



BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

# RELAF NEWSLETTER



N°03

March 2012



*Towards a corporative image for the Lasallian Mission...the General Council, in its session, June 2011, has decided to propose to the Regions to use the corporative image of the manual that was presented to Brother Visitors during the Inter-capitulary Assembly...As it relates to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools the*

*Signum Fidei sign, which usually appears in the Centre of the Institute publications, continues to be the fundamental reference logo ...and the only official logo . Therefore, the new corporative image will only be used in the areas of Lasallian Educational Mission.*

*For RELAF, we should adopt the above logo for the Region”*

RELAF Newsletter is a publication of the  
De La Salle Brothers by the  
Regional Team.  
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## SUMMARY

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pastoral Visit: District of West Africa</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Life of Districts and Sectors</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Lasallian Family and Association—Young Lasallians</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Celebrate as Brothers:</b> Silver Jubilee of Br. Regis Emmanuel	<b>18</b>
<b>Celebrate as Brothers:</b> The Feast of Br. St Miguel	<b>19</b>
<b>Restructuring:</b> The Boundaries of RELAF	<b>20</b>
<b>Restructuring:</b> Slowly...but surely	<b>21</b>
<b>Communication: RELAF</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Regional Office</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Initial Formation</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Reflection: Laicity or Laicism</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Christian Life: Pilgrimage</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Christian Life: Lent</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Calendar</b>	<b>30</b>

## Editorial



Slowly but surely, our bulletin *RELAF Newsletter* is always in search of its contents. This is a newsletter that will provide a forum for sharing to collect and disseminate information about our Region, constructive reflections and why not, discussions of ideas. At the moment, we do not want to maintain a rigid editorial line. First, because this would limit the number of articles while we cannot invent receiving in abundance. Secondly, because we are not certain that our perspective on this question corresponds to what would have wanted most of you. For the time being, we publish everything that comes to us.

Some will notice however that their articles were not published. Two scenarios may explain this absence. The first case may be because the article might have come a little late. In this case, the article will be published in the next issue. We must keep in mind that everything must be published in French and English and therefore, a sufficient time must be provided for translating texts which come to us in one language only. The second case can be explained by the fact that

the text reflects a specific liturgical season that is inconsistent with the liturgical season of the universal Church. Everyone is therefore invited to send us what he thinks fit to share with others. For choosing this line, we were inspired by an emission of RFI which is so called "*Call on current events*." The purpose of this program is to enable each participant to speak on the subject he wishes to discuss with others. Our intention is that gradually, with the orientation of the Articles that come to us and suggestions you will not miss to make, an editorial line emerges from itself. This is a choice that is worth it.

Many of you have positively appreciated our last bulletin in December. We are grateful and sincere thanks for your support and reception that you reserve to our space for sharing. It is a sign that it corresponded to a real need. Thanks to your constructive feedback, we hope to do better.

In the current issue, special emphasis is given to the activities of the various Districts and Sectors, in terms of both pastoral work for vocations, formation and the Lasallian Educational Mission. Some testimonies also gave a specific style to this bulletin. But what is very pleasing and can inspire others to write, are the reflections on current issues that are beginning to be sent to us. In this edition, we have for example an article on *the boundaries of our RELAF Region* and another on the dangers of secularism. These are personal views. You may agree on the content or not. But still recognize the merit of the authors for sharing their thoughts. In the contradictory sharing, we can go further, by joyfully welcoming the ideas of others, while agreeing to participate in the sharing. However let us keep in mind that we will not publish controversial articles or those who prey specifically to people or structures established. We only want to promote that which will enable us to move forward, not what is going in circles.

In this period of Lent, we hope that this time of prayer, fasting and sharing makes us better for an effective revitalization of our Lasallian Educational Mission. May the Lord grant us the grace of conversion for us to live up to our Mission.

*Br. Gabriel Some*  
General Councillor for RELAF



# Pastoral Visit of Br. General Councillor

## District of West Africa

**A**s outlined in his calendar, Br Gabriel Some, General Councillor for RELAF, spent the first part of his pastoral visit to the District of West Africa from 4<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2012. He began with the French Speaking Noviciate community in Bobo Dioulasso. He had the opportunity to meet the staff members (Br. Valere, Br. Jean Palmier and Br. Mamy) and the first year novices. Moreover Br Councillor took the opportunity to encourage the novices to give themselves totally to the Formation, a very important step in Religious life. Moreover, it should be noted that the second year novices were out of Novitiate for their community experience from 2<sup>nd</sup> January to 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012; Br Councillor will meet them in the next visit.

Then Fr Gabriel continues his visit to the educational community of Tounouma (still in Bobo-Dioulasso). There, the Brothers and the teachers demonstrate their total dedication to the service of 800 students of the school. For the two-day visit, Br. Gabriel took the opportunity to go to a few classes to listen and give some reflections to students ... (In the community, Fr Gabriel Zabramba, the former Visitor of the District, has been recovering from his accident two years ago. We wish him a total recovery). The community accompanies five aspirants who live together in the Brothers' house in Ouezenville, in the neighborhood of the Brothers' school.

After Tounouma, Toussiana community also benefited from this pastoral visit. The four Brothers are in charge of a mix and boarding school including three hundred boys that are boarders. Girls who are boarders being taken care of by the Little Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. For the Brothers, the works in the Boarding school is too demanding and takes time. However one of them said: *'The system helps us to witness our life as Brothers and our love for the young'*. Among these boarders, we also find those aspiring to the vocation of the De La Salle Brothers. Br. Gabriel met them in order to know and speak to them about our vocation and our Institute in general. He particularly emphasized on the path that awaits these young people in their vocational journey.

Brief, the visit has given a new life in this part of the Institute where the District of West Africa reflects the hope and future for our Institute in RELAF Region. May God make our Brothers' efforts fruitful in fulfilling their Lasallian Educational Mission.

*Brother Michel Zo Tolojanahary*



*Noviciate staff with Br. General Councillor : left, Br. Jean Palmier, right: Br. Mamy R. Sitting in front: Br. Valere M.*



*Aspirants in Toussiana after their meeting with Br General Councillor*



*Teaching Staff of the Brothers' School in Toussiana*

# Life of Districts and Secteurs

## District of Douala

The Assembly of the Brothers from the Sector of Equatorial Guinea and those of Douala District was held in Elobawa, Cameroun from 26 to 29 December 2011. We note that they are in the process of forming one District. After this meeting, a convention was adopted and sent to the Superior General for approbation. When the Guinean Brothers left, those of the district of Douala gathered to evaluate the Statutes of the District which were an experimentum since the Diang Assembly in December 2010. A final text was sent to the Superior and his Council for approbation. (*Source: Douala Flash Infos*)  
[See Restructuring]

## District of Antananarivo

Reaching halfway through the mandate of Brother Visitor, Desire Rasamison, the District of Antananarivo held a Inter-capitular session on Friday, 6 January 2012. This was in order to evaluate and appreciate the journey that lies ahead. The capitulants from the South, East and Center were the participants of this session. They were grouped into five different committees, namely: Interior Life, Community Life, Educational Service of the poor and Association, Pastoral of Vocations, and finally Government- District and animation.

(*Source: special SALAMA, Jan. 2012*)

## District of Congo Kinshasa

### **BUILDING CAPACITY WORKSHOPS:**

Brother Visitor, Roger Masamba, in collaboration with the Office of Lasallian Schools of the District of Congo - Kinshasa organized a workshop for capacity building of teachers working in the De La Salle Brothers' schools. This workshop, the second of its kind, was held at the Lasallian Centre of Kinshasa (CLK) from 10th to 12th November. The workshop participants came mainly from Boma, Matadi, Kinshasa and Tumba.

The workshop was supervised by Brother Felix Kabata, Advisor to the Office of Lasallian Schools. He focused on the following two modules:

\* **Mathematical language and mathematical method of evidence supported by students' practice of justification statements.**

\* **Active learning: experience with appropriate technology**

Out of 57 participants expected, there were a total 44 teachers: 29 in Mathematics and 15 in physics. Through this workshop, teachers have updated their scientific knowledge. A certificate of participation was given to each participant.

Following this workshop, participants formulated some suggestions that include a regular organization of such programs and its extension to schools other than those of the Christian Brothers.

*Brother Félicien Bora  
District of Congo Kinshasa*

## Charles Lwanga District

### Sector of Ethiopia

Br. Balayneh, the Sector Coordinator organized an assembly. From December 8 to 9, all the Brothers of the Ethiopian Sector had the opportunity to share their stories, challenges and aspirations during a Sector Assembly. Thanks to reports the Brothers became more aware of the realities experienced in their communities and Lasallian Education Institutions. They were able to reflect together on some crucial issues and took some important decisions. Such assembly promote solidarity and understanding among the Brothers. An expert in financial and legal matters enriched this Assembly in the context of on-going formation.

### Sector of Kenya

Twelve Street Children sat successfully for their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education. Sixteen Street Children prepared for and received the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. These children will continue their Christian Education in preparing themselves for the sacrament of Confirmation. These Street Children are cared for by the Brothers, Lay Colleagues and students of St Mary's Lasallian Education College in Nyeri.

On the February 5, 2012, St Mary's College celebrated its Golden Jubilee. This Lasallian School has made over the years tremendous progress in attaining academic excellence and high reputation for integral formation of students.

### Sector of Eritrea

From November 10 to 13, 2011 the Brothers organized an educational trip for the Staff members of the village school in Shinara/Keren. They participated in a one day workshop on Interactive Pedagogy in the context of their school reality as well as on the ministry of a Lasallian educator/teacher. They also enjoyed some leisure time on the beach of Massawa which is a very important port town of Eritrea.

### Sector of South Africa:

The new Director of Religious Studies in collaboration with Bro Tom, Sector Coordinator, edited a *Guide for Parents to a Lasallian School*.

Recently a representative of CASPA (Catholic Schools Proprietors Association) visited the Junior School as part of a diocesan initiative referred to as a "Validation Process". The report concluded with the observation "*Without doubt, Religious Education is being given its rightful place at De La Salle Holy Cross College Primary School, providing a sterling model on which other Catholic schools can be shaped*".

### Sector of Nigeria: The Sector Coordinator received an award

Bro Damian received an award in December from the Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria in recognition of the contribution he made towards the growth and development of the Catholic Youth Organization in Nigeria and for his selfless services rendered to humanity.

Brother Marc Hofer  
Charles Lwanga District



## Lwanga: A witness to God's loving presence

**A**s our Superior General Brother Alvaro says, "*In a world and in a society which have sought to remove God from the political decisions of States, from the fabric of social life, and even from the consciences of people, we (Lasallians) are called, as disciples of Jesus, to bear witness to the loving presence of God and to extend it by our lives.*" In my years as a teacher, administrator, and Auxiliary Visitor in the Lwanga District, I observed so much witnessing to the presence of God and the extension of this witnessing by lives of so many Brothers and other Lasallians that I know I cannot really give an overall picture of the good that has been and is being done there. But here are some samples of such witnessing.

I recall a visit to St. Mary's Boys Secondary School in Nyeri, Kenya. 440 high school students, all boarders and mostly from poor families, are enrolled there. I observed several classes and was pleasantly surprised at how attentive and involved the 55 students in each class were despite the fact that the desks were so close together that I could not walk to the back of the room except down the middle aisle. Nonetheless on the national exam at the end of grade 12, the boys achieved very well: 23rd out of over 4,000 high schools in the country. What's more, the school choir placed first in provincial competition and the basketball team went to the district finals before being ousted.

Some 14 years ago, the Brothers and other Lasallians opened St. Mary's Child Rescue Center as an outreach to abandoned and street children in Nyeri. The children range in age from four to about 16 years of age and live at St. Mary's. Those in the elementary grades attend local public schools; high schoolers go to St. Mary's Secondary or St. Mary's Polytechnic, in either case free of charge. ***What a marvelous witness to the loving presence of God!!***

I first met Bro. Collins, currently a scholastic at CTIE, at another Lasallian outreach program for very poor children: Child Discovery Centre in Nakuru. It is located some 150 kilometers northwest of St. Mary's, Nyeri. The project was started by Bro. Francis Kamanda to try to meet the growing street children problem that has exploded in so many cities of Africa. Because of poverty, unemployment, marital instability, single parent families, and AIDS, there are thousands of children in and near the cities who are either orphans or in a family situation with no one to care for them... There are now over 100 boys and girls, all very poor, in the program. They attend the local public school in the area and live at the Centre which is supervised by Brothers and Lasallian colleagues. Recently a technical school was added to the Centre. ***A loving witness to God's presence!***



Brother. James Wallace  
Manhattan College, NY, USA

**Another of my visits:** Meki Catholic School (MCS) in Ethiopia. MCS has some 1800 boys and girls in grades 1 to 12. It is the only secondary school within a radius of 30 kilometers, an area inhabited by some 200,000 people. The 1800 students of MCS are the poorest of any of our Lwanga schools. It has responded to this poverty by purchasing land nearby for a farm; the fruits, vegetables, cheeses, and wines are sold over a wide geographical area and make a very significant difference in the school fees charged to the students. Again: What a marvelous witness to the loving presence of God!

**Moving to West Africa,** I spent several days at Mount La Salle College in Naka, Nigeria. Here also Lasallians are providing a quality Christian education to the young, especially the poor and neglected. The teachers at this school always struck me as unusually motivated to expand their repertoire of teaching methods including various Cooperative Learning strategies, the Venn Diagram, and Kinesthetic activities. (continued p. 8)

As we know, students find it easier to pay attention and to learn if they are taught through methods that match their preferred learning styles.

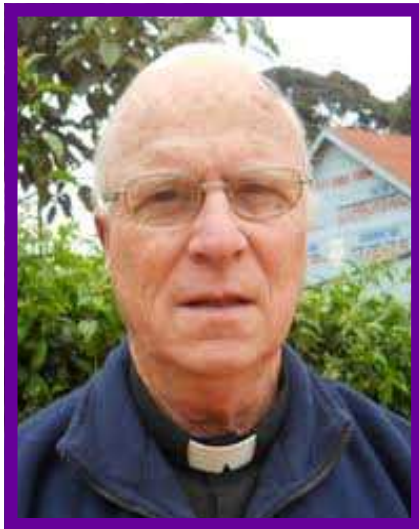
Today the school serves some 600 students, 80% of whom are from families living below the poverty line. In an effort to promote food security at Mount La Salle, the students engage in farming. Each student is given a portion of land to farm which later is inspected and graded. As they work the farm during the growing season, the students are provided guidance in enhancing the amount of fruits and vegetables that can be grown on a given plot of land. Later, on their own farm, they will easily be able to provide for the needs of their families and the surpluses left over to sell in the market.

We hope that the youngsters currently being taught and cared for in the District of Lawnga will respond by becoming, in the words of Edwin Wanyonyi at the funeral of Brother Dominic Jordan in Kenya, "*living witnesses of God's great present to us*" that Br. Dominic and other Brothers and Lasallians were and are to us.

*Brother, James Wallace  
Manhattan College, NY, USA*

## Br. Dominic Jordan

*«In God's hands you rest, in our  
hearts you live forever!»*



***"...A living  
witness to God's  
great present to  
us "***

## (April 3, 1940-February 8, 2012)

- \* Born on April 3, 1940 in New York City
- \* Entered the Juniorate in Barrytown on September 9, 1954
- \* Entered to the Novitiate on June 24, 1957
- \* Received the Religious Habit on September 7, 1957 and Named as Brother Dominic Benildus.
- \* 1962: Assigned to St. Rymond High School in Bronx, NY as a teacher.
- \* 1965: Pronounced his final Vows at Manhattan College, Bronx, NY
- \* 1984: Arrived in Kenya [...]
- \* January 3, 2008, He experienced a Heart attack and was admitted to Karen Hospital for five weeks.
- \* February.2008: Taken to De La Salle Hall, Lincroft New Jersey for recuperation
- \* May 2008: St. Peter's HS Community, Staten Island, NY : recuperation
- \* January 2009: Back to Kenya, to St. Mary's worked as Finance and Development person to St. Mary's and the Sector of Kenya.
- \* 2011-2012: Went back to St. Peter High School retired. However, he continued as fundraiser of the Program in St. Mary's to the time of his death.
- \* January 10, 2012 He arrived Kenya to help at St. Mary's with the Intention of leaving for the USA on February 13, 2012
- \* Febr. 3, 4, 2012 Experienced chest pain
- \* Febr. 6, 2012: Admitted to the Nairobi Hospital, Kenya.
- \* Febr. 8, 2012: He died.
- \* February 17, 2012: Buried at the Diocesan Cimetary, Mathari, Kenya.



# District of Golf of Benin

## I. District Annual Retreat

**T**he Brothers' annual retreat began in the evening of December 23 and ended on December 29 after the District Council in Tami. It was held at the retreat centre in Dalwak, in the Diocese of Dapaong with the theme: the radical gift of self in Religious life. It was led by Father Modeste SOME from Diebougou Diocese; he was for three years (97-99) at St. Miguel Scholasticate while studying at the WACU-UUA. He is now the CERAO (Bishops' Conference in West Africa) Secretary and a lecturer in WACU (West African Catholic University) and in CELAF. 21 brothers attended the retreat from all the communities of Togo and Benin. Br. Norbert on a mission in Nouna (West African District) was also present.

Father Modeste, before entering into the heart of the matter began by '*setting the ground*' using the method of action plan. It is this same method that brought the entire retreat in the form of conferences. One might ask questions such as: Where did the idea of the action plan come from? What is this method?

The idea of the action plan came out during the Jubilee of 2000. It is a pastoral methodology developed by Pope John Paul II, I quote: "*In the cause of the Kingdom, there is no time for looking back, and even less for settling into laziness. Many things await us, and that is why we need a post-Jubilee pastoral plan that is effective. It is important however that what we propose, with God's help, should be profoundly rooted in contemplation and prayer. Our time is a time of continual movement which often leads to activism, with the risk of 'do for the sake of doing'. We must resist this temptation by trying to "be" before 'doing'. 'Novo Millennio Ineunte No.15.*"

This kind of action plan is also adopted by the CEREAO for Dioceses and Religious Congregations of the West Africa region. This is a clear vision or a clear vision of the end to find adequate means. It is the primacy of the end over the means. Hence the need to sit and reflect on the purposes, and according to them, takes the steps necessary to achieve the goal. This is not always easy. [...]



*Brothers of the Golf of Benin District during their annual retreat*

The plan of action is a living program. This is a working method that brings us to renounce the worldly life rhythm, improvisation, to live day by day. It refuses contingencies and emergencies and opts for work planning and rigor in action. This is an appeal to all Brothers who are not organized, slow, which does nothing or rarely...

In parallel to these events, as it is the custom in the District, the Brothers who are preparing for final vows, shared their spiritual journey to the Brothers present at the retreat. Three afternoons sufficed for Brother Emile, Gerard and Francis to share their vocational journey. It was a fraternal sharing, despite some questions and comments. [...]

We say thank you to Brother Visitor (another model of the Action Plan method) and his Council for finding and targeting the theme of the retreat to which the majority of the Brothers of the District was present. And thank you to the facilitator who has led the retreat on the method of the action plan applied to religious life.

From the standpoint of the Christian life as a whole, the vocation to the consecrated life is, despite its renunciations and trials, and indeed because of them, a *path "of light"* over which the Redeemer keeps constant watch: "*Rise, and have no fear*". Vita Consecrata 40.

*Brother Gérard Bomboma  
District of Golf of Benin*

## II. AKASSATO: A new school

**T**he new "De La Salle" School in Akassato, in the town of Abomey, fifteen kilometers from Cotonou, Benin has opened its doors to students in the *sixth grade* for the 2011-2012 academic year.

**A dispute?** We started our project with searching and purchasing the land in 2008. The Mayor of Abomey made the task easy for us; he sold to us two pieces of land in the neighborhood of Zopah, a developing area. With the invaluable help of our Brothers of ARLEP and PROYDE and the donation of Mrs. Lopategui, we started building in September 2009.

**A joint project?** Well, I do not know if you know, but there are always different opinions in seeking what is best for all. De La Salle school complex is a project; it is a rendez-vous of quality education, educational innovation and a search for financial self-sufficiency, not to mention the social promotion of children and local youth difficulty in school enrollment, which is unique to our Lasallian Charism.

It's called "living together and in association," Brothers Paco Martínez, Silvano de Frutos and Juan Arranz, for over a year and a half have rented three rooms as accommodation in the neighborhood and they have "brought" a dream to reality. The building of the Community has been inhabited since July 2010. A bad joke. The economic crisis in Spain and Europe in general has closed a lot of doors. Financial assistance has become little drops. It must remain between us, we are a little "Quijotes" and we believe in Providence. We have just started building the first floor of the building of the Primary School.

**Reasons to believe.** The building of the first cycle of secondary is complete and it is very nice. We have 28 and 29 students respectively in each class of grade six. Girls and boys who do their best to dance to the rythm of Lasallian drums. The Tutoring Group, the upgrading programs, the instrumental enrichment program (IEP), the joy of reading in the school library and with the support of the association of "*Children's right*", "learning the information technologies and communication contribute to educational innovation project and the emerging reality of our Lasallian school.

We are celebrating 150 years anniversary of Catholic Education in Benin, and the new De La Salle School is a reason to believe that "DE SALLE" is always present.

*Brother Paco FALLADO  
District du Golf du Bénin*



*On a Monday, students during the flag raising*



*Some students in the classroom*



*A pupil in the program of ICT*

## District of Antananarivo

### CHRONIQUE DE LA MAISON RAFIRINGA, N°01

Dear Brother Postulator General,  
Dear Brother Visitor,  
Dear Brothers and Lasallians

**R**eceive my fraternal greetings to you and to all those entrusted to you. With its heading, this is intended as the starting point of a new end of the year chronicle and including the main events which happened at the Rafiringa House thus forming around the news of the Vice Postulation and the Sanctuary of our Blessed . The year 2009 was the year of the beatification, the year 2010 will therefore be the first year of this new feature that will appear each time in December, between Christmas and New Year

#### 1. The Pastoral Letter of the Superior

We, like all the Brothers of the Institute, received and read the Pastoral Letter from our Superior in December 2009. Having himself experienced the solemn celebration of the beatification in Madagascar, we propose in this letter the figure of the Blessed Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa as Lasallian icon to make present the Kingdom of God (see p. 50 -53).

I sent to Brother Superior a thank you note for this personal witness to the animation of the Institute towards the new Lasallian Blessed in the Indian Ocean and RELAF, after the Blessed Brother Scubilion in the Isle of Reunion, beatified by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in May 1989.

#### 2. The General Postulation

Having acceded to the request of Brother Vice Postulator made last year, Brother Rodolfo Meoli, Postulator General of the Institute granted special support to enable the Rafiringa House to renew its computer equipment to improve performance in information and communication. we express our sincere gratitude.

#### 3. The District of Antananarivo

The 15th District Chapter in June 2009 had decided to make the Vice Postulation "one of the District priorities "in the line of Action No. 10.

The District Council, on proposal of the Economic Council adopted a special budget to begin the new project in its operation while waiting for the participation of the communities. Thanks to the District Bursar (Brother) and a few communities.

#### 3. Rafiringa House

Is so called the first Brothers' house located in Soavimbahoaka , founded in 1897 when the then future Blessed Brother Raphael Louis lived with other missionary Brothers. Known for years as the community of elderly Brothers in charge of Soavimbahoaka Hill and property, vineyards and the winery, it also had in its history to host the novitiate of the Institute of Guadalupana De La Salle Sisters in its early years of foundation in Madagascar.

Today, Rafiringa House perpetuates the memory of our Blessed in Madagascar and became the office of the Cause of his Beatification and Canonization: Office of the Vice Postulation, Secretariat, Reception and Boutique, meeting room, VIP Room , exhibition room, hall, archives, library, Store sanctuary and courtyard. Today, the Rafiringa House employs a staff of 4 persons of which 2 permanent and 2 temporary including two nuns and two lay people.

#### 4. The animation group of the Sanctuary

Since May 2010, a group animation of the Sanctuary under the name of "FiFaO Rafiringa, Malagasy significant symbols for its shared commitment to promote the canonization of Blessed Rafiringa, has worked hard to spread devotion to our Blessed Brother. The group now consists of twenty members, all volunteers, including couples and beneficiaries of favors and graces from the Blessed. It elected its Representative Office and drafted its statutes. Its mission is essentially to animate prayers (Eucharist, Rosary, vigil ...) of pilgrims at the Sanctuary, specifically Saturday afternoons.





*The Relics of Blessed Brother Raphaël Louis Rafiringa  
in the Sanctuary, Soavimbahoaka*

## 6. Pilgrimages, visits and recollections

Day by day, weekend to weekend, and every year, Rafiringa House attracts individuals, families and groups who come to honor Blessed Raphael Louis Rafiringa either in the Sanctuary or near his grave, or even in the House dedicated to him. Pilgrimages, recollections and organized visits have been scheduled to ask God for graces and favors, and - why not a miracle through the intercession of our Blessed? Today, the highest point of these large gatherings of Christian fervor remains on the day May 19, his birthday in heaven or the celebration of his feast in the Church, as it was celebrated for the first time on May 19 last year in Soavimbahoaka with concelebration and participation of students of our schools.

## 7. The spread of the devotion to Blessed Rafiringa

Eighteen months after the beatification, it is necessary to speak today of the spread of the devotion to Brother Rafiringa from the Centre to the periphery, that is from the Rafiringa House in Antananarivo to the various dioceses of the Malagasy Church, and even outside the country by a few requests for relics. By witnesses of favors and graces obtained through events organized in dioceses in response to requests from bishops, institutions, religious congregations and groups, a devotion more and more popular manifests itself towards Blessed Rafiringa. Make him known, post messages in his letters and writings, pray with him in various meetings, participate in the diocesan radio broadcasts constitute most often the spread of the devotion.

We would be surprised to see record numbers of new churches (Catholics) and halls, schools and places of Christian movements and the basic ecclesial communities, a catechetical center and recently a sports association that bear his name ... or at least asked to be under his protection. On November 1, 2009, 500 young people of the Diocese of Antananarivo chose to do their annual pilgrimage to His Sanctuary by carrying the cross of WYD.

## 8. District Spiritual Retreat

With the rehabilitation of the District Accommodation Center in Soavimbahoaka, Brother Visitor and his Council had chosen to organize the 2009 annual retreat on the theme of *"religious consecration in the life and thought of Blessed Louis Raphael Rafiringa"*. They asked, on this occasion, Brother Vice-Postulator to kindly ensure the animation of this retreat whose theme was within his mission. Many Brothers have had to (re) discover our Big Brother, firstborn of the Institute in Madagascar but also to live within the pilgrimage organized along these lines *"In the footsteps of Blessed Louis Raphael Rafiringa"* through Antananarivo city, to finish in his parental village which became a place of pilgrimage: paternal house, family tomb, Church. After the retreat, a trip to the Great Sanctuary of Blessed Louis Raphael Rafiringa in the Diocese of Fianarantsoa eventually expanded the spiritual atmosphere to the dimensions of the missionary life of the Blessed. Thank you to Brother Bursar of the District for collaboration in the organization. Thank you to Brother Visitor for having taken the initiative by giving a wide coverage of the contents of this retreat in his circular letter.

While giving thanks to the Lord for this year, we ask Him to fill ourselves, our associates and partners in the Lasallian mission and finally our apostolate with His abundant blessings and the protection of the Blessed Louis Raphael Rafiringa.

*Brother Hilaire Raharilalao  
Vice-Postulator  
District of Antananarivo*

# Lasallian Family and Association

In the Strategic Plan *Towards Unity of RELAF*, adopted at the Visitors' conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was also discussed putting in place or coordinate the various Lasallian groups that are part of the Lasallian Family in the Region. We have already created a repertory for each District and sector. Initiatives are being taken here and there, but we need much more coordination between those responsible for the various groups and pastoral activities of each group. Common measures were adopted to allow each District and Sector to join its activities with those proposed by the Region with the aim of moving towards the same direction, *Unity of the Region*. In addition, the center of the Institute through the various Secretariats (Solidarity and Development, Being Brothers Today, and Lasallian Family and Association) supports the efforts of Districts and Sectors.

The International Council for Young Lasallians expect to publish articles on the Young Lasallians in RELAF in the next Intercom, June 2012. These articles intend to relate the different Young Lasallian activities in each District and Sector in RELAF. A letter requesting the articles with appropriate pictures has already been sent to each group leader and also to Visitors. We hope that they encourage their groups to actively participate in this project. We remind you that this initiative aims at making known not only the existence of the Young Lasallian movements in Africa, but particularly the activities and its contributions to the Lasallian Educational Mission in the Sector, Delegation, District, Region and Institute in general.

With regard to MEL, we have begun the process to establish a Regional commission. We also sent a letter to Brother Visitors so they can appoint and send us the names of **two Brothers** and **two Lay persons** with a priority to women according to the Center of the Institute. We hope to finalize the list of the commission members very soon. We remind you that the MEL International Assembly is scheduled on 5<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2013 in Rome. Theme: **"ONE FAMILY, ONE MISSION: Lasallians Associated for the Educational Service of the poor."** This Assembly will include two thirds of lay people and one third of Brothers. RELAF is entitled to 13 representatives.

*Br. Michel Zo Tolojanahary*



Young Lasallians  
Lasallian Former Students  
Lasallian Students  
Signum Fidei  
Catechists Union  
Lasallian Volunteers  
Lasallian Scouts  
Association of Lasallian Educating Mothers

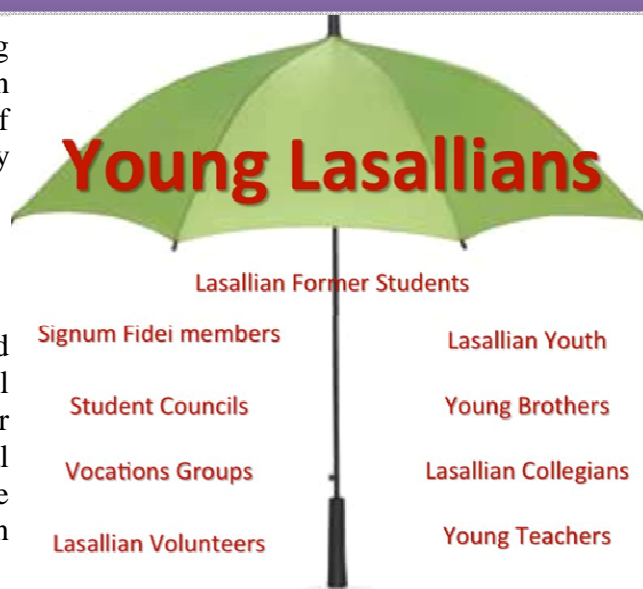


## Who are the Young Lasallians?

**A** Young Lasallian is an adolescent or young adult who is moved by the spirit of St. John Baptist De La Salle, to be an active agent of change against poverty and injustice as they affect the lives of the young, especially the poor.

### But where are these Young Lasallians?

The term Young Lasallians has to be understood as an Umbrella Term that brings together all groups of young people who are in some way or another connected to the Lasallian Educational Mission. In other words, Young Lasallians are found everywhere, probably in all the Lasallian Educational milieu.



## International Council of Young Lasallians (ICYL)



Back row (Left to Right): **Br. Charles Kitson** (Coordinating Secretary for Lasallian Family and Association), **Br. Pedro Bravo** (RELAL), **Vanessa Abella** (PARC), **ElissaPensa** (USA/Toronto), **Joseph C. Gilson** (International Coordinator for Young Lasallians).

Front row (Left to Right): **Aitor Zulaika** (RELEM), **Catherine D  ry** (Canada Francophone), **Br. Michel Zo Tolojanahary** (RELAF)

The International Council of Young Lasallians (ICYL) exists to develop and sustain the international network of groups and projects coordinated **for** and **by** Young Lasallians. The ICYL emphasizes the importance of active participation of youth within the Institute and the larger Lasallian Family. For this reason, the ICYL, through the day-to-day work of the International Coordinator for Young Lasallians, works to develop structures and programmes that support young people in their networking and communication efforts.

The ICYL also promotes the strengthening of formation programs based on values and relevant themes that help to inspire young people to be more committed to the Lasallian Education Mission. The overarching mission of Young Lasallians, identical to that of the Institute is to provide for the human and Christian education of the young people, especially the poor.

*Joseph Gilson*  
International Coordinator for Young Lasallians



# International Standing of the Young Lasallian Network

## Secretariat for Lasallian Family and Association

(Liaison with General Council, Vicar General, Bro. Thomas Johnson)

Coordinating Secretary for  
Lasallian Family & Association  
**Bro. Charles Kitson**

Co-Secretary for Lasallian  
Family & Association  
**Ms. Montse Nieto**

International Coordinator for  
Young Lasallians  
**Mr. Joseph Gilson**

International Council for Lasal-  
lian Family & Association

International Council of  
Young Lasallians



**RELAF**

**RELAL**

**PARC**

**USA/  
Toronto**

**Canada  
Francophone**

**RELEM**

Young Lasallian activities in these two Regions are mainly ministry-based, and generally have a young Brother at their helm. A number of other models are also in place.

RED Joven RE-LAL (RELAL Youth Network) is a newsletter by, and for Young Lasallians circulated at a Regional Level in RELAL.

The reality of Young Lasallians in PARC is very diverse. In some Districts and Sectors, this is very strong. (e.g. Lasallian Youth Ministry, and 'Share the Mission' Program, in Australia)

PARC, through its VEGA Roving Team and its Regional Lasallian Services Committee, has been sharing good practice and leading workshops for the development of Young Lasallian programs across the Region.

RELEM and USA/Toronto (which will soon include Canada Francophone as the two Regions merge into the new Region of North America) have Regional Structures for Young Lasallians.

The first meeting of the RELEM Young Lasallian Commission was held in December, 2011.

The Regional Committee of Young Lasallians for the USA/Toronto Region consists of 8 members, two from each of the 4 Districts of the Region. It holds both virtual and in-person meetings.

Some Districts in both Regions, e.g. DENA (Eastern North America), ARLEP (Spain and Portugal) and Canada-Francophone (in the near future) have YL District structures.

# Nairobi: Young Lasallians

## A Day of Formation at De La Salle Centre

It is my pleasure, in the name and in the spirit of our Founder St. John Baptist de La Salle that this Lenten season unite us in a special way as Young Lasallians. It is time for agents of our Founder to take more time to listening to his voice through the work that he continues in us. **"Lord, the work is yours"**

The Young Lasallians in Nairobi had a one day of formation Sunday, February 26, 2012 at De La Salle Centre. Brother Finnbar Murphy (FSC) was invited for a brief presentation on vocation. He focused more on the Lasallian vocation as educators.

Later, Br. Collins, Scholastic Brother and Coordinator of the YL made reflections on the theme: "Who is a Young Lasallian?". It was a high time for renewal and unification because members have a much better understanding of **who they are called for**.

The Young Lasallians in Nairobi have shown more determination to move forward. On March 17, they will travel to Rift Valley of Nairobi to visit Child Discovery Centre in Nakuru, one of the Brothers' apostolate in the sector Kenya.

Promising our effort to achieve unity in diversity, we wish you all a wonderful Lenten season.

Brother Collins Wafula  
YL Coordinator  
Sector of Kenya



Br. Charles Kitson (Coordinating Secretary for Lasallian Family and Association) with the Scholastic Young Brothers during his visit in Nairobi, January 2012



Some YL meeting at de La Salle Centre, Nairobi.  
Seated in front: Br. Collins Wafula  
(Kenya YL Coordinator)

# Catechists Union in Eritrea



*Br Alberto Gomez avec with one of the Bishops in Eritrea and two other members of Catechists Union in Asmara*

From 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2011, Br. Alberto Gomez, General Councillor from Rome, visited the Sector of Eritrea. The main purpose of the visit was to learn about the reality of the secular Institute of the Union of Catechists in Eritrea; however, he also took time to visit almost all of our apostolate.

Br. Alberto being the General Councillor of the Union of Catechists has a responsibility to assess the movements of the Union worldwide. He met with the members of the Union in Asmara and in Keren. The union was originally started at the Italian city of Turin (Torino) by a De La Salle Brother Br. Teodoreto.

new bridge of collaborating and sharing the mission as members of Lasallian Family.

Br. Alberto visited our communities in Asmara, Keren and Hagaz. He also had meetings with our Postulants, Novices and Scholastics. While in Keren, Br. Alberto met with the Brothers and participated in the annual feast of Immaculate Conception. He also got a chance to discuss with all (three) Bishops of Eritrea.

The Sector of Eritrea is grateful for this visit and thanks Br. Alberto for arranging different meetings and sharing his insights to the Brothers especially in the formation Houses.

*Brother Negasi Gebreab  
Sector Coordinator (Eritrea)*



*Catechists Union in Keren, Eritrea.  
Behind row, far left: Brother Negasi Gebreab, Sector Coordinator*



# Celebrate as Brothers



## Silver Jubilee of Br. Regis

### Emmanuel Palenfo

*“By faith the Brother recognizes that his life consists in a succession of calls from God to which he continues to respond. This dialogue between God and each Brother permits the Brother to grow continuously in fidelity. For this reason the Brother is invited to be open each day to the presence of God in such a way that he discovers it, and lives it in his mission, his consecration and his community life ” (Rule art. 100)*

We are today witnessing the everyday response of our Brother Regis to God's call over his 25 years of religious life. This year he celebrated his silver jubilee of his perpetual vows in the Congregation of Christian Brothers.

To celebrate the occasion, the community of the Akwaba home, in charge of a center for street children in Abidjan where Br. Regis carries on his Lasallian mission, chose Sunday February 5 to celebrate together as Brothers.



*Br. Regis surrounded by children in Akwaba home during his Silver Jubilee celebration*

It should be noted that the day for Consecrated life was celebrated on February 5, in all the dioceses of Abidjan. A Thanksgiving Mass followed by a fraternal meal was held in the courtyard of Akwaba home. The Scholasticate and Bon Pasteur communities and a few Religious men and women were invited. May the Lord, with his great tenderness and love make our Fr Regis discover His will in the mission He entrusted to him!

*Brother. Michel Zo Tolojanahary*



# Celebrate as Brothers



## Feast of Saint Miguel Febres Cordero, Patron of the Scholasticate, Abidjan

*"Almighty and everlasting God, in Saint Miguel Febres Cordero you gave your Church a distinguished educator of youth. Grant that by imitating his exemplary dedication, we learn to welcome young people with kindness and thereby guide them more surely to you. Through Christ our Lord!"*

**T**he Scholasticate community celebrated the feast of St Miguel Febres Cordero, its heavenly Patron.

In the Institute calendar, the feast of St. Miguel is expected every February 9. But the community opted Friday, February 10, in the after-noon to celebrate as Brothers. At 18h a Mass presided by the Chaplain was held in the Chapel of the Scholasticate. Religious men and women, and Lay Colleagues were invited. After the Eucharistic celebration, the invited guests also took part in fraternal meal with the community. For this occasion, Br. Edward Nlandu, Director of the community shared some points of the pastoral letter (Consecrated by God the Trinity, as a community of Brothers) Superior General speaking to us about the life of St. Miguel: in his personal life, we may focus our attention on:

- ◆ *Making the Word of God the center of his life and his main source*
- ◆ *The daily celebration of the Eucharist and his prayer time before the tabernacle.*
- ◆ *His desire to holiness, God is the object of his desires.*
- ◆ *The lived experience of a faith that is not disincarnated, distant from life.*
- ◆ *The requirement with which st Miguel saw his religious life, his life as a Brother.*

*Brother. Michel Zo Tolojanahary*



*St Miguel Cordero Febres Scolasticate  
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire*



*The portrait of St Miguel, surrounded by candles  
in the Scholasticate Chapel*



# Restructuring: The Boundaries of RELAF



The activities that link the Districts of our Region and which could increase the sense of belonging to the Institute and would make it more dynamic are quite limited: two Formation Houses and CELAF (CAFOP included) for the French Speaking zone, the work of Secretaries for Formation based in Rome and the presence of the General Councillor. And recently we have the RELAF Newsletter bulletin, which appears regularly.

Besides, we observe that there is an economic management of the Districts more or less organized, but no inter-District coordination. The project of a School of Application was paralyzed for years while the land is already ready in Mbadon, Abidjan. The Formation commission does not exist. The Office for the Regional animation led by the General Councillor slows to establish and settle in Abidjan. The English and the French speaking zones are too distant despite the desire to reach bilingualism.

What happens? I think there is much to reflect on the boundaries that somehow block the development of RELAF. Sometimes we have to learn from our past. How Christianity could take root and develop everywhere? Merit goes to St. Paul. He immediately understood that if the Christian message did not come out of society and culture, it would become a small Jewish sect likely to disappear with time. The norms and the Jewish culture would quickly stifle or distorted. And this is Saint Paul who began the fight, sometimes against the apostles, to spread the Christian message in cultures more inclusive. And it is this openness to such new foreign mentalities will provide the basis for the success of the Christian message.

An initiative that seems to me urgent for RELAF is this: opening a Lasallian Formation center in Abidjan for Brothers and Lay people. The formation team could also organize training sessions in Abidjan and other Districts. And it would consist of forming groups for several periods of weeks at a time.

If our Lasallian Charism remains confined in small Districts, attached or identified with a single local culture, does it not run the risk of weakening itself? We must ensure that the Districts do not end up looking like “sects” detached from the Region and the Institute. It may be that the boundaries of RELAF are mainly mental.



*Brother José-Manuel Sauras  
Visitor of Golf of Benin District*



# Restructuring: ...Slowly...but Surely!



The Brothers of the District of Douala (Cameroun-Chad) and those of Equatorial Guinea continued the process of restructuring with a strong desire to work together. We talked about this process which had taken a decisive turn when the General Assembly of the Brothers of the two entities that had been held in Diang, East Cameroon in December 2010. Resolutions had been taken. A schedule had been set up. The next General Assembly was therefore scheduled for December 2011 to assess the progress of the implementation of resolutions and considered the future. They were a total of 25 Brothers, 18 from the District of Douala and 07 from Equatorial Guinea.

It is in this perspective that the Brothers of the two entities met in Ebolowa (South Cameroon) from December 26 to 30, 2011. The meeting was held at the Catechetical Centre of the same city. After an icebreaking interaction (*the buenos dias hermano, hello Brother*) and some practical orientations, works began with a meeting of the two Councils. The latter adopted a consensus document that was submitted to the Assembly. A copy was given to each participant for a rereading and a meditation. Back to the Assembly, the document was submitted to a vote by secret ballot and at the end, the results of this consultation are as follows: 25 in favor, 0 against and 0 abstentions.

What document is it? It is all about the Convention governing the future functioning of what will come out of the restructuring of the District of Douala and the Lasallian Zone of Equatorial Guinea. Until the Convention is ratified by the highest authorities of our Institute the document should be sent to the Visitor of the District of ARLEP for reading and appreciation.

The next assignment was to define priority actions until the next General Assembly. They should include the following areas: the District, Formation, Community, Economy and Administration.

Slowly but surely ... we shall make it . Note that the main concern in this process remains the sub-regional integration in the CEMAC (*Communauté Economique et Monnaitaire de l'Afrique Centrale*) sub-region which is only effective in the papers. What a long and cumbersome administrative procedures for the Brothers of Cameroon and Chad to obtain an entry visa to Equatorial Guinea! Well, it's alright because hope is possible. Slowly but surely ... we will eventually get there.

*Brother Pascal Mbaby  
District of Douala*

# Communication in RELAF



The International Communication Council Members had a meeting with Brother José Antolinez, Secretary General and Brother Alberto Gómez, General Councillor. The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate and plan for the future based on the objectives and lines of actions set forward by the Circular letter 456 regarding communication. One of the most important issue that was discussed was about the flow of communication that should exist in the Institute. The flow of information and communication through Internet has improved accordingly in the other Regions. They have websites, allocated full time personnel in every District and they have fast flow of communication among the Districts and the Institutions. As you may know that the RELAF situation is different. RELAF Region needs to come up with communication strategic plans in every District, websites and able to create a flow of communication at least to reach where other regions are today. I believe that in order to achieve the objectives and line of actions that were set by the Circular letter 456.

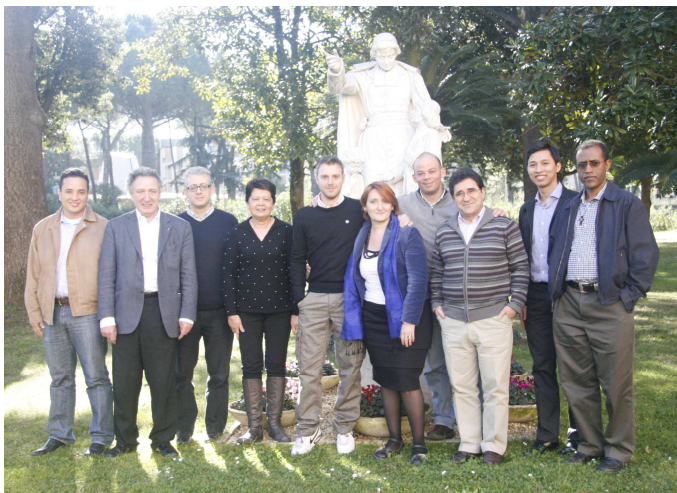
We need to start with linking every Brother and Lasallians in the network. I would like us to start with creating a new email account for every Brother or Lasallian in the Region. The Communication Service of the Institute has offered us free accounts under Gmail. [lasalle.org](mailto:lasalle.org).

The purpose of the new email accounts are mainly:

- ♦ *To help every Brother or Lasallian to get an access of the news that is shared on the net and give every Brother or Lasallian to share his or her own stories and work in the mission.*
- ♦ *Creating the email account is very vital for this matter. We expect every Brother or Lasallian to use it and be committed to share information, news and experiences regularly. Since the new website will be launched this month of March, we do not want any Brother or Lasallian left behind. We want to share what every Lasallian and the Brothers in Africa are doing. This is also an opportunity for all Lasallian, to learn, to support and to communicate with each other.*

I think the first approach should be to help each Brother or Lasallian to have an email account. I request that those responsible for communication in Districts, Sectors or Delegation support our efforts to improve communication in our Region. The next step is to create a website for the Office RELAF that is linked to existing web sites of institutions in the Sectors or Districts.

*Brother Betre Fisseha  
RELAF Representative  
International Council for Communication*



*Members of the International Council for Communication  
meeting in Rome, January 2012  
(far right, Br. Betre Fisseha, RELAF Representative)*

# Regional Office

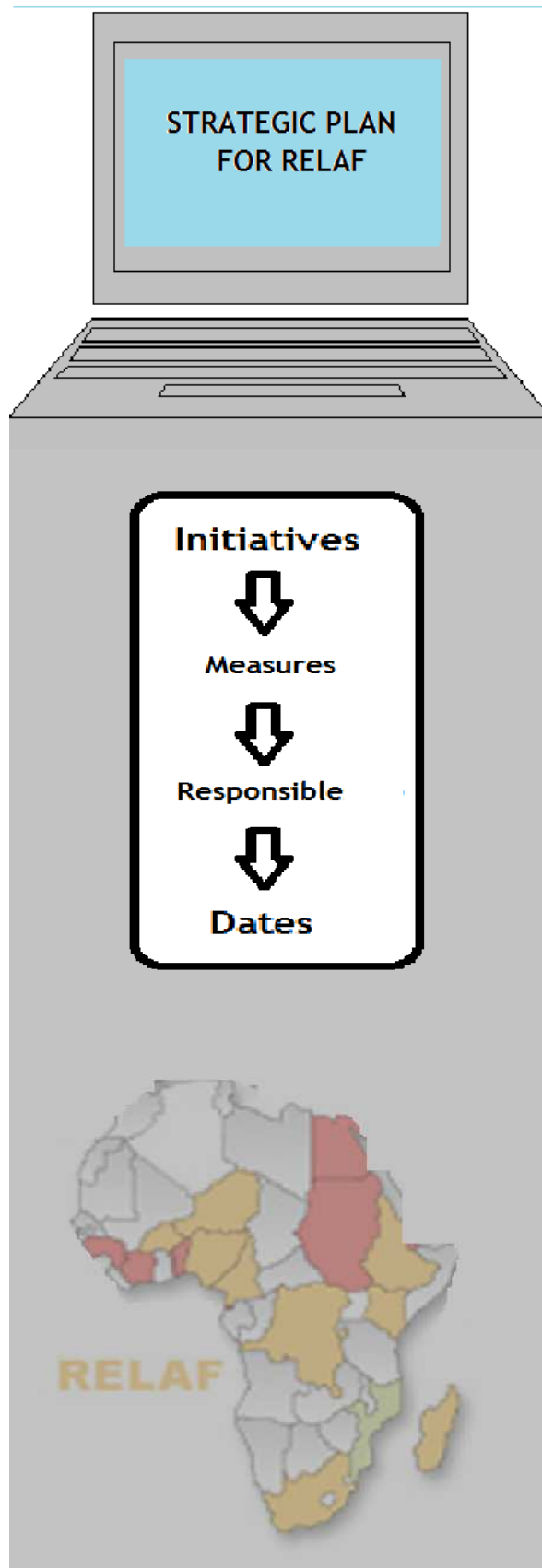
From January 16 to 21, 2012, Brother Jorge Gallardo, General Councillor residing in Rome came to Abidjan to support the Regional Team of RELAF through a reflection-session. His reflections revolved around the big question: *how to have an effective Regional team?* Unfortunately two team members were absent.

We went through the RELAF Strategic Plan in which different responsibilities were well established with specific dates for the tasks. The session began with a brainstorming of the Strategic Plan adopted at the Conference of Visitors in Addis Ababa in November 2011. The result of this brainstorming led us to classify the different initiatives in order of priority and according to their importance. We then assigned tasks to each team member to follow up decisions. To these tasks were assigned specific dates for their implementation. We also analyzed the schedule of responsibilities for each member in the animation and the Restructuring of the Region.

For an effective Regional team, a place where the team can live and work is also required. But until the Cocody house is totally repaired, the Regional team stays in Bon Pasteur community, Riviera III. By next academic year, the Regional team will move to Cocody. Note that the huge repair work is completed. There are only a few interior arrangement to finish.

It should be noted that Brother Anatole Diretenadji (Regional team Administrator and Regional Bursar) is back in Abidjan on Monday, March 12. Br Anatole, after a short stay in Abidjan went back to his District of origin to prepare an assignment hand over.

*Br. Michel Zo Tolojanahary*





# Initial Formation

## Some echoes from the English Speaking zone

### Postulancy reopened its doors

Thanks to an effort done in the Pastoral Vocation Ministry, especially by Bro Paul Anderson, the Kenyan Postulancy reopened its doors to a few Candidates. This is a sign of hope and encouragement to all the Brothers of the Kenyan Sector.

### Postulants met young Brothers

During the Young Brothers' Solidarity Assembly, the Postulants met the participants. They shared their reflections on "why young people join religious Congregations, especially the De La Salle Brothers, in today's Church and Society?", "why and how can we as Brothers persevere in our vocation?"

**From January 25 to February 11**, the Lwanga District Formation Coordinator organized and animated workshops and a dialogue-conference for Aspirants, Postulants and Young Brothers. He visited the various Communities. It is always an adventure to reach out to people of different socio-cultural and religious backgrounds. But this adventure can bear fruit thanks to God's grace and to the positive and openhearted attitude of the participants.

**In Ethiopia**, the Sector Coordinator and Bro Sheferaw reinforced the Pastoral Vocation Ministry in such a way that *Come and See Programs* are well attended by a good number of Aspirants. In August ten selected candidates will participate in a one-week *Come and See Program* as an immediate preparation for Postulancy that will start in September.

In Nigeria, Br. Ade, the new Postulancy Director, welcomed eight candidates to the Postulancy in Naka last September. At the beginning of January 2012 two Postulants started their Novitiate Program in Nairobi after having accomplished successfully their Postulancy program.

Brother Marc Hofer

## From the French Speaking zone

In the District of Congo Kinshasa, the "*Postulancy Brother Ignace Veron*" has started well its activities for the year 2011-2012. Postulants are in the community since September 2011. They are eleven including five (5) in the first year and six (6) in the second. The staff includes three Brothers: Pie NSUKULA (Director), Félicien BORA (Assistant Director and Bursar), and William Panzu, member. The dynamics of community life settles and Postulants integrate gradually. In the first trimester those of the first year participated in an inter-session for Postulancies.

Brother Félicien BORA

From January 2 to February 2, 2012, the second-year Novices of the Inter-African Novitiate in Bobo Dioulasso did their community experience. As expected in the Novitiate formation program, it allows them to have community life experience by taking part in the mission of the Brothers and their rhythm of daily life. It is also an important period for a personal discernment for the novices before engaging to the Religious life of the Brothers of the Christian Schools by the profession of first vows.

Brother Michel Zo Tolojanahary

On Thursday, December 1, 2011, the community of the Inter-African Novitiate celebrated the taking of habit ceremony of the first year Novices whose protector is Blessed John Paul II. They are from the District of Antananarivo (5 novices) and the Sector Mozambique (3 novices). Fr Manuel Sauras, Visitor of the District of the Gulf of Benin was invited as the principal celebrant of the ceremony. It should be noted that before taking the habit, they had a day of recollection led by Brother Philippe de Montety, Secretary of the District of West Africa.

[Source: Novitiate Chronicle]

# Reflection: Laicity or Laicism



*closed laicity (aggressive)*  
*silent laicity (indifferent)*  
*open laicity (benevolent)*  
*secularised laicity (favourable to unbelief)*

Laicity is not a finished product. It is not data given once and for all. It was not bequeathed to us as a revelation. It is to be sought, discussed, experi-

mented, corrected and repented if necessary. Rather it is a process in which we try to find which attitude to promote in the context of secondary education so that the young learn how to know the others in their difference and find the school meaningful for their life, both in privacy and citizenship.

Laicity must not be synonymous with muteness. That is why we have tried, in a previous article, to unveil the « un-said » content of the message worded in the phrase : « **The state school system is lay** ».

First we have maintained that the Laicity of education does not imply the exclusion of religions from school curriculums. Therefore an authentic laicity, unless it be itself a prejudice against religion, a kind of « lay spirituality », includes instruction or education about the plurality of the religious fact. Although the present historical and social context is religious, it is not unfrequent to hear about a religious crisis among the young. Is there not a relationship between the Laicity of education and the religious crisis among the young in Burkina Faso ?

Then we have also maintained that the school must educate more. Indeed the State school in general does not explicitly address the issues that the young elicit while maturing psychologically, affectively and socially. The pandemic of HIV-AIDS, upheld by the « dirty money » of fund-suppliers, has roused many a one to address the young about this disease and the moral behaviour it calls for. Such an effort should be continued to answer the existential questions of the students.

Finally, we have supported the effort of the decision-makers endeavouring to bring back civic education into secondary education. Besides the difficulties inherent in the drafting of a « model-content » to be proposed to students, we think that a few themes or topics suggested are relevant to superior level and can be set aside and replaced by other subjects dealing with the existential problems that preoccupy them.

Facing a globalization that questions particular identities, facing the progress of science and technology influencing every human activity out of which anything mysterious, secret or sacred tends to be driven away, the school is called upon to build bridges between the various conceptions of life and to offer the students elements for an answer. Life is not only yield, competition, consumption, possession and power. Many are the consequences of such a conception of life : dispersion, hypocrisy, corruption, individualism, the frivolity of a life without rhyme or reason : a life that can be deemed colourless, scentless and tasteless. Each individual decides upon his morals and the life he chooses to live. That materialistic and individualistic conception of life appears to us as unacceptable to the young in a country open to the religious dimension of life. It would be a treason of the burkinabè culture to persist in considering openness to the religious dimension as an appendage to the formation of the young.



That is why we propose Civic and Religious Education (ECR) taking into account morals or ethics so that each student be able to tell food from poison. That he be able to discover the objects and conducts that are for him bearers of a message of eternity, windows of meaning. The benefit of that ECR will be to develop among the young the sense of moral, civic and religious values, the inter-religious dialogue, the art of living together. For the moral building up of the young is more important than their general culture.

Nobody then will say that the school gives no education. Indeed it cannot do everything. But instruction and education will no longer be separated. Then the phrase integral education will rightly be used for each teacher will have found or found anew the importance of education and the urgency of doing something for it. Our conception of education will be none else than that given by Pope John-Paul II : *"Education consists [...] in man becoming ever more a man, that he might "be" more, and as a consequence, through everything he "has", everything he "possesses", he might know more and more fully how to "be" a man. To that purpose, man must know how to "be more", not only "with the others", but also "for the others"*<sup>1</sup>. That is building man. It will be one of the tasks of secondary education that will take into account Civic and Religious Education (ECR). The educator will be a witness, an organizer, an observer, a listening man and a teacher. Laicity itself will be made fully understandable and authentic. It will no longer suffer from any complex because of the conditions it was born in, amid arguments and divisions. Moreover, total coherence between words and actions will have to be observed. Let us refrain from excess of any side, when it comes to the religious fact in relation with the world of school in the context of Laicity.

*Brother Marc Some*

*District of West Africa*

*(Translation: Brother Philippe de Montety)*

<sup>1</sup> John-Paul II, Pope, "Address to the UNESCO : Education, the primary task of culture", in *Documentation catholique*, N° 1788, Paris, May 1980, p. 11.

*'Br. Marc Some is part of the International Council for Research and Lasallian Resources. He regularly writes articles for relexions on Lasallian themes and Lasallian Educational Mission. He is now a member of Toussiana Community, District of West Africa*





# Christian Life: Youth Pilgrimage

## Youth Pilgrimage in Nguelemendouka (NKA) Cameroun 21<sup>th</sup> Edition – February 12 to 18, 2012

**T**raditionally, for the last 21 years, the Diocese of Doumé - Abong Mbang of Bertoua Ecclesiastical Province (Eastern Province) Cameroun organizes Youth Pilgrimage, in the week following the Youth National Day, on February 11. Three days before the diocesan meeting in NKA where will meet young people and accompanying staff throughout the diocese (5 pastoral zones), each zone organizes the march in stages. Regarding the Lomié zone (5 parishes), like last year we marched with Abong Mbang zone .

**Sunday, February 12**, late in the day, we drove to Mpemzok village, 110 km from Lomié. The first trip, 14 young were transported from Lomié, I was part of this group. Father Raphael went back to Lomié, and he joined us the next day with eight other young people. You should know that these young people must be serious in their studies if they are students because they are autorised miss classes for a week. On the first night, late at night, the group from Mindourou, also from Lomié zone, joined us. In total there were 36 young people, two priests, a seminarian and a De La Salle Brother, 40 pilgrims from our zone. A delegation from Abong Mbang, 15 km away, also came to the village that first night. After settling, late supper and entertainment, the short night gives us a little rest.

**Monday 13**, at dawn, serious activities begin. Rising at 5 am, Eucharist at 6 am followed by breakfast. At 8 pm, after a sending benediction, the group of 85 pilgrims moves to the road (path). All through the villages, or along the groves and plantations, the animation is constant: songs, recitation of the rosary, Ways of the Cross at times, but also personal meditation, in villages where a Christian community structured, with chapel, a decision is often made, to pray with and for local Christians. These pit stops are also rewarded with a glass of water and fruits available. The priests who accompanied walking are asked to bless the faithful kneeling beside the road (women and children most often), water is blessed at the same time. To distinguish the zones, a color is assigned to each (blue, red, yellow, green and purple).

For us it is the purple color that distinguishes our scarves. Without a scarf we cannot be recognized as a pilgrim.

With the experience of last year where I could not walk for 6 km, being a driver for our luggage and a few priests who gave blessings, this year I was able to join the pilgrims walking, 85 km (almost 90% of the way). In Lomié we crafted a lightweight cross, bearing the logo of the theme and the map of our zone: we followed the Cross of Christ and we pray for the intentions of the faithful of our parishes. A booklet "*Pilgrim's Guide*" gave the outline of steps and a few readings to nourish the march, and finally we also wore the logo on our badges.

The mid-day break takes place in St. Michael parish, Abong Mbang (it is 12h 15), before meal, a conference reflecting the theme is given by a priest (Vicar General). But the fatigue since the beginning does not allow many to benefit. The pause is long, before leaving the city there are still stops in the other two parishes. It is only at 16 h 10 that we leave the second Cathedral of diocese. We were not lucky enough because there are still 12 km to go, with the various stops. This is the beginning of the night we get to the stage of the evening, Bagoloul ; it is 18 h 25'. With the arrival of pilgrims, some leaders of the Christian community divided pilgrims for the night. Young people are grouped by parish, in a house or room (often made of clay where a mat is unrolled). The boys go from one side, girls in other places. For bathing it is often down to the river, sometimes with water drawn from the drilling. The AM (Apostolic Ministers: priests, religious, seminarians) are assigned a private accommodation; comfort varies greatly from one house to another, a bucket of water can most often be used to keep away the dust glued by sweat (the movement of cars, motorcycles and trucks raises a lot of dust); shower rooms are rare, the toilets are also very traditional.



*Young Pilgrims marching towards NKA*

A pilgrim accepts what is offered. It is indeed a very close contact to the daily life of people that some might want to ignore. After being put at ease, a meal is shared. Finally a time for vigil (singing concerts) closes the day. Everyone then joins in bed for some rest.

Each day follows a little program. The differences observed in the roads more or less steep, more or less dry, more or less long. The pathfinders alert us on vehicles coming on our way; rear security warned us to keep right well to allow free passage.

The theme of the diocesan pastoral year is *"Family, school of Christian life."* That of the pilgrimage is the youth-friendly version: *"Young people at school in the family and in Christ."* Conferences have titles such as: *"Young people at school in the family," "Young people live your vocation in your family," "Young people in the school of Christ," "Being the Timothy in the third millennium (2 Tim 1.5 -12) ", "Dialogue between family values and the Gospel values, full and fulfilling young people. "The five zones should prepare a song on the same theme. The songs are repeated several times, especially during vigil concerts. In Nguélémendouka on Friday night, the mega-concert (15 minutes per zone) enables young people to compete. Again this year our zone of Lomié won the singing. This one is entitled: "Family is hope," an adaptation of the song of Gilbert Gafah, Togolese who is in France, "My foolishness is hope."*

Bishop Jan Ozga, our Bishop, has repeatedly encouraged young people to be Elites of Christian young people, by practicing four dimensions of the Pilgrim: Thanksgiving, expiation of sins by acts of charity, prayer and conversion of heart.

On Thursday 16, at 3pm, we come in tight rows, 170 pilgrims from Lomié (purple) + Abong Mbang (green) in the place of pilgrimage. The joy of having arrived and the songs erase the trials of the road. The blue scarves of Nguélémendouka, Messamena yellow, Doumé red have already arrived. Our day had a delay of one hour thirty minutes due to the morning heavy rain in Kagnol II.

Grouping allows 718 pilgrims to live another three days in church, from 16 to 18 February, dotted by several activities: Game nonstick, Rosary at the Marian Shrine, Message of the pilgrimage, solemn opening Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, penitential celebration, the Way of the Cross at night, Concerts of religious music, solemn closing Mass.

The emotion of separation and also the willingness to move the Church forward accompanied the returning to every parish. The atmosphere remains lively on the way home. For us, from Lomié it is in the early night, at 21h 30' that the truck brings back the pilgrims. The Pilgrimage is an act of faith that will help them live each day and which also enables to evangelize around. *"Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel"* (1 Cor 9:16).

*Brother Jean-Marie Fouqueray  
Lomié Community Director  
District of Douala*



*Br. Jean Marie with a group of Young Pilgrims*

# Christian Life: Lent



## An extract of Pope Benedict XI Message for Lent 2012

« *Let us be concerned for each other,  
to stir a response in love and good works* » (He 10, 24)

### 1. “Let us be concerned for each other”: *responsibility towards our brothers and sisters.*

This first aspect is an invitation to be “concerned”: the Greek verb used here is *katanoein*, which means to scrutinize, to be attentive, to observe carefully and take stock of something. We come across this word in the Gospel when Jesus invites the disciples to “think of” the ravens that, without striving, are at the centre of the solicitous and caring Divine Providence (cf. Lk 12:24), and to “observe” the plank in our own eye before looking at the splinter in that of our brother (cf. Lk 6:41) [...] Today too, the Lord’s voice summons all of us to be concerned for one another. Even today God asks us to be “guardians” of our brothers and sisters (Gen 4:9), to establish relationships based on mutual consideration and attentiveness to the *well-being*, the *integral* well-being of others.

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

The Lenten season offers us once again an opportunity to reflect upon the very heart of Christian life: charity. This is a favourable time to renew our journey of faith, both as individuals and as a community, with the help of the word of God and the sacraments. This journey is one marked by prayer and sharing, silence and fasting, in anticipation of the joy of Easter.

This year I would like to propose a few thoughts in the light of a brief biblical passage drawn from the *Letter to the Hebrews*: “Let us be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works”. These words are part of a passage in which the sacred author exhorts us to trust in Jesus Christ as the High Priest who has won us forgiveness and opened up a pathway to God. Embracing Christ bears fruit in a life structured by the three theological virtues: it means approaching the Lord “sincere in heart and filled with *faith*” (v. 22), keeping firm “in the *hope* we profess” (v. 23) and ever mindful of living a life of “*love and good works*” (v. 24) together with our brothers and sisters. The author states that to sustain this life shaped by the Gospel it is important to participate in the liturgy and community prayer, mindful of the eschatological goal of full communion in God (v. 25). Here I would like to reflect on verse 24, which offers a succinct, valuable and ever timely teaching on the three aspects of Christian life: concern for others, reciprocity and personal holiness.

### 2. “Being concerned for each other”: *the gift of reciprocity.*

This “custody” of others is in contrast to a mentality that, by reducing life exclusively to its earthly dimension, fails to see it in an eschatological perspective and accepts any moral choice in the name of personal freedom. A society like ours can become blind to physical sufferings and to the spiritual and moral demands of life. This must not be the case in the Christian community! The Apostle Paul encourages us to seek “the ways which lead to peace and the ways in which we can support one another” (Rom 14:19) for our neighbour’s good, “so that we support one another” (15:2), seeking not personal gain but rather “the advantage of everybody else, so that they may be saved” (1 Cor 10:33). This mutual correction and encouragement in a spirit of humility and charity must be part of the life of the Christian community.

### 3. “To stir a response in love and good works”: *walking together in holiness.*

These words of the *Letter to the Hebrews* (10:24) urge us to reflect on the universal call to holiness, the continuing journey of the spiritual life as we aspire to the greater spiritual gifts and to an ever more sublime and fruitful charity (cf. 1 Cor 12:31-13:13). [...] The time granted us in this life is precious for **discerning** and performing good works in the love of God. In this way the Church herself continuously grows towards the full maturity of Christ (cf. Eph 4:13). Our exhortation to encourage one another to attain the fullness of love and good works is situated in this dynamic prospect of growth.

*His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI*



# Calendar (May-June)

- ♦ **Visitors' Conference (French Speaking zone)**  
- Abidjan: March 25th to 30th, 2012
- ♦ **Calendar for Br. Gabriel SOME, General Councillor RELAF**

Place	Date	Event
District of West Africa	March 31 to April 7, 2012	Pastoral Visit
District of Douala	April 25 to May 2, 2012	Pastoral Visit
Rome	May 7 to 19, 2012	Session with the new Visitors
Rome	May 21 to June 15, 2012	Session with the General Council
Delegation of Rwanda	June 16 to 27, 2012	Pastoral Visit
Nairobi	June 27 to July 7, 2012.	Pastoral Visit

- ♦ **Institute Calendar**
- \* **Monday 19, March: Feast of St Joseph, Patron of the Institut**
- \* **Saturday 7, April: St John Baptist de La Salle (Memory in the Church)**
- \* **Friday 27, April: Memory of the Blessed Nicolas Roland**
- \* **Tuesday 15, May: Feast of St Jean Baptiste de La Salle**
- \* **Saturday 19, May : Feast of Blessed Raphaël Louis Rafiringa**

## Correction

In the last issue of RELAF Newsletter, we failed to mention the number of scholastic Brothers of the District of Douala. Now done. Our apologies to the Brothers of the District of Douala.

DISTRICTS	NUMBER OF SCHOLASTICS
West Africa	39
Antananarivo	52
Congo Kinshasa	26
Douala	34
Golf of Benin	27
Equatorial Guinea	12
Haïti (Sector)	06
Middle East	06
Rwanda (Delegation)	38
Belgium South	01