction to avoid, that of routine. This can result in a lack of critical appraisal of our establishments, without which they run the risk of living on the fringes of the changes taking place in their area, and of being cut off from everyone in splendid isolation. I have already mentioned elsewhere instances of restructured schools which offer both academic and technical courses, and add manual work to intellectual work. I should like to mention also various literacy programmes, rural leadership courses and further education courses for adults.

In addition to this direct involvement, I would say that the Institute can contribute still further to the development of the people of Africa. It can do this by being actively and sympathetically aware of their efforts to extend peace and to develop economically, socially and politically in a way that respects the individual and the common good.

– How do you envisage the African Brother of today and of tomorrow?

I envisage him as a Brother, that is, as a disciple of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, who tries to live according to the Rule of the Institute, and who accepts the three dimensions of our consecrated life: mission, consecration and community.

While trying to be totally Lasallian, he remains an African and, as an African, he tries to make these three dimensions a part of his life. What I am talking about here is, as you have guessed, inculturation.

As the third millennium approaches, the greatest challenge facing the Catholic Church in Africa is inculturation. This consists in being inspired by Christian traditions while producing something authentically African, in union with the other churches proper to the continent, and with the universal Church. Inculturation is one of the five major topics to be discussed at the next African Synod.

I think therefore that inculturating Lasallian religious life in Africa will be one of the most important tasks for African Brothers. This consists in sifting out, in the light of the Gospel, all that is doubtful or improper in ancestral customs or in practices more recently imported from abroad. In this way all that is good in African life can be accepted. This process of inculturation calls for a great deal of time, clear-thinking theologically, and spiritual discernment.

I should like to stress again that this inculturation is not possible nor authentic unless there is a constant to-and-fro movement between God and real life here below, and between this real life and God. This is rather like the angel going up and down Jacob's ladder, as described by the Founder in meditation 198. Only those who really know Christ and who really know their cultural heritage can discern how the Divine Word can be suitably represented through this culture. There is no authentic inculturation which does not come from the contemplation of the Word of God and through a progressive resemblance to him through a holy life.

In concrete terms, the Institute will achieve this inculturation if more and more it helps the African Brother to understand the Founder better, helps him to make the Rule a part of his life, and to be faithful to his consecration to God. In practice, it is finally professed Brothers in community who give authenticity to inculturation and who make it effective.

St. Louis of Ambositra College, Madagascar. In the background, bell tower of the church.



Moreover, young people need to see finally professed Brothers as models for their own lives, for they offer an example of a response to the love of God who has entered into a new and eternal covenant with man.

- Would you think of the "shared mission" with Lasallian lay people in Africa?

Ever since the beginning of our involvement in Africa, there have always been many lay teachers working with the Brothers. Rather like in most parts of the Institute, they were considered not so much as joint partners and collaborators, as subordinates and dedicated teachers strictly controlled by the Brothers. This point of view has not disappeared entirely: Brothers still need to change their mentality.

It should be mentioned that lay catechists have played a major role in the evangelisation of Africa, and so Brothers have always asked their lay colleagues to teach catechism to the pupils. Moreover, it was the Brothers who trained these catechists for many years in the teacher training colleges they ran in many parts of Africa.

I think that the shared mission with Lasallians is beginning to take shape in Africa. In many sectors there are instances where our spirituality is shared with others, and courses in Lasallian pedagogy and retreats centred on the spirituality of the Founder are organised in many Districts. Lay teachers took part in the CLAF session in Kinshasa on the Lasallian Family. Meetings with lay teachers are part of the Visitor's programme on his visits. As a way of encouraging the involvement of teachers in the shared mission, RELAF will have a lay consultant at the 42nd General Chapter.

As for the sharing of responsibilities, only a few Lasallian schools have been entrusted to lay heads. This practice is not yet widespread, and in any case Brothers as well as lay people wonder whether this practice should be extended, seeing the noticeable increase in the number of Lasallian religious vocations in Africa. This shows that the basic reasons for the shared mission are far from being understood and assimilated.

I think that there is one important group we must not forget when speaking about the shared mission, and that is the

parents. Parents of pupils are becoming increasingly conscious of their responsibilities in Lasallian schools. And so in some Districts, parents form committees which work with staff in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the educational programme. Parents are invited to involve themselves in the appointment of new teachers. Parents who are members of the administrative council share in decisions regarding the organisation and the administration of the school.

Examples such as these are a sign of greater maturity. The education of children in school is not a mission exclusively entrusted to teachers: parents are the first and principal educators of their children ...It should be quite normal, therefore, for them to collaborate in participatory structures where they have an essential role to play.

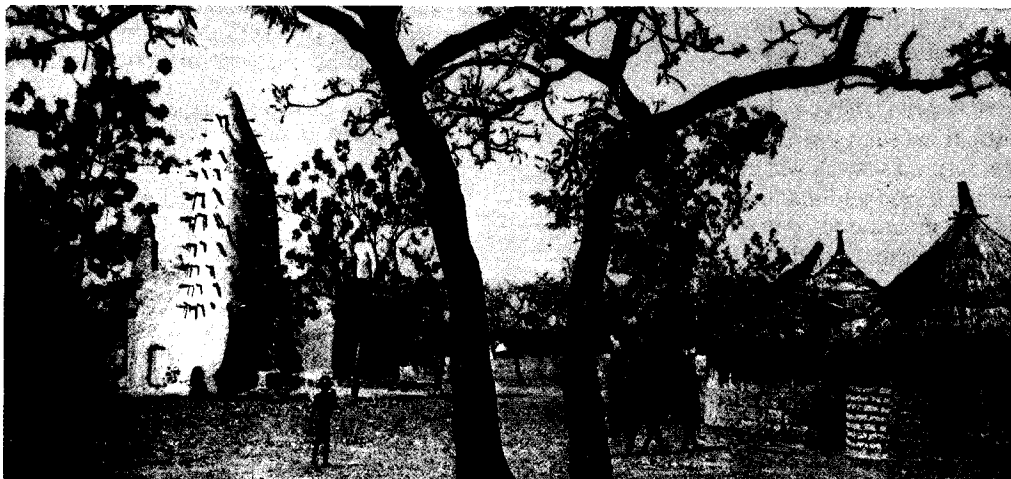
In Africa, it often happens that schools anticipate the future more rapidly than families. Teachers have a duty to help parents to shoulder their new educational responsibilities in a society subject to new sources of influence. 1994, the International Year of the Family, will be an opportunity to study more thoroughly the question of links between families and schools.

- What is your assessment of the pastoral ministry of vocations in our Institute in Africa?

I have the feeling that the pastoral ministry of vocations in Africa has received a fresh impetus in recent times. In the 70's, Africa also suffered from the worldwide crisis afflicting religious congregations: novitiate houses stood empty.

At the present time, there are more than 50 novices in RELAF. The Institute has helped it to build two Regional novitiates and two scholasticates for the religious and academic training of the young brothers whose number is growing. The perseverance rate varies from sector to sector, but I feel it is going to improve.

In spite of this improvement, much still remains to be done. Districts, like Kenya and Madagascar, that have appointed a Brother to work full-time for vocations are beginning to reap the benefits. I should very much like to see other Districts follow their example, in order to maintain interest in com-



Typical landscape of Burkina Fasso.



Abidjan, 3rd October 1992: beginning of CELAF courses, Centre for higher studies for Brothers and other French-speaking congregations of teachers. In the photo, Brother Marcellin, President of the Administrative Council, Brother Hilary, Director of CELAF and Father Penoukou, Rector of ICAO.



Talba: District of Douala. Brothers' community residence.

munities for stimulating vocations, and to ensure proper discernment. The training of competent formation personnel for initial formation and the accompaniment of young Brothers deserves a more serious effort in many Lasallian sectors in Africa.

– What would you like to ask the Institute to give Africa? What would you like to ask Africa to give the Institute?

I should like to ask the Institute to demonstrate solidarity and interdependence in concrete terms.

The kind of solidarity needed is one that does not seek to evade the issue, but calls upon everyone to work with others and for others without exception.

At the present time, the world situation is such that cooperation between what is called the North and the South is becoming increasingly necessary. What is needed is generous and respectful collaboration between countries, Districts and sectors with vastly different levels of development. I should like to mention some priorities in any future cooperation between North and South, and South and North.

- * initial and continuing formation of teachers which concentrate on technology and Christian values;
- * projects generating revenue to provide local finance for basic education, especially in poor areas;
- * sending volunteers who are able to establish links of solidarity between peoples by their contacts and their voluntary unpaid service.

Regarding Africa's contribution to the Institute, I think that the people who live in this continent have something to offer the world and therefore also the Institute. In this connection, I should like to quote something the Pope said during his recent visit to Uganda: "Despite your difficulties, despite the apparent triumph of injustice, corruption and violence, you are not overcome by despair." This surely demonstrates

patience in the midst of adversity, and the courage to begin all over again in the face of apparent defeat.

Another contribution Africa can make to the Institute is its vast numbers of young people that need a Christian education. The hopes of these young people remind Brothers of the relevance of their vocation in the world of today. I am convinced also that the Lasallian charism is comfortable in the African context.

– Have you any other matters to raise?

I think the missionary commitment of the Institute in Africa needs to be strengthened. A large proportion of the population has not yet heard the Good News. At the same time, the Catholic faith of young people needs to be strengthened in the face of attempts to lure them away from the Church to join the "New Age" religion, or the innumerable sects that are invading Africa (there are more than 10,000 of these).

I would also like to invite Brothers to take part in the life of the Church in Africa.

We are preparing at present for the African Synod. Its main topic for discussion will be: "The Church in Africa and its Mission of Evangelisation as the year 2000 approaches: You will be my witnesses" (Ae 1,8).

It would be useful to study the topics of the Synod in some detail, because communities would find there nourishment for their community spiritual life and inspiration for their apostolate.

Finally, by our attitudes and actions, we must continue to face up to the challenge offered by violence, racial discrimination, unemployment, poverty and injustice. Africa is waiting to be set free from these heavy yokes. If Brothers do this, they will see their identity more clearly defined, their apostolate fulfilled and, one can hope, their numbers will increase. ●

