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of the Christian Schools

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THE INSTITUTE
IN ASIA AND OCEANIA

BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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The Brothers of the Christian Schools and their mission. The presence in Asia and Oceania.

The Institute is concerned above all for the educational needs of the poor as they strive to become aware of their dignity and to live and to be recognised as human beings and children of God. The Institute establishes, renews and diversifies its works according to what the kingdom of God requires. (R. 11)

The Brothers are entrusted with their mission by the Institute, a mission especially to the poor. As a community they become increasingly conscious of the reasons for the poverty that surrounds them and so become earnestly involved in the promotion of justice and human dignity through the educational service they provide. (R. 14)

This concern of the Brothers for the poor serves also to motivate their activities when they deal with people in a more favourable social environment, urging these to become more sensitive to unjust situations of which the poor are so often the victims. (R. 14)

The Brothers make a genuine effort to understand the deeper aspirations of the people in the milieu in which they work by being actually involved in it. Thus they can take advantage of the right moment and use the appropriate language to speak of Jesus Christ to those to whom they bring their message. Reciprocally, they themselves are open to being evangelised. (R. 15)

Catechesis is above all a form of witness. It springs from the depth of a community of faith, that brings together Christians within whose hearts dwells the Holy Spirit, the teacher of all truth. (R. 15a)

The Brothers also take part in the pastoral programme of the local church, either as catechists themselves or as teachers or leaders of their fellow Christians who undertake the work of catechesis. (R. 15b)

In countries that are non-Christian or markedly plural-

istic, where it is very difficult or impossible to provide catechesis in the schools, the Brothers seek new ways of evangelising. To open young people to life, to a sense of their responsibilities, to knowledge and to love, is already a way of accomplishing God's work since his Kingdom is built both by the activity of the Church and by work in the world. (R. 15c)

Every culture needs to be evangelised. The Brothers make every effort to get to know, to respect and to assimilate the positive values of the cultural heritage of the people where they are located and whom they are called to serve. With joy and hope the Brothers discover there the signs of the presence of the Spirit. They ensure that the ferment of the gospel renews and enriches this cultural heritage. (R. 18)

With an open mind and yet in a spirit of healthy criticism the Brothers study the various religions, ideologies, and cultural traditions of the areas in which they establish themselves. They will be able in this way to absorb the positive values therein and so to make a valuable contribution to the education of the people around them. (R. 18c)

The Institute is particularly conscious of the great design of God who wills that all people should come to the knowledge of the truth. Thus the Institute participates in the missionary activity of the Church whose essential task is to announce the Gospel to everyone and to all cultures. (R. 19).

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

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



**LA SALLE
1994**

1. THE INSTITUTE IN ASIA AND OCEANIA

1. ASIA AND OCEANIA



La Salle Centre, Singapore:
Fountain and a bronze statue symbolising
the spirit of the school.
Artist: Br Joseph McNally.

Asia and Oceania cover half of the globe. The immense territory they represent offers an infinite variety of contrasts: there are areas that are over-populated and others that are uninhabited; highly productive areas and countries that are underdeveloped; the cultures here often go back thousands of years, but they are all different: there are religions whose origins are lost in the mists of time; there are others that are fiercely exclusive and radical.

In this immense mosaic of races, cultures, stages of development, evolution, traditions and politics, so varied and so different, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools serves the Kingdom of God through the educational apostolate entrusted to it by the Lord and the Church.

In Institute terms, Oceania and most of Asia form a Region known as PARC (Pacific-Asia Regional Conference). Another part of Asia, however, which by tradition is called the Middle East, is not part of PARC, but constitutes two Delegations (Lebanon and the Holy Land). There is yet another Delegation, that of Turkey, which straddles the dividing line between Europe and Asia. All the Brothers' houses are in Asia. With Egypt and Greece, these three Delegations form the Mediterranean Region.

Another sector, that of New Caledonia, is attached for historical reasons to France, even though it is in the Pacific.

In view of all this, we have divided up our presentation of the Institute in Asia and Oceania into two parts. In the first part we have included the Districts, sub-Districts and Delegations of PARC; and in the second, the Delegations of Lebanon, the Holy Land/Jordan, Turkey and New Caledonia.

To give a clearer picture of the various countries where the Brothers are working, we include two sets of statistics regarding their economic situation and their level of development. These figures are taken from the magazine "Asiaweek" (issue of December 15th 1993) and refer only to a certain number of countries.

VITAL SIGNS

	People per doctor	Life expec- tancy	Pop. (m.)	Pop. growth	Infant mortal- ity	Calorie intake	Literacy rate	People per TV	Urban pop.	People per teleph.
New Zealand	332	76	3,5	1,0%	7	3.362	99,8%	2,7	84%	1,4
Australia	438	77	17,9	1,3%	7	3.216	99,5%	2,1	86%	1,5
Japan	610	79	125,0	0,4%	5	2.956	100,0%	1,6	77%	1,5
Singapore	711	74	3,1	2,0%	5	3.198	91,1%	2,7	100%	2,0
Hong Kong	866	78	5,9	1,0%	5	2.853	88,1%	3,8	94%	1,6
Philippines	1.016	65	64,6	2,3%	34	2.375	93,5%	24,4	43%	52,5
Turkey	1.260	67	60,4	1,9%	72	3.236	81,0%	5,7	63%	6,6
Pakistan	2.111	59	123,8	2,9%	94	2.250	35,0%	59,0	33%	76,0
India	2.272	61	890,8	2,1%	80	2.229	52,1%	37,0	26%	126,6
Malaysia	2.656	71	19,0	2,6%	15	2.774	78,5%	6,9	44%	8,8
Vietnam	2.857	67	72,3	2,2%	39	2.233	88,0%	26,3	20%	435,0
Thailand	4.361	69	59,2	1,5%	28	2.316	93,0%	9,2	23%	28,5
Shri Lanka	6.162	71	17,7	1,0%	16	2.277	88,5%	31,3	22%	10,0
P.N.-Guinea	11.900	56	3,9	2,0%	55	2.403	52,0%	500,0	16%	49,0
Burma	12.500	59	44,8	2,1%	85	2.440	81,0%	500,0	25%	476,0

These figures are the latest available from national and multilateral sources. Population growth is the percentage increase in one year and includes births, deaths, emigration and immigration. Infant mortality is the number of babies per 1.000 live births who die before reaching one year of age. Though standards may differ, literacy generally means the ability to read and write a short, simple statement about everyday life. Literacy rates refer to the population over fifteen years of age (ten for Singapore). Calorie intake is the average per person per day.

THE BOTTOM LINE

	Per-cap. GDP (PPP)	GDP (PPP)	GDP growth	Per-cap. GNP (nom.)	Exports 12 months	Cur. acct. balance	Foreign debt	Reserves excl. gold	Inflation CPI	Saving % of GDP
Japan	\$19.642	\$2.453b.	-2,0%	\$36.615	\$354b.	\$131,1b.	0\$	\$98,3b.	1,7%	34%
Hong Kong	\$19.446	\$115b.	5,1%	\$16.875	\$128b.	\$1,3b.	0\$	\$29,0b.	9,0%	32%
Australia	\$16.930	\$300b.	3,4%	\$14.870	\$42,8b.	-\$10,8b.	\$114,9b.	\$11,0b.	2,2%	16%
Singapore	\$16.674	\$52b.	9,2%	\$16.200	\$72,0b.	\$3,0b.	0\$	\$43,7b.	2,4%	47%
New Zealand	\$14.333	\$50b.	2,9%	\$11.500	\$10,1b.	-\$0,5b.	\$35,0b.	\$3,3b.	1,3%	20%
Malaysia	\$7.992	\$150b.	10,4%	\$3.115	\$43,5b.	-\$1,7b.	\$15,8b.	\$15,4b.	3,7%	30%
Thailand	\$5.665	\$333b.	7,4%	\$1.905	\$33,2b.	-\$7,3b.	\$37,6b.	\$23,2b.	3,6%	32%
Turkey	\$4.952	\$296b.	5,3%	\$1.910	\$14,9b.	-\$0,9b.	\$41,4b.	\$7,2b.	73,1%	17%
Shri Lanka	\$2.772	\$49b.	4,3%	\$550	\$2,4b.	-\$0,5b.	\$5,4b.	\$1,1b.	9,9%	13%
Philippines	\$2.440	\$157b.	1,7%	\$805	\$10,7b.	-\$1,1b.	\$32,0b.	\$4,9b.	8,1%	19%
P. N.-Guinea	\$2.132	\$8b.	9,0%	\$1.115	\$2,1b.	-\$0,2b.	\$2,4b.	\$0,1b.	4,7%	13%
Pakistan	\$2.124	\$261b.	3,0%	\$440	\$7,4b.	-\$2,5b.	\$18,4b.	\$0,4b.	7,5%	12%
Vietnam	\$1.263	\$91b.	8,3%	\$220	\$2,5b.	\$0,2b.	\$15,4b.	\$0,2b.	37,7%	7%
India	\$1.198	\$1.062b.	4,2%	\$310	\$19,5b.	-\$6,0b.	\$73,5b.	\$7,0b.	5,9%	19%
Burma	\$676	\$30b.	1,2%	\$250	\$0,6b.	-\$0,1b.	\$4,8b.	\$0,3b.	21,9%	13%

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the value of all goods and services produced in one year. Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) takes into account price differences between countries to provide a more accurate picture of national wealth. GDP growth is adjusted for inflation. Gross National Product (GNP) is GDP plus payments from abroad from investments, labor and minus similar payments to foreigners. Per-capita GNP is converted to U.S. dollars using average exchange rates. \$ Net creditor.

2. THE INSTITUTE IN ASIA AND OCEANIA

● PARC (Pacific-Asia Regional Conference)

The PARC Region is very extensive: it stretches from longitude 65 to 175, and latitude 45 north to 40 south. There are about 550 Brothers working in this part of the globe, where the predominant religions are Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.

PARC is comprised of the following Districts, sub-Districts and Delegations:

Districts/ sub-Districts	Towns and countries Date of 1st foundation
Australia	Sydney, Australia, (1906) Blenheim, New Zealand (1953) Yule Islands, Papua-New Guinea (1946)
Colombo/Pakistan	Colombo, Shri Lanka (1868) Multan, Pakistan (1960)

Penang	Penang, Malaysia (1852)
/Malaysia	Hong Kong (1875)
/Hong Kong	Singapore (1852)
/Singapore	Manila, Philippines (1911)
Philippines	Saigon, Vietnam (1866)
Vietnam	

Delegations	
Japan	Hakodate (1932)
Myanmar (Burma)	Rangoon (1860)
Thailand	Nakhon Sawan (1953)
India	Calcutta (1859) Madurai (1961)

● Other Delegations

Lebanon	Tripoli (1882)
Holy Land-Jordan	Jerusalem (1876)
Turkey	Izmir (1841)
New Caledonia	Robinson (1981)

There are also Vietnamese Brothers in New Caledonia. They belong officially to the Region of France.

INSTITUTE STATISTICS

DISTRICT SUB-DISTRICT PARC	Bro.	Schools							Students	Teachers	GNP US\$ per cap
		Kin	Pri	Mid	Sec	Uni	Oth	Tot			
Australia	176		4		22	1	3	4	12.610	890	14.870
Burma	20						3		100		250
Colombo/ Pakistan	69	5	9	9	9	1	4	1	16.400		550
India	13	1	4		4		1	2	3.900	180	440
India	35		1		2		2		2.000	50	310
Japan	17			1	2		3		12.000	200	36.615
Penang	49		28		19		5	42	44.109	1.879	3.115
Hong Kong	16	1	3		5			5	12.000	470	16.875
Singapore	19		4		2		1	5	7.233	317	16.200
Philippines	38	14	15		16	7	1	13	64.903	3.864	805
Thailand	12	1		3					8.420	327	1.905
Vietnam	63					1	2		400		220
Total	527	22	68	13	81	10	25	72	184.078	8.177	
Lebanon	41	4	6	7	4	1			12.181	714	\$1.800
Holy Land /Jordan	19	4	4	5	4	1	1		3.965	222	\$9.750
Turkey	6			3	3				1.800	152	\$1.730
New Caledonia	6		2						?	?	?

2. THE INSTITUTE AND THE GREAT RELIGIONS OF ASIA

A CONTINENT STILL LARGELY CLOSED TO THE FAITH?

Brother Vincent J. Corkery

Despite centuries of missionary effort, the teeming millions of Asia's vast continent have remained untouched by Christianity in any significant numbers. India with a population approaching 900 million is just 3% Christian. China with a massive 1300 million is less than 1%. And so for most other leading countries in the region such as Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Pakistan. One such notable exception is the Republic of the Philippines which is 93% Christian, another is South Korea with 30%.

Here in Asia the church encountered strong ancient cultures and highly developed religious traditions. The church's style of encounter varied from period to period, from congregation to congregation, but in general and for centuries there was an unhappy element in its missionary thrust, together with a radical rejection of all "pagan" religions. This was clearly exemplified in the zeal of St Francis Xavier and of many more who followed in his footsteps. Another complicating factor was the prolonged colonial presence and interest which included attitudes of arrogance and of cultural superiority which perhaps rubbed off on some missionaries as well.

On balance however the small numbers may not be the true index to success. For the redeeming presence of the church has "parabled" Asia's cultures and religions in a great diversity as both *salt* and *light*. And to this process the Brothers of La Salle, though few in number, have made a worthy contribution.

FATHER BEUREL AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE BROTHERS

The Brothers first arrived in Asia in 1852 when colonialism was at full tide, and their schools over the next century were confined to the new urban centres which developed with colonialism. In Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Burma, Vietnam and Hong Kong, the Brothers ran magnificent schools, often highly distinctive in architecture. Here the work of evangelisation went hand in hand with colonial culture and values, in a relationship which was sometimes uneasy, even a little volatile. The curriculum was directed basically towards preparing students for the professions, the commercial sector and government service.

The coming of the Brothers to Asia was due largely to the persevering efforts of Fr Beurel, a member of the Paris Foreign Missions (Missions Étrangères), then parish priest of Singapore. Fr Beurel, the great precursor of the Brothers in Asia, campaigned for the most of a decade to obtain the services of the Brothers. In 1848, when it looked as if he would succeed, he published his vision for the Brothers' School in a leading local newspaper as follows:

"The principles upon which [the Brothers' school] is to be conducted will be as liberal as possibly can be: thus it will be open to everyone, whatever his creed may be; and should, for instance, a boy of a persuasion different from that of Roman Catholics attend it, no interference whatever will take place with his religion, unless his parents or guardians express their wishes to have him instructed in the Catholic religion. Public religious instruction will be given to Roman Catholic boys either before or after the hours for school; but at all times the Masters will most carefully watch over the morals of the whole, whatever their religious persuasion may be."

In the early decades following their arrival, the enrolment was largely Catholic and the Brothers sought to provide quality education such that Catholic parents would not be tempted to send their children to the sometimes more prestigious Protestant schools.

A PLURALITY OF FAITHS

By the 1880's the demand for education increased among the population at large, and the Brothers were pressurised into accepting a larger proportion of non-Christians. Because of a shortage of Brothers, lay teachers were recruited. This represented a significant departure from Institute practice at that time. These lay teachers were usually Christian, but included also occasionally teachers who were Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim.

This development was seen by some as a dangerous dilution of the essentially Catholic, even "Institute," character of the school. One Brother Assistant early this century was shocked to find non-Christians among the staff and a majority among the students, and thundered: "We are Brothers of the Christian Schools, not Brothers of the Pagan schools!" He refused to send any more Brothers on the Missions. Happily he was later succeeded by an Assistant who, after visiting the Brothers in Asia, made the missions his great personal priority.

During their first century in Asia, the Brothers had no real contact with the major religions beyond the children in the classroom and a few teachers on the staff. Barriers of suspicion and prejudice were further aggravated by a rigid interpretation of the RULE which discouraged communication with "outsiders", as well as by the prevailing Church attitude of rejection, even hostility, as regards non-Christian religions.

At first religious instruction was given to Catholics only, but there came a time when others too were allowed, even encouraged, to attend religion lessons. Muslim children who, as a rule were never admitted to such classes, did occasionally take Bible knowledge which was an option for the government examination.

Conversions were generally few, but the value of a "Catholic" education was widely appreciated, and Buddhist parents in particular often asked for Catholic instruction for their children because of its moral value formation. From among these, conversions often did follow in later life; never from among Muslims.

The Brothers' school could rightly be seen to have been the standard-bearer for the Church, particularly in respect of other religions. The clergy functioned purely within the often small Catholic community. By contrast, the Brothers witnessed to the gospel in a much larger and more plural context, and thereby helped make the Church better known and give it a clear profile for selfless service and commitment.

In this plural context, ministering without distinction to people of all religions, the individual Brother was seen as a person of God, vowed to the service of youth, and he exercised an influence beyond all calculation by the witness of a life of Gospel simplicity and asceticism.

When the countries of Southeast Asia were overrun by war, the colonial establishment melted away before the Japanese advance. However it was but natural for the Brothers to



La Salle Centre, Singapore: "Datuk Tinian", bronze statue by Br Joseph McNally representing man's identification with nature: it shows man being transformed into a tree.

remain quietly at their posts and share the fate of the people they served. Many were destined to spend years in prison camps, or in malaria-infested jungles. And a group of fifteen Brothers were massacred at De La Salle University, Manila, on the very eve of liberation.

EMERGENCE OF INDEPENDENT STATES

In the post-war period independence became a new challenging reality for many countries in Asia. With national unity a crucial priority, it was seen that the Brothers' school had made a major contribution towards the growth of a sense of brotherhood among students belonging to different races and religions. In the classroom and on the playing field, friendships had developed which made for life-long understanding and co-operation. By contrast the more traditional vernacular schools were often racially-based and tended to isolate race from race, religion from religion, and thereby create barriers of prejudice and distrust.

With independence, traditional religions and cultures came into sharper focus all across Asia. Race, religion and language often came together as a political slogan, as a basis for unity. As a consequence, races, religions and languages, other than the dominant, were sometimes denied adequate recognition and this has been a major cause of continuing ethnic conflict throughout the region.

At this juncture the new openness on the part of the Church, thanks to Pope John XXIII and the Vatican Council, in particular its recognition of the rich spiritual heritage presented in other religions, came none too soon, particularly for the work of the Brothers. It was a critical development. At last the Brothers could openly affirm what for generations they had privately recognised, namely the deep spirituality and "natural" goodness found among students, staff and parents who were Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or animist. Particularly striking, in their experience, was the pervading sense of family and the abiding respect for all things spiritual.

Today the presence and witness of the Brothers varies greatly from country to country, largely according to the pattern of political evolution since obtaining independence.

THE BROTHERS IN SOUTH ASIA

In Shri Lanka where a dominant Buddhist culture is in open conflict with a large minority Hindu-based culture, the



La Salle College, Hakodate, Japan:
Statue of St John Baptist de La Salle.

Brothers, coming as they do from both sides of the racial divide, provide a truly admirable witness to brotherhood as they share the terrible anguish of ethnic tension. In a milieu which enjoy the full confidence of Buddhist and Hindu parents alike.

Deep in the slums of Colombo, the **Lasallian Community Education Services**, for more than ten years now, has been providing a great complexity of services to meet the health and educational needs of some 2,000 families of all faiths. Infant mortality, for example, which was as high as one in every ten, has long since been reduced to zero. Initiated by Brother Emmanuel, this project was designed from the very start as a Lasallian venture which would transcend notions of mere co-operation in favour of co-responsibility, involving community leaders of all religions. And even though Brother Emmanuel has always been a main inspiration and an active member of the administration team, the key post of Director is held by a lay person, a lady. Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Christians figure freely among the 60-odd lay staff and all work together in family harmony.

Pakistan is 99% Muslim, with a minority Christian Church which enjoys an exceptionally high moral profile. This is due in no small measure to its truly magnificent contribution to education, in a country where state education is available to less than 50% of the population. The Brothers run Urdu-medium schools for the poor, mostly Christians, and English-medium schools, almost totally for Muslims. It is a situation in which the evangelical witness of the Brothers is much in evidence. In **Multan**, for example, two well-to-do Muslim lady teachers on the staff, in their appreciation of the work of the Brothers, teach gratuitously, refusing to accept salaries for their services,

The Brothers returned to **South India** in the early 1960's after an absence of perhaps eighty years. They run schools and a flourishing Boys' Town. In addition they have initiated a great number of highly and timely educational projects at the level of village life, in this Hindu culture. Since the real India lives in its vast network of small villages, the Brothers' priority is to bring their living of the gospel to village life. There is daily rapport with Hindu colleagues, children and parents. At Boys' Village, for example, a number of such projects are run and here we find a balance between Catholics and Hindus among the youthful and enthusiastic staff. All alike look to St De La Salle as model, companion and inspiration in their difficult work. He is the tangible bond of their unity. At a renewal weekend, Catholics and Hindus joined most naturally in the predawn prayer meeting. And what does one say when Hindu teachers in such a context ask if **Signum Fidei** can be for them as well?

The important **Reaching the Unreached** programme of Brother James Kimpton among lepers and outcasts has inspired the Indian Brothers to their own creative response. A widely acclaimed apostolate in recent years is the **Namban** project for street children in **Madurai**, directed by a zealous young Indian Brother, as a model for a new approach in a highly challenging apostolate. While working to meet the needs of street children and gradually restore them to their families, Brother S. James and his staff maintain working



Chapel of the Little Sisters of the poor,
Singapore.
Stained glass window
by Br Joseph McNally.

relationships with Hindu religious leaders, thus helping to sensitise them to social realities and to possible action.

THE BROTHERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

In **Thailand** we meet a highly sophisticated and unified 95% Buddhist culture. The Brothers are relatively new and few. Through their splendid colleges and their work among the very poor they represent an important Christian presence. As elsewhere in Asia we meet the young Brothers who identify with their culture in new creative ways.

In both **Burma and Vietnam**, the work of the Brothers had flourished for more than a century before being overtaken by hostile political developments. In both countries, under very different conditions, they have managed to survive many hardships and now look forward to a second spring.

In **Malaysia** the dominant culture is highly Islamicised, even though Muslims are only about 54%. Here too, religion tends to be identified with race: Islam with Malays, Buddhism and Taoism with Chinese, Hinduism with Indians. All these religions are represented in considerable number among the teachers and students of the Brothers' schools. Since independence, Islam has been able to impose its will and values on national life and culture. All schools, including Catholic schools, were obliged to provide Islamic instruction for Muslim students, as well as a prayer room. At the same time severe restrictions were placed on the teaching of other religions. Staffing and student intake were controlled for the purpose of increasing the presence of Muslims in the Brothers' schools which had acquired a reputation of being prestigious. The process was gradual and effective.

The pain of these changes for the Brothers was not in vain. Working directly within the government educational system, despite greatly reduced numbers, the Brothers live and work in the very mainstream of national education, their special contribution fully recognised and appreciated.

In recent years there is an annual National Lasallian Youth Convention for teams of student leaders from all Brothers' schools. The original inspiration came from the **La Salle Asia Youth Convention** held in Manila in the Philippines' District. In Malaysia it has been adapted to students of all faiths and represents a genuine promise for the future of La Salle in this country. The programme provides for immersion in social reality, followed by reflection in the light of Lasallian spirituality. The process climaxes with individual pledges to live La Salle in their respective schools through various forms of service of others when they return.

In **Singapore**, where they first set foot on Asian soil in 1852, the Brothers today continue their special witness as they keep adjusting to a society characterised by strong futuristic trends. In addition to their long-established schools, La Salle Arts Centre has emerged as an increasingly important tertiary-level college. It has recently been invited to join the University of Singapore as its Faculty of Fine Arts. The philosophy of "LA SALLE" is perceived as refreshingly spiritual and Lasallian at the cultural heart of a society often characterised by its sheer pursuit of material success. An important feature of its policy is to preserve and enhance traditional art forms, often in danger of being superseded by the flashy products of a consumer culture.

In **Hong Kong**, the Brothers have worked since the 1860's in a purely Chinese milieu, where religion was for the home and family, and where it never became politicised as happened elsewhere in Asia. Today the Brothers' schools continue to be among the best schools, even though the number of Brothers is fast diminishing. On a rapidly approaching horizon is 1997 when the territory reverts to China. Some see this as the end; others are convinced that it will represent a new beginning.

Similarly, in **Japan**, the Brothers pursue their apostolate in a society which does not politicise religion. Even though close to 90% of the population remain staunchly Shintoist and/or

Buddhist, the Brothers have always enjoyed the affection and esteem of their almost entirely non-Christian clientele. The reinforcement of the mission in Japan by Brothers from Mexico has helped to give new life to this important Christian presence.

The Philippines is 93% Catholic. Here the Brothers run their own schools, colleges and universities, as well as offering close supervision of schools which do not belong to them, in a fully Catholic milieu - the great exception in the world of La Salle in Asia. The Brothers in other Asian countries gladly avail themselves of the fine academic resources and facilities for renewal and educational upgrading which are available, especially as these have an appropriate "Asian flavour."

LA SALLE ASIA 1993

In November 1993, Malaysia hosted the 3rd LA SALLE ASIA for student leaders from the Asia-Pacific Region. The theme was expressed as: "Share the pain, share the dream." A perusal of the objectives will reveal something of the present Lasallian style of relating with the other great religions in many parts of Asia. The objectives are as follows:

1. Faith Dimension:

To sensitise us to our personal faith journey and celebrate our diverse spiritual traditions.

2. Lasallian Heritage

To develop our sense of solidarity within the Lasallian Family.

3. Reality

To awaken us to the cries, concerns and challenges con-

fronting the peoples of our region, especially the youth and the poor.

4. Vision

To commit ourselves as agents of change within the reality in our local situation.

5. Action

To identify and encourage Lasallian-style initiatives to celebrate persons.

Criteria for selection:

Youth aged 16 to 20

Must have been involved with leadership at fairly mature level

Can continue to contribute leadership upon return

Without regard to race or religion

CONCLUSION

In 1976 the Asian Bishops' Conference chose Dialogue with other religions as one of four major pastoral priorities. They envisaged dialogue at many levels. The one which Lasallian experience has found most productive has been the dialogue of life, namely the daily working together with peoples of all faiths within the educative community, in a spirit of fraternity and co-responsibility. It is dialogue of mutual evangelisation, as we learn to respect and appreciate the spiritual values which animate decisions and actions, but also a dialogue in which, in a very special way, our Lasallian charism for brotherhood finds creative expression. It is a style of dialogue which can leave us feeling very humble. ●



Chapel of the Divine Child, Singapore: the "Bethlehem Window", completed in 1986 by Br Joseph McNally and students of the Fine Arts department.

3. EDUCATION IN PACIFIC ASIA

1. Introduction

In attempting to give a thumbnail sketch of present realities and future prospects of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the work of education in Pacific Asia, one must bear in mind that in this part of the world, what the United Nations earlier referred to as the Asia and the Pacific (ASPAC) region, there has arisen a new consciousness within the past ten years of what is increasingly coming to be known as the Pacific Rim which covers the entire area washed by the waters of the Pacific, from the West Coast of the United States and of Chile and Mexico to Mainland Asia and the islands in the Pacific.

In the self-image of a substantial number of inhabitants in these different countries, the twenty-first century will be the Pacific Century, with economic leadership exercised principally by Japan and the so-called "tiger economies" of Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea and the emerging economies of Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Moreover, the vast economic potential of the People's Republic of China and Vietnam are expected to be realized in the same period.

In speaking of the Pacific Century, one must likewise remember that the emerging human person in this area will be *Homo Pacificus*, a blend of the East in his culture and value system and of the West in his mastery of science and technology initially borrowed from the West.

The Pacific Area is the fastest growing economic area in the world with a population of over two billion; it represents a potentially huge market and a capacity for production that will be a competitor to both the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and the European Union (EU) through its own economic union known as the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the larger though still controversial Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group.

2. Present Realities in Education

In the field of education, the countries in the Pacific Asia area represent developments stemming for the most part from a colonial tradition or a tradition affected by the West through cultural influence (even if the country itself was spared the experience of colonialism). One thinks of Thailand, never colonized, but until the post-War period deriving its education model from France. The other countries based their educational models on either the British tradition (the Commonwealth countries) or the American tradition (the Philippines, and more recently, after the period of colonization, countries such as Indonesia and recently Thailand as well as Taiwan and South Korea).

The prevailing educational model while derived in its basic structure from a colonial model has been engaged in the process of decolonization or more positively, indigenization. The primary goal of education is practical in nature, with emphasis on vocational and technical orientations rather than the humanistic liberal tradition. Curricula have been indigenized to reflect local rather than the colonizing countries' content; emphasis is on local culture and heroes; while the value of English has not lost its adherents (in fact, in former Francophone countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia, English has become the major foreign language to be learned), there is likewise a justly deserved emphasis on local languages, many of which have become national languages and are undergoing cultivation as media of instruction in schools. Many national languages are still in the process of cultivation as languages of academic discourse and hence lack proper library support for use as languages of higher education.

In line with the immediate history of these countries as well as political features (mostly of State control and a highly centralized authoritarian government with some of the trappings of Western democracy), there is continuing or even increasing state control of education at all levels. Thus a typology is possible whereby from the point of view of state

control, one has several types: (1) highly controlled countries such as the People's Republic of China, Taiwan; (2) countries such as New Zealand, South Korea, Japan; (3) Philippines where private education is increasingly being allowed: Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore; (4) countries where private education is increasingly being disallowed: Malaysia; (5) countries where private education is not allowed although there is no adverse campaign against other religions, as in Taiwan.



Yuji, a pupil of the Brothers in Japan, proudly displays the primary school certificate he has just obtained.

The existence of private education and the state policy towards private education has much to do with the future of religiously affiliated schools in the region; moreover, while some countries allow private education at the general education (primary and secondary) level, some do not, as Commonwealth countries do not, while in other countries, private initiatives at the tertiary level are now being allowed because of the inability of the state to supply needs of higher education (as in Thailand and Indonesia). Moreover, in some countries, while private education is allowed, there is no state aid of any kind, thus obliging private education agencies to raise money through tuition with the consequent effects of this policy on the socio-economic level of the clientele.

For the Brothers working in these countries (Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia (East and West), the Philippines,

New Caledonia, Australia and New Zealand), the United States (West Coast) and parts of South America (Chile and Mexico), the concentration of educational activities has for education with tertiary education widespread only in the Philippines, the United States, Mexico; at one time there was a teacher education institution and a junior college in Malaysia and Singapore; in Australia, a Brothers' teacher training college became a member college of a new Catholic University; in Papua New Guinea, the Brothers run a teacher training college.

The funding for these Brothers' institutions is varied from complete tuition-based operations (as in the Philippines and Thailand) to state-aided education (as in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea). Funding of course implies a range of control from very benign to increasing ideological domination (as in Papua New Guinea, Australia and Singapore on the one hand; East and West Malaysia on the other hand).

The future of the Brothers' work in these countries differs from country to country in the light of the social and political realities of each state. The common threads are the lack of manpower (vocations) to carry on the work in the traditional manner, the relative ineffectiveness of some institutions to become agents of social change especially in poorer countries, the accusation (subject to qualification) that some institutions have become instruments of the status quo rather than agents to change and are therefore continuing agents of cultural (if not political) imperialism, the failure of some institutions and districts to adjust their apostolates to the emerging social and economic realities leading to their irrelevance and eventual extinction, and most important of all, the failure of some institutions to adapt in sufficient time to adjust to the emerging educational needs of these countries, especially needs for nonformal education in complementation with the traditional school-based apostolates.

3. Future Prospects

The prospects for the Pacific-Asia are quite bright; already signs are present of the emerging prosperity and prospective economic leadership through the use of a free-market economic model in a highly centralized authoritarian cultural matrix.

Moreover, the cliché that prosperity necessarily brings about secularization based on the experience of Europe is not borne out in the region. Side by side with the new prosperity is an expansion of formal religion (as in South Korea) or a continuing faith (in the form of folk religion) as in the Philippines, and more particularly, because of its nonChristian tradition, Japan. traditional religions are quite stable in Thailand, Burma, and Indonesia, with a fundamentalism movement, however, in Islamic Malaysia.

One foresees that in a decade, the problem of subsistence living, and the proportion of populations living below the poverty line, will have seen some relief if not outright solution.

There will be a large population of young people to educate and there is tremendous value placed on education as a means of managing poverty and ensuring prosperity through the use of science and technology. Portions of each country's budget for education and science will increase, not decrease, with education regarded as one of the most powerful instruments for speeding up socio-economic development. With the prosperity, however, will arise social problems at least among a significant minority of students dropping out of the system and losing faith in the political structure. The needs of out-of-school youth through nonformal education means must be met. Moreover, there is need for the continuing education or lifelong education of adults, especially to help them cope with social changes in the even more rapidly changing world of the twenty-first century. Above all, in the midst of the new-found prosperity, some marginalized people will continue to need help. On the other hand, those for whom the problem of poverty has been solved will still need to find meaning in life through a form of lifelong education or what UNESCO calls "Education to Be." Higher education which will be focused on attainment of specific skills and competencies, based on a general education founded on the liberal arts, now enculturated, will continue to be in demand.

In the religious sphere, one foresees the urgency of developing a new paradigm of religious education in line with the need for continuing religious and values education among a twenty-first century scientifically literate and very-well educated population planning for future generation. One foresees that this education will be ecumenically oriented based on a pluralistic world and evoke faith in a contemporary scientific age with the empowerment of the laity in a clericalized Church.

For the Brothers in this part of the world, which will become the center of economic (hopefully not military) leadership in the world, where the majority do not subscribe to Christian tenets although they are sympathetic with them and are eager to work with Christians, the biggest constraint will be the vocation constraint since the numbers of our religious fraternity will most likely continue to be limited, even reduced, at least in the short term.

However, as the Spirit clearly indicates to us these days, the lack of Brothers should not be a constraint to expansion for the Kingdom of God on earth if we continue to recruit,

train, empower our lay peers in Lasallian and Signum Fidei groups.

The needs are there, the means to meet these needs will have to be nontraditional and adapted to contemporary realities. The Brothers work with their lay peers, not subordinates, and form Lasallian communities of faith with married and single colleagues as well as religious cooperating in the field of education to meet the demands of twenty-first century *Homo Pacificus*. In an ecumenical age which has had a long tradition of religiosity and with varied Asian traditions, the contextualization of the faith will have to be done under the assumption of nonexclusivity and a faith seeking understanding of the plan of God on earth for non-Christian peoples and their religious traditions and comprehension of how these plans jibe with the continuing salvation history of Christians.

Under this new paradigm, one foresees expansion of Christian-influenced and Christian-oriented if not explicitly Christian schools manned by Christian and non Christian colleagues who have a sympathetic understanding of the religious tradition.

These schools, of varied forms, formal and nonformal, initial, continuing, specialized, will move towards education fitted to the needs of the population instead of increasing the educated unemployed. It will be particularly oriented towards science and technology in complementation with the traditional humanistic style of education. The liberal arts must be defined in the Pacific Asia context. Education for multilingualism and multiculturalism will be the rule rather than the exception.

For this the Brothers must be trained beyond traditional teacher training schools for highly specialized teaching; they have to focus on educational problems where they can exercise leadership position even if limited.

If the Brothers meet the challenges and demands of twenty-first century *Homo Pacificus*, the continuing relevance of the fraternity founded by John Baptist de La Salle will be something to be expected and the dawn of a new age something to be welcomed rather than faced with apprehension. ●

Bro. Andrew Gonzalez



La Salle Centre, Singapore: Fine Arts students using computers to prepare their projects.



La Salle Middle School, Kagoshima, Japan.

4. THE LASALLIAN FAMILY IN THE PACIFIC-ASIA REGION

Our recent 42nd General Chapter gave the following definition of the Lasallian Family:

"The expression "LASALLIAN FAMILY" designates all those who participate in the Lasallian educational enterprise, especially those who are moving toward a sharing of the spirit and the mission of St. John Baptist de La Salle." (Circ 435 p. 49)

In the region of Pacific-Asia the Lasallian Family manifests itself in a rich diversity of groups and a multitude of persons who participate in different Lasallian works and programmes. Ever since the first Brothers arrived in Singapore in 1852 to open the first Lasallian school, the task of running educational centres in Asia always involved the participation and commitment of other educators. Today the staffs of our schools and other kinds of educational centres, are made up of persons from a rich variety of backgrounds, skills and training: different world religions (Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Shinto), different ethnic roots (Chinese, Indian, Malay, Sinhala, European, Papuan...), different socio-economic classes, and, of course, different academic disciplines...

FROM A COMMON OCCUPATION TO A SHARED MISSION

Over the course of almost 150 years of shared history, this partnership has grown from a shared profession into a sense of shared mission. Asia has always given an honored place to education and to educators. Education is the recognized path to growth and social mobility. With traditionally large and extended families, schools in Asia-Pacific always tend to overflow with young people. Consequently when the Brothers opened their classroom doors it did not take long before the classes were filled to overflowing.



The paucity of Brothers immediately raised the question of whether to hire lay teachers or not. It seems the Brothers did not waste time deciding this. Almost in every apostolic work they started, they immediately accepted lay teachers as their partners (exclusively male at first, ladies much later). And there was no shortage of teachers because of the esteem in which the teaching profession is generally held in the region. This is seen, e.g., in the great reverence in which teachers are held in Thailand and Japan. Among Asians of Chinese origin, the Confucian tradition of respect for one's teacher, is further re-inforced by the ideal of developing a master-disciple relationship between teacher and pupil.

But no matter what their background, one finds in the majority of our colleagues a commitment to the educational goals of the work they belong to, and a sincere desire to maintain the high quality of service for which our Lasallian institutions are known. Not all our colleagues are on the same level in terms of their understanding of, and acquaintance with, Lasallian values and ideals. Because of the religious backgrounds of our colleagues, it is not uncommon that many of them first get to know De La Salle, and only later do they become better acquainted with Jesus. A lot depends on the type and frequency of formative programs offered to them. With the importance given to Lasallian formation in the Institute, more programs are being implemented to strengthen the Lasallian awareness and commitment to the shared mission among these different members of the Lasallian Family.



Whether it's the Philippines or Penang, everywhere the Lasallian Family is being built up through the shared mission.



MEMBERS OF THE LASALLIAN FAMILY

Using the categories of the 42nd General Chapter, here are the members of the Lasallian Family in Pacific-Asia and the mission they share.

1. "Men and women who are committed by reason of their profession or ministry, such as teachers and other educators"

The average Lasallian school in Pacific-Asia (PARC) would offer an elementary and secondary education to upwards of 1300 students, staffed by 3 to 4 Brothers, 2 or more lay administrators, and anywhere between 30 to 50 lay teachers. The membership of the staff would reflect the religious and cultural makeup of the country: predominantly Shinto in Japan, Buddhist in Thailand, Hindu in India, Muslim in Pakistan and Malaysia, Protestant in Australia, members of the traditional religions of Papua-New Guinea, and Catholic in the Philippines, or a mixture of many of these in Shri Lanka and Singapore. In a few places one may find a resident chaplain and religious of other congregations as members of the staff.

In Singapore, Australia, India, the Philippines and Pakistan we have junior colleges or pre-university and university programs. In the Philippines there are two universities named

after the Founder. In more and more of these and other institutions, the administration is in the hands of a board of trustees, which includes Brothers, lay persons, religious and clerics. In Australia, Shri Lanka and India the Brothers and numerous partners keep Boys' Towns, and similar programs, running smoothly. The same cooperative spirit is found in The Institute of Spiritual Formation in Asia (ISFA), an Institute set up and maintained by the District of Colombo (Sri Lanka) which allows religious and diocesan priests to attend courses and receive graduate degrees and certificates.

In Lashio (Myanmar), Khushpur (Pakistan), in Hochiminh-Ville (Vietnam), and in Manila (Philippines) Brothers and their colleagues from different vocational callings work together to run centres for the training of lay catechists. These lay apostles play a critical role in the building up of the local Church, or the re-birth of its parishes, like the work of the catechists the Vietnamese Brothers work with in the parishes of Hochimin-Ville (Saigon), Nhatrang and Banmêthuôt.

Partnership with other dedicated persons, no matter what their religion, has allowed other types of educational centres and programs to spring up, to survive or to expand in response to new or continuing educational needs of persons. The Australian District has opened centres for indigenous groups in western Australia and maintains a teacher-training college in Papua-New Guinea. These offer programs suited to the special needs of their people.

When the government nationalized education in Shri Lanka, a few of the Brothers' schools decided to remain

private. They could not formally charge tuition fees. The associations of former students organized themselves as the schools running. In Australia a growing number of Lasallians are involved in HELP LINE: a free telephone service for children and youth in need of guidance or counseling has grown into a nationwide program. In the slums of Colombo members of the Lasallian Community Educational Services offer nursery and elementary education, pre and post-natal care education for mothers, livelihood skills (like sewing, carpentry, welding) to youth of urban slums.

In India our Lasallian centres have outreach programs serving the educational needs of youth and adults living in the surrounding villages.

In Madurai (India) and Bacolod and Quezon City (Philippines) Lasallian street educators establish contact with street and working children, gradually leading them to find help and to leave the streets. In two La Salle schools in Thailand, such children are offered a place to stay and the opportunity to attend a regular secondary school.

The Philippines has 7 schools which have a Brothers' community. However there are 12 other schools which belong to the Philippine La Salle Supervised School System. These schools are run and managed by lay partners. They are schools for the working class and the poor supported by subsidies from private companies, or maintained by tuition fees which are scaled according to the parents' financial capabilities. These schools have a formal contract of supervision either with the District, or a school with Brothers on the staff. A supervisor, Brother or lay partner, visits the school at least once a month to supervise its academic, administrative and Lasallian programs; coordinate the continuing professional and religious development of the staff; and maintain the links of the school with other Lasallian schools. But all consider themselves "Lasallian schools" and participate actively in joint faculty and students activities among the schools. This system of supervised schools incorporates another 788 lay and religious colleagues, and 15,914 students into the Philippine Lasallian Family.

2. "Some men and women who have made a total commitment by vows in a Lasallian Institute of Consecrated Life"

The La Salle Sisters founded in Vietnam are beginning to receive new vocations in Vietnam and to increase their numbers in Thailand. Seven Thai Sisters and three postulants work side by side with the Brothers in our school in Bangkok. The La Salle Guadalupana Sisters, founded in Mexico, are on the staff of the University of St. La Salle in Bacolod, Philippines. They now have local vocations.

3. "Men and women who have made a commitment in some form of lay association, such as the Signum Fidei"

Some PARC sectors have well-established groups or associations among their staff to foster their continuing professional formation. Some sectors invite staff members to voluntary membership in groups which meet for prayer and other spiritual activities. This is done with great sensitivity to the local religious situation. The Signum Fidei movement has been most successful in the Philippines where a local chapter can be found in more than 12 Lasallian schools. Members number between 6 to 40 in each chapter. They include faculty members, administrators, service personnel and a few parents. They have undergone a period of formation and decided to commit themselves to deepen their Christian and Lasallian identity, and to be "signs of faith" in their place of work, especially through some educational activity. They have successfully staged two national assemblies these past 4 years with the enthusiastic participation from all the chapters.

4. "Men and women who are committed only for a limited period, such as Lasallian volunteers, Young Lasallians, etc."

The following sectors of PARC have held at least one national assembly or congress of Lasallian Youth: Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines. The PARC Region has sponsored three regional assemblies of Lasallian Youth. Such assemblies have sparked a deeper sense of identity among students and young Lasallians: leading some to greater sense of mission either among their peers, or in involving themselves in the outreach programs of their schools. Some Lasallian schools in the Philippines and Australia have volunteer programs of varying durations available to students and faculty members. ●

Brother Raymundo Suplido



Together and by association, a new world of love, justice and peace is being built up.
Assembly at the La Salle Urdu School, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

5. DISTRICT OF AUSTRALIA

1. Geographical:

The District of Australia includes Lasallian establishments in Papua New Guinea and New Zealand as well as in Australia itself; geographically this represents a vast expanse, greater than the whole of Europe. All three countries have evolved from being British colonies or dependencies to being independent Commonwealths within the wider British Commonwealth. For the greater part of this century, until 1975, P N G was a dependency of Australia.

Australia and New Zealand until recently were both high on the First World level of standards of living and social services; in the past decade, however, owing largely to the decline in values of the export of their primary products, both countries have slipped considerably and are now rated much lower. Though P N G is a Third World country, it ranks among the highest of such countries, being abundantly self-sufficient at the subsistence level.

The populations of these countries are roughly: Australia 17 m., N.Z. 4 m., P N G 4 m. In Australia the Catholic population is over 25%; in N Z, 10-15%; in P N G, some 40%.



In Australia the Catholic school system is independent of the state, but is generously (though not completely) aided by the Governments, State and Federal; in N Z and in P N G the Catholic schools are integrated within the wider national systems.

2. History:

The Australian District was founded at the end of 1905 by a joint venture of eleven Brothers from the Irish District and the District of Nantes. Owing, however, to misunderstandings and lack of comprehension on the part of the largely Irish clergy, the French Brothers soon withdrew (most of them establishing themselves in the Districts of Penang or Colombo). The five Irish Brothers remained (cf. Rigault *Le Temps de la Secularisation*, 1991, p.74). Other Brothers soon came from Ireland to join them; between 1906 and 1937 some eighty Irish Brothers served in the Australian District. At present there are only four Irish Brothers remaining: all the others are nationals of Australia, N Z or P N G. The Australian Brothers have themselves become missionary: not only have they served in P N G for nearly half a century; but over the years the District has sent several volunteers to Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines; most recently one of the Australian Brothers has responded to an appeal to head one of our schools in South Africa.

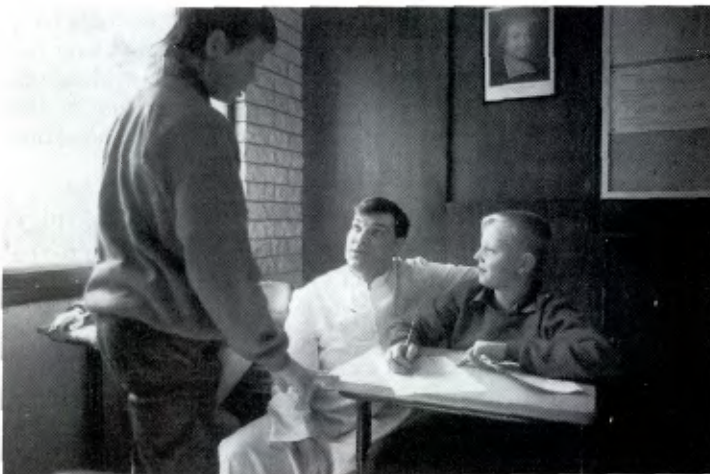
Australia has been an independent District since 1913, gradually extending its establishments throughout the country and later into P N G (1946) and N Z (1953). This expansion was possible owing to the considerable number of vocations in the '50's and '60's. Numbers in the Australian District peaked in 1967 at exactly 300 Brothers. Since then, however, there has been a steady decline in numbers and an accompanying rise in the age level; this has necessitated the Brothers withdrawing from many of their establishments. The District now numbers about 180 Brothers, many of whom (more than 50) are above the accepted retiring age of 65.



Some Brothers from the community of Boys' Town, Beaudesert, Queensland.



Frawley College, Scarborough, Queensland: Brothers Dominic and Anthony speaking with two students.



Boys' Town, Beaudesert, Queensland: the tutorial system is used here.

3. Works: Schools:

At the moment there are 26 communities and some 20 schools, nearly all of which are secondary. This includes two full secondary establishments in NZ and three junior secondary schools in P N G. In Australia itself the Brothers direct 12 schools, nearly all of them full secondary High Schools.

Formerly the Brothers conducted several boarding schools; there now remain, however, outside of the P N G establishments, where secondary schooling generally requires that students be in residence, only two boarding schools, one in Melbourne, the other at New Plymouth, N.Z.

The Brothers, through the development of their former Scholasticate (De La Salle Training College, Castle Hill) have played a large part in the evolution of the Australian Catholic University which was opened in 1991; its first Vice-Chancellor is an Old Boy of the Brothers. There is, however, only one Brother now working at that level.

Special Educational Works:

Prominent among the present works of the Brothers is the **Boys Town** complex: founded in southern Queensland in the late 1950's, after an earlier similar venture in Sydney in the 1940's. **Boys Town**, Beaudesert, affords special education and guidance to boys and adolescents most of whom have already come into conflict with the law. **Boys Town** has been generously supported not only by private charity but by the State government of Queensland and has now become a massive and extended enterprise with all kinds of ancillary support services; most prominent among which is **Kids' Life Line** designed to afford immediate direction and help to children and young people, girls and boys, who are victims of abuse of any kind.

The main complex, situated in a beautiful rural area of south-east Queensland, attempts to provide the boys with a basic education as well as developing or restoring their self-confidence and helping them to re-integrate into normal society.

A similar work, established in the late 1970's is **San Miguel, Kurmond, N.S.W.** Here the Brothers direct what was originally designed as a **Crisis Centre**: to provide fathers or mothers and families with short-term accommodation when, for whatever reason, families had broken up. While continuing to serve this purpose, it now extends its activities to include re-training courses for the unemployed of all ages.

Like **Boys Town**, Beaudesert, **San Miguel Crisis Centre** has attracted considerable support from charitable organisations, non-Catholic as well Catholic. It has also been greatly assisted by special grants from the State Government of N S W. It continues to grow and, in a time of economic hardship such as the present, affords ready and much appreciated help to many people: families, parents, children.

For the past decade and more the Brothers have devoted much of their resources to the Aboriginal Mission in the far north-western part of the continent. At Derby, W.A., the Brothers have the direction of the local primary school; while, in the deep interior, they have charge of two schools for the children of Aboriginal people who still largely maintain their traditional style of life.



San Miguel Family Crisis Centre, Kurmond, NSW: parents and children.



The community at Marrickville, Sydney, NSW.

4. PNG Mission:

In 1946 the Brothers worked on the Papuan coast in collaboration with the French M S C missionaries; at the end of the 1960s they moved into the mountain interior where the missionaries mainly belong to the S V D. At present there are some twenty-seven Brothers working in five different establishments. Despite the dwindling total of effectives among the Brothers, the Australian District has maintained and even increased its numbers in the PNG sector.

Although over the past forty years there have been numerous entries into the Brothers - more than forty have received the Habit and some thirty have made first vows - none, excepting the first applicant, have persevered. In recent years a new start has been made and at the moment there are four national Brothers in temporary profession and four novices; there is also a large group of Aspirants.

As initiation into the life and work of the Brothers, the Aspirants are engaged in various types of "non-formal" education in the squatter settlements around Port Moresby; they teach basic literacy and numeracy as well as giving religious instruction to children and youths who cannot find a place in the schools. Because of their fluency in the *lingua franca*, Pidgin, or Tok Pisin, they are better able to do this than are most of the Brothers.



Brothers John Johnston, Superior General, and Gerard Rummery, General Councillor, with senior pupils from the Mainohana High School, Papua-New Guinea.

5. Other works:

Another interesting enterprise is *Villa La Salle*, a Retirement Village for the elderly, established and run by the Brothers, which includes also residential provision for some dozen or so senior Brothers who constitute a community, while sharing all the facilities of the complex; as well as offering the other residents a part in their own liturgical and community prayer life.

On the South (Pacific) Coast of N S W the Brothers conduct a *Lasallian Centre* which serves the District as a locale for retreats and renewal sessions; it acts, too, as a staff



Sydney, NSW: jubilee celebrations.



The kindergarten at Six Mile Settlement, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea: the aspirant, Mark Sonny, with the "Big Book" and children from the kindergarten.



Tapini, Papua-New Guinea: the Brothers' house.

development centre, serving mainly but not only our own establishments. It also welcomes Brothers from other parts of the Asian-Pacific Region to its renewal sessions and retreats.

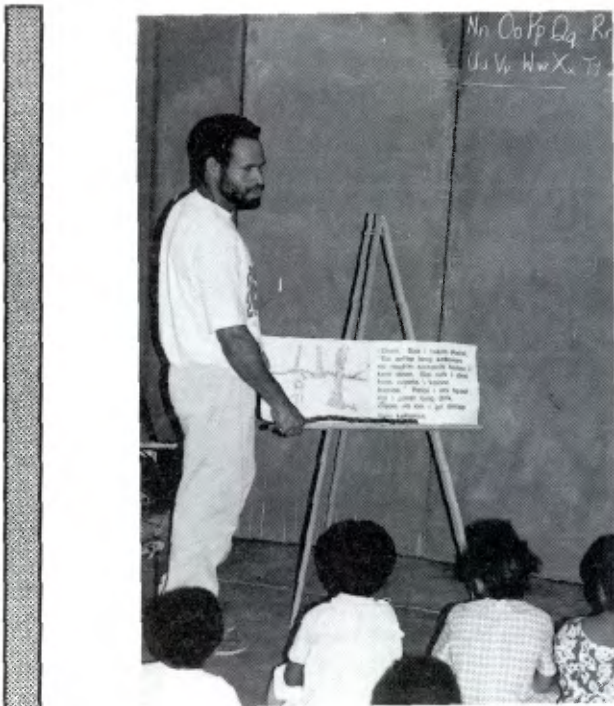
6. Formation:

For the past several years, despite vigorous vocation promotion activity, there have been no applicants in Australia or N Z; a novitiate, however, has been running for three years in P N G where, at the moment, there are two First Year and two Second Year Novices.

The grand and beautiful Training College complex, at Castle Hill, N.S.W., built in 1935/36 to house Juniorate, Novitiate and Scholasticate, now serves (as mentioned earlier) as one of the campuses of the Australian Catholic University.

Many of the Brothers' former pupils (Old Boys) have achieved distinction in the Church and in secular professions. The FSC number three of the present Bishops among their past pupils, and the present Prime Minister, Paul Keating, is a former pupil of the Brothers in Sydney. There are several other Old Boys who are ministers of the State or Federal Governments. ●

Br. Christian Moe.



Six Mile Settlement, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea: aspirant, John Wamil, teaching "Tok Pidgin".



The school at Mainohana, Papua-New Guinea: Br Superior addressing the pupils.



Holy Rosary High School, Papua-New Guinea: Brothers John Johnston, Superior General, and Gerard Rummery, General Councillor, with headmasters Edward Becker and Bede Makrell, attending a Culture Day.

6. DISTRICT OF COLOMBO

SHRI LANKA

According to Marco Polo, Sri Lanka was undoubtedly the finest island of its size in all the world. With a tropical climate and sparkling under year-round sunshine, Sri Lanka (formerly called Ceylon) has an area of 65,610 square kilometres and measures approximately 435 kilometres North to South and 225 kilometres East to West at its largest points. The population is estimated at over 17 million, of whom 74% are Sinhalese. Tamils make up about 18%, with Muslims and Burghers (descendants from Dutch and Portuguese colonists) forming the rest.

Sri Lanka is a multi-religious community of Buddhists (69%), Hindus (15.4%), Muslims (7.6%) and Christians (7.4%).

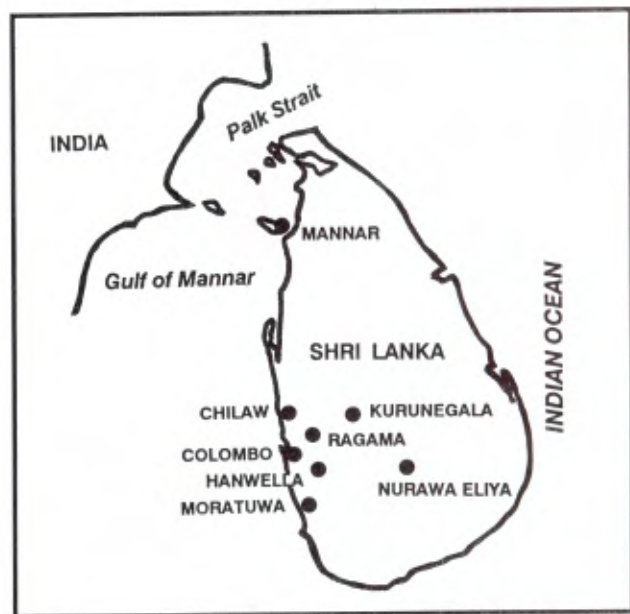
The Sri Lankan economy is based on agriculture and trade. The main exports are tea, rubber, coconut, gemstones and garments.

Sri Lanka is governed by an elected executive President who appoints the Prime Minister and Cabinet from the party winning the General Election (last held in 1989). Sri Lanka gained her independence from Britain in 1948 and became a Republic in 1972.

OVERVIEW OF THE DISTRICT OF COLOMBO

The Brother's oldest institution, St. Benedict's College, Colombo, dates back to January 1867 when the Benedictine Fathers handed over their fledgling school to them. This 127-year-old school now has a total of 2,500 pupils and a staff of over a hundred. It is considered one of the more prestigious schools of the island, but caters to the lower middle class families of the metropolis and its suburbs. The glory of St. Benedict's has been, as one of its world-famous alumni declared in public, to educate children of the lower classes and fit them to rub shoulders with those of the higher classes of Sri Lankan society.

What is called St. Joseph's Novitiate in Colombo was acquired by the Brothers in 1884. It served as the centre of formation, hence its name, and has for the past century or so



been the Mother House of the Brothers of the island. The provincial resides there; so do the Scholastics and Aspirants. It has, off and on, sheltered some of the elderly, as its site by the sea caters to their health needs.

Neighbouring the Mother House of the Brothers is De La Salle College, founded in 1905 to serve the children of the poor of the zone known as Colombo 15, the least favoured of the 15 zones of the metropolis.

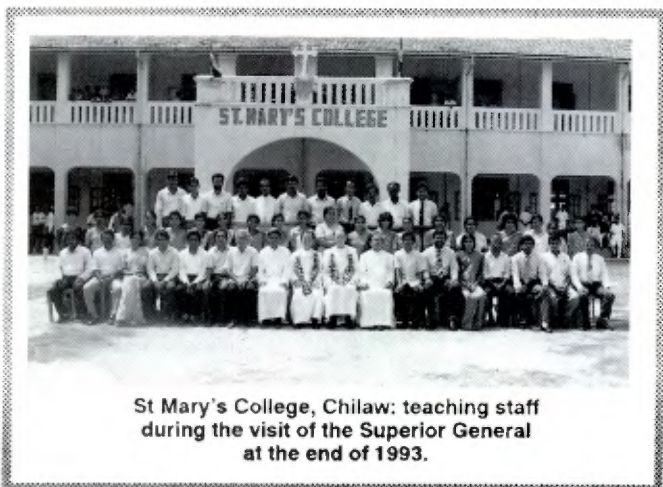
In the same year, the Brothers took over the parish school of Grandpass, two kilometres away from De La Salle. This school also serves the poor. Another school of the same type, Saint Mary's, located in the heart of the metropolis called Pettah, was acquired by the Brothers and run very effectively from 1920 to 1940. Circumstances did not permit its continuance beyond these twenty years, and many are the admirers of the Brothers who lament its suppression.

Besides St. Mary's in Pettah, the Brothers once had under their tutelage schools in Negombo, Bandarawela, Badulla, Puttalam and Kotahena which circumstances required them to hand over to other competent authorities.

The Brothers moved into the provinces with the establishment of St. Sebastian's College at Moratuwa, a fashionable town 20 kilometres to the north of Colombo. This school, like St. Benedict's, caters to the lower middle classes and shares with her brother school similar prestige. Of the same type is De Mazenod College, Kandana, 12 kilometres north of the capital. It has a student population of over 3,000 and a staff of 130 men and women.

Further to the north is St. Mary's College in Chilaw, an important provincial fishing town on the seacoast. About 70% of its people are Catholics, most of them occupied in the fishing industry. The school, begun 60 years ago, includes many priests, religious, doctors, lawyers, engineers, politicians and teachers among its Old Students. Since 1933, St. Mary's College has brought prestige to church and city and remains today an enviable centre of education. St. Mary's is at the moment a Government School and the Brothers are often praised by the Education Ministry for the good the College is doing for society in general.

St. Anne's College in Kurunegala, a famed royal city, welcomed the Brothers in 1934. Like its counterpart in Chilaw, St. Anne's was and is a beacon light of education in the North Western province of the island.



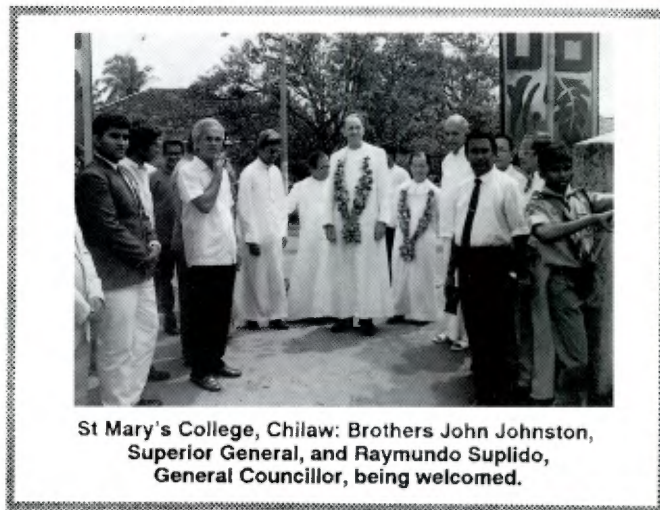
St Mary's College, Chilaw: teaching staff during the visit of the Superior General at the end of 1993.

St. Anthony's College in Wattala came into existence at the historic World War II period of 1942. It is now a large state school with over 3,000 pupils enjoying its justified fame.

In the late 1950s the Brothers ventured to the almost extreme North, Mannar, where a school of smaller proportions but of great worth witnesses by its uplifting influence on all the population in and around the island. Despite the difficult situation due to the ethnic conflicts in the North, five Brothers valiantly live out their Lasallian vocation to serve the people all around them. Mannar feels deeply indebted to the Brothers of then and now.

Following their Founder's wide path of vision, the Brothers of Shri Lanka expanded their apostolic zeal to non-formal education and thus in 1959 founded the Diyagala Boys' Town for the education of poor children deprived of the best in life. Its extensions at Kotahena, Pallama, Nuwara Eliya, Halgashena and Muwathagama are an indication how much needed is the Brothers' educational ministry to the artisans and the poor.

In 1960 the Sodality of the former pupils of the Brothers of Mutwal (Colombo) established the Mission to the Poorest, a



St Mary's College, Chilaw: Brothers John Johnston, Superior General, and Raymundo Suplido, General Councillor, being welcomed.

centre in Mutwal which provides vocational guidance to the poor.

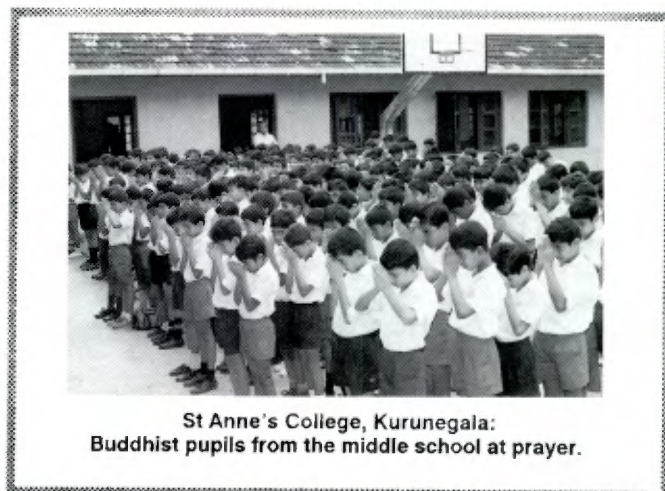
La Salle Institute, founded in 1971, is another non-formal centre of education of varying types for the ordinary people of the metropolitan area.

The Lasallian Community Educational Services (LCES), established in 1987, is unique in its focus on the human and Christian development of children and adults living in the slums. LCES has an extensive curriculum and with the help of government and foreign aid does tremendous good both educationally and physically for a large segment of the Colombo North area who otherwise would be street dwellers exposed to all sorts of crime.

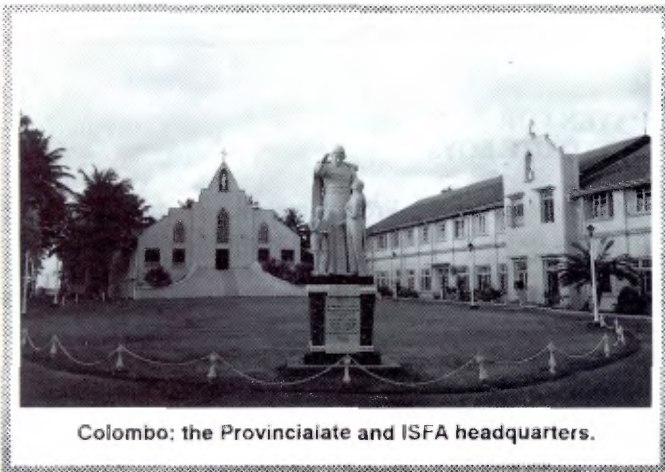
The Colombo District expanded into the sub-continent of Asia by establishing works in Pakistan in 1959 and by re-establishing the Institute in South India in 1960. Around a dozen Brothers work in the Sub-District of Pakistan. About three dozen Brothers are building up the Institute in the Delegation of India.

A significant milestone in the educational history of the Brothers in Shri Lanka was the government's takeover of all grade 2 and 3 schools in 1960, leaving alone the grade 1 schools if they wished to eke out a precarious existence without state aid in any form.

Some of the Brothers' schools were taken over immediately; a few attempted to continue as private schools for some time and in despair went over to state tutelage. Today the



St Anne's College, Kurunegala: Buddhist pupils from the middle school at prayer.



Colombo: the Provincialiate and ISFA headquarters.

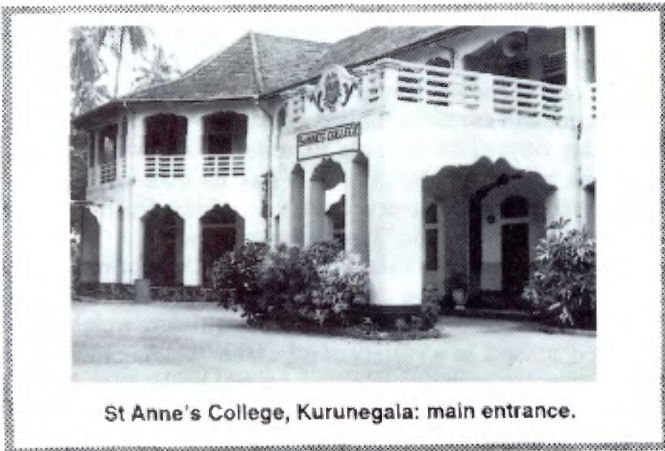
District has three partially state-aided private schools enjoying prestige in Sri Lanka's educational ambiance and five state schools where at least a few Brothers exert some Lasallian influence. The non-formal educational centres are vigorous.

The vexing problem right now is the lack of Lasallian personnel. The state schools have just one or two Brothers each within the state-approved cadre, while the private schools have four to five Brothers each on the state-approved list. Vocations are hard to come by, despite valiant efforts on the part of some young Brothers in their regular recruiting campaigns. However, the recent inspiration of the Shared Mission holds out the hope of exercising our Lasallian apostolate with renewed vigour despite the diminishing number of Brothers.

The selected examples that follow indicate the sizable context in which the De La Salle Brothers of this remote isle exercise their consecration.

ST. ANNE'S COLLEGE, KURUNEGALA

This secondary school, a pioneer Catholic school in the North Western Province of the island, is in its 59th year of existence. The royal city of Kurunegala is the capital of the province where this Lasallian centre of education remains to this day a mighty citadel of Christian education. Old Annites



St Anne's College, Kurunegala: main entrance.

spread over the world and the island speak of their alma mater in glowing terms. In the 1950s and 1960s, St. Anne's University Entrance results hit the headlines. (A school seems to gain popularity with examination results in the educated ambiance of our cities. It is questionable whether this is the correct yard-stick, in the context of holistic Lasallian education.) St. Anne's today also speaks for its wholesome mores of typical Lasallian personality formation.

The number on its roll is 2,162, with Buddhists representing 53%, Christians 40% and Muslims 6%, and the remaining 1% including Hindus and others. Thus the ecumenical environment lends itself to a thorough formation in human ethics. From this perspective, St. Anne's is a beacon light to its sister and brother schools of the North Western province. Indeed the De La Salle Brothers through the years have had a deeply leavening influence on this vastly Buddhist and staunchly Sinhala province of the island. The community comprises three Brothers. Over one hundred lay men and women occupy posts of responsibility and administration. St. Anne's is a school where the Shared Mission is a vibrantly living reality.

The liaison between the civil authorities and the church authorities is tangibly appreciated and makes for solid support of the school morally and materially. There are manifest



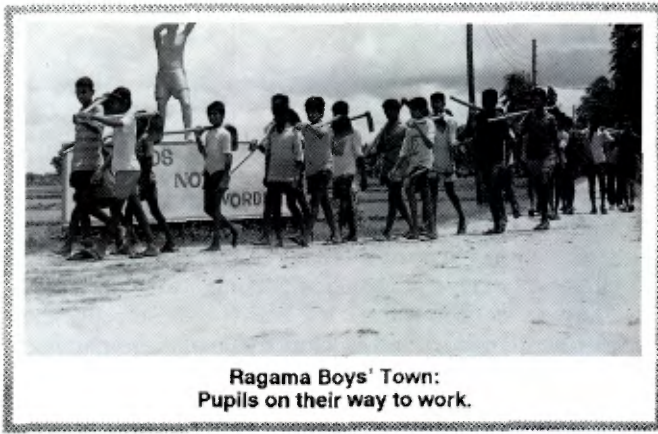
St Benedict's College, Kotahena: staff photo.

signs that such support forges the improvement of the school in several spheres. With the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in the offing, the Green, the Gold and the Blue of the school flag will fly high over this rock-girt capital of the North Western Province and the St. Anne's motto Possumus ("We can") will have been proved true.

ST. BENEDICT'S COLLEGE, KOTAHENA (COLOMBO)

Today the Brothers reside in a house built in 1865 in the style of an Italian Benedictine Monastery. When the school was shifted from Wolfendhal Street in 1866 there were 368 boys and 170 girls.

In 1866 Bishop Sillani requested Bro. Philip, Superior General, to send Brothers who could teach in English. The Brothers arrived and took charge on 1st May 1868.



Ragama Boys' Town:
Pupils on their way to work.

In 1942 1,650 students were sent to Wattala, Veyangoda and Hapugoda. This difficult division of the College was an impact of war, but also the birth of St. Anthony's College, Wattala.

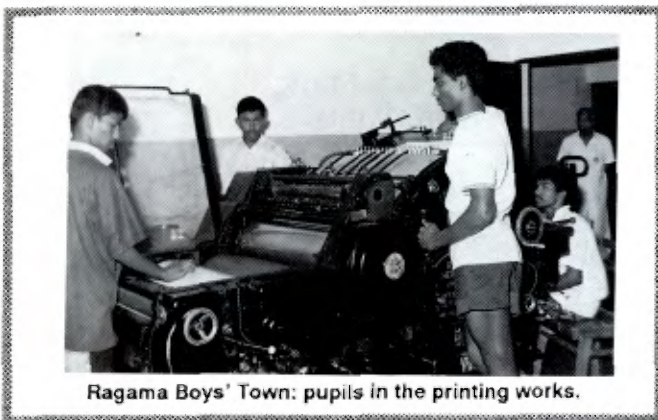
In 1943 the Brothers built the Science and Hostel Block and obtained land for a playing field. Later additions included the completion of the Hall and 9 classrooms. The teachers and students collected the funds needed to build and equip them. Additional land was bought to extend the playground and build the pavilion.

With the 1960 take-over of schools by the Government, the College became a non-fee levying private school.

In 1965 the College completed 100 years. At the Benedictine Fete held from 26th August to 5th September 1965, the Archbishop of Colombo, Thomas Cardinal Cooray, OMI, stated, "Most heartily we do associate ourselves with our dear Brothers of the Christian Schools... Indeed this institute is so uniquely identified with the History of Catholic Education in our midst, it is so much a part of our Cathedral Parish that it is impossible for us not to consider as our own whatever affects it."

In 1980 the Government agreed to give a grant in the form of salaries of the eligible members of the tutorial staff. On March 21st 1990, as a monument to the glorious completion of 125 years of existence, the "Luke Memorial" building, named for the Brother Director who built up the College in the 1930s and 1940s, was blessed by His Grace the Archbishop of Colombo and declared open by the late President Ranasinghe Premadasa. This building has 10 classrooms, a library, dancing and music rooms. Each room is dedicated to a donor.

Today there are 2,550 students, 10 religious and 94 lay teachers; 88% of the staff and 80% of the students are Catholics.



Ragama Boys' Town: pupils in the printing works.

HAVEN FOR DESTITUTE BOYS

Many years ago, a French member of the De La Salle Brothers found a starving orphan abandoned on a street in Colombo. Taking pity on the boy, the Frenchman, Bro. Hermenegild Joseph, provided him with food and shelter. Very soon, he and his fellow Brothers were caring for six other young boys, all orphans. Shortly after this, the Brothers were provided with 30 acres of an abandoned rubber estate in Ragama by the Archbishop to start an orphanage for destitute boys. With money from firewood obtained from trees on their land, they built themselves a little mud and cadjan dwelling place, bought some hens, a pair of cows and a pair of pigs and started a small farm for the orphans.

Today, years later, that little farm is now a sprawling 120 acre scenic area sheltering and training 400 once-destitute boys between the ages of 16 and 20 years. A dramatic change has taken place at this one-time farm since its inception. In one section healthy cows moo loudly to be milked; thousands of clucking hens announce that their eggs have been laid; bees buzz in little domes provided for them; geese cackle loudly.

Indoors, in another section, busy boys hammer and saw at pieces of wood to make furniture; others concentrate on welding and turning out their own tools; yet others learn how to repair automobile engines.

Behind all the enormous work and organisation is an innovative Brother Managing Director who governs the whole complex, his key objective being discipline for success. "I want to make the boys responsible, honest and loyal citizens", he explains.

During the past few years 2,000 boys have been trained; all of them have found gainful employment and are a long way from their once desperate plight.

Only the most destitute boys who are socially and economically handicapped are usually accepted into Boys' Town. This year, 1,225 applications for admittance were sent in for the 125 available places. Those chosen are enrolled at 16 years of age and trained for four years either in agriculture or technology, according to their own choice. Training includes the practical as well as theory. Where agriculture is concerned, there is crop cultivation as well as animal husbandry.

For the 400 residents, who are of all religions and races of Shri Lanka, life begins as early as five in the morning. There are no masters to supervise the boys; supervising is done by the boys themselves, as is management to some extent.

At the beginning Boys' Town was lucky enough to be assisted by various foreign organisations. Most of the machinery for technical studies was donated at that time, and is still intact and carefully looked after.

Today Boys' Town is able to generate its own funds and receives no aid or donations. It has its own supermarket where meat and meat products, vegetables, fresh eggs and milk are sold under the "Town's" own name.

The boys are paid a salary of Rs. 900 - 1000 per month and are encouraged to save money in bank accounts. At the end of their four-year stay they receive a certificate, which is very well recognised, in a variety of jobs from welding mechanics and carpentry to cultivation and animal husbandry. Usually even before they have finished their training, they have got themselves jobs because people "book" them while they are

training. There is also a followup programme, every three months for a year, for the boys who finish.

PROJECTS

All the projects at Boys' Town are income generating. There is big demand (including by leading hotels) for the furniture that the boys turn out, as well as for the gardening utensils they make. Dairy farming is very rewarding too, as is crop cultivation.

There is also an aquarium section in the "Town" (started by a talented and enthusiastic young resident) comprising beautiful and colourful sea and fresh water fish and well-maintained tanks.

Last year some income-generating projects for girls were set up at both the farm and its technical sections. "The boys looked after their appearance better and their language improved a lot", says Bro. Managing Director with a smile.

Diyagala Boys' Town has today also become something of a scenic park. Hundreds of people visit the beautifully kept grounds and the little mini zoo of pet leopards, graceful swans, a python, monkeys and other animals.

The success story behind that one-time farm now called Diyagala Boys' Town is one of dedication and patience by the De La Salle Brothers. This year the unique Diyagala Boys' Town celebrates a jubilee year of success that has turned hundreds of once-destitute boys into disciplined, employed adults.

LASALLIAN COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICES, COLOMBO

Shri Lanka today bleeds with ethnic strife. Here four of the world's great religions are deeply rooted, yet religious conflict in debate often erupts. The Lasallian Community Education Services (LCES) forges the bonds necessary to transcend this harsh environment. The staff of 147 includes four Directors (two lay, two religious). Persons of different religious faith and ethnic affiliations provide a holistic approach to Love, Care, Education and Service.

LCES since 1980 has worked in the slums and shanties of Colombo North, recognizing two major factors: 1) that urbanisation in the Third World is a dynamic force that needs to be better understood; 2) that by the year 2000 more than half of the poor in developing countries will be in cities and towns, uneducated, illiterate and uncared for.

LCES works with the poor. Education is the focus and commitment, while constantly examining major issues and problem areas and taking remedial steps towards solutions.

HEALTH. Poverty and lack of education, not the lack of food, is the root cause of malnutrition; the low birth-weight of pregnancies in poverty areas has escalated alarmingly the number of drop-outs and non-achieving students.

EDUCATION. Provision is made for almost 900 pre-schoolers and non-school goers in the two slum schools.



Ragama Boys' Town: making collars.

Approximately 170 to 200 of them each year are equipped with uniforms, shoes and birth certificates and are admitted to government schools in the vicinity.

SOCIALLY USEFUL PRODUCTIVE WORK (SUPW) is a hands-on basic skills (pre-apprenticeship) training programme taking the 10-17 year old drop-out, non-school goer off the streets into a range of skills – masonry, plumbing, electricity, tailoring, welding, carpentry, etc. SUPW serves as career guidance to the otherwise potential drug addict, alcoholic or law breaker.

WOMEN. The Home and Family Support programme provides to hundreds of women daily the skills necessary to run a home, thereby focusing a young mother's skilled energies on her children.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, while deepening the comprehension of cultural dynamics in processes of change, assist with ethnic understanding.

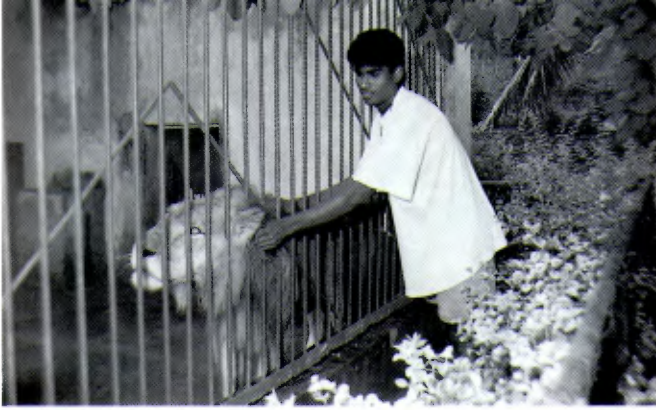
COMMUNITY EDUCATOR TRAINING. Over the past nine years, LCES has shared its practical experience of working with the urban informal sector in the shanties of Colombo with other lay and religious persons through competency-based Community Educator Training programmes.

More recently, in an attempt to be self-financing, LCES has received donor assistance for a Conference, Seminar, Workshop Centre and Hostel. Here rural poor youth are trained in Hoteliering, Catering & Bakery trades.

Most important is the environment. "We share God's beauty with the poor, giving them a sense of self-worth. They know we care".



Ragama Boys' Town, Diyagala.



Ragama Boys' Town:
the lions aren't always so docile.



De Mazenod College: a school celebration.

DE MAZENOD COLLEGE, KANDANA

De Mazenod College is situated on top of a hill in verdant surroundings just 12 kms. north of Colombo. De La Salle Brothers took over the management of De Mazenod College in 1933 from the Oblate Fathers, whose founder's name the College honours. At the outset the student population was about 300 with 14 teachers. Today, there are over 3,000 students, boys and girls, and over 125 teachers, with just five De La Salle Brothers on the management and teaching staff.

Education is imparted from pre-school to Advance Level classes. In addition, the Technical Training Centre serves school dropouts, training about 150 students annually in technical skills. From 1960, De Mazenod College has functioned as a non-fee levying private school. Now the Government pays the salaries only of the registered teachers. De Mazenod has been a cradle for religious vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Our students are quite keen on studies. Last year one of our students obtained the highest aggregate marks in the Commerce Section islandwide, at the Advance Level Examination.

Various sports facilities are available for students: Cricket, Soccer, Basketball, Netball, Volleyball, Athletics.

VOCATION AND FORMATION IN SRI LANKA

The Brothers have been in Shri Lanka for 126 years. Local Catholic youth in large numbers were attracted to the Brother's vocation from early years of this century. However

in the 1970's and 80's the number of those who joined us began to drop significantly. Those few who joined us did not persevere. During the last 6 years there has been a renewed effort to provide quality formation to the few candidates who come to us, and to develop realistic plans for vocation promotion. The contribution made by the Brothers' Community in the northern town of Mannar needs special mention, because it is a clear example of the community's central role in vocation promotion.

Presently there are 4 resident aspirants and 18 non-resident aspirants in Shri Lanka. After a period of follow up, some non-resident aspirants will join the resident aspirancy. Those who fulfil the requirements to enter the Postulancy follow a year's programme to prepare themselves for the Novitiate. The Postulancy Programme in Colombo is open to receive candidates from other neighbouring countries who wish to follow the programme before proceeding to the Asian Inter-District Novitiate in Shri Lanka.

At the moment there are 13 Brothers with temporary vows, 10 of whom are Scholastics. While attending to their academic studies, they are encouraged to do some apostolic work and to continue their religious studies. Five of these Scholastics are studying in Taffna, 400 kms away from Colombo. Communication between them and the centre has been very difficult due to continuing war in Jaffna district. The accompaniment of these Brothers with temporary vows is a major concern today, and the District is committed to the formation of the young Brothers, the visible signs of God's fidelity. ●



LCES (Lasallian Community Education Services):
a teacher in class.



District of Colombo, 1994:
second year novices with their formators.

7. SUB-DISTRICT OF PAKISTAN



Pakistan

Area:	310,403 Miles.
Population:	120 Million
Religions:	Muslims 97%
	Christians 1%
	Hindu 1%
	Others 1%
Government:	Federal Islamic Republic
Provinces:	1: Punjab
	2: Sindh
	3: N.W.F.P.
	4: Beluchistan
Biggest Province:	Punjab with a population of 66%
Literacy rate:	35%
G.N.P. for education	2.1%

Pakistan came into existence because as the time of independence from Britain to Indo-Pak Sub-continent drew near, the Muslims of India feared that they would be dominated by the Hindu majority, and demanded a separate state for Muslims. Pakistan was born in the upheaval and chaos of partition. Muslims from India migrated to Pakistan and Hindus from Pakistan fled to India. Christian and other minorities usually stayed put on either side.

Christians in Pakistan

The Christian community is small, barely two percent of the total population. Most of them were converts from Hinduism and from what are called scheduled castes of India. The present Christian population is about 90% percent from the converts. The other 10% are migrants from other parts of pre-partition India which had a longer tradition of Christianity. Christianity in Pakistan is only about 100 years old. Many of the majority look down on their Christian brethren because of their origin. They regard them as an alien group.

The Muslims who have had contact with Christians through our institutions show a more positive attitude. But there are others who cannot understand how Christians came to be in Pakistan. They identify Christianity with the west and look upon Christian missionaries with suspicion.

The Brothers came onto the scene in December 1959 at the invitation of the then Bishop of Multan Diocese (Punjab Province), the late Bishop Benedict Cialeo. The three Brothers, namely Brothers Oliver, Caesar and Harding, all of whom have gone to their heavenly reward, were asked to run the La Salle High School Multan. From there Brothers ventured into a Christian village about 70 km from Multan named chak no 133 Amrithnagar, to run a high school and a hostel for poor Christian students. After the nationalization of the schools in 1972 the Brothers were left only with the hostel and later on due to lack of Brothers, the hostel had to be handed back to the diocese.

The same Bishop who invited the Brothers to Pakistan, later on was transferred to the newly created diocese of Faisalabad (Punjab Province). Knowing the work of the Brothers well, he invited them to run a high school and the national Catechist Training Centre. Brothers came to the Diocese of Faisalabad in 1961.

In 1992, the Brothers had to hand over the technical school at Karachi due to lack of personnel. Brothers had worked in this institution for well over 25 years.

Pakistan Sector

On 28th December 1994 Pakistan sector will be completing 35 years of the arrival of the La Salle Brothers in Pakistan. The 35 years of Lasallian presence in Pakistan has proved a



successful missionary endeavor among the Christians as well as among the Muslims.

The Brothers did not come to Pakistan to convert but just to be Christian witnesses. The Brothers are here in the predominantly Muslim country to develop in our students the sense of God's loving presence, the sense of prayer and the sense of justice.

Besides working with the Muslims, the Brothers are also working with the very poor Christian students. Brothers run 2 high schools and two hostels for the very poor Christian students. If not for these institutions many poor Christian students would not have received any education at all. Numbers of Christians are gainfully employed as teachers, technicians, catechists and skilled workers due to our institution. Our Catholic hostels are a seed-bed for vocations.

During the past 30 years the Brothers have done quite a lot to improve the educational institutions and they are well known in the educational circles all over Pakistan.

The present work of the Institute in Pakistan

Number of Brothers working in Pakistan: 16

Of whom: American	1
English	1
Pakistani	4
Sri Lankan	10

Number of Institutions: 8

La Salle Multan:

Was the first community established by the Brothers in Pakistan. There are two high schools and a boys hostel. The

English middle school was raised to higher secondary level in 1993. The hostel which was started mainly for non-Christian boys has gradually been turned into a hostel for poor Christian students.

Alban Academy, which is named after the late Bro. Alban Morin (a Canadian missionary who later came to Pakistan) is the high school for poor Christian students (boys and girls).

La Salle High School Faisalabad:

This was established in 1961 and Bro. Anselm Mankovsky was the founder of this institution. Today, after nearly 32 years this has grown into a very big institution. The medium of instruction of this school is English.

La Salle Urdu High School – Faisalabad:

Brother Anselm Mankovsky was the founder of this school. From its very poor beginnings of about 30 years ago, today it has grown into a High School and in 1995 this school will be raised to a higher secondary level. The medium of instruction of this school is Urdu and 98% of the students are from poor Christian families.

The Catechist Training Centre – Khushpur:

This Centre run by the Brothers trains lay Catechists for all the Dioceses of Pakistan. The Brothers of this Centre also run a literacy centre for the Catholic adults of the Khushpur village. Sewing is done for the women and cooking classes conducted for young men, mainly school dropouts. Brothers also help the farmers of the village in different ways.



La Salle High School, Faisalabad: two views of the buildings.

Catholic Hostel Khushpur:

This is the biggest hostel for boys in the diocese of Faisalabad and it is run by the Brothers. All the students of this hostel are Christians and from poor families. At present there are 95 hostelers. They attend the government school which is in the same compound. The school used to be run by the Brothers before the nationalization. This hostel is also a seed-bed for vocations, especially to the priesthood.



Faisalabad: an Urdu secondary school.

General:

Both the English middle schools run by the Brothers help financially the Urdu middle schools, which are mainly for the poor Christians.

The educational mission (informal dialogue)

Brothers, through their educational institutions, help the Church to keep the flame of informal dialogue between the majority Muslims and the minority Christians. Not only do parents and adults come in contact with Christians and are able to interact with Christians but also children who live or study with Christian children learn something of each other's religion, its practices, mutual respect and cooperation. Sometimes they build up relationships that extend beyond their school years. Non-Christians who study in Christian Institutions get a chance to see Christianity at first hand, and are exposed to Christian ideas, morals and practices. This is exactly what the Church wants and Brothers help the Church through their schools to further this.



Catechist Training Centre, Khushpur: a group of catechists following courses.

Vocations and Formation:

The Pakistan sector places a lot of importance on vocations and formation. Our mother District, Colombo, is unable to supply us with personnel any more due to lack of Brothers in Sri Lanka and due to visa restrictions. We have set aside a Brother who is well qualified in this line and all efforts are being done to promote vocations to our congregation. But it is an uphill task. Young men are mostly attracted to the priesthood for various reasons and most look at the Brothers' work as a secondary thing. At present we have 13 young men in formation at various levels. This is one of the projects we look forward to strengthen at all costs because the continuation of Lasallian work in this country mainly depends on promoting local vocations. The country does not allow any new missionaries in.

Another project would be to improve the standard of education especially in our Urdu middle schools. The poor Christians will have no place in the society unless they learn to compete with the majority. To further this we may have to open at least one more school for the Christians in a place such as Khushpur where the standard of education in the nationalized school has gone way below the freezing point.

Our greatest hope is in the Christian youth of Pakistan, that they will build up and foster the interrelationships they experience in their schools, colleges and communities, into real active dialogue with their non-Christian friends. ●



Above: sub-District of Pakistan: 1993 aspirants.

Below: Graduation Day: catechists make their profession of faith.



8. DISTRICT OF PENANG Malaysia Singapore – Hong Kong

Early History

The District of Penang, the oldest in Asia, dates back to the arrival of the first Brothers in Singapore in April 1852. The three territories which it presently encompasses – Malaysia, Singapore & Hong Kong – represent a small aggregate population of just beyond 27 million, small in contrast to the massive populations of neighbouring countries such as China (1,300 million), India (857 million), Indonesia (184 million) & Japan (124 million). Even so, distances can be sometimes surprising: communities in West Malaysia, for example, are separated by thousands of miles from sister communities across the South China Sea in East Malaysia and Hong Kong.

A feature shared by all three territories is the British colonial connection, dating from the latter half of the 19th century. Another is the Chinese Diaspora, dating largely to the same period. These two factors have greatly affected the work of the Brothers who traditionally concentrated their resources on building large, prestigious schools where the enrolment became increasingly Chinese, and where English was the medium of instruction.

If the District of Penang today has a strong Chinese orientation and character, it was not always so. The early Brothers who set up schools in Singapore and Penang in 1852, were already within eight years establishing schools in India and Burma, and somewhat later in Shri Lanka. The District continued to have a strong basis in South Asia right up to the end of the century.

This rapid expansion across a huge continent was in part due to the fact that the first group of French and Irish Brothers came at the urgent request of the Paris Foreign Mission, an association of missionary priests already working all over Asia for more than a century. To this day, in fact, the District of Penang looks back fondly to Fr Beurel of the Paris Foreign Mission as the founder of the District.

By the early years of this century the District of Penang was perhaps the most far-flung in the Institute, extending thousands of miles from the Philippines to Shri Lanka. There followed what some regard as the halcyon years of Brother



James Ryrne's long visitorship, which went almost unbroken from 1912 to 1946. In time separate Districts were to be formed – Colombo, Burma and Philippines – until what we now know as the District of Penang eventually achieved its present manageable proportions.

The Brothers of the District of Penang came from a great diversity of backgrounds: Chinese, Indian, Eurasian, Burmese, French, German, Irish, Hungarian, Czech, American, Canadian and perhaps others. Together with numerous lay teachers of different races and faiths, these Brothers ran a network of very prestigious schools and colleges across Asia, distinguished as much for their distinctive architecture as for the large numbers of excellent students they produced.

These schools facilitated social mobility within rather rigid traditional cultures, often helping pupils of the poorest backgrounds to find a more worthy place in society. Stories abound of leaders in all walks in life who proudly attributed their success to the personal interest and patient coaching of a particular Brother.



St Michael's Institution, Ipoh.

World War II

A major crisis came with the outbreak of World War II. In the single month of December 1941, as the Japanese army made its historic dash through south-east Asia, the District of Penang, without warning or preparations, lost control of its schools. Many were shelled and bombed and classes were everywhere suspended. A large number of Brothers, particularly those classified as enemy aliens, were interned for the duration of the war, mainly at Changi Prison in Singapore. Others had shorter periods of imprisonment, while still others were destined to waste away in a Japanese-sponsored jungle settlement.

Where communities managed to survive, the Brothers joined Japanese language classes in the hope of being allowed to teach in the now Japanese-controlled schools; and a number were permitted to teach.

With the advent of peace in September 1945, the Brothers, many weakened through sickness, imprisonment and malnutrition, were suddenly confronted by insurmountable opportunities. Their ascendancy in the field of education was enhanced by the fact that they had not abandoned the people; they had stayed behind and shared their pain and despair.

Post-war Era

A new age was opening up, the rush for education was on and it would appear that everyone wanted admission to a Brothers' school. There followed a period of unprecedented expansion of schools and a corresponding increase in the number of Brothers, recruited locally as well as from overseas, notably from Ireland and Australia.

The Japanese invasion was seen as a judgement on the colonial powers, and perhaps more by default than by design, the Japanese sowed the seeds of nationalism. For the Brothers themselves, it marked a movement towards local ownership, with the appointment immediately after the war of the first Malaysian Brother Directors and a general policy to get the Brothers properly qualified.

Government recognition was later obtained for the Scholastic programme and it was opened to lay teachers as well as to Brothers. For the 15 years or so that it functioned, the Brothers' Training College produced a remarkable body of excellent teachers. These were destined to play a key role in preserving and enhancing the traditional character of the

Lasallian schools, and continue today as a basic core of membership within the Lasallian Family.

The early Brothers had concentrated on parochial schools where the majority were Catholic. As time passed, the number of children of other faiths increased such that today the proportion of Catholics in Brothers' schools averages between 15% to 20%, with some schools dropping to single digits. Teachers are appointed and paid by the government, and, in Malaysia particularly, as a result of regular teacher transfer, the proportion of Christian teachers keeps falling.

This situation has been long in the making, and the Brothers have learnt to adjust, often with much pain and anguish, particularly when another long-established school passes to a lay principal who can be a Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim. In the process, however, the Brothers have been brought into warmer rapport with pupils, teachers and parents of all religions, and much goodwill has been generated.

The Lasallian Youth Convention

Strangely, it is at the point in our schools when all formal support for our evangelising mission has been removed, even sometimes the very presence of the Brother, that the Spirit seems quietly to come alive. The national Lasallian youth convention organised annually for the past four years by our young Malaysian Brothers has brought together from each school a core of student leaders of all faiths, together with their teachers.

For the most of a week they are given a formation experience in Lasallian spirituality, including an immersion experience by actually living with a poor family in a squatter area, a fishing village, among plantation workers or with an aborigine family.

The participants return to their respective schools with the strongest Lasallian convictions and with a plan of action to share with fellow students the fruits of their experience, particularly our Lasallian concern for the less advantaged. The school management is usually well disposed and supportive.

With each passing year we meet a growing number of these youthful Lasallians, some now in university or already into their careers, still alive to the Lasallian dream and ready to give of their time and energy as members of the organising team for later conventions.

In effect the Brothers are no longer seen to have exclusive ownership of the Lasallian heritage. This ownership is now clearly shared, with warmest conviction, by a growing number

Schools

Location	School	Level	Students	% Catholic	Brothers	Colleagues
Peninsular Malaysia						
Kuala Lumpur	St. John's Primary School	primary	850	4%	1	33
Kuala Lumpur	St. John's Institution	secondary	1,987	10%	1	111
Malacca	St. Francis' Institution	secondary/superior	1,107	20%	2	63
Penang	St. Xavier's Institution	secondary	1,717	10%	3	114
Taiping	St. George's Institution	secondary	1,339	8%	2	80
East Malaysia						
Tambunan	St. Martin's Secondary School	secondary	891	95%	4	33
Singapore						
	St. Patrick's School	secondary	1,352	28%	2	58
	St. Joseph's Institution	secondary	1,584	30%	5	122
Hong Kong						
Hong Kong	St. Joseph's College	secondary/superior	1,200	21%	2	75
Kowloon	La Salle College	secondary	1,545	27%	4	66
Kowloon	Chan Sui Ki College	secondary	1,000	5%	2	7
New Territories	De La Salle Secondary School	secondary	540	11%	1	31
Total			15,112		29	793

of dynamic young people, who are fully representative of the ethnic and religious diversity of the region.

Thanks in large measure to this development the Brothers themselves have regained their faith in the future of the schools and are exploring other ways and means of maintaining supportive contact, particularly with those schools no longer under their direction.

Examples of Lasallian Projects

- Brother John D'Cruz, a gifted young Malaysian Brother, has been developing a project for the past ten years for

children with special learning needs. He was inspired to leave the official school where he was serving as Director, in order to explore ways to redeem the many students who could not cope with the pace and content of the official school curriculum.

His project has now reached maturity and has attracted much attention and interest, and he is presently planning to train facilitators who wish to establish units elsewhere. One special Lasallian feature of his project is the emphasis on community spirit and shared vision among those operating his project.

- In Singapore for a similar period, Brother Joseph McNally has been realising his life's dream at La Salle Arts Centre. His is a story of vision, stubborn determination and creative imagination triumphing over every conceivable disappointment and difficulty. Today the sun shines on his achievement: a widely recognised tertiary-level college offering a range of courses in a variety of art forms, traditional and modern, including music, drama, sculpture, painting, industrial design, etc.



La Salle College, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

Originally from the west of Ireland, Brother Joseph has lived in Asia since 1946, hence his ability to merge art forms from the west with those from the vast cultural hinterland of Singapore, extending south to Indonesia and Bali, and northwards to Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, India, China, and Japan.

His personal work in sculpture has brought him much acclaim from near and far, with government, among others, commissioning him to do pieces. Even more important is his ability to discover giftedness in others, often the less advantaged. Now and then stories make their way into the media of young people redeemed from futility, even despair, through Brother Joseph's intervention, by discerning and developing their artistic gift at his Arts Centre and thereby providing themselves with the means to make a living.

The challenges

In East Malaysia, the Church at the present time experiences perhaps the most phenomenal growth in numbers for any part of Asia. Here the Church works within cultures which are traditionally animist, and there is a greater readiness for the gospel message. Here the Brothers have been working for more than forty years in close co-operation with the Church, originally with the Mill Hill Fathers, and more recently with the established local hierarchy. Within that period the schools run by the Brothers produced a core of leaders for the Church as well as for professional and public life. Their contribution is seen to have been critically important.

Now in East Malaysia the Brothers are few and ageing and aspirants are rare. However there are glimmers of hope and of new life, particularly in the desire of some Brothers to serve in the interior of the country where living conditions are at their simplest and educational needs most acute. A beginning has already been made.

Big challenges face us as a District at the heart of the fastest developing part of the globe. Among others there is China where big developments are now taking place: other congregations are already poised for action. And what of the new, dynamic Lasallians participating in our annual national youth conventions? What direction will they wish to take?

Conclusion

We can conclude with the statement of the District Chapter held in November 1993, in response to question: Who are we as La Salle Brothers in Asia today?

At the heart of Asia today, with:

- its teeming millions
- its unprecedented affluence
- its dehumanising poverty
- its racial & religious conflicts
- its migration & displacement of peoples
- its diversity of rich cultural & religious traditions
- its vast potential of young people seeking for just & meaningful expressions of life.

We are pilgrim people

- called to continue God's saving action in Jesus Christ
- by promising to live out Kingdom values
- of faith, fraternity, simplicity, openness & availability.

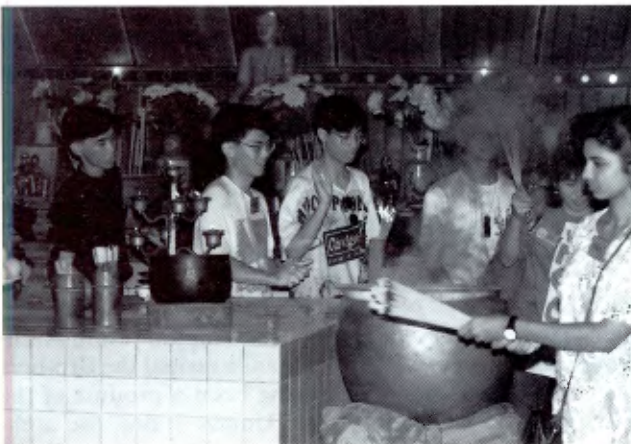
We live this call from God

- in community
- as vulnerable & ordinary persons
- seeking to be a sign of hope
- and a source of life.

We realise this specifically:

- with the young people & adults we are called to accompany, especially with the poor & disadvantaged
- in solidarity with other members of the Lasallian Family
- in dialogue with people of all faiths
- by promoting a human & spiritual education that is innovative & transformative. ●

Brother Vincent Corkery

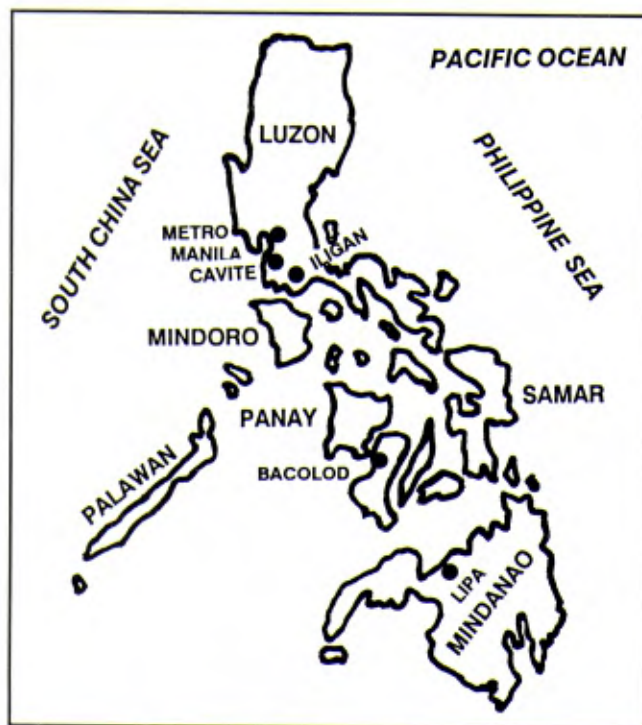


Lasallian pupils in a Buddhist temple.
Most of our pupils are either
Buddhists, Hindus or Muslims
(the main religions in this part of Asia).



Two young Malay Brothers
with students belonging to a variety of religions
during a workshop for training leaders.

9. DISTRICT of the PHILIPPINES



THE COUNTRY

Having a total land area of 300,000 square kilometers, the Republic of the Philippines stretches 1,839 kms. north-to-south off the southeast coast of Asia. Its 7,107 islands comprise one of the largest island groups in the world.

About 60.5 million Filipinos comprise the total population, 55% of which occupy the largest island of Luzon. Filipinos comprise 111 cultural and linguistic groups of Malayo-Polynesian origin with varying degrees of Chinese, Spanish and American influences. The dominant religion is Catholicism. The Philippines is considered the world's third largest English speaking country, after the United States and United Kingdom. Filipino is the national language. English is used for commercial and legal transactions. Literacy rate is 88%.

The country is divided into 14 regions, 73 provinces and 60 cities. It is rich in copper, cobalt, nickel, silver, iron and gold deposits. It has well developed industries in food processing, textiles, clothing and home appliances, with fast growing agriculture, micro circuits and furniture sectors. Its economy is basically light industry and agriculture, its chief crops being rice, corn, coconut, banana, pineapple and sugar cane.

Recorded history began after the discovery of the islands by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. Prior to the 16th century Chinese, Indian and Arab visited to trade goods. Later expeditions were conducted in the service of Spain's King Philip II after whom the country was named. In 1898, the Filipinos won independence after 327 years of Spanish rule, but found themselves controlled by the Americans from 1900 to 1942, when the Japanese occupied the islands and again from 1945 until the birth of the Republic in 1946. The past presidents led the Filipinos with thrusts responsive to the needs of the period. Unforgettable is the 20-year rule of a dictator followed by the EDSA Revolution of 1986. The non-violent revolution propelled the first woman president of the Republic. The concerns, problems and issues continue to challenge every citizen.

Among the present concerns of government and church leaders, non-government and people's organizations are the enormous increase in population; the awakening to the problems posed by social justice and human rights; stark poverty; migrants and refugees; the breaking of peace and order; and a radical change in socio-political situation.

HISTORY of the INSTITUTE

Realizing the need of a religious education in the country to safeguard the Catholic faith of the Filipino youth, Archbishop Jeremiah James Harty of Manila invited the Brothers to put up a school in 1905. Having been a product of the Christian Brothers' school in the United States, the archbishop was most appreciative of the good education offered by them. In a plenary session preparatory to the General Chapter of 1907 in Belgium the delegates discussed the request and passed a decision to open a school.