



**Bulletin of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools N° 237**

**THE DE LA SALLE BROTHERS ON THE AMERICAN CONTINENT**



**BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE  
OF THE BROTHERS  
OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS  
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*Front cover:*

**Quebec (Canada): Centre for Youth Ministry, called Villa des Jeunes, which has been managed by the Canadian Brothers for several years and which embodies the new ideas on the apostolate made desirable because of changed social conditions.**

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**Rome, June, 1992: Meeting of representatives of Lasallian Regions with the General Council. The American Continent is divided into three Lasallian Regions: French-speaking Canada, United States-Toronto, and Latin America.**

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# **THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN CANADA**

**(more than 150 years of continuous presence)**

by Brother Lionel Poitras

with the collaboration of Brothers Daniel Gosselin,  
Ferdinand Blais, Leo Boisvert, Michel Lepage,  
Martial Vézina and Michel Jacques

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1837, four Brothers from France arrived in Montreal, Canada. They had left Le Havre on October 10th and arrived in New York on November 3rd. They continued their journey from there on a succession of small boats and took the train for the final section.

They arrived in Montreal on the 7th. The Sulpicians who had asked for them, welcomed them with open arms and provided them with board and lodging in their old seminary, near the Notre Dame church, the first parish church in Montreal. The names of these pioneers are Brothers Aidant (in charge), Adelbertus (in charge of the senior class), Rombaoud (teacher) and Euverte (cook).

It was an epic journey. All the more so, because their arrival coincided with a minor revolution. "Canada is in flames", they were told in New York. It made no difference. They arrived fearlessly at their destination, wearing their black robes, white cotton rabats and tricorne hats. How could the population not see them! Be that as it may, we think that the rapid expansion of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Canada and in America is a more worthwhile adventure to recall in these pages. Given the scope of this article, we can only summarise and pass briefly over these beautiful pages of our Lascallian history.

The historian Nive Voisine has recently brought out a two volume history of this period. The first co-

vers the years 1837-1880, and the second, 1880-1946. The summary we offer here is based on this Herculean work. We use material also from *L'Oeuvre d'un siècle*, a book published in 1937, a beautifully produced book, full of praise for the work of the Brothers. This article deals with the rapid expansion of the work of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the 19th and 20th century. In each of these periods there were certain key persons, normally with very strong personalities, who provided the driving force for this expansion. It is a pity we cannot describe them here as fully as they deserve. We shall end by giving an overall picture of the present period which is characterised less by an abundance of novices than by a profusion of apostolic undertakings.

## **I – RAPID EXPANSION IN THE 19th CENTURY**

### **1. Montreal, cradle of the Instituts in America**

On arriving in November 1837, the Brothers quickly set about preparing for the opening of their school. The school opened on the following December 23rd with 200 pupils. There was a steady increase in numbers. In May 1838, there were 76 pupils in the top class and 146 in the intermediate. It was essential to open another class for the 120



children on the waiting list. Brother Euverte was given this class even though his responsibility was manual work.

In the face of such rapid progress, the Sulpicians bought land and built schools. More Brothers came from France but not in sufficiently large numbers to meet needs, 1 in 1839, 2 in 1843 and 5 in 1847. This much appreciated help was in response to Br. Aidant's request to his superior: "We need Brothers, Brothers and more Brothers".

In 1840, the St. Laurent school had 5 classes, and in 1841 it had 8 classes catering for 860 pupils. By 1843, the Brothers were working in various parts of Montreal: in the former College de Montreal, in Ste. Anne, in the Bishop's Palace and, from 1844 onwards, at Ste. Brigide. A little later, in 1864, they opened a school with 4 classes and 268 pupils. The community in Sacré Coeur took over another school with 6 classes and 300 pupils.

During this period, we can see that the Brothers were prepared to teach very large classes. A consequence of this incessant influx of pupils was that the Brothers were always asking for more colleagues to join them. Another consequence was the need for a

**Brother Assistant Reticius.**



novitiate to train Brothers for our new schools. A year after his arrival, Br. Aidant opened a novitiate for the three candidates that had applied to join. The venture did not prove successful: the linen shirts that were the rule in those days were hardly suitable for the cold Canadian winters. Colds, illness and disgruntlement led to defections.

In 1842 a full-time novitiate was opened, but it had to move site twice because of a rapid increase in the number of novices. It should be noted that at that time the Montreal novitiate catered for candidates from both Canada and the United States. Some of the novices were English-speaking and this caused practical problems. In 1861, 24 novices and their novice master, Brother Hosea (Ephrem Gagnon), left for New York and their new novitiate. At that time the Brothers of New York depended on the District of Montreal. As for the Brothers of the District of Toronto, they had to wait till 1880 before opening their novitiate.

At the beginning of the history of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Canada, the community of St. Laurent, Montreal, served in some sort as the Mother House of the great District of America. Its Director was the Visitor himself, and the premises housed the teaching Brothers of the school and of other parts of the town, the novices and the junior novices. In 1875, it became necessary to split the community into two: one for the old and sick Brothers, and one for the teaching Brothers. From this house, zealous Brothers of the Christian Schools set off for others parts of Quebec, English-speaking Canada and even the United States.

## 2. Quebec, the capital

We should distinguish between Quebec the capital and the Province of Quebec. In the 19th century, because Quebec was the capital, it had a fair percentage of English speakers. The Brothers were naturally interested in starting up a school in such an important town.

In 1837, a priest from the Quebec seminary contacted Brother Anaclet to ask him to send some Brothers. Br. Anaclet, however, considered his plan to found schools in Montreal to have priority. And so Quebec had to wait till 1843 before the first Brother and three novices arrived. The day the school opened there were 80 pupils. In less than a week there were 700 applicants. At this point the Education Department let the Brothers have the use of premises on Rue des Glacis. The Des Glacis school was therefore the first Brothers' school in Quebec.

As soon as it opened, there were enough pupils to make up three classes. Two more were added



very soon, more Brothers were requested, and two arrived in April 1844. There were more than 600 pupils at the school. The end of the school year was celebrated with grandiose ceremonies: a general examination, prize-giving, etc. The bishop and local educational dignitaries attended. There was much praise for the teaching and methods of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

In 1845, the Des Glacis school was burnt down. General sympathy for the Brothers and generosity helped the Brothers to continue their work to the extent that by 1846 the school was rebuilt and improved and housed 6 classes.

Just as in Montreal, here too there were pressing needs. Space was lacking and new schools needed to be set up. In 1852, the first classes opened in the St. Roch district and to these English classes were added. Three other full classes were located under the church of St. Jean.

But there still lacked an establishment that had prestige, and the first steps were taken then that would lead to the creation of the Académie commerciale. In 1877, Brothers taught in the preparatory classes of the above mentioned academy, known as the "Petite Académie". Lessons there were given in both French and English.

In 1880, the community of Quebec numbered 33 Brothers. These taught 1,384 pupils in 25 classes in 4 schools.

### 3. Trois Rivières and other French-speaking places

The Brothers of the Christian Schools came to Trois Rivières in 1844. The school opened with 280 pupils, and parents and ecclesiastical authorities were delighted with the education being given. The parish priest wrote: "Our streets are empty; our children would be happy to spend their whole lives with the Brothers. The school has been open only three months and you wouldn't recognise the children, they have changed so much". This brilliant start led to further foundations. Evening classes were begun in 1846, a boarding school in 1860, and the community took charge of a new school (St. Philippe) in 1874. In 1880, there were 14 Brothers in the Trois Rivières community. They taught 400 pupils (52 boarders) in 10 classes.

In 1853, the Brothers established in Yamachiche, not far from Trois Rivières. As in several other places they were welcomed triumphantly. There followed other urgent requests for their services and in 1847 they came to Baie du Febvre, and in 1879 to St. Grégoire.



Brother Assistant Facile.

In 1849, they arrived at Beauharnois, not far from Montreal. Brother Adelbertus taught at this school which also had boarders. That same year, the Brothers came to Sorel and remained there till 1866. It was the scene of incredible encounters with the education authorities. With the support of the population, the Brothers insisted on applying the educational methods prescribed by the Conduct of Schools. In 1849 also, other Brothers were asked to go to Oka, and there they taught the young Algonquins and Iroquois to cultivate the soil.

In 1855, four Brothers opened a community in St. Jean Iberville and had many disagreements with the local authorities. The Director was only 19 years old. In 1867, the Brothers arrived in Longueuil and took over the running of the commercial and industrial Sacré Coeur school. At this time, in addition to providing a good Christian and secular education, the Brothers laid much stress on music and drama. This establishment has survived as has the one in Lachine, in the suburbs of Montreal, where the Brothers arrived in 1876. Other Brothers came to Chambly in 1871.





Montreal: Mont de la Salle.

#### 4. Ottawa and certain French-speaking places outside Quebec

The foundation at St. Boniface, in West Canada, started well but did not last long. The Brothers arrived there in 1854 and the beginnings were very successful. More and more pupils came to the school, and Mgr Tache, the first bishop of West Canada, spoke with pride of the piety and zeal of the Brothers, these "members of my minor clergy". Unfortunately things went wrong and the Brothers left in 1860. This sudden departure led the Oblates to ask the Brothers to come to Ottawa. Six Brothers arrived there in 1864 and opened a school which thrived. Classes were moved to premises on Sussex Street, and a commercial class was started. In 1876 there was a foundation in the district of Ste. Anne.

Although the town of Hull is in Quebec, it lies within the sphere of influence of Ottawa. The Oblates asked the Brothers to come to this town and they arrived in 1878. Success was rapid, and their foundation marked the beginning of fine educational work which ceased only recently.

#### 5. Toronto and English-speaking Canada

Mgr de Charbonnel, bishop of Toronto in the ten years between 1850 and 1860, fought hard to establish a separate Catholic school system. As he knew the Brothers well – he had been chaplain to the community of St. Laurent, Montreal – he asked Br. Facile to send some to Toronto. He received a favourable response and 5 Brothers arrived in 1851. St. Michael's School opened with 200 pupils. Success came so swiftly that other schools had to be opened elsewhere: a boarding school was started in 1852, St. Patrick's was opened in 1853, an extension to St. Mary's in 1854 and a little later, the commercial Aca-

demy in 1863. This latter establishment was much praised by the archbishop. In 1880, there were 23 Brothers in Toronto. They taught 602 pupils (75 boarders) in 18 classes in 5 schools.

Let us close this general view of our foundations in the 19th century by mentioning some other institutions run by the Brothers in Ontario and in the Maritime Provinces.

The Brothers arrived in Kingston in 1853 and ran an inter-denominational school there. In 1876, 4 Brothers took charge of a school in St. Catherine's to the south of Ontario.

If the Brothers no longer have any schools in the Maritime Provinces it is not through want of trying. The Brothers in fact opened 6 schools in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island but they did not survive. In Nova Scotia the Brothers opened a school in the Grand Arichat area in 1860. After 5 years they left and went to Petit Arichat. Here the problems were such that they left in 1867. They were more successful in Halifax the capital where they arrived in 1865 and stayed till 1876.

The Brothers arrived at St. Jean New Brunswick in 1866. They taught also at the school of St. Joseph and in another local school. After 10 years the difficulties they encountered drove them out. The same thing happened in Charlottetown on Prince Edward Island. They arrived in 1870 and left in 1877. The Brothers ran a school also in Chatham in New Brunswick from 1877 to 1880.

The majority of Brothers who left Montreal went to Quebec, and a relatively smaller number went to English-speaking Canada and the United States. Even though it is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth saying a few words about one part of this great migration.

Quebec: St. Joseph's Institution.





## 6. From Montreal to the United States

In 1841, the bishop of Baltimore wrote to Br. Aidant offering him the school he was having built in his parish. The offer was refused but was accompanied by a suggestion: if he sent some young people to be trained in the Novitiate in Montreal, these could then run the school. Five candidates came to the Novitiate but only one persevered. He returned to Baltimore to teach in Calvert Hall. Br. Aidant then sent two more Brothers there and consolidated the establishment.

When the archbishop of New York, Mgr John Hughes, heard of the success of Calvert Hall in Baltimore, he wrote to Br. Philippe, the Superior General, asking him to send some Brothers. The Superior expressed his interest. He asked a certain Br. Leopold to see to the dispatch of several Brothers. The Brothers worked next in St. Vincent's School, Canal street, in three classes, two of which were French and one English. It was the first of many foundations in the districts of the great city (St. Stephen's, St. Mary's, St. Francis Xavier's) and throughout the diocese (Troy, Albany, Utica, Rochester, Buffalo, etc).

In St. Louis, as everywhere else, the teaching of boys was the most neglected. In 1849, Br. Facile, the Assistant of Montreal, sent Brothers there and they opened St. Joseph's Academy. This became the Mother House of the District of St. Louis which came into existence in 1873.

As Brother Angelus Gabriel, the historian, remarks, it was from this centre, as also from Baltimore and New York, that originated all the other establishments of the Brothers from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in the Philippines and in Central America. Between 1837 and 1880, the Institute spread more or less everywhere in America, especially in the United States and French Canada. The first Visitors of Montreal were Brothers Aidant (1837-1848), Facile (1848-1861) and Turibe (1861-1864). It was Br. Liguori (1864-1868) who brought about the division of the District which had become too big.

## 7. The key men in this great expansion

At this time of rapid expansion, the Brother Visitor had a key role. At the present time our lives are lived in a clearly marked out framework. In those days, almost everything had to be established. The men who had authority, the Visitors and Assistants, distinguished themselves by their qualities of mind and heart, by their decisiveness and their determination. As guardians of regularity and of the religious



Montreal: Mont St. Louis.

spirit, they visited their flock to rekindle the flame and settle various problems. During the annual retreats they indicated firmly the path that should be followed. When bishops, parish priests or educational authorities asked for Brothers, they had to weigh up the pros and cons and move Brothers to enable some other place to benefit from Lasallian education. And their role when there were conflicts? As the people with the authority, they were the ones to settle problems even if it meant withdrawing Brothers from certain places.

After listing the various Visitors and Assistants we shall say a few words about each of them.

### *BROTHER VISITORS*

Aidant 1837  
Facile 1848  
Turibe 1861  
Liguori 1864  
Hosea 1868  
Armin Victor 1875  
Reticus 1880  
Chrétien 1886

The District of Toronto was founded in 1888, and that of Quebec in 1927.

### *BROTHER ASSISTANTS*

Anthelme 1844  
Facile 1861  
Patrick 1874  
Aimarus 1884  
Reticus 1893  
Albanus 1877

The above lists contain the names of some remarkable people. Not all were able to give proof of





**The Servant of God Brother Theophanius-Leo Chatillon was born at Nicolet on 31 October, 1871, and died at Mont La Salle in Laval-des-Rapides on 28 April, 1929.**

their full potential, either because of ill health or other circumstances. Some names stand out, as for example, that of Brother Facile, Assistant from 1861 to 1874. His tireless work and innumerable journeys show him to be a man full of zeal who devoted all his energy to fulfilling his role. Of course, a hurricane uproots trees here and there. And so in 1866, at a time when the wind of independence was blowing strongly in the new District of New York, Brother Facile changed at one and the same time the Visitor, the Director of the most important community and the Director of novices. In other circumstances he was praised for his kindness. When he returned from his journeys, the Brothers would greet him with much affection. In a word, Brother Facile can be described as a strong personality with a harsh exterior and a heart of gold.

As Assistant of Canada and the United States, Br. Facile seems to have had a special liking for American communities which, from 1864 onwards, no longer depended on Montreal. After his resignation in 1873, he went to live in the United States in a novitiate. He had to return to France, however, and died in Marseille in 1877. In 1885, the Brothers of the United States brought back his remains from France.

There is so much that could be written about the men who built up our American and Canadian Districts. There is Brother Hosea (Ephrem Gagnon), the Canadian Visitor. Two of his Brothers joined the Brothers and, like him, had very successful careers. Br. Hosea's fate seems a bit mysterious to us: he ended his life far from the people he knew, on the

west coast of the United States, in the new District of San Francisco, set up in 1858. It was there that he died 53 years later, in 1928, at the age of 95.

In 1875, the Regime appointed Brother Armin Victor Visitor. His role was to make reforms. As he said: "I don't care for the word, but what it stands for is absolutely necessary". His rigid views made him see personal whim everywhere. He made it his duty to re-establish the Rule. He devoted much energy to his mission, but his onerous work and numerous voyages (the Superior sent him to Ecuador in 1878) wore him out prematurely. He had to return to France where he died in 1883 at the age of 44.

We cannot omit to mention a Superior who is still spoken about: Brother Reticus. He was first of all Visitor of Montreal for 6 years (1880-1886). Then he left and came back later as Assistant, and remained in the job for more than 20 years (1891-1913). A highly cultured person with a great capacity for work, he seemed cut out for epic battles, which were not long in coming. Like Brother Armin Victor, he came here with an important mission to fulfil: that of bringing the Brothers back to the wise Rule of the Founder. He invested an equal amount of energy in the formation of new vocations, and he it was that built Mont La Salle, at Maisonneuve, in a suburb of Montreal. Without neglecting his programme of interior renewal, foundation of communities, and concern for the Brothers, he threw himself headlong into the polemics supporting denominational education against the secular movement. A convinced ultramontanist, he had many friends and followers, including Mgr Lafleche of Trois Rivières. His enemies were numerous. In 1886, the authorities in Paris moved him to Baltimore. He left a District with 27 communities, 300 Brothers and 32 novices.

Seven years later, Brother Reticus came back as Assistant. This period was marked by an extraordinary increase in schools. In Montreal, Mont de La Salle and Mont St. Louis were opened respectively in 1887 and 1888. In the years that followed, Toronto set up a novitiate and a scholasticate. The mass immigration of Brothers from France in 1904 was a great help at this time of expansion. Altogether, between 1904 and 1909, a total of 221 Brothers arrived here. Their arrival was providential and its benefits should not be minimised. However, with Brother Reticus in charge, internal difficulties were not long in appearing. Within a short period of time, most of the posts of responsibility in the District were taken by the French Brothers, in particular in the house of formation and Mont de La Salle. Some complained that the French spirit had replaced the spirit of faith.

It was said that Br. Reticus kept tight control over everything however small, and did not leave



enough initiative to Directors, or even Visitors. He was criticised for his rigidity and intransigence, but his religious spirit and honesty were never called into question. He gave a new impetus to our work. Between 1880 and 1912, the number of our communities increased from 28 to 54, and the number of Brothers, from 306 to 735.

During the 20th century which, with Br. Reticius's assistancy, we have now reached, the Brothers of the Christian Schools enjoyed a period of prosperity which ended only in the 60's. In part two of this article we shall speak of this important period, of the Brothers who were particularly influential, and of our present-day work.

## II – THE CANADIAN BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN THE 20th CENTURY

### 1. A period of prosperity

Up to the 60's, the Brothers of the Christian schools here enjoyed many years of prosperity: novitiates and scholasticates were full, our work was flourishing, there was slow but real expansion. We can give only an overall view here and not an analysis of the situation.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were two Districts in Canada: Montreal and Toronto. In 1927, the District of Montreal split in two, giving rise to the District of Quebec. After years of prosperity, these Districts went through further divisions. In 1957, the District of Trois Rivières was formed from the District of Quebec, and the District of Montreal was split into three new Districts: Montreal, Ottawa and Longueuil. The latter did not last long as a separate District: it rejoined Montreal in 1973 after a realistic assessment of the situation.

Our big institutions, some of which had been founded at the end of the 19th century, were all doing well. Let us mention first our houses of formation. In 1917, Mont de La Salle moved from Maison-neuve to Laval des Rapides. The Director of the Novitiate at the time was Br. Theophanius Leo. The name of the house remained the same but there was more room. It now contained the novitiate, scholasticate, juniorate, the Holy Family community and nursing facilities. It was also the residence of the Visitor and of the Assistant when he was in the country. In Quebec, from 1927 onwards, the house of formation was located in the Maison St. Joseph, a

building similar in size to that of Mont de La Salle. We should add that the juniorate at Limoilou had been serving the region since 1913. The District of Toronto set up its own juniorate and novitiate in 1890, and a scholasticate in 1891.

During the first part of the 20th century, our educational establishments did well and each District had some prestigious institution. In Montreal there was Mont St. Louis, a boarding school founded in 1888, which offered 3 programmes of study: elementary, commercial and scientific. The Académie de Quebec, which began as a bilingual institution, began offering in 1924 advanced courses in commerce. In the 60's, this prestigious institution moved from the centre of Quebec to a new site in Ste. Foy. It became the State Cegep (College for general and professional education) for Ste. Foy. Both Ottawa and Trois Rivières had their prestigious institutions. In both cases they were called Académie De La Salle.

Brother Marie-Victorin visits the gardens which are looked after by the pupils.





They provided demanding courses of instruction for children from the area around and especially from the numerous primary schools run by the Brothers in the region. As for the District of Toronto, in 1931 it opened De La Salle Oaklands which proved very successful and, we may add, in 1992, it is still functioning.

To tell the full story of how our many schools developed would take too long. Let us mention only a few. Following Lasallian tradition (as at St. Yon, for example), the Brothers of the Christian Schools opened two schools for delinquents: the St. John Industrial School in Toronto, and the Ecole Industrielle St. Joseph in Alfred. Despite some disparaging talk about them now, we can say that these schools played a very beneficial role in helping young delinquents.

Schools in Ontario experienced a special kind of difficulty arising from Regulation 17 which restricted the use of French in teaching. It should be pointed out the Brothers of the Christian Schools of the District of Ottawa were French-speaking, while those of the District of Toronto were English-speaking. Despite these obstacles – one might even say, persecution – the schools in Ontario (the Académie De La Salle, the Guigues, St. Jean Baptiste and Brébeuf schools, etc) were able to function. Very close, but in Quebec, the Brothers were numerous in Hull where they ran the Notre Dame and Saint Rédempteur (founded 1911) schools, and the Larocque school in Wrightville.

The town of Montreal grew and the Brothers' schools with it: Ste. Cunegonde (1888), Maisonneuve (1902), Westmount (1904), Viauville (1907), Salaberry (1909) and St. Jean Baptiste de La Salle (1911). There were two institutions in particular in the area which would have a great future: the College de St. Jérôme (1896) and the boarding school at Varennes (1899). Also the school at Longueuil and the Piche de Lachine academy left their mark and deserve more than a mention.

To the schools in Quebec itself (St. Roch, St. Jean Baptiste de La Salle) already mentioned, we should add those of the province: Nicolet and St. Ferdinand d'Halifax (now in the District of Trois Rivières), Limoilou, St. Augustin and Arthabaska (1905), Beauport and Thetford Mines (1907), St. Raymond (1909), Ste. Anne de Beauvre (1910) and Loretteville (1913).

Even though it is time we ended this list of schools which could go on yet awhile, we cannot do so without saying something about two university colleges which played an exceptional role: the Quebec Faculty of Commerce, and the Institut Pédagogique St. Georges in Montreal. Between 1937 and 1940, the authorities running the Quebec Academy

set up an advanced institute of commerce which eventually became the Quebec Faculty of Commerce. Quite a number of Brothers did specialised studies in order to teach in this institution which was housed in an imposing building put up by the Brothers. This faculty of commerce contributed to the excellent reputation of the Brothers in Quebec. One of its deans was Br. Clement Lockwell, a highly reputed intellectual. In about 1964, the Brothers handed over the Faculty of commerce to Laval University. The Faculty was doing extremely well at the time and was in a sound financial situation.

In a similar way, the Institut Pédagogique St. Georges became a part of Montreal University. It was founded in 1929 at the request of Mgr Georges Gauthier, Chancellor of the University. The Institut Pédagogique St. Georges ran courses in pedagogy, psychology and careers' advice. Initially students were all male – Brothers of the Christian Schools, other male religious and lay people in the same proportion. In 1943, women were admitted. Courses led to the baccalaureate degree and even doctorate in pedagogy. In about 1969, the Institut St. Georges became a part of the Faculty of Education of Montreal University. In the light of the educational reforms going on at the time, this merger was quite normal and took place to the mutual satisfaction of both parties.

This period of prosperity encouraged the missionary spirit among us. In 1932, the Brothers went to Japan, where they still run establishments in Tokyo, Hakodate, Sendai and Kagoshima. This year, this Japanese branch of the Montreal District is becoming a Delegation. Another important missionary commitment is Cameroon, where the District of Quebec has been sending Brothers since 1949. Today

**Montreal: a student helping a young girl in need.**







Varenes: Pastoral activities.

the District of Douala is autonomous and has 46 Brothers and 8 communities.

## 2. Some remarkable people

There are so many of these men who gave themselves totally to the service of God through the Christian school. Numerous also are those whose names deserve to appear on the honours board. Let us pay homage first to the unknown Brothers. They are in the majority. They each brought a stone to help build the edifice, and together they erected a marvellous educational temple in Canada.

Among the leaders, we should first mention the Assistants. With the power at their disposal, the Assistants presided over the remarkable expansion of our work. As we have already seen, Br. Reticus was Assistant till 1913. Those that succeeded him are as follows:

Allais Charles 1913 (10 years later he became

Superior General); Mandellus 1923; Romuald Hosea 1936; Nivard Anselme 1946; Herve Matteau 1956; Arthur Bonenfant 1966.

These Assistants deserve more than a mere mention, but this is beyond the scope of this article. We shall limit ourselves to saying a few words about two Brothers who are particularly well known: Theophanius Leo and Marie Victorin.

Adolphe Chatillon was born in Nicolet in 1871. He went to the juniorate in Montreal in 1884 and received the habit in 1887, taking the name of Theophanius Leo. After a few years' teaching in our schools he was appointed to the staff of the juniorate where he stayed 9 years. In 1912, he was appointed Director of novices. A model of the interior life, he devoted himself heart and soul for 12 years to the work of training novices. His personal motto – "Make happy in order to make better" – tells us already something about him. His next appointment was to be Visitor General of North America. He was a delegate to the 1928 General Chapter. Before returning he had to spend some time in Paris because cancer had been diagnosed.

He returned to Canada just in time to die there in 1929. All the Brothers considered him a saint. In 1962, his body was exhumed and transferred to a marble tomb in our house at Ste. Dorothée, near Montreal. His cause for beatification has been introduced in Rome. Fr. François Lanoue has just written a biography of the holy Brother.

Another Brother, Marie Victorin, worked especially as a scientist. Born in 1885, Conrad Kirouac made his novitiate at Maisonneuve and went into teaching. But he fell ill. In his free time he studied botany. Appointed to Longueuil, he ran closed retreats for his pupils, and founded and ran a literary club. His literary and scientific writings were notic-

Montreal: help in studies, REVDEC.





ed. Soon he was sharing his time between school and the university. As a botanist, university lecturer and scientist he gained an outstanding reputation in French-speaking Canada. He founded the Botanical Garden of Montreal and gave great impetus to scientific studies. As a consequence, he is regarded as one of the pioneers of scientific development in our country. He died in an accident in 1944. The numerous houses, roads and streets that are named after him are an eloquent testimony to the fact that he is part of Quebec history.

Many Brothers achieved great success and left their mark both locally and further afield. Brothers here still remember Brothers Natalus Hebert, Visitor and educator, Magloire Robert, mathematician, physicist and astronomer, Macarius Leo, grammarian and educator, Clement Lockwell, literary critic and acclaimed intellectual, Meldas Cyrille, writer, lecturer and communicator, and many others. Contemporaries have no place here. Their history will be told at the proper time.

### **III – CONTEMPORARY APOSTOLIC COMMITMENTS AND PROJECTS**

Unfortunately, we no longer have the great number of schools we had in the middle of the century. Educational reforms, on the one hand, and ageing of the Brothers, on the other, have forced us to regroup to a certain extent. Present-day society provides the Church with practically no more vocations; families produce only one, two or three children. The latter are so spoilt that they are not prepared to undertake a life of sacrifice. Also, our big institutions (the Quebec Academy, Mont St. Louis, the De La Salle academies of Trois Rivières and Ottawa) have been handed over to others or sold. Of the 1,500 Brothers we had there are only 500 now. Our 4 French-speaking Districts have just merged to form a single District. On August 15th 1992 the new District comes officially into existence. Brother Maurice Lapointe has been appointed Visitor and will preside over the fate of the new creation. His Auxiliary Visitors are Brothers Ernest Bourgault and Andre Dubuc.

Despite a high average age, the Canadian Brothers are still very active, and the few educational undertakings described in outline below are eloquent proof of this. I am most grateful to the Brothers who

have provided this information: Ferdinand Blais for the educational projects in the District of Quebec, Daniel Gosselin for Haiti, and all the others.

#### **1. The Brothers' work in Haiti and the literacy project on Ile de la Tortue (Br. Daniel Gosselin)**

The Brothers of the Christian Schools arrived in Haiti, on the Ile de la Tortue, on February 24th 1974. At first there was one Brother only, Paul Emile L'Heureux from the District of Montreal. He first worked as an infirmarian and then he was asked to take charge of 79 pupils.

Two Brothers joined him, followed soon by three others who were there to found a community. The Superiors placed this new venture into the hands of Providence. Today there are 8,000 pupils in the diocese of Port de Paix who benefit from the work of the Brothers. 28 French Canadian and 4 Haitian Brothers work with great devotedness in a number of areas. There is so much to do:

- study Creole, become inculturated,
- work in education and human development,
- tap springs of drinking water, build water tanks,
- build schools and equip them with everything,
- find one meal a day for all the pupils,
- provide first aid,
- build roads, quays and maintain them,
- teach economics and organise cooperatives, etc.

There is all that to be done to make them become aware of their dignity, and only then can you preach the Christian message.

If by chance you can come to see for yourself, you must visit St. Joseph's School, Fatima School, the technical and professional school, and the Notre Dame de Lourdes seminary/school. At St. Louis du Nord, you will find 1,200 very hard-working pupils. On Tortue Island, if you visit St. Miguel school, the six primary schools, the 50 classes and 35 sub-centres you will be greeted with joy.

La Tortue (Tortoise Island): northwest of Haiti, 40 km long, 8 km from the coast. Estimated population 25,000. The island was named by Christopher Columbus because of its shape.

The first Brother offered his services as an infirmarian at a hospital run by a Montfortian priest, Fr. Riou. It was not long before the parish priest, Fr. Boniface, suggested the Brother could take charge of the three classes in the village of Maroug. At the time, illiteracy on the island was up to 98%. Thanks to the work of the Brothers, 18 years later the illiteracy rate had dropped to 55%, while it still remained at 85% in the rest of the country.



It was decided that instruction in the youngest classes would be given in Creole, a decision which proved to be very effective. 6 schools teach about 2,000 primary school children; 36 "satellite" schools with 50 classes teach 2,000 middle school children; and the Collège St. Miguel teaches children for the first three years of secondary school. It is hard to imagine what a long way we have come and how much work was involved. To keep all this going, we provide:

1. access to the schools: transport and maintenance of a 40 km road;
2. electricity, drinking water, one meal per day, building, equipping and repairing schools;
3. hiring, training and paying the salaries of nearly 200 teachers and monitors;
4. health care, training in home economics, savings banks (6), a cooperative offering a variety of services.

We do all this work in order to proclaim that God is love, that these people are loved and respected, and that they must take their fate into their own hands in a responsible way.

## 2. Schools

### (a) St. Paul's School, Varennes

(Br. Michel Lepage)

St. Paul's secondary school was founded in 1857 and became the property of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1899. Since 1971, the school has been run by a joint trust composed of 6 Brothers and 5 lay people. There is room for 1,000 pupils at the school. It offers 5 years of secondary studies. The



Varennes: Teachers on a snowy day.

staff consists of 8 Brothers and 45 lay teachers. The school is mixed.

Our overall aim is to provide quality and excellence, and so the services we offer try to be inspired by the following 4 values which are stated in our education programme and which we try to propagate locally: the sense of responsibility, respect, gratitude and belonging. While respecting freedom of conscience, St. Paul's proclaims the values and beliefs of the Catholic religion. Each pupil's timetable includes a course of Catholic religious instruction. Pupils have also a pastoral care programme at their disposal.

The school has well-equipped laboratories for chemistry, physics, ecology, basic computer studies, home economics, technology and typewriting. There are also specialised rooms for the plastic arts and music. While not neglecting any of the subjects on the curriculum, special stress is placed on teaching languages and science.

Socio-cultural activities have always been very important at the school. Midday break is obviously the most important time for these, but pupils also return to school some evenings and even weekends for play rehearsals or orchestra practice, or because they are involved in some pastoral activity. Activities generally available include: the newspaper, T.V news, budding geniuses, English video club, computers, cultural evenings, weekend camps, expo-science, orchestra, band, introduction to the stock market, plastic arts, historical research, travel, summer camps, typing, scrabble, theatre.

St. Paul's considers sports important also. The following sporting activities are available within the school: basketball, tennis, cosom hockey, football, volleyball, badminton.

Two specialist pastoral care workers in the

Varennes: Budding "geniuses" trained by Brother Yvan Rodrigue.





school try to help pupils grow up in an atmosphere in which Christian values are respected.

During the course of the year, many activities are made available to the pupils on an individual, collective or class-group level. For example:

- weekend camps
- special topic meetings
- participation in various committees
- celebration of major religious feasts.

### **(b) Mont Benilde Secondary School**

(1325, Avenue des Pensees,  
Ste. Angèle, GOX 2H0)

Located in Ste. Angèle, opposite Trois Rivières, the house was once a pre-juniorate. In 1986, the Canadian French-speaking Districts opened a boarding school at Mont Bénilde. This secondary school has over 100 pupils, 115 to be exact. The staff consists of 2 Brothers and 5 lay people. Of course, we look forward to increasing numbers.

What the Brothers wanted to do was to establish a Lasallian school at Ste. Angèle. The school's Lasallian education programme is intended to be a modern implementation of St. John Baptist de La Salle's genius.

Some of our aims are as follows: we wish to have a school that

- respects the young person for what he is
- exemplifies an education programme of faith by proclaiming Jesus Christ
- offers challenges to pupils and staff
- provokes the interest of parents and pupils
- pays special attention to pupils with problems
- prepares young people for their human and Christian vocation

Ste Angele de Laval: Mount Benildus College.



— asks teachers inspired by the Lasallian spirit to stress the search for a vocation.

Most of our pupils are boarders. The three aims of the boarding school are: success in studies, learning to live as part of a group and according to Christian values.

We want a school that aims at excellence on all levels and which involves young people in their own education. In our educational programme it is said that the young person will develop only in response to challenges and by meeting men and women able to mark out for him the road to follow today and in the future.

## **3. Some Christian life and vocation centres**

### **(a) Transit House**

(409, rue Gamache, Sept Iles, G4R 2H8)  
(Br. Ferdinand Blais)

#### **AIMS:**

- To offer a welcome to all persons without distinction of status, nationality, race, sex or religion;
- To offer a quality service, easily available night or day;
- To help people while respecting their needs, liberty and conscience.

#### **IMMEDIATE HELP SERVICE:**

- We can offer shelter and food to 12 people for a short stay.
- We offer food to people not staying in the house, but who need to share our meals.
- Upon request, we help people to find lodgings and furniture, and obtain forms of help from the social services.
- We analyse the economic implications of certain requests for help so as to be able to provide a suitable response.
- Individuals and organisations bring us food regularly. We distribute it to people we know who are in financial difficulties.

#### **SUPPORT SERVICES:**

- Consultation service: we inform people about their rights, about projects and services made available by the social services, about ways of limiting violence in married life.
- Support interview service: we arrange support interviews with individuals. On request, these interviews can be mixed and with a partner.



— Moral support service: we have a manned phone so that people can call us; people can come and spend a few hours on the premises during the day: we try to alleviate their solitude or simply have a chat with them.

**STAFF:**

From the outset, the team has been mixed and made up mostly of members of male or female religious congregations, who offer their services free.

The team includes also a few paid members who add their expertise to that of the rest of the team.

**(b) Le Tremplin ("The Springboard")**

80, rue Martel, Loretteville, G2B 2W5.  
(Br. Ferdinand Blais)

**AIMS:**

- Help young people with difficulties at school
- Take in young people who are not managing and who cannot cope with normal life in a State school.
- Take in certain young people who work during the day and who wish to continue their secondary school studies.

Our work here tends to be ad hoc. We give lessons only in three main subjects: French, English and mathematics.

**FUTURE PROSPECTS IN 5 YEARS' TIME**

These are difficult to predict because of the average age of the Brothers working at Le Tremplin. There is no guarantee that, when one or other of us has to stop working there because of ill-health, there will be someone to replace us.

By its nature, Le Tremplin is a temporary service to help people in trouble.

**(c) Education in the Faith Service**

270, chemin Fraserville,  
CP. 638, Rivière du Loup (Br. Ferdinand Blais)

**AIMS:**

- Help the people of Rivière du Loup and the surrounding area to increase and deepen their faith.
- Offer a simple and straightforward course that is accessible to ordinary people.



**St. Paul's College in Varennes: group session discussing pastoral ministry.**

- Use a variety of approaches in order to reach a wider public (lapsed, not practising, etc.)
- As far as possible, cooperate with parish, regional and diocesan pastoral schemes and ensure collaboration of local clergy.

**FUTURE OF THE SERVICE IN 5 YEARS' TIME**

- With the present staff, our work can go on for another 5 years. There is little room for expansion, however, or for new schemes.
- If, on the other hand, we could form a better team made up of Brothers, then the future would be bright and there would be plenty of projects.
- If we do not manage to keep the present team together, in five years' time our work will have become considerably reduced. (The quick turnover in staff over the last 3 years has been a major obstacle to providing the kind of follow-up we want).

**(d) Religious works Library**

20, rue Cook, CP. 846,  
G1R 4S7, Quebec (Br. Ferdinand Blais)

**AIMS:**

- Furnish readers with the possibility of deepening their knowledge of their religion and faith.
- Make worthwhile works available to students of catechetics and theology to help them pursue their research.

**FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY IN 5 YEARS' TIME**

It will remain as valuable as ever with regard to education in the faith, but there will be a problem re-



garding staff. Consideration should be given to making it a community venture.

**(e) Lasallian Day Centre**

1041, chemin du Quai,  
St. Nicolas, G0S 2Z0, Quebec.  
(Br. Ferdinand Blais)

**AIMS:**

- Enable Brothers to meet their families and spend a day together outdoors.
- Provide facilities for communities in Quebec and the surrounding area to have a meal together.
- Provide facilities for meetings for:
  - physically or mentally handicapped people
  - groups from surrounding parishes
  - parish pastoral councils
  - youth groups for a study day
  - District of Quebec committees

**FUTURE OF THE CENTRE IN 5 YEARS' TIME**

- The Centre will be used by more and more people.
- It is worth maintaining at least for the next 5 years.

**(f) Villa des Jeunes (Youth Centre)**

4860, rue St. Félix, St. Augustin, G3A 1X3  
(Br. Ferdinand Blais)

**AIMS:**

- Educate young people of school age in the faith (last years primary and secondary).
- Prepare children for Confirmation

**CLIENTELE**

Boys 8-12 1,300  
Men 30 and over 200  
Girls 8-12 1,300  
Women 30 and over 300  
Boys 13-17 1,100  
Girls 13-17 1,100  
Men 18-30 35  
Women 18-30 55

**STAFF**

Brothers 7  
Lay people 5

**FUTURE OF THE CENTRE IN 5 YEARS' TIME**

— It seems that the future will be much the same as this year (1992).

— But this depends on constant rigorous updating of programmes and of the staff working with the young people.

**(g) Bénilde House (Br. Martial Vezina)**

Bénilde House is in Montreal (1475, boulevard Morgan). It houses a Lasallian community providing vocational accompaniment. Founded under the protection of St. Benildus, it seeks to be a fraternal and apostolic community, living according to the Gospel and offering a positive welcome to young people so as to give them an opportunity to hear the call of God and to respond to it.

On an average, depending on the year, there have been 4 or 5 Brothers in the community and 3 to 5 young people. The house offers accommodation also to young people travelling long distances to attend weekend meetings. By living with the Brothers, young people get to know religious life from the inside. The young people who live with us take part in our prayers, our community meetings and the apostolic work of the Brothers in the locality.

Since 1983, about 15 young people have stayed one, two or three years at Bénilde House. Only one has entered religious life – Br. Pierre Belisle.

In this house there is also the official office of Revedec (See below), as well as the secretarial staff of the “Camp de l’Avenir”. Finally, because the house is involved in the initiation to the sacraments courses and other activities of the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve district, the Brothers have a visible presence in the locality.

**(h) The Notre Dame de La Rouge Centre**

(Br. Leo Boisvert)

The property belongs to the Brothers of the Christian Schools of the District of Ottawa. It is situated halfway between Montreal and Ottawa, 100 kilometres or so from each town.

**ITS MISSION:** to help young people from various socio-economic groups to develop fully, that is, on the human and spiritual plane.

Throughout the course of the year, a succession of groups comes to the centre, brought in most cases by secondary school teachers and/or pastoral workers.

**ITS AIMS:** to provide young people with a place conducive to relaxation and reflection, offering them an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of



their faith by meeting Jesus Christ in the sacraments and by hearing the Word of God. The Centre is run by a group of Brothers, competently helped by a number of monitors.

During the summer months, its rooms are made available to Brothers from the District of Montreal who run their Camp de l'Avenir there.

#### (i) **Le Foyer** (Br. Leo Boisvert)

This is the name given to our community in Ottawa (89, rue Stewart). The task it has undertaken is to give accommodation to 6 or 7 university students who accept to be more than simply boarders. They share the life of the Brothers, take meals together, and are invited to take part in community prayers.

Almost every week, they take part in a meeting normally run by a member of the clergy attached to the Faculty of Theology at St. Paul University.

These young people are not necessarily candidates for the religious life. We are convinced, however, that the work we are doing has a positive value and that we are responding to an urgent need in our modern society: education in the faith in a setting conducive to it.

#### (j) **Revdec** (Br. Michel Jacques)

Revdec is a centre for young people who have difficulties in school and who play truant. The youngsters who come to Revdec are boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 15 who need some time away from school or who have given up going to school. Each year, about 60 young people come to Revdec.

In the morning, pupils from certain Montreal schools come to follow their lessons at Revdec because they need to get away for a time, to unwind and recuperate. At school, for all sorts of reasons, they have difficulties with their work or problems because of their behaviour. They come to Revdec to sort out a difficult patch they are going through or an explosive situation. At Revdec, the children are given personal tuition: each pupil has his own teacher and his own room.

When the crisis has been defused or solved, these pupils return to their schools to complete the school year. By going away they avoid aggravating a temporary moment of crisis. This is an effective way to combat truancy. It works.

In the afternoon, the truants who have given up going to school achieve some measure of personal satisfaction in the workshops by doing manual work. This helps them to value themselves more.

During the afternoon and evening, two "street workers" walk around the district and meet the young people on their own territory: home, streets, park, amusement arcades, etc. They take Revdec into the streets: they extend the service offered by Revdec to where the young are and where they go to ground.

The aim of Revdec is to offer young people with difficulties at school a place and a welcoming atmosphere where they can feel they are loved and accepted. This helps them to regain self-confidence gradually and find meaning in their life. Surrounded by an atmosphere of "intensive loving care", they are able to find within themselves the courage to take themselves in hand and to nourish renewed hope.

Revdec is run by a Brother. He is helped in his work by four male and female helpers. There are other Brothers also who involve themselves actively in the work of Revdec on a part-time basis.

#### 4. **District of Toronto** (Br. Walter Farrell)

This Canadian District is linked to the Region of the United States. At the present time, the Brothers of the Toronto District run two secondary schools, both of them in the town of Toronto: De La Salle Oaklands, with 877 pupils, and O'Connor College School, with 100 pupils. In the same town, they also have De La Salle Centre which is located in the Oaklands property. Five Brothers, a Sister and some lay people work there looking after handicapped adults. There is also a chaplain on the staff. Last year, more than 1,000 pupils used the Centre for retreats. The Centre was opened in 1990, and is available to teachers and other adults for days of recollection and other activities.

**REVDEC:** Private courses run by Brother Adrien Boyer.





In Toronto, the Brothers run also two centres for refugees or vagrants (Lasallian Refugee Centres). Two Brothers work there with two lay people. Last October, when Brother Superior visited the Centre, we celebrated the arrival of the 100th refugee by having a special Mass. On an average, people stay 6 months. The Centre accepts married couples, children and single adults.

The most recent apostolic undertaking of the Brothers of Toronto began in 1991 in St. Paul's parish, in a part of the town called "Cabbagetown". Although the Brothers have worked in this parish for more than 100 years, it is the first time they have had a community there. There are 8 Brothers in the community. Several of them serve meals to about 100 poor children each day before class begins. They help adults also (especially immigrants) to learn English as a second language. Some Brothers work outside the parish.

In the town of Windsor, the Brothers have set up a retreat centre. Initially, the premises were used as a community for Brothers from Toronto studying at university. Since 1985, it has been used by teachers and students for retreats, recollections and other activities. It is used mostly by students. Last year they numbered 525. Other groups also (teachers, priests) come here in particular for retreats. The staff consists of 3 Brothers, a priest, two Sisters (volunteers) and a lady volunteer.

Also, the District of Toronto is responsible for the

sub-District of Nigeria and the community on the St. Vincent Islands in the West Indies. In recent times, the Brothers here have shared their missionary responsibilities with the Brothers of the United States and Great Britain. There are, for example, lay volunteer workers from the United States helping with the missionary work on St. Vincent.

## A WORD ABOUT THE FUTURE

According to Brother Maurice Lapointe, the Visitor of the new District, the merging of the Districts gives birth to the hope associated with a fresh start. This regrouping will certainly mean the consolidation of our work, but also a greater stress on apostolic work done "*together and by association*".

Our efforts to create a committed Lasallian Family will be intensified; we hope to extend to the whole of our territory the richly promising types of work to be found here and there. These efforts reflect our will to promote a type of Lasallian education for young people that combines human and religious education in a balanced whole. Our work with the destitute and those wounded by life is already extensive. It is often the result of the zeal of individuals or small groups. We hope to make it one of the distinguishing marks of the new District. Our renewed dynamism leads us also to hope that there will be an increase in vocations.

REVEDEC: (care of the handicapped): in the workshop. Brother Michel Jacques in the centre of the picture.





# THE EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES AND TORONTO REGION

Editor:	Brother Robert Mc Cann, FSC <i>Secretary of Education</i>
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## THE OVERVIEW

The eight Districts of the United States (Baltimore, Chicago, Long Island-New England, New Orleans-Santa Fe, New York, St. Louis, St. Paul-Minneapolis, San Francisco), and the District of Toronto in Canada form a Region within the Institute. The headquarters are located in Romeoville, Illinois. The staff of the National Office is composed of a Regional Coordinator, Brother Dominic Ehrmantraut; a Secretary of Education, Brother Robert Mc Cann; a Secretary of Formation, Brother Joseph Jozwiak; and support staff of Brother Francis Huether and Brother Richard Rush.

The Region has seven institutions of higher education, Manhattan College (NY), La Salle University (B), Christian Brothers University (StL), Lewis University (C), St. Mary's College (SP-M), College of Santa Fe (NO-SF), and St. Mary's College (SF) with 25,585 men and women students and serviced by 163 Brothers. Thirteen Brothers of the Region serve in other non-FSC institutions of higher education which include Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island and St. Mary College in Leavenworth,

Kansas.

Four hundred and thirty-five Brothers educate over 40,000 students in 63 secondary schools, 8 of which also include elementary grades, and some being co-educational. The secondary schools have 2,326 lay teachers and 149 non-FSC religious and clerics. The secondary schools' administrative staff includes 92 Brothers, 146 lay men and women and 22 non-FSC religious and clerics. Eleven Brothers are employed in other non-FSC Catholic secondary schools and 3 in elementary schools.

Five Districts (Baltimore, Long Island-New England, New Orleans-Santa Fe, New York and St. Louis) of the Region have elementary grades totaling 2,850 boys and girls, with 22 Brothers.

Six Districts have Child Care centers serviced by 33 Brothers in 7 institutions, with 2 Brothers working in non-FSC centers. There are also several special education programs assisting young people in need.

Special Apostolates include Retreat Centers, Parish Assistants in Religious Education, Adult Education, Group Homes, and Refugee Centers involving 46 Brothers.

Special Services comprising District, Regional,



and International assignments include 98 Brothers of the Region. Sixty-two are in Overseas Missions; 13 in Diocesan or National educational services; 37 in full time study, sabbatical or continuing formation; 258 in retirement or infirm.

Of the 1,250 Brothers in the Region, 230 are involved in Religious Education.

The Lasallian Volunteer Program includes Lasallian Associates serving in the Overseas Missions as well as in schools serving the poor in the United States. Summer programs within the Region invite Brothers, Postulants, Aspirants, lay colleagues, and secondary and college students to serve in schools ministering to minorities and disadvantaged children.

The Region sponsors the Buttimer Institute for study of De La Salle and his works; the Huether Workshop for developing Lasallian educational traditions; Sangre de Cristo programs for continuing formation; Spirituality Seminars to brainstorm new trends in religious life from the viewpoint of Lasallian spirituality; Bethlehem University and Missions in East Africa and Central America. Some Districts have ongoing workshops and retreats to orientate and develop Lasallian principles, policies, and practices among lay colleagues.

## ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

As with many ventures in the New World, the first school of the Christian Brothers did not last. In 1774 five French Brothers opened a school on the island of Martinique, but the French Revolution in



Minneapolis, Minnesota: De La Salle High School.

1792 ended the work of the Brothers in France and its colonies. The next venture was in 1819 when three Brothers opened St. Genevieve, a school for French pupils near St. Louis in the Louisiana territory. Brother Antonin became the first Christian Brother to teach in the United States. The school closed after three years when the clergy sent each Brother to different areas, thus destroying their community life and their continuance as Christian Brothers.

It wasn't until 1837 that the Brothers came to stay. Four Brothers from France opened a school in Montreal. Within eleven years the one school of four Brothers and 270 students grew to three schools in Canada, two in the United States, with fifty-six Brothers and 3,200 students.

A publication, "Les Melanges Religieux" in August 1843 states: "Attached by their vocation to the sublime career of teaching, these good Brothers make it the sole purpose of their life; they are distracted by no preoccupations of family affairs, no ambitious views, no plans for the future. Detached from every worldly interest, from every idea of advancement, the limited area of the classroom is the



New Orleans, Louisiana:  
De La Salle High School.



world to them... These schools in spreading religious and liberal education, in improving the youth of this city, are destined to effect a moral revolution in the whole country".<sup>1</sup>

In the United States, it was the immigration of the Irish and German Catholics in the second quarter of the nineteenth century that created a great need for schooling. Although the individual clergy nurtured the beginnings of Catholic education in colonial days, and the dioceses later gave definite and final shape to the system, it was the religious teaching orders, men and women, to whom the clergy appealed during the days of massive immigration to undertake the management of their schools. The religious orders were really the nuclei of Catholic educational growth during this period. In this new development of the Catholic school system in the United States, the Brothers of the Christian Schools were destined to play an important part. During Brother Facile's administration from 1848 to 1873 the number of communities grew from 5 to 76; the number of Brothers increased from 56 to 900, and they were in charge of over one hundred schools.<sup>2</sup>

Immigrants, then as now, are frequently "persona non grata". The so-called "public schools" were not tolerant of students with a different religion, and the Catholic clergy were fearful of children losing their faith. Governor Seward of New York, in his message to the State Legislature in 1840 states:

"The children of foreigners, found in great numbers in populous cities and towns, ... are too often deprived of the advantage of our system of public education in consequence of prejudices arising from differences in language or religion. I do not hesitate, therefore, to recommend the establishment of schools in which they may be instructed by teachers speaking the same language with themselves and professing the same faith".<sup>3</sup> His message was not received favorably by the voting citizens, hence the rise of the Catholic school system.

The motto of the Catholic Church in the United States was "**THE SCHOOL ALONGSIDE THE CHURCH**". The first Provincial Council of Baltimore in 1829 stated that it is absolutely necessary that schools be established. The first Plenary Council of 1852 stated that parishes maintain schools with revenue from the parishes. The second Plenary Council of 1866 stated that teachers belonging to religious congregations be employed wherever possible, and the third Plenary Council of 1884 that schools be within every parish within two years of this decree.<sup>4</sup>

The Christian Brothers providentially arrived in the United States during the maximum immigration period of Irish and German Catholics. The parish school was the special field of the Catholic educa-



Calvert Hall, Baltimore: First school of the De La Salle Brothers in the United States, founded (not in the present buildings) in 1845. Photo of the old school.

tional system, then in the process of development, upon which the clergy and bishops relied for the preservation of the faith of the children of immigrants and for their service in fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

However, the work had problems. The first Brothers were French speaking, and the novitiate for North America was originally in Montreal. The immigrant students in the United States necessarily became bilingual since many of the early Brothers learned English (or German) from their students and students learned French from their teachers. Even in Montreal there was a school in 1841, St. Patrick's, for Irish-Canadian boys. In 1846 a novitiate was opened at Calvert Hall in Baltimore, and this greatly facilitated the number of applicants that were joining the Brothers. In 1863 fifty postulants arrived in America from Ireland, and in 1874 twenty-eight more came.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I.C. Caisse, *L'Institut des Freres des Ecoles Chretiennes*, Montreal, from *Les Melange Religieux* (August 1843) p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Brother Angelus Gabriel, FSC. *The Christian Brothers in the United States: 1848-1948*. p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> J.A. Fredrick, "Old St. Peter's". *United States Catholic Historical Review*. 5.2 (1907-08, p. 354-391.

<sup>4</sup> Brother Angelus Gabriel. *op. cit.* p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> *L'Oeuvre d'un Siècle (1837-1937)* p. 111. Brothers of the Christian Schools. Montreal 1942.



Another problem was the matter of support for the Brothers. The Brothers insisted on teaching gratuitously and would not collect tuition from students. This did not sit well with some impoverished parishes and caused the withdrawal of Brothers from some schools. It was not until 1854 that a dispensation was received from Rome authorizing American Brothers to receive tuition if the school was called an Academy.

In the years 1848 to 1948 there were 204 elementary schools taught by the Brothers. A breakdown of the majority of them shows: 41 in New York City; 43 from New York south along the Atlantic seacoast; 14 in New England; 12 in St. Louis; 5 in New Orleans; 7 in the area of the Louisiana territory.<sup>6</sup>

The elementary school fulfilled the special ministry of the Brothers which was the teaching of poor children and the teaching of religion. Brothers did not teach girls; therefore, there were boys' departments in the grammar schools with the Brothers teaching the upper elementary grades. The Brother served as a role model for the boys, since in many cases in the inner city there was not a male role model living in the family.

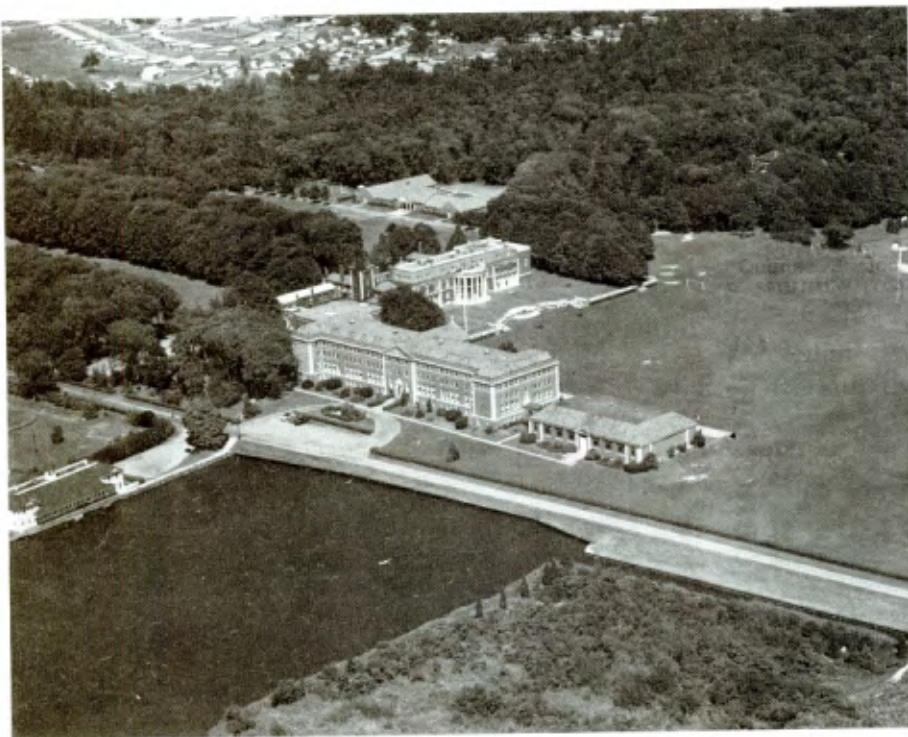
The number of elementary schools taught by the Brothers gradually decreased in the later part of the 20th century as the need changed. In the 19th century basic formal education ended with the elemen-

tary grades. In the 20th century laws were instituted, primarily at the insistence of trade unions, for compulsory education for teens to keep young children out of the market place. As the demand for formal education grew and the population became more educated, so too did the education of the Brothers, with most obtaining advanced degrees.

The tuition academies that had been started in the 19th century to help support the free elementary and welfare schools were usually owned by the Brothers. Many of them ran into hard times around the turn of the century. This was due in part because of the enforcement of the Brothers' Rule forbidding the teaching of Latin – considered a must in the academic curriculum. Many academies had to emphasize commercial and technical courses. It wasn't until the middle 1920's that the Brothers were again permitted to teach Latin. At this time the demand for academic high schools became great.

In Philadelphia, for instance, the Brothers were taken out of grammar schools to teach in the diocesan high school. Many dioceses and parishes started high schools, but the fact that Brothers' schools were not coeducational had a special appeal to parents. As time progressed, the Brothers began teaching in more diocesan and parish high schools, a new organizational pattern of co-institutional schools evolved. One school building contained two separate schools or departments. In 1955 there were 55 such Catholic schools in the United States with the Christian Brothers conducting 12; no other religious order conducted more than one such school.

<sup>6</sup> See Brother Angelus Gabriel, FSC. *The Christian Brothers in the United States*. Book Three: p. 135-233.



Long Island, New York:  
La Salle Military Academy.





St. Louis, Missouri: College  
High School of the De La Salle Brothers.

The expansion in the number of high schools conducted by the Brothers in the late 1950's was such that a map of the United States was needed to identify where a new school was located. They were spread chiefly in the mid-west and in New Jersey. But in the 1990's, the number has greatly diminished. Like the swing of a pendulum the need rises and falls. As enrollment decreased in schools many became co-educational – a first for many Brothers' schools.

Just as we have seen the growth of elementary schools in the first seventy-five years of the North American apostolate, and its decline in the 20th century, so too we experience the growth and decline of the number of secondary schools conducted by the Brothers. As with all events there are contributing causes for the rise and fall in numbers. The work of Christian education is an ever present need, though the form it takes is dependent upon the needs of the times.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

In the middle of the 19th Century two episodes created an enormous number of neglected orphan and destitute children in the United States: an epidemic of cholera, typhus, and tuberculosis, and the Civil War between the Northern and Southern States. Numerous orphanages, usually under religious auspices, responded to the need to care for these children.

Almost as soon as the Brothers were asked to conduct schools for dioceses and parishes they were also called by bishops and pastors to manage orphanages for boys and programs for the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. In Baltimore, for example, the first permanent school conducted by the Brothers in the United States was opened in 1845. The following year the Brothers were asked by the bishop to staff St. Vincent's Male Orphan Asylum in the same city.

From 1846 to 1894 throughout North America, especially in the United States, more than 20 establishments devoted to the care of orphans or delinquent boys were staffed by the Brothers. Most of the time the work was difficult, not only because of the many problems of homeless and delinquent youngsters, but especially because there was never enough financial support for this kind of work. Only in eternity will the skill and heroism of countless Brothers be recognized. However, even now three Brothers can be singled out for their special leadership in this apostolate.

One was Brother Teliow Fackledei (1828-1900), who directed several child care agencies from 1863 to 1900 not only throughout the United States, but also in South America (Quito, Ecuador). He is especially remembered as the Director of the New York Catholic Protectory from 1863 to 1877, but he also worked in other fields of education, among other things securing the charter for La Salle College, now a University, in Philadelphia.

Brother Barnabas McDonald (1865-1919) was another great leader in child care, from 1892 until





Bronx, New York: Manhattan College.

his death in 1929. Active in both United States and Canada on numerous commissions and at national conferences, he was called upon for his expertise by two Presidents of the United States and awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by Notre Dame University in 1924. He also received special honors from the Boy Scouts of America and from the

Knights of Columbus, for whom he organized the Columbian Squires, a Junior Order of the Knights.

The third Brother is Brother Amphian of Mary Lavill (1836-1919) who was appointed director of St. Vincent's Male Orphan Asylum in Albany, New York, now called La Salle School, in 1868 and remained until his death fifty-one years later. He spent his entire life as a Brother in service to orphans and boys in trouble. In Albany he was referred to as another Curé of Ars.

In only four of the many establishments of the 19th Century are the Brothers still engaged. However, these four have developed many new residential and day programs to meet the changing needs of youth in today's world: special education, job training, clinical and social work for family counseling and support, therapy for sexual and drug abuse, small group homes as an alternative to large group living, and supervised independent living for adolescents and young men who have no home.

These four establishments are: **La Salle School** (originally St. Vincent's Male Orphan Asylum) in Albany, N.Y., founded in 1854; **St. John's** in Uxbridge, Ontario, Canada, founded in the 1880's; **De La Salle Vocational** (originally St. Francis Vocational School) in Bensalem, Pennsylvania, founded in 1888; and **St. Gabriel's Hall** (originally the Philadelphia Catholic Protectory for Boys) in Audubon, Pennsylvania, founded in 1898.

During the last 20 years the Brothers of the USA and Toronto Region have entered or initiated more than a dozen new programs that meet the new needs of troubled youth, especially of adolescents in large urban areas.

Some of these new programs provide residential and day treatment for court committed delinquents:



Romeoville, Illinois: Administrative block of Lewis University.



**Journey House** in Pasadena, California; **Mercy Boys Home** in Chicago, Illinois; **De La Salle-in-Towne** in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which is a day program with a wide range of social services for both the students and their families; and **Ocean Tides School** in Narragansett, Rhode Island, which includes a school of special education, small group homes as well as the large residence at Narragansett, and clinical and social services for the youths and their families, as well as supervised independent living.

Other new programs are schools providing special education classes for boys and girls who suffer from behavioral, emotional, and/or developmental problems: **Christian Brothers Academy** in New Orleans, Louisiana; the **Quadalupe Area Project** in St. Paul, Minnesota; **Maison Benilde** in Montreal, Canada; **Martin de Porres** in Springfield Gardens, New York, which also provides residential care in group homes as well as clinical and social services for students and families; **De La Salle Educational Center** in Kansas City, Missouri; and the **Highbridge Community Life Center** in New York City, which also provides classes for adults in reading and writing, plus several kinds of social service for hundreds of people living in one of the poorest areas in all of the United States. Also, a special **Outreach Program** has recently been initiated by the Brothers for the parish and neighborhood of St. Raymond's High School in New York City.

A new kind of special education was created in De la Salle Academy, in New York city, not so much for children in trouble, but for specially talented, but poor, elementary school boys and girls, mostly from the inner city. Its purpose is to provide an advanced curriculum to help these youngsters realize their full potential personally and to aspire to greater service of others because of their special gifts.

Another program which is mostly for adults that may also occasionally include children is the **Lasallian Refugee Center** in Toronto, Canada, which provides a complete array of services to persons and families seeking refuge in Canada. A similar program in Los Angeles, California assists new arrivals in the United States. This program, called **Instituto Miguel-Hidalgo**, has as its main focus adult education and assistance to the children of the participants.

It is clear, then, that the original work of St. La Salle at St. Yon in Rouen has been continued by the Brothers of North America, not only from the beginning of their work in this continent but also with equal initiative during this present era.



Chicago, Illinois: Saint Patrick High School.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

In the United States, the Christian Brothers direct seven institutions of higher education: Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee, The College of Santa Fe in Santa Fe, New Mexico, La Salle University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois, Manhattan College in Riverdale, New York, St. Mary's College of California in Moraga, California, and St. Mary's College of Minnesota, in Winona, Minnesota. In these seven post-secondary institutions, there are a total of 163 Brothers, who with a large number of lay, clerical, and religious colleagues are engaged in educating approximately 25,600 students.

The Lasallian characteristics that are present in these Christian Brother schools include:

- Excellence in teaching; commitment to teaching as a vocation
- Personal attention to all levels of students
- Life-long learning stressed for students and faculty
- Service to others emphasized for the students while in school and for the future
- Sensitivity to social needs locally, nationally, and globally
- Experiencing a value-centered education
- Emphasis on careers and practical utilization of knowledge
- Open to persons (students, faculty, and staff) of all faiths, yet grounded in the Christian faith and



bolstered by over 300 years of living the Lasallian vision and traditions.

Each of the seven Universities and Colleges has a unique characteristic.

**Christian Brothers University**, founded in 1871, possesses a well-earned reputation for educating business and engineering graduates with a solid background in the arts and sciences taught in the Lasallian tradition within an ecumenical context.

**The College of Santa Fe**, founded in 1947, due to its location, educates a significant number of Hispanic and Native American men and women. Communication arts is one of their main programs and they have a new theater facility with the latest equipment.

**La Salle University**, founded in 1863, continues to experience growth on all levels due to its excellent reputation for quality teaching and special care and concern for the student's needs. The University features a liberal arts education.

Moraga, California: Saint Mary's College.



Santa Fe, New Mexico: College of Santa Fe.

**Lewis University**, founded in 1932, offers a fully accredited program in Aeronautics which is approved by the Federal Aviation Administration. The Schools of Nursing and of Business meet the needs of the local community.

**Manhattan College**, founded in 1853 has a well-deserved reputation for educating leaders for the professions and the corporate world. The School of Engineering is widely acclaimed and the School of Education has a long history of developing Lasallian teachers.

**St. Mary's College of California**, founded in 1863, has the distinction of being the oldest institution of higher learning in the western United States devoted to enhancing and expanding a Christian liberal arts education.

**St. Mary's College of Minnesota**, founded in 1912, ranks as the number one Catholic, liberal arts college in the country in the ratio of its graduates who go on to earn Ph.D. degrees. The college has expanded to include outreach programs in several of the surrounding cities.

The Brothers' universities and colleges have come to be dynamic institutions for carrying out the Lasallian vision in an educational setting, which is highly significant to the American Church and to American society. These institutions largely serve youth and adults from the middle and working classes. This is made possible due to the sacrifices of the Brothers and the generosity of alumni, friends, and benefactors. Many of the students who are from disadvantaged backgrounds receive financial aid from governmental sources which allows them to attend the schools. These students are empowered to take their place as active leaders in American business, industry, and the professions, as responsible citizens of their country and men and women with faith in themselves, their neighbor, and their God. Such is the contribution of the American Lasallian universities and colleges in today's world.



# THE LASALLIAN REGION OF LATIN AMERICA

## LA SALLE IN LATIN AMERICA. CONTINENT OF HOPE.

It is good to reflect calmly and realistically on what is going on in our Institute in Latin America, good too to look at this from the Church's standpoint. Our understanding of the Church has grown as we have become involved in the local churches. I believe that we can apply to ourselves what the Bishops said at the end of their Medellin meeting:

“We trust God, men, values and the future of Latin America. Now is the time therefore imaginatively to find ways of acting that are worthwhile, and which can be followed through with that courage which the spirit gives and with the calm that comes from God”.

The above words spoken in 1968 have led the way for De La Salle Districts in the decades since that time. Here are examples:

- \* 1970: Letter on Religion teaching to Latin American Brothers.
- \* 1973: Reflections on Education.
- \* 1975: Meeting of De La Salle directors of formation or training.
- \* 1980: The charism of De La Salle: Readings from Latin America.

When he presented “Lasallian Charism”, Brother Jorge Chappuis, president of the Region at the time said: “Latin America is a kind of huge laboratory where all sorts of hypotheses, ideas, and wide-ranging doctrines are being tried out. The Church and Religious life are also going through this crucible of fire and martyrdom in order to be purified as salt for the earth and light to the world. Our congregation, because of its particular mission, is feeling with special force the brunt of what is going on. It needs to go to the very roots of the Gospel and the Founder” (9-10).

Facing up to life means recognising reality and its

importance and how to concentrate on the priorities that are our challenge.

A. Here are some highlights:

1. The Brother is becoming more clearly Latin American. Vocation ministry in the Region is progressing and the blending of local Brothers with those from abroad is evolving.

2. The Region feels it is becoming Latin American. Meetings, exchanging ideas and finding common solutions to our common problems are now frequent.

3. The organisation of the Region is becoming more efficient, which results in success in educational ventures and the spread of the Gospel.

4. The Lasallian Family is becoming stronger, as a result of the Lasallian Charism in many lay teachers and from the fact that our schools can be centres, not only of work, but of mission.

5. In and out of school the New Evangelisation is taking place.

6. We are becoming more aware of the poor, and are concentrating on their needs.

**Bolivia: Meeting of the Conference of Latin-American Provincials (CLAP).**







**Lasallian Family at prayer.**

7. Brothers' communities are trying to become a greater force in educational communities, though they feel the stress of new commitments with the reduced numbers of Brothers.

B. Here are the most important challenges:

1. The numbers of neglected and abandoned children are increasing with a corresponding need for an education and evangelisation that fits their need.

2. Poverty is increasing in large sections of our society. How can we help these people, whose po-

verty takes away their dignity and that of their society?

3. The New Evangelisation is a vital need. Latin American people are religiously inclined in a popular way, but there are huge gaps in their religious knowledge, and even wrong information, little follow-up in their religious experiences and little feeling of permanence in their religious communities. How can we as Lasallians and Latin Americans join the Biblical and Catechetical movement in the home churches and in voluntary work as missionaries? How can we make our schools places where one feels the strength of a community which studies, shares, proclaims, prays and celebrates its Faith?

4. A crisis surrounds the school system and therefore the teachers. How can we give support to so many Christian teachers who do not feel recognised for their work?

How can we educate in our schools, in the light of the Gospel, for justice and peace, so that one will see the causes of poverty and injustice in our society?

5. There is an absolute need, given the above, to promote vocations with all our endeavour. How can we realistically present the identity of the Brother in situations as problematic as:

\* a church which tends to clericalism,

**La Salle College in La Paz, Bolivia: colleges of the traditional kind are constantly improving their structures and educational services.**





- \* emphasizing the role of the laity, which is in its early stages as yet,
- \* an educational system which has not managed to retrieve its early quality as a ministry?

How can we renew our communities in such a way that they will be welcoming places with good guides to young men who want to be Brothers?

How can we renew religion teaching and pastoral work in our schools, so that a choice of religious life will be the normal result of living and maturing in communities of faith?

6. It is vital for the Brothers to share the Lallian spirit with the thousands of teachers working in our schools. How can we enthuse people to the idea of shared mission and spirituality?

7. The time has come to widen the missionary horizons of the Region: "Latin American Brothers, because of the faith they live and the poverty they live among, send out missionaries".

8. Christians are rather confused because of pressures put on them by various sects, and because of the unbelieving and materialist surroundings where they live.

How can we give a firm and clear witness to our state of consecrated persons? How can we make our communities welcoming and ready to guide people spiritually?

## REGION LATINOAMERICANA

1. DISTRITOS y SUBDISTRITOS



## STATISTICS (On 31.12.91.)

DISTRICTS, SD, DEL	Number of Community	Number of Brothers	Brothers final vows	Brothers with temporary vows	Novices	Aspirants and Postulants
ANTILLES	9	33	31	2	1	5
ARGENTINA	17	70	63	7	0	0
BOGOTÁ	21	131	101	30	4	29
BOLIVIA	12	45	41	4	2	0
CARACAS	10	48	44	4	1	4
CENTRAL AMERICA	15	55	34	21	3	0
CHILE	9	41	36	5	1	0
EQUADOR	17	74	64	10	4	0
MEDELLIN	18	83	71	12	2	2
NORTH MEXICO	18	127	100	27	8	0
SOUTH MEXICO	19	136	102	34	3	20
PANAMA	7	38	38	0	0	0
PARAGUAY	6	18	13	5	1	13
PERU	11	53	44	9	2	0
PORTO ALEGRE	32	162	135	27	9	60
SAO PAULO	12	42	38	4	2	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>1,156</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>133</b>



Indeed the words of St. John Baptist de La Salle continue to be entirely up to date and relevant; they are quoted in the Rule (142):

“The need of this institute is very great”.

*Brother Genaro, Vicar*

## ENSURING THE VITALITY OF THE REGION

Every three years there is a General Assembly of RELAL composed of three brothers from each District and Subdistrict, whose task is to assess the three previous years, then to analyse the most important needs and challenges which lie ahead. They choose projects which realistically fill the needs seen to be the most urgent, and this is followed by the making of plans to ensure that what has been decided is done. In addition to this, once a year, the Brothers Provincial of the Region's conference, known as CLAP, have a meeting also. This meeting, in addition to giving mutual support to the Provincials in their work, decides on practical ways in which the decisions of the triennial Assembly's proposals can be carried out. At Regional level there also exist Commissions on Vocation and Formation Ministries, Educational Mission and the Lasallian Family. Each of these three commissions has a representative from every district and subdistrict. In February 1992 the three commissions held a joint meeting for reflection and planning. The priorities decided on by the 5th General Assembly, the 23rd

meeting of “CLAP” and the joint meeting of the commissions were as seen in the table below. On the list are also grouped plans to ensure that the priorities are dealt with:

<b>PRIORITIES</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
1. To study in depth and to make the charism of De La Salle alive in Latin America.	1. To set up a study team for RELAL. 2. To work out a Lasallian plan for Latin America. 3. To organise three sessions of the Centre for Latin American Spiritual Renewal (RELAL).
2. To reinforce the Pastoral Ministry of vocations and Formation.	1. To exchange experiences, resources and courses. 2. To organise a course for the formation and training of directors of formation.
3. To meet the educational needs of Latin America.	1. To exchange educational projects and ways of evaluating our establishments. 2. To study the principles of Lasallian Education. 3. To collect and systematise the journey of De La Salle in Latin America.
4. To share our mission with lay people.	1. To exchange experiences and material. 2. To organise a meeting of the Regional Commission for the Lasallian Family to compose a GUIDE FOR TRAINING THE LAY LASALLIAN.
5. To accept and increase our missionary commitment.	1. To increase our work in Japan, Cuba and Africa.

**Bogota (Colombia): Student Brothers in chapel.**



## ACTUAL VITALITY

“The Institute establishes, renews and diversifies its works according to what the kingdom of God requires” (Rule 11).

In Latin America the Brothers are doing work at every level in the “usual” forms of education, from pre-primary schools to universities, and they are attempting to combine academic excellence with training in moral values.



Among these “usual” kinds of institution can be singled out centres for orphans, outcasts and delinquents, as well as education colleges for teachers.

In less usual fields, the Brothers and their fellow-workers undertake catechetical work, and train persons for pastoral ministry or to help in parish or diocesan religion teaching. They encourage vocations not only to the brothers, but also to other ministries of the church. They organise youth groups, youth centres and summer youth camps. They work with adults in literacy programmes and have summer refresher or initial courses for teachers. In the area of communications, they arrange education programmes by radio and produce teaching material. There has been an increase in their centres for preparing leaders for country districts and poor suburbs and persons skilled in community and cooperative development.

In the early stages of the Brothers’ work in Latin America, schemes were begun to train élite specialists, but right from the beginning there were centres directed to the working class. These centres then grew in size, and working class folk found it hard to obtain a place in them.

At the present time we are not abandoning these centres, and the number of students attending them continues to grow. Their infrastructure and methodology is also constantly improving. The Brothers try to ensure that the pastoral care of the students is well taken care of. \* Efforts are made to encourage students to recognise the poverty and suffering which surround them and to commit themselves to some form of social action. The Brothers want to make these establishments available to a wider clientele, so that many paying schools have been opened in the evenings for free education for poorer persons.

Since Vatican II and the General Chapter of 1966-67 our great endeavour has been to find ways and means of turning more directly to the poor. These efforts were at first isolated and individual, but gradually became community concerns, backed by the Institute as a whole. Some district Chapters decided not to open any more centres, unless they were for poor students. Others clearly decided which institutions would undertake work directly with the poor, or decided on a certain percentage of brothers who would work only with them. Yet others began dis-



**Bogotá, Colombia: A group of student Brothers.**

cussions on criteria and strategies for revising and changing the objectives of our establishments. Ways were sought to allow the less fortunate to attend Lasallian Schools by means of scholarships offered by districts, the state, private businesses. Greater notice was taken of fringe minorities like Native-Americans and Afro-Americans. Plans were drawn up for establishments and programmes of a less academic and more practical nature, dealing with agriculture, commerce, mechanical and technical skills, community leadership. At the same time there was a greater number of Brothers highly qualified and with human and spiritual gifts, who left their usual academic schools and went out to poor city areas, the countryside, among mountain people, the forests and marginalised groups.

To the above, one should add the recent addition in the Region of missionary work abroad. There were Brazilian and Argentinian Brothers who joined Spanish Brothers to form the subdistrict of Paraguay; Mexican Brothers went to Japan; Brazilians have recently set foot in Africa, and Brothers from several districts have replanted the De La Salle order in Cuba.

But the above movement was not achieved without difficulties arising from ideological conflicts, nor without its martyrs like Brothers James Miller and Jaime Gutiérrez and the two dozen lay catechists trained by the Brothers for the Instituto Indígena of Guatemala.

There are three other aspects concerning this subject which have come to the fore during the past twenty years:

\* In 1986, 174,584 students attended Lasallian schools in Latin America. By 1990 this number had grown to 251,930.



1. In some places more than in others, matters were eased by the Christian and Lasallian commitment of Lay people associated with the Brothers. In 1986 these numbered 7,862; in 1990, 13,498. When these lay people took over the administration and even the headship of our traditional schools, the Brothers were able to take on work more directly concerned with the poor or with pastoral ministry.

2. Advances were also made in a greater understanding of interdependence in the Region. For several years every district of RELAL gave financial help towards the establishment of the Institute in Paraguay. At the moment the same thing is happening to begin educational and evangelising foundations in Cuba. The grouping and linking of personnel has allowed the creation of interdistrict houses and teams and even intercongregational houses of formation.

3. With the encouragement of RELAL, the Brothers are trying to move to institutions frankly called popular, which are not only caring for the local people, but are inventing new programmes to suit their needs. This supposes an interest and solidarity with the poor, with whom they are starting, not just a system of aid but one in which they are themselves involved; organised by them, and for which they themselves are responsible. This is not just a result from what is needed, but a help towards understanding the causes which are at the back of those needs and what means can be taken to answer them. Moreover, this is not done in isolation but in partnership with other popular organisations.

Nevertheless, the more work is done, the more challenges arise to test the creativity of the Brothers' apostolic zeal. One of them is to convince Governments of the priority of education, and the urgency of giving access to it irrespective of the economic means of the would-be student. Another is to increase the economic, professional and spiritual well-being of teachers. Others: creating more and more Christian communities for education, who will promote the new evangelisation and commit themselves to justice and peace; the implanting in Latin America of the Lasallian charism, not only in religious life, but in the active element of its mission. In order to bring about such ideas, RELAL is working under the coordination management of the Study Team and in conjunction with every district, in

what will be known as the Latin American Lasallian Project.

**Brother Edgard Hengemüle**  
*Executive Secretary of RELAL.*

## **MAKING SERVICE TO THE POOR A PERMANENT AND EFFECTIVE PRIORITY.**

Turning towards the poor as the field of their apostolate is becoming an ever-growing factor among Latin American Lasallians.

A few examples of this from the District of São Paulo will now be listed:

1. Its paying schools are stressing Justice, through undertakings like the following:
  - a. Frequent campaigns to collect resources and material for the poor.
  - b. Permanent establishments patronised by paying schools to gather material for poor schools and the training of their teachers.
  - c. Making free literacy-teaching part of the programme for obtaining one's teaching diploma in colleges of education.
2. Arrangements with the state authorities which allow 5,300 students in four schools to receive free education. The government pays the salaries and helps in the upkeep of the buildings, whilst the Lasallian community directs and determines the philosophy of each of the establishments.
3. Looking after "street children".
  - a. In the outskirts of Brasilia, in 100 hectares of ground, there is the La Salle Agricultural Institute (IALS). Sixty-five boarders live there; they are the children of poor families, street children or outcasts. From 7:30 until 5:30 another 420 students come to the Institute, children of small farmers or workers from the capital. All these are non-fee-paying, and besides receiving an academic education, they are trained in some practical skill: agriculture, gardening, fruit-production, horticulture,



carpentry, lumbering, typing, sewing, tailoring etc.

b. Since 1989 in the suburbs of São Paulo, three Brothers have been living in a community among the people, working full-time and without charge in the ministry to young people in need.

#### 4. Lasallian volunteers.

a. In IALS (see above) there are about 80 boys and girls who have nowhere to go during the holidays. A group of lay Lasallians from other Lasallian establishments join these children free of charge to help them to keep busy and have fun during the holidays.

b. In the northern region of Brasil, the condition of teachers, especially as regards training and salaries, is terrible; many of them never finished secondary school, others did not even finish primary level. In an effort towards solving this problem, the Tocantins Project was born, which is run almost entirely by lay teachers. Lasallians of São Carlos (São Paulo) and Brasília, travelling thousands of miles for the purpose, began to help, free of charge, in changing the situation, by starting a training college for 120 teachers and giving courses for 94 teachers of religion (November 89). Later, in January 92, courses in a college for 833 teachers began.

New needs were discovered once the above had started, so further plans are afoot; in fact the work has only just got off the ground.

#### Opening new avenues

The movement from the traditional school to new ventures has in recent years grown in magnitude.

The south of Brasil can be called a "first world" area, and from it Lasallians have gone to begin work in the "third world" areas round Pre-Amazonia, and Amazonia itself: Manaus, Altamira, Uruará, Santa Teresa do Paruá, Candido Mendes...

The District of Bogotá has undertaken to bring education and the Gospel to geographically, economically and culturally marginalised parts of Colombia. In the past twenty years communities have been set up far from the centre of the country in places difficult to reach, without energy or telephone and lacking clean water.

In 1983, the Council of the District approved the setting up of a community at San Juan del Cesar, Guajira. In 1988 the district began a college in Orocué, Casanare. Another one was started in San Vicente del Caguan, Caquetá in 1989.

Early working conditions were always hard. Brother Antonio Bedoya, former visitor of the District and cofounder of one of these communities, had the following to say:

"The community pitched its tent in an area torn by violence and riddled with drug traffic. When we first arrived we could still smell blood in the atmosphere, fear lurked around, and orphans abounded. The climate has an obvious effect on the youth of the region, which has no hope or joy, only bitterness and serious fear for the future. These factors noticeably influence young people, who are lazy in their studies, undisciplined, cold towards religion, skeptical and indifferent to their own progress".

But everywhere the presence of the Brothers is improving conditions, is having an influence on the students, who are beginning to receive a formation of high academic and moral standard.

## **SERVING JESUS CHRIST IN POOR CHILDREN.**

### **(Children's Boarding school of Guadalupe)**

#### *Philosophy of the boarding school.*

The school was founded in 1954 by Brother Miguel Cacho Villa, with the backing of Monsignor Luis Ma. Martinez, to look after small offenders, abandoned and street children, orphans and children with discipline problems.

For 31 years it was directed by its founder, then from 1985 the Brothers of the Christian Schools took it over and added to its facilities.

During the 37 years of its existence, around 7,000 children have been taught there and, thank God, by using occupational therapy, 350 skilled technicians and professionals and 7 priests have resulted and



in any case, the most satisfying thing is that the majority of them have turned out to be good citizens, Christian workers, responsible parents, in spite of the fact that they joined the school with some conduct problems.

#### *General objective.*

Our school takes a human and Christian view of life and service, in which young people who are mal-adjusted or disadvantaged can find an affectionate atmosphere. By means of a healthy and cheerful approach, we try to help the children respect themselves; we protect them from bad influences and give them better living conditions.

We attempt to make the school a real life experience where the children can be well brought up.

#### *Our idea of the person and of education and our chief strategies.*

We try to give to each child personally the chance to recognise and develop his qualities and place them at the service of others. He feels free enough to do this wherever and whenever he himself wants to use his God-given qualities.

There is a climate of respect and affection between children and teachers, in which the various aspects of religious, psychological, intellectual elements of each person are cultivated.

Self-respect begins with having adequate food, clothing and health. The children are told about hygiene, orderliness and courtesy and how to get on with others.

The daily time-table allows for plenty of encounters with others, in which the children learn how to adjust to persons and institutional regulations, and where they have to adapt to actual situations in a moral and socially respectful manner.

The time-table is quite full, so that the children learn good study and work habits, and do not have much chance to misbehave.

However, free time exists, for in this way they learn how to use their time sensibly and to be their own masters.

As for intellectual life, the institution itself looks after the primary teaching completely, then the children go to outside for their secondary and technical schooling. There are work shops in which the

older children learn how to make a living. Work is done on the upkeep of the school itself, and this way the children learn to look after their own living quarters.

Sports and physical exercise are part of the daily programme.

Lessons in religion, reflections on life, reception of the sacraments help them to grow in the faith.

We recognise that a lot of our work might be worthless if we neglected where the children come from and where they will return.

At the moment the boarding department looks after 150, and of these 105 are in primary school, 36 in secondary and 9 in technical. The staff consists of 4 De La Salle Brothers, 5 De La Salle sisters, 6 primary school teachers, 5 auxiliaries, 5 workshop supervisors and one social-worker-psychologist.

## **TRAINING TEACHERS AND TECHNICIANS.**

Since 1964, in Urubamba, Peru, our congregation has been running, by arrangement with the Ministry of Education, the Advanced Institute of Technology and Teaching. It is a people's college, training for the intermediate level in a Christian atmosphere and with a Christian purpose.

It has 650 men and women students, 300 of whom are doing technical subjects (120 agriculture, 85 construction, 95 forestry) and 350 teaching (230 primary, 120 intermediate school).

85% of them are from local peasant families, whose work is small scale farming and selling. ISTEP ensures the Christian atmosphere of the Institute.

The two facets of our work are:

### a. Professional training.

Training teachers: full programme for beginners, and distance learning for practising teachers.

The academic programme lasts five years for teachers and three years for technicians. Practical work is done in the area covered by ISTEP.

The teacher training programme includes practice teaching in local schools, help to actual teachers



of the region by supervision of their work and distance learning, and supplying teaching aids.

The technical programme comprises: agriculture (including transport, planting, harvesting and the feeding of live stock). Construction: transport of material for school and parish dining halls for local communities. Workshops: supplying material and doing carpentry locally.

b. The pastoral side.

ISTEP's objective is to form Christian teachers and technicians.

Religious teaching and formation is a vital part of the Institute and of those we deal with. Help is given to those religion teachers who go to areas where there are no schools. ISTEP assists the parishes in the formation of catechists and has begun a school for catechists.

As is usual with the Brothers, all the pastoral and professional work is linked with the goal of Christianising people and their endeavours.

## HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE TO MAKE PROGRESS.

### 1. RADIO SAN GABRIEL: VOICE OF THE AYMARA PEOPLE.

On 11 November 1991, this radio station, run by the Bolivian De La Salle brothers, received the first Bartolomé de las Casas prize for defending the cultural identity of the indigenous communities.

Seven years previously, Dr. Ramiro Beltrán, recipient of the MacLuhan communication prize, said: "San Gabriel is 30 years in advance in popular communication. It is lively, original, democratic and a station which people can share".

RSG (Radio San Gabriel) certainly deserves the prize. Here are the 12 areas of its work for the Aymara people:

1. Pastoral and Social programmes, with which the station began and which are still its most important contribution. Short courses for Aymara catechists.

2. Three news programmes per day, through a link with ERBOL radio station, and with views from the people themselves either broadcasting directly or through reports by the announcers.

3. Education programmes, through short courses and some publications. The sectors are:

- Distance Adult self-education programmes.
- Aymara-Spanish literacy lessons.
- Rapid primary education programme: three stages.
- Rapid intermediate education: three stages.
- Permanent adult education, including cultural lessons for farm workers.

"THE VOICE OF THE SCHOOL" programme, which continues the education of those who have finished school and of teachers on the high plateau.

4. Aymara Culture dominates, since the radio's language is predominantly Aymara, and concentrates on their age-old culture.

There are 500 programmes each year on Aymara music.

5. Health: prevention and treatment of sickness for around 60,000 Aymarans.

Saint Gabriel Radio, Bolivia: transmission in the Aymara language.





6. Agriculture: daily programme followed up by teams of agricultural and live-stock specialists and veterinary surgeons who cooperate with local people on the spot.

7. Women's programmes three times a week to complement the 80 women's educational centres scattered over the high plateau.

8. Public services, as follows:

*country mail*: in cooperation with the government and linked with the radio station, 12,000 letters a year are sent and received.

*advice and greetings*: since there few telephones on the high plateau, 23,000 of these are sent per annum.

*legal help*, in conjunction with the state, which helps peasants who need this service.

9. Printed material produced with the help of a team of amateurs. It consists of leaflets to go with the radio programmes.

10. Audio-visual material is managed by a team of librarians. It helps in the full understanding of the radio programmes, the courses offered and the work with the farm labourers.

11. Practice schools, so that what is learnt by radio does not remain theoretical, but is followed up by practical experience. One of these is in Chuqinayra (Ingavi), and the other, just beginning, is in K'uchuna (Nor Yungas). In the first, in 1988 alone, there were 22 courses attended by 778 men and women and dealing with agriculture, catechism, live-stock, forestry, health, women's topics. Local leaders and teachers followed these courses.

12. Environment sector. There is a professional team based in Chuqinayra, working on the improvement of local plants. They produce in their nurseries and greenhouses 100,000 plants of various species each year.

## **2. THE SANTIAGO (PRODESSA) DEVELOPMENT PLAN.**

*"The Indian peoples have the inalienable right*

*to their own education, which means a bi-lingual and bi-cultural education. The source of this is the family, the indigenous community, the traditional and indigenous leaders and authorities"*. (8th Inter-American Congress of the indigenous people)

Guatemala is perhaps the American country with the greatest number of indigenous peoples. Of its 9,000,000 inhabitants, more than half speak one or other of its 22 native languages and belong to one of the 6 principal ethnic groups. It is not by chance, if, to go by Amnesty International, there is more violence per square kilometre there than in any other American country.

The Maya people, traditionally very democratic, have not been helped by an educational system supporting and respecting their values and aspirations. There is a grave educational problem here, for illiteracy is high, teachers are few, opportunities for the poor to study are insignificant; moreover the universities show social class distinctions which do not favour the Mayas.

The above is the background to the Project for development, called Santiago (PRODESSA), based on the Santiago Institute for Native peoples, which serves primarily the indigenous people, representing 66% of the population.

The growth of the above Institute during the 80's led to a new concept of education for people from rural areas. The Santiago experience led on naturally to PRODESSA, run by the De La Salle Brothers, which involves the people themselves in answering the problem posed by the destructive effects of poverty, and in ways of working out lasting solutions to local needs.

PRODESSA has four areas of concern:

1. "The Indigenous Institute Santiago", which was the first to train local teachers. Students are chosen from their communities on the recommendation of the priest, a religious or a catechist. Primary teachers and technicians of intermediate standard are trained there for the communities. Its 200 students receive an academic and practical training, which includes animal husbandry, bakery, tailoring, carpentry and weaving. Through self-management they learn to become leaders in their communities.

The question was posed: "how can we educate through the local culture?" The first part of the answer was to strengthen local culture through literacy



in the local language. Then delving into the history of the Mayas, brought about an understanding by the people of their own identity, a pride in their past and a knowledge of their traditional beliefs and customs.

2. The school of higher education in rural affairs (ESEDIR). Theoretical and practical higher training, through classes and distance learning, forms community technicians. The programme includes agriculture, animal husbandry, administration, community development, popular education and lessons in Maya culture.

3. Support centre for local communities (Ru K'ux Tinamit). This encourages community organisation and self-sufficiency, by means of production projects and training schemes; the aim is to achieve political weight through economic strength. In general the goal is to eliminate poverty.

4. Popular communication centre (El Nawal): to train indigenous leaders in popular communication. Video equipment, printing and audiovisual material are used to spread local knowledge.

PRODESSA's education programme in local culture aims at:

1. Strengthening local identity and respect for local culture.
2. Increasing the ability in decision-making and in affirming their own cultural wealth.
3. Retrieving their cultural heritage lost during the colonial period.
4. Supplying outside cultural resources which can be used by the local people and kept under their control: such as learning Spanish, modern science and intermediate standard technology. An effort is made to link local with national culture, for the benefit of the country as a whole.

For all the above PRODESSA has evolved an educational system which fits the people's needs in this moment of their history. This supposes a decolonisation programme, which will allow for a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual nation of Guatemala.

Thus the PRODESSA scheme acknowledges the



Institute for native people in Santiago, Guatemala: learning a trade.



Institute for native people, Santiago: Graduation group.



A native town in Guatemala.



value of the local Indian communities' contribution in designing, carrying out and evaluating their own education schemes. The old colonist view, that the local culture is insignificant, is abolished, and instead, the local people decide on their own future, for such is the destiny of the Indians as Guatemalans.

PRODESSA's education plan:

1. uses the vernacular for all communications and teaches Spanish as second language.
2. Local culture and wisdom is brought into school curricula and in literacy schemes, thus avoiding imposing the culture of the dominant authorities. Equality of education supposes equality in social possibilities.
3. Indigenous teachers are trained for their own peoples and links are forged between schools, literacy programmes and the community.
4. The programmes are arranged to fit the local calendar and work hours.
5. All the courses fit into a unit and are not departmentalised, whether they be literacy, post-literacy, university or training schemes.
6. Education is integrated into schemes to abolish poverty, for to neglect one would mean that neither is of value.

**Brother Oscar Azmitia FSC**

**College of Paulino San José, Panama: Education of Afro-Americans.**



## **HELPING AFRO-AMERICAN PEOPLE TO KNOW DE LA SALLE.**

The subdistrict of Panama founded in 1981, because of the political situation at the time, covers three countries: Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia. Until the 80's the Brothers' work in the Central American district was in schools for indigenous people; since the foundation of the subdistrict, they have continued to concentrate on help to the neediest.

The needy in this case are the Afro-Americans living in Caribbean coastal towns, and 57% of the Brothers' students are these people, who are taught in Colegio La Salle in Cartagena, Colombia and in the three schools of Colon: La Asuncion, La Salle, San Jose-Paulino. The latter three are crowded, so we are trying to extend our facilities.

We are pleased to be giving this worthwhile service, since Afro-Americans are discriminated against, rejected by society and blamed for their own situation. "Apartheid" is supposed to be legally abolished, but Afro-Americans receive lower salaries for the same work as others, who live in "better" areas. Today, 54% in Colon are unemployed and 30% live in houses condemned as unsuitable for human habitation. The greater part of these percentages are of Afro-American persons.

Without trying to be spectacular, and with respect to our listeners, we are passing on to young Afro-Americans the ideals of De La Salle. The Brothers are encouraging these persons to be the architects of their own liberation and to become interested in making their society more just and stable.

We think that education can help towards these ends, by producing leaders who will use legal methods to achieve justice for their people.

The first thing is to instill the realisation of their value as persons, to make them proud of themselves as children of God and heirs to a rich culture not to be valued for mere money, to be strong in character, dutiful, masters of themselves and of their families and their race, all of which are tremendously worthwhile.

The task is difficult of course, but we are helped by Afro-Americans, who are practically the only teachers in these schools. This is a good strategy for showing the Gospel values which are to be found in their culture.

These teachers perfectly fit the Lasallian ideals and are the local answer to "shared Mission". After



three years working with them, we have found out that they, by their enthusiasm and fidelity to ideals, and perhaps because of their struggles with difficulties, are perfect colleagues for this work.

The same quality education and the same pastoral attention to students and teachers is given in these schools as in others in the subdistrict. The academic standards, good order, extra-curricular services offered have made these Brothers' schools the best in the region, and the university entrance examination results achieved in them are excellent.

This kind of education has proved to the Afro-American students that they are second to no one, and are quite capable of escaping from their poor social conditions.

The Brothers are the pastoral guides in these schools and have in a sense been inculturised by their students, for they have profited from their culture by living with them. They constantly search for means so that the Gospel message will help these students to change the structures of injustice which contradict the wishes of Our Lord.

The result is that the Brothers' communities are respected, since they in their turn respect the students, who look on them as generous helpers of the Afro-American people.

**Brother Jose Maria Gonzalez  
Panama.**

## **EDUCATING IN THE NEW LATIN AMERICAN WAY. (POPULAR EDUCATION)**

### **1. Argentina and Paraguay.**

A report to the district of Argentina lists the following establishments opened in the past 25 years:

In Argentina:

— School and College of San Juan Bautista de La Salle in Jujuy.

It is situated in the poorer districts and comprises primary, intermediate and secondary schools and a teacher training department. Education goes on in the school itself and in the area around, through

communities called "The Word", who also set up food kitchens for the elderly, and sewing and weaving workshops.

— La Salle Technical School in Campo Gallo, Santiago del Estero.

This is an intermediate agricultural school, which is also planning actually to produce goods for sale.

In Paraguay:

— The School of San Isidro the Worker in Pozo Colorado, which is a primary boarding school.

— San Francisco de Asis School in Cerrito, offering basic agricultural courses for the rural population, and now forming plans to venture into "popular education".

— Jose Maria Bogarin-La Salle school in Asuncion, a popular primary school in a poor district, working in coordination with the parish.

— La Salle School in Campo Aceval, Chaco, a popular primary school, situated on the Transacho Highway.

Conclusions from the report:

1. All the establishments set up in the past 25 years have been in neglected areas, and are dealing with the needs of the poorest.

2. All are on popular education lines, which the District of Argentina has been encouraging and which the subdistrict of Paraguay has also taken up.

### **2. Caribbean Isles.**

a. Anyone wishing to see what the Latin American concept of popular education means, is invited to the San Juan Bautista de La Salle school in the Simon Bolivar district of Santo Domingo's northern zone. It is the life and soul of its district and is headquarters of the "Life and Hope society", "the Committee for the Defence of Suburban Rights", the "Simon Bolivar Sports League" and the "Simon Bolivar Cooperative Society".

This district has been divided into three zones, whose leaders are parents, and each of which has an administrative team and two organisations, the first of family groups, who share ideas on the Gospel and life, and who find out local needs; the second of



Christian Communities, who attempt really to understand the Faith.

The Parents' Association is divided into technical, communication, health, youth, festival teams.

In the school are a pastoral ministry team, theatre society, the Brother James Miller teaching library. The latter is for the continued training of local teachers, and contains a documentary section on popular and traditional education.

The students are set in groups, who have their own leader and organisation, and the teachers are grouped by responsibilities connected with studies, work teams, tidiness of the premises. For each class there is a course council, whose guide is the class teacher.

b. Santiago is the second city of the Dominican Republic. 20 minutes from its centre is Cienfuegos. The hub of this heavily populated suburb is the "Youth and Culture Centre" known as CJC-De La Salle Centre, which was the outcome of work of the Brothers' college in certain sections of the local community: they repaired the parish school, constructed a community centre, and opened a sports field and a bakery. The centre was begun in 1983 for the local young people. Today its activities have spread into the areas of faith, culture, sport, communication, finance, support and literacy programmes. It offers children's religion lessons, a prayer room, a library, choir, theatre, typing room, clinic and pharmacy, sewing and craft room, industrial machine workshop for training mechanics, markets for the poor and a community sitting room.

The CJC is run by the young people themselves, directed by parents and Brothers who have had previous experience of the centre, and who ensure the training of future leaders for the same kind of work. It is an expression of De La Salle's charism, for its managers read his works and have as their motto: Faith, Friendship and Service. Every 21 January on the feast of Our Lady of Altagracia, patron of the country, they renew their annual promise to serve the community.

## BECOMING MISSIONARIES.

### 1. *Brasilian Brothers in Africa.*

Latin America, once a missionary country, is



**Brazilia:** Pupils of La Salle Agricultural Institute: Latin-America is a vast field where "the Brothers are finding new ways to deal with new needs" (cf. R. 41).



**Brazil:** The "Tocantins" project: Lasallian volunteer organisation for teachers in poor areas of North Brazil.



**Abel Institute, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro:** Students collecting food and clothing for the poor. In schools of the traditional type efforts are being made to help students realise social needs and to become involved in social work.



now sending out missionaries itself. In this the Brothers answered the call of the Latin American Bishops' Conference (CELAM), of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) and of the Latin American Lasallian Region (RELAL).

Because of the common language and culture it was decided by the Brazilian district chapters to work first in Portuguese Africa. The three brothers selected from Porto Alegre and one from São Paulo were given a great send-off after the annual retreat and in some parishes, and arrived in Beira, Mozambique in January 1992.

They are now working chiefly in catechetics and pastoral ministry in a free secondary school in collaboration with the parish, and they already are seeing to the need of training local leaders and pastoral workers.

The work is a joint venture by the two Brazilian districts and the Archbishop of Beira. There is an agreement to send further missionaries in the near future, with the hope of fostering vocations and of looking after them when they arrive.

Since 1992 there has been an inter-district commission for missions.

## **2. Our return to Cuba**

After doing good work in Cuba until 1961, we left at the Marxist take-over in the beginning of President Castro's rule, though many Brothers had their eye on a speedy return. Negotiations to that effect were being made by the last three governments of the Institute, but bore fruit only in July 1989. By 14 October of that same year we had set up a community in Santiago, comprised of Brothers Osvaldo Morales and Hilario Arraldi, who were joined in January 1990 by Brother Luis Franco. God seems to be blessing the enterprise for two young men have joined the aspirancy to the Brothers, and follow studies in the seminary where the Brothers teach, whilst getting their Lasallian formation in the Brothers' community.

The Brothers are doing work in two distinct areas in Cuba, the one being in pastoral and formation programmes, the other in Lasallian projects.

### **PASTORAL AND FORMATION PROGRAMMES.**

#### **1. Teachers in the seminary:**

The Brothers are teaching in the 2-year cycle of philosophy, religion and humanities in the Archdiocesan Seminary of Santiago de Cuba.

#### **2. Youth ministry:**

- Have joined the diocesan team.
- In charge of the subzones of Santiago de Cuba and Palma Soriano.
- Advisers to the university youth group of Santiago university.
- Retreats in Advent, Lent and Summer for adolescents.
- Organising, examining and assessing the diocesan and national youth plans.

#### **3. Social communication media:**

- developing audiovisual material.
- showing the audiovisual programmes as required.
- publishing the diocesan bulletin.

#### **4. Catechism:**

- diocesan organisation of the religious teaching programme.
- joint managers of parish catechetical material.
- Archdiocesan catechetical institute "San Antonio Maria Claret", a three year course for 35 students, two Saturdays per month.
- lower level programme for parish catechists.
- visiting catechetical centres in the Archdiocese of Santiago de Cuba.

#### **5. Ministry of Music and Liturgy.**

- help in the inter-parish choir of Santiago.
- small courses and talks for those in charge of parish choirs.

#### **6. Diocesan commission de la Cruz.**

- members of the commission.

#### **7. Diocesan commission of missionaries of Our Lady of Charity.**

- are members.
- helping to train committed lay missionaries.

### **LASALLIAN PROJECTS.**

The Brothers run groups based on Lasallian spirituality and train its members, so that they can do



some of the Brothers' pastoral work or do parish work. The groups are:

1. *Lasallian former students.*

A Brother is their organiser and there are 100 members in Santiago who organise activities throughout the year.

2. *Signum Fidei fraternity:*

A group more spiritually committed, number 12 at the moment but promising more and growing in the Christian spirit.

3. *Group "Z"*

Comprises younger members from 22 to 25 years of age. Its members have weekly meetings for formation in spirituality and commitment as Christians.

4. *Lasallian youth movement:*

Usually pre-university people from 18-30 years of age, have a monthly meeting on how to live the Christian life under Lasallian inspiration and within their own parish.

As can be seen, the work is almost beyond such a small group of Brothers, who have their hands too full, but the RELAL region is planning to set up another community, this time in the capital, Havana, as soon as possible.

## **SHEDDING ONE'S BLOOD FOR THE POOR OF LATIN AMERICA.**

### **1. BROTHER JAMES MILLER.**

On the 4 February, 1976, the sun rose over Guatemala to reveal the havoc caused by an earthquake which left more than 20,000 dead, thousands injured, homes wrecked and vast and widespread damage. A few months later, in their pastoral letter "United in Hope", the bishops of the country reminded their people that this natural disaster had made everyone realise how sin was a reality in their country. This is what they said:

*Our people, which possesses a true sense of values, has for centuries been exploited, and is now living an unjust and inhuman existence. Guatemala lives under a system of counter-evolution, which deprives our brothers, not only of material goods, but of a sense of their own value.*

*We cannot fail to point out how Guatemala lives in a situation of organised violence, that is to say:*

— *There are unjust social structures.*

— *Oppression is everywhere in evidence.*

— *The great majority of people live on the fringe of society, which causes unacceptable tension.*

*But people rise up against repression, so for years now, we have been suffering what could be called a "spiral of violence". Subversion follows oppression, repression follows subversion, so that the climate is gradually becoming more exasperating, and the blood bath in our country is becoming insufferable.*

One of the victims of this blood bath was Brother James Miller, who in 1982 joined 14 other priest and religious martyrs to the Gospel to the poor, between 1979 and 1982.

Brother James worked for 9 years in Central America, 8 in the Brothers' mission on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua and the final one, following a short stay in St. Paul, USA, in Guatemala. In one of his last letters he wrote:

*I am personally sick of all the violence, but continue to be committed to the poor of Central America who suffer so much. As the Bible says, God's ways are not men's ways. God knows why I stay on in Guatemala in spite of the advice of friends and relatives to leave for my own comfort and safety. I pray God to give me grace and strength to serve him faithfully by my presence among the poor and oppressed of Guatemala. I place my life under the protection of God's Providence; in him I place my confidence.*

On the 13 February 1982, towards 4:00 in the afternoon, Brother James fell victim to the irrational violence which is the scourge of the country. In a statement made by the Brothers of Heuhuetenango, the following words are found: *Brother James's death was not an accident. Brother James died for what he was and represented, as a Christian educator, apostle of the poor and less privileged and as a worker in favour of justice and social change.*



Two letters which I read after the death of Brother James, impressed me. The first was by himself, written to an older retired couple in North America, who had been paying scholarships for young people in the “Centro Indígena” where Brother James worked. He wrote it a few days before his death. He was talking about a young student, whom the Brothers’ community wanted to expel. Brother James said that the couple should continue paying the boy’s scholarship, because James had made himself responsible for him, and that every evening he had a chat with him to help him improve, and thus complete his studies. That was Brother James, unable to lose faith in a youngster, always ready to give of himself, without looking back, just like the Good Shepherd.

The second letter is from a former student of the “Instituto Indígena Santiago”, written on the 17 February, 1982, just four days after the murder of Brother James. The man was from a small village of Solola, in the native western part of Guatemala. I keep it with affection:

*“The only reason for writing this letter is JAMES MILLER. He is a man who will always stay alive among us; he gave himself for the poor and died among them. Brother, I share the great sorrow of all the De La Salle Brothers. As a former student of the «Indígena» I shall never forget the love the Brothers had for the children, young people and the poor. I want to join my prayers with yours to ask Jesus Christ and our patron St. John Baptist de La Salle to help us; in them we shall have confidence that they will bless the Brothers and add to their number and not allow them to be disheartened. If the seed dies it produces more seed: one leader has died, but others will take his place...”*

Ten years after his martyrdom we recall the great gift which God gave us in Brother James, and we offer to Our Lord, his life and his death. We recall his nine years work in Central America, his labours for young people in the “Casa Indígena”, his tireless toil on the farm, his blood unjustly spilt whilst he was repairing the front of the house. He died whilst doing manual labour, the same work, which he enjoyed so much, as our workmen and peasants.

All these things we offer to Our Lord, not with resentment and bitterness, but with joy and hope, because we realise that for the Christian, the paschal mystery does not end with death, and that, if the seed sown in the ground does not die, it bears no

fruit. We know that the best thing we can offer to Our Lord from the life of Brother James is his contagious happiness, his love of life and this earth, his ability to make friends, his encouraging words during the long private talks he had with his boys.

May he from heaven help us to be:

- Visible signs of God’s love.
- Bearers of Our Lord’s message of salvation, especially among the indigenous people and the most needy.
- Men full of the Spirit, men who live and help others to live by this Spirit of love, peace, joy, generosity, understanding and goodness. (Gal 6,22)

If we live like that, we shall be prepared to give



**Brother James Miller, martyr in Guatemala.**



**Brother Jaime Gutiérrez, who died in his fight against drugs.**



up even our life, as Brother James gave his, since in the words of our Holy Founder: "The only satisfaction one can hope for in having taught children, especially poor children, is insults, calumnies, persecution, and even death itself. This is the reward the Saints and apostolic men received, just as it was that of Our Lord. Do not expect any other reward for the work which God has asked you to undertake in his ministry". (Med 155,3)

**Brother Alvaro Rodríguez Echeverría,  
Visitor of the District of Central America.**

## **2. BROTHER JAIME GUTIERREZ.**

Brother Jaime lived from 1924 to 1991, and having made his first vows in 1941, remained until his death a completely committed De La Salle Brother.

He received extensive training for and during his educational mission, by obtaining his Arts degree from Lille University in 1960, by following the CIL session of 1980, taking refresher courses in religion teaching in Brussels (1981) and by attending CREL in Cochabamba (1990).

He was a prayerful and straight-forward man, always ready to give a helping hand, responsible and efficient, not bothering much about what this world can offer, in fact, quite uncomplicated. He was a great communicator and got on marvellously with people.

He also did some imaginative work for the community and young people. He was the founder of the Centre for Communications Technology in the Brothers' district of Medellín, began a newspaper called "The New People", was in charge of publicity for the College of Campoamor, and was author or co-author of several teaching manuals, for example "Teaching expression in children's poetry", "Colombia is its name", "Let's revitalise Colombia", "Elementary History of the province of Antioquia", "History and Geography of Colombia".

He was a fine champion of the poor and oppressed, as was seen by the risks he took in teaching the Gospel and denouncing the vices of modern society, especially those which harmed his college.

His last job was as rector of La Salle College in Compoamor, at a time when drug-traffickers were rife in several suburbs of Medellín. Poverty, the injustices of society and general human weakness led many youngsters to the sale or use of narcotics. Brother Jaime boldly fought this scourge, and in fact

risked his life for its young victims. For months before his death, he had been receiving death threats from drug pushers, who, having been denounced by the authorities, saw their profits diminishing and their liberty of action curtailed. His superiors, realising his danger, offered him a transfer to another post, but this he declined, in his wish to combat drugs, and because he always thought of others.

Perhaps Brother Jaime was dreaming of martyrdom and even looking out for it, since he was always talking about Monsignor Romero of El Salvador, Brother James Miller and other martyrs for social justice.

He was murdered outside the main gate of his college on 21 May, 1991.

By his death, there is another addition to the long list of Latin American martyrs. We expect that Brother Jaime's fine example will encourage other defenders of the Latin American poor, and urge us Lasallians to persevere with courage in our commitment, in spite of persecution.

## **REAL HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. (VOCATIONS MINISTRY AND INITIAL FORMATION)**

There was a very important meeting in Santafé de Bogotá in February 1992, when every representative for Vocations and Formation from the RELAL Region met together with the other Commissions to reflect and pray on our future.

There were real signs of hope, as we prayed and tussled with plans to revitalise our Institute, especially when we realised that Panama has 15 novices, Guatemala 5, Porto Alegre and São Paulo 17, Bogota 29, North Mexico 9. These were certainly signs of the Lord's blessing for the way each district had worked at the vocations question in recent years.

### **1. Vocations ministry.**

The following are the most important aspects:

1. Prayer in many different places: in the Brothers' communities, in classrooms, especially in the "vocations weeks", in St. Benildus clubs (Mexico), in



enclosed convents of sisters, and fervent prayer from apostolic groups and during missions.

2. We have a ministry of hope, based on the fact that the Lord sends his chosen ones gratuitously, linked with a ministry of searching, for Our Lord has placed in our hands the destiny of the Institute. The search means also personal counselling and asking young men: "Since time is passing, what do you intend doing with your life? Perhaps the Lord has something special for you to do. Make a decision".

3. Our Region has communities which are really committed to an effective and affective assistance to young candidates; they decide on a yearly plan and try to give witness by the way they live, and find ways of convincing young people of the value to the church of the Lasallian way of life at the present time. From photographs of young people joining the Brothers in chapel and at meals one can see this commitment. Time is allotted to the Brothers for approaches to young men to join them, and to pray for vocations and to emphasise this priority which gives new vigour to the communities.

4. Youth ministry is an area with a vocational emphasis. In youth groups young men learn to live a Lasallian spirituality, and through fraternal contacts they see that they are members of the universal church, recognising its need of apostles. Some then realise that the Lord is calling them to greater commitment through the consecrated life, which they examine by personal discernment.

5. In some districts a programme of systematic counselling, known as "accompaniment" is being worked out, and districts which have not started it are being asked to do so. Part of the programme is a kind of personal meeting with Our Lord through the sacraments and prayer; then there are Lasallian vocational readings and personal counselling sessions in which are also confronted the facts of the apostolate and one's own possible call to it, with an "accompanying" Brother. The Bogota district's programme "En Route" is a good example of the attention which is being given to the vocations question and its follow-up.

6. The educational community and especially the families of possible vocations are becoming involved in the process of discernment or search. Lay people in general are becoming involved and, like families,

are taking part in community events, as when novices take the habit or when Brothers make their vows. There are also viewings of films and videos on St. John Baptist de La Salle and other saintly or blessed Brothers.

7. The Districts have produced several quite straight-forward, but effective publications to show the riches and the meaning of the De La Salle Brother's vocation.

8. Though manpower is short, an effort has been made to have part- or full-time Brothers in the vocations ministry in the District or schools, for example vocations commissions have been set up in the districts, working in conjunction with the Lasallian Family.

A great deal has therefore been done, but a lot still has to be improved, because the difficulties are ever present. In this Latin American continent we are 1156 brothers, which is a drop in the ocean, yet nevertheless a sign and a seed for the future.

We shall now summarise in a few sentences the challenges and commitments for the coming years:

1. To live fully as Lasallian religious educators, aware of the treasures yet the poverty of Latin Americans, and determined to serve them, with the help of the Lasallian Family.

2. To prepare ourselves and the Lasallian Family to serve the church more, through Youth and Vocational Ministries.

3. We intend programming the above:

— by personal conversion and growth in the faith.

— by community and church links.

— by constructing a civilisation based on love in poor areas.

— by answering God's call to promote his kingdom.

— by getting to know and by living the Lasallian spirituality, which gives meaning to personal and community growth to young people.

4. We hope to be cheerful communities given to the Lord and aiming at the commitment of youth to the Lord, and accompanying young people in their



early and later stages of commitment, and when they enter houses of formation.

5. We shall be in union with the church, by linking with diocesan vocational work, thus recognising various types of vocation, and seeing that the vocations from our colleges are not only to the Brothers, for the Lord calls for whatever vocation he wills. We have to think of other vocations, as is seen in the work of the Panama Vocations ministry.

## 2. Initial formation.

Several aspects in Latin American are satisfying:

- Our postulants are following the programme set out in the “Guide to Formation”.
- Each stage of formation is well planned.
- There are good Formation Commissions in the Districts.

Of course we know our failings and have plans to overcome them by:

1. Even better training for our directors of formation for the Latin American situation.
2. Bettering our formation plans, with emphasis on work for the poor.
3. Having Brother Counsellors for young Brothers.
4. Fixing joint formation programmes between districts.
5. Realising the responsibility of giving a good theological training to the Latin American Brothers, and making plans for this at university and post graduate level.

Latin America is a new race,  
a hope and promise for the future.

Our Institute is needed by our continent.

We know that God will not abandon  
the work of his hands.

God calls. We hear  
the call of our people.

We have confidence in De La Salle and our Institute.

With our hands at the plough  
we continue to cultivate the fields.

We have faults and disappointments,

but we are sure that the Lord will give us victory,  
for his glory the good  
of our brothers the poor.

**Brother Lorenzo Gonzalez Kipper.**  
*Coordinator for the RELAL commission  
for the Ministry of vocations and initial formation.*

## PLANS FOR MORE VOCATIONS.

For a good number of years now, the Lasalle District of Bogota has had an average of 10 new postulants per year. Last year we had 21, so figures for 1992 are 33 Brothers with temporary vows, 11 student Brothers, 8 novices, 29 postulants.

Here are some of the factors that have favoured this growth: families committed to their faith, Brothers communities determined to improve their teaching and spirituality, an apostolate of prayer by the Brothers, an appreciation of the Brother's vocation in districts and in their work places. The main thing however has been the ministry of vocations undertaken over the past 15 years by the Brothers.

Personnel and resources have been devoted to this work:

1. All the student Brothers study religious education as their speciality in La Salle University of Bogota. The matters covered are Scripture, Theology, Religion teaching, methodology. Schools therefore have good religious teaching specialists.

2. Youth groups deal with Christian subjects and have a Brother as leader more often than not, who counsels them and helps them in the faith. Each school tries to set up one of these groups, which becomes committed to prayer, work in the poor areas etc.

3. There is an annual pastoral ministry programme in schools, organised by the religious education departments (DEF). Sacramental life is emphasised and there are activities for various ages: camps, retreats, youth gatherings, missionary days, living together, ecological outings.

4. Annual district ministry programme to train youths for a period of two to three weeks in La-



sallian youth courses for leadership of youth and other groups, e.g., catechism, spirituality courses adapted to different ages.

5. Pastoral ministry under the direction of full- or part-time Brothers, at district and school level.

All the above have led to more Christian commitment by young people, who have joined the Brothers or other orders or the priesthood and Sisters' congregations.

The programmes are constantly reviewed, which results in vocation work for older and younger Brothers.

There is a specific programme for young men who wish to be De La Salle Brothers. It is called "En Route Plan" or in Spanish "Plan Ruta", and consists in counselling youths and finding out those who have vocations to be Brothers. It lasts not less than a year and helps in discerning whether the person has a Brother's vocation.

Because Colombia is changing a lot, the vocations search is quite challenging, but the programme is continuing to get better, with children's and university group ministries joining the usual youth ministry, and being backed by the districts. So soon there will be ministries from childhood to university levels. Even market research is being brought into the vocations ministry, and propaganda is taking place in areas where there are no Brothers. We put our work under the protection of the God of life, who will bless it by sending good vocations for his service.

**Brother Fabio Coronado**  
*Santafe de Bogota.*

## **OVERALL PLAN FOR FORMATION.**

This plan was started in the district of Porto Alegre. It is overall because it covers all ages from aspirancy to retirement and also because it covers all aspects: human, Christian, Lasallian; and all dimensions: consecration, mission, community. It arose from the need to define what kind of Brother is needed for Latin America, and to provide initial and permanent formation directors with the content and method to form that type of Brother.

In this matter, here are some of projects of the district of São Paulo.

We hope to effect a deep liberalising formation depending on the person's dynamic attitudes: there is a death dynamism, which prevents growth in love, and there is a dynamism of life, which produces the opposite. Formation is aimed at stifling the one and encouraging the other. The latter leads to the Gospel attitude of loving, and is desired affectively and intelligently. One aims at helping the trainee to make Gospel values really his own. A study is made of the ability of the aspirant to do this, and to find out and tackle obstacles to his doing it. Structures and atmosphere are created to remedy these obstacles and to strengthen the ability to love.

We work on the unconscious and conscious dimensions of the person and are finding that the progress made at the spiritual and human level of the aspirants is well worth this approach, which we hope to improve even. To encourage growth in the various stages of formation, the different factors are studied and different approaches used accordingly.

The novitiate is the central initial formation period and lasts two years, a time thought ideal to interiorise Lasallian values. It takes place after adolescence, around the age of 20. Lasallian spirituality takes precedence, though a reasonable load of pastoral activity is undertaken of a practical nature, linked to the overall pattern and under supervision. An important aspect is the three separate week-long directed retreats during the novitiate.

To prepare the novitiate there is a two-year postulancy, meant to give apostolic experience, whilst living in community and in a spiritual manner; there is also a consolidating intellectual content. It is held in two places, one with a training community responsible for a primary school in a poor area, in which during the first term, the postulant does practice teaching of the College of Education type. Afterwards he follows a university catechetical programme, whilst continuing practice teaching and deepening Lasallian knowledge.

After the novitiate comes the scholasticate, lasting three years, the first of which takes place in a community running a relatively small educational establishment at some distance from large towns. During this time the scholastic tries, according to his abilities, to live a full community life according to the norms he has learned in the novitiate. The second and third years are spent in a community geared to their needs, and whilst they do teaching and pastoral