

Brothers of the Christian Schools
RELAF NEWSLETTER



SUMMARY



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

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"Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God...And let us adore Him"

As Lasallians, we are familiar with these words. Yet we should never tire of exploring their depth...

Simone Weil spoke of times when the best way to think about God is to forget Him... She probably entered deeply into the meaning of the mystery of the Incarnation. In Jesus, God became man, as to forget that He is God! Lasallian spirituality is nourished by a tireless meditation on the mystery of the Incarnation.

The school, in various forms, is for us Lasallians this place where we live and relive this overwhelming event of a God who takes the risk to trust in our humanity. Here is what recommends John Baptist de La Salle: **« Recognize Jesus beneath the poor rags of the children you have to instruct: worship him in them; Like poverty, and honor the poor, after the example of the Magi; because poverty is to be kind to you who are responsible for the education of the poor. That faith make you do so with affection and zeal, as they are members of Jesus Christ. It is by this means that the divine Saviour will thrive with you, and you will find Him, because He has always loved the poor and poverty. »** (MF 96,3). We may compare this text passage with that of Matthew where Jesus talks about his glorious return on the last judgment. (Mt 25: 31-46) In this passage, Jesus reveals that the attention and presence to our brothers and sisters in need are attention and presence to Him.

In other words our God is a hidden grandeur, dignity that calls us to his rescue so that his rescue can appear concretely in children and youth. The mystery of the Incarnation finally speaks of a God who enters only where we accept to receive him. Thus in the school, there are of course human lives entrusted to our vigilance but also the very life of God entrusted to our lives. In my life as an educator, the very life of God is « at stake ». There is in children and young people entrusted to us, and in ourselves, something greater than ourselves.

In the light of the mystery of the Incarnation, we are invited to a quality school attendance, with our colleagues, with our students ... Our presence takes the sense of an attitude, a silent prayer to God: "Thy kingdom come."



Brother Pierre Ouattara
General Councilor—RELAF

At the same time, it expresses in concrete terms a "Here I am Lord ...". The very act to report to school, in class, in front of students, accompanied by an act of God to make himself present in many ways: through self-presence, students, colleagues. Our "Here I am ... Lord to do your will" is expressed in a thousand ways to work with zeal, to pay attention to people, to allow time for students to listen to colleagues, to be available for catechesis for visits ...

But we cannot pretend to be present to God and to others, by failing to be present to oneself. Everyone can only give what he has. To be able to say "Here I am" means to give, we must learn to "reflect" to be present to ourselves and to be present in God the innermost self. We now understand that De La Salle recommends mental prayer as the first and the main activity each day.

To all, Brothers and Lay educators, I express my hope and prayer that, throughout this pastoral and academic year, we are "Beings of presence."

Your Brother in De La Salle, Pierre OUATTARA.

Congo Kinshasa: Children's Right

To raise awareness among teachers in Lasallian schools in the District of Congo Kinshasa on the promotion and protection of children's rights, two training sessions are held; the first 21 to 25 July in Mbandaka in the equator, and the second from 18 to 22 August 2014 in Kinshasa.

By organizing these sessions, the District of Congo - Kinshasa is following in the footsteps of the Lwanga District and the District of Central Africa who have experienced this type of training.

Brother Edward NLANDOU Auxiliary Visitor, presided the first session in which 30 Lasallian educators and four Brothers, a Religious Sister and four women participated. The general theme which is "the protection of children's rights" were divided into five major modules from which several sub themes were presented brilliantly by a team of five experts from Kinshasa under the coordination of Sister Jacqueline BUKAKA.



The 5 modules dissected included general concepts Child and Family; formal and non-formal education, Children's Rights in the DRC, the limits of the law in the Child Protection Policy and Lasallians in child protection.

In detail, the experts defined what is a child and a family in the Congolese context; stages of child development, the importance of family and relatives, their role and responsibilities in the protection of the child; children in need of special protection measures; reproductive health and prevention policies in the health of the child; formal, non-formal and vocational training; presentation of National and International instruments for the protection of children; the organization, powers and procedures of the Juvenile Court in the DRC; economic, social and legal obstacles in the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in the country.



These sub-themes have furnished 5 days during which presentations alternated with group work resumed in a plenary session often followed pertinent questions and discussions and constructive contributions. The effective participation of all in the debates proved sufficiently the importance each participant gave to training.

The participants said that it was an incredible opportunity, to have been selected for this training that enabled them to realize that they had the ignorance of National and International legal instruments and legal protection of children's rights. All unanimously satisfied participants reported that their idea of children's rights before the training session was far from what they have learned and deepened during the 5 days. Their expectations at the beginning are met of more than 90%. The participants promised during the evaluation to implement the learning outcomes, teach their colleagues and be involved in the implementation of the Child Protection Policy in their respective schools.

The result of the overall evaluation is very satisfactory, at closing, each participant received a certificate of participation from the hands of Brother Visitor, Brother Firmin Phambu Ntoto who closes the session and congratulated the participants for their dedication while calling to be conscientious objectors with regards to children's rights.

Meanwhile, the session in Kinshasa was attended by 41 Teachers including 17 women. Again, the same team of trainers from Mbandaka were deployed for 5 days to the general satisfaction of participants. Don't we say « Do not change a winning team» The ball is in the court of those who have participated in the training. They must implement in their respective schools a Child Protection Policy which guarantee their rights and their development in all aspects, which is the main objective set by the District in organizing these sessions.

Brother Anatole Diretenadji



Some News from Lwanga District

Formation Workshop for Formators

On August 29th, 2014, the Formators of the two International Formation Houses in Nairobi and Bro Marc, District Formation Coordinator, participated in a Formation Workshop on the theme: *Relevance of Accompaniment in Formation Ministry: Basic Skills in Journeying with young religious men and women to grow towards Human and Christian Maturity*. Our reflections were guided by pertinent questions such as: Which challenges do you encounter personally as a Formator as far as accompaniment is concerned? Which challenges do Novices and Scholastics encounter as far as the accompaniment is concerned? What are some means of promoting spiritual transformation?

What characterises a life in consonance with Christ? What characterises Formation as a service of accompaniment? What are the main attitudes of a Formator? What is the main aim of accompaniment? What is discernment?

This Formation Workshop was followed by a Lunch taken in a restaurant as a sign of gratitude for the generous and much appreciated involvement of Bro Taddele, Director of the Scholasticate, of Bro Julius, Sub-Director of the Scholasticate, of Bro Anthony, Director of the Novitiate, and of Bro Yohannes, Sub-Director of the Novitiate, in the animation and administration of our International Formation Houses in Nairobi.

Welcome to the Scholasticate

At the beginning of the month of August the International Scholasticate in Nairobi welcomed wholeheartedly 8 new Brother Scholastics: 2 Brothers from Ethiopia, 1 Brother from Kenya, 4 Brothers from Nigeria and 1 Brother from Burkina Faso. We wish them success in their studies at the Christ the Teacher Institute for Education and a Formation Community where they feel at home and fully integrated.



St Joseph's College in Addis Ababa, contributed to Grand Renaissance Dam

St Joseph's staff, faculty and students bought bonds issued by the Ethiopian government for a second time to help raise money for the construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam project underway at the Blue Nile River. Besides buying bonds student also took part in a fundraising run organized by the municipality of Addis Ababa. The mega dam project which is in its third year is one of the biggest dam projects in the world and when completed it will make Ethiopian a major exporter of power in the region.

Illustrious alumni in Nigeria

Mt. La Salle College, Naka played host to her illustrious alumni, Miss Jessica Lkyon who graduated in 2009. At her graduation, she was admitted at the Benue State University to study Mass Communication. With her love for culture, she contested and won the QUEEN of Culture and Tourism, Benue State. During her visit, she addressed the students encouraging them to shun social vices such as exam malpractice, drug abuse, sexual abuse and others.



They should rather take to hard work so as to be a giant in academics. For hard work pays off and it is only through hard work that one can achieve his or her ambition. The Queen also advised students to be proud of their culture for culture is an identity. A person or group of persons can be identified with their culture by way of dressing, eating or way of life.

The queen thereafter donated some textbooks to the school library and some exercise books to the students.



Lasallian Outreach in South Africa

The Grade 7 class of La Salle College, in Discovery, South Africa, spent an afternoon socializing with the children of a local home for abused and abandoned children. The children of St Lawrence's kids Haven were delighted to have friends round to play for after-noon, especially as the Lasallian's provided fun party games with sweets as prizes. During lunch the girls helped to redecorate one of the boys' bedrooms. Finances for the decorating were generously donated by AGI Africa. The carpet and all bedding were replaced, as well as walls painted and decorated. The Children were delighted by the results! The Grade 7's donated food packs for the children during the holidays, as well as clothing. When it was time to leave, none of the children wanted the day to end!

Visit to the site of construction of the La Salle Primary School

The District Development Committee had a meeting on Tuesday, August 26th, 2014, in order to follow up the process of implementation of the District Income-Generating Project: La Salle Primary School. Thanks to this Project the Charles Lwanga District will be able to finance in future the Formation of its Novices and Scholastics.

The visit to the site such as to the Administration Block, to the Kitchen Block, to the Parking, and to the Lower Primary School Block in construction was very much appreciated by the members of the District Development Committee. Their comments were positive and encouraging. To all of them the construction seems to be original, attractive, spacy and solid.

This District Income-Generating Project was planned for years. Finally, it is in the process of being implemented thanks to the dedication of so many people such as the Architect, Engineers, Workers, Brothers, Experts ... and thanks to the generosity of so many Brothers and Lay People who have been willing to sacrifice some of their earnings in order to finance this Income-Generating Project.

We are encouraged to notice that here and there in the various Sectors of the Charles Lwanga District Brothers are willing to be involved in so many ways in the process of becoming more self-sufficient in economic resources. Bravo!

CELAF Institute: Inaugural Lecture

On September 18, 2014, at 9:00 am, the CELAF Institute Administration launched the official opening of the Academic Year 2014-2015 time. After the allocutions of the Secretary General and some key words for year from the Director General of the CELAF Institute, the long awaited moment has come, the Inaugural Lecture that deals with a theme of current interest in many African countries: « **Emergence and development. What challenges for Africa?** » The speaker, Ms. BAH, wife Koné, economist and Lecturer Researcher at the University of Bouake and former student of the Christian Brothers in Paris, attracted the attention of the audience, right from the beginning, on the amalgam to be avoided in the use of these two concepts, **Emergence** and **Development**, which according to her, do not fundamentally mean the same thing.

According to Ms. BAH, if the concepts Development and Underdevelopment are familiar in economics, the word emergence is new and does not correspond to economic concept.

However, she stressed that the paternity of the use of this concept is attributed to a Dutch economist IFC (International Finance Corporation, a Department of the World Bank) who used the term « **emerging countries** » to distinguish good grains (Countries



with sustained growth) et les mauvais grains (countries with lower growth).

She emphasizes that in fact, an emerging country is a country that attracts investors, this is a country that has committed to reform its investment code, established free zones, obtained capital accounts from large companies, in short, a country pro-market, that is, the market economy. For her, the concept of emergence is only based on the institutional reforms without real impact on the fight against poverty and the eradication of poverty in some African populations. If that is the case, the concept is not synonymous with Development as Policymakers are trying to make people believe.

Making reforms, attract investors and achieve high growth rates: are these enough to achieve Development in its proper sens ?



Development is more than attracting investors and increasing growth rates. It is first and foremost economic growth and processing factors of production, as well as modernization of infrastructures, technology development, industrialization and wealth creation, in short, factors that sustainably and positively impact the living conditions of the population, a corollary of social development which is nothing but the result of the drastic reduction in poverty rates.

We may ask ourselves the following questions: If Emergence is synonymous with Development, why the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) said they would seek Emergence to leave the area of Developing Countries to join the Developed Countries? Why do all African countries except South Africa and the Maghreb limit their horizons taking for model the BRICS countries who themselves seek to become Developed Countries?

Emergence and Development. What challenges for Africa? According to the speaker, the challenge is to get out of poverty, achieve Development that is globalizing, full, inclusive, and which highlights human capital and dynamic Sustainable Development. This is not just a slogan, unfortunately, is what gives clear almost all African Countries that are engaged in the race to become emerging as if it is an end in itself, she said.



After being classified as non-aligned countries, developing countries, highly indebted poor countries (HIPC), some African countries now seek to emerge. But before that, we have witnessed some struggle to reach the HIPC completion point, once they have reached, the poor Africans realize that the poverty rate has hardly moved one iota in decrease direction. As we can read on the title of one of Ayi Kwei Armah's novels, Ghanaian writer, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, meaning that: the golden age is not for tomorrow!

Brother Anatole Diretenadji



DWA: LASALLIAN FORMATION

From September 15 to 26, 7 Lasallian schools in Burkina conducted days of formation for teachers.

Topics focused on the internal rules of the schools, the theme of the year, the program of the first trimester and should be mentioned in a special way, one that has been addressed by the Secretariat for the Lasallian Educational Mission (SMEL): THE PERSON OF THE TEACHER

To begin with, SMEL took over the COMEL whose objectif is to train all Teachers in Lasallian Schools of the District of West Africa (DWA) both in Lasallian Charism and in the profession of teaching. Its plan of action for the 2014-2015 school year has twofold: to intervene in the pedagogical-pastoral days on the start of the school year and to organize two training sessions on Child Protection for all Teachers in Lasallian schools .

Thus, SMEL went to Lasallian Schools in Burkina Faso following this schedule:

Date	Place
15 september	Collège De La Salle - Ouagadougou
16 september	Collège Lasallien de Kongoussi
20 september	Collège de Tounouma - Bobo-Dioulass
22 september	Collège Pierre Kula - Diébougou
24 september	Collège Moderne Privé - Toussiana
26 september	Collège Charles Lwanga- Nouna

SMEL dealt with the theme by presenting it in 4 modules:

- 1. PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS OF A TEACHER IN BURKINA FASO**
- 2. IDEAL OF A LAY TEACHER/IDEAL OF A LASALLIAN TEACHER**
- 3. LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY**
- 4. THE THREE LEVELS OF THE IDENTITY OF A TEACHER**

*Brother Salvador
District of West Africa*



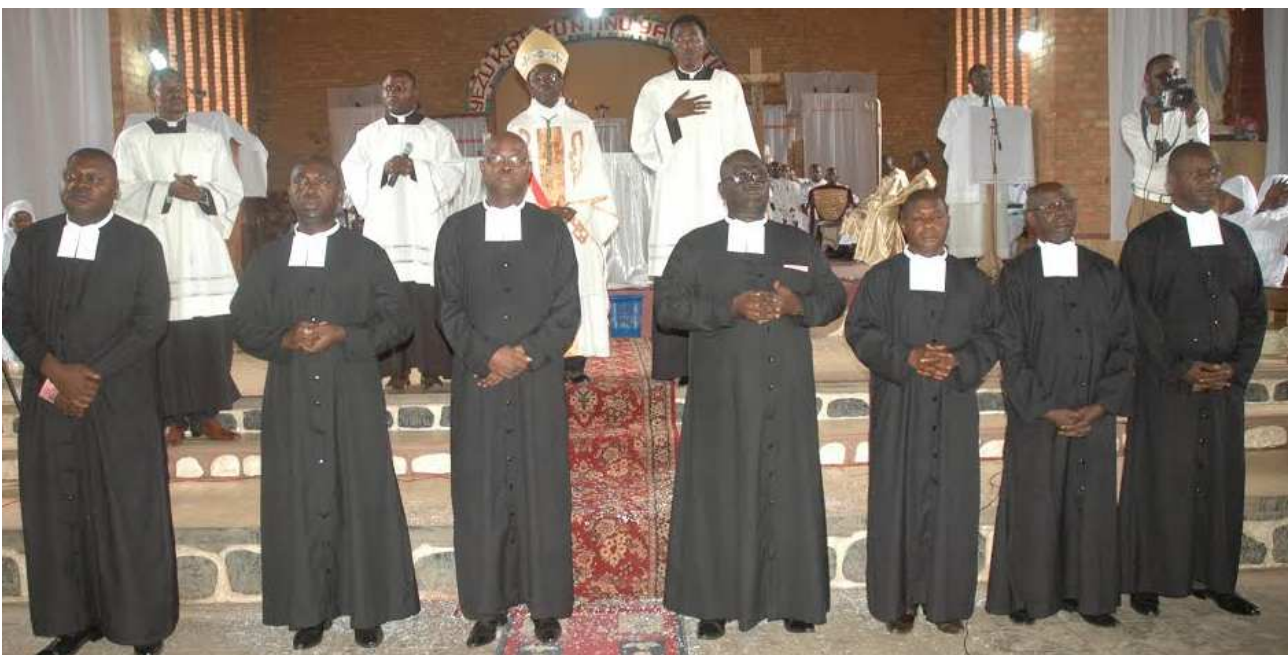
Congo Kinshasa: Perpetual Vows & Silver Jubilee

On October 5, 2014, the District of Congo Kinshasa celebrated the Final Profession of Brothers Sébastien MATUNDU, Georges TSHIBOYI et Alain NZUZI. 7 Brothers also celebrated their Silver Jubilee (since the taking of Habit). These were Brothers: Roger MASAMBA KINKUMA, Justin MUAKA BUNGA, Jean-Marie PULULU LUKOMBO, Félicien MPIA ISESE, (28 years) ; Manuel GOMES MAFUCA (27 years) ; Modeste NGUMA NZITA (26 years) ; Fr. Prosper IKU ENKER (25 years).

The Eucharistic celebration was presided by the Bishop of Boma Diocese, Cyprian Mbuka. In his homily, he praised among other things the Lasallian Missionary activity in his Diocese and expressed the hope to see the Lasallian educational works extend particularly to the north of the Diocese where the need for education is becoming increasingly acute.

It is with joy and profound gratitude that the entire Catholic community of Boma celebrated for the first time a Perpetual Profession and Silver Jubilee of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. It is a blessing of God received with piety and recognition by alumni, students and the entire Lasallian family. Catholic youth of Boma had the opportunity to better know about the vocation of the De La Salle Brothers.

The Mass was led by the selected choir of Christ the King Parish Choir and the Boma Rosignoles Choir of Kinshasa. Many Priests, Religious, Nuns and Lay people of Boma and Matadi neighboring dioceses, Kisantu Kinshasa and Cabinda in Angola took part in the celebration. Mass started at 8:30 and ended at 12:20 followed by meal together in the main hall of the school renovated for the occasion. The celebration ended with songs and dance steps.



"My evaluation of the 45th General Chapter"

By the grace of God and the pastoral solicitude of Brother Alvaro Rodriguez Echeverria, Superior General at the time, I participated in the 45th General Chapter as a young brother invited with the right to speak and vote. I deliver you through these lines my evaluation of the 45th General Chapter, in accordance with the proposal of Young Brothers at that Chapter.

A prepared Chapter

The least that can be said of the 45th General Chapter is that it was well prepared. Since its announcement until its closure, through its development, nothing escaped the organizers. First, Brother Alvaro and his council who were able to appoint suitable persons in the preparatory commission. The commission did a great job; Manual Chapter was a proof. Then the central committee consented to multiple sacrifices to lead the Chapter until the end. All services: reception, catering, communication, translation, secretariat, health, transport were well planned and effectively done. The Revision of the Rule commissions have done a document of great value, even if it was not followed literally by the Chapter.

An event experienced in spiritual fervor

The Chapter was truly a time of prayer. Our liturgical celebrations were always well prepared, prayerful and meditative, with strong symbols. Prayers unable to read several texts of the Bible, the Founderm Saints and mystics. Singing, always adapted to the occasion and well chanted, delighted the hearts of Brothers and made their offering acceptable to God. The variation of the celebrants, the presence of nos-seigneurs and Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz; ecclesiastical eloquents, inspired or prayerfull, favored intimate union with Christ during masses. The time dedicated to personal prayer also allowed each Brother to be « heart to heart » with God. In addition, the opening retreats into the different phases also fostered the spiritual renewal of Capitulants and the consciousness to collaborate on a divine work.

A fraternal Chapter

Fraternity is probably the main feature of this 45th General Chapter. Brother Robert Schieler, Superior General, said in his speech on June 7th 2014. In fact, from various backgrounds, the Brothers were able to show Brothers, overcoming all that, objectively, could divide, the least keep them away from each other: language barrier, age difference and experience differences of opinion on important issues such as the association with the laity. They were able to live as true Brothers during the seven weeks of the Chapter. If meals were often taken spontaneously in linguistic groups and most prayer services were also in these same groups, affinities were shone strongly. In addition, going out, leisure were always in an international context. Different gifts exchanged between the Brothers reflected the same sense of Brotherhood and friendship. St. Thomas Aquinas did not he say that we made gifts to those we love.



Brother Raoul TRAORE
District of West Africa

A Chapter concerned about consensus

The 45th General Chapter is also characterized by its constant search for consensus. Indeed, the Institute is established in more than eighty countries. Brothers hold in various (primary, secondary, university, social, catechetical centers, professionals ...) educational sectors and work with various partners. Needless to say that the experiences, religious and cultural backgrounds are very diverse. To achieve a single word on such matters as the association, evangelization, catechesis ... is thus a challenge. The vote was sometimes used to separate the positions.



A Chapter for listening and sharing experience

The 45th Chapter was also a time of mutual listening. In fact, the Chapter community wanted that to be in line with what the rule says 1987 in Article 54: « *The community for the Brothers their home. It is there that they live together. It is there that they experience each day anew the friendship, the esteem, the trust and the respect that they have for one another. They pay special attention to the needs of young Brothers.* » Throughout the Chapter, each Brother felt loved, accepted, respected and valued. This was shown through the civilized or polite debates, anniversary celebrations, gestures of moral support in times of distress. For example, when Brother José Antolinez lost his Father and Brother André-Pierre Gauthier his brother, the whole Chapter Community expressed sympathy to them. And when I was, myself, bedridden by malaria, I was visited by number of Brothers, including Brother Alvaro, Superior General at the time. In addition, without sharing the view of a Brother, the other left him time to speak, trying to understand his idea, and if they did not want to assume it they proposed a reformulation and not a categorical rejection.

A Chapter of passion and emotion

During the Chapter, there were periods of great passion and emotion. For example, during the phase of perspectives, election and revision of the Rule. The desire that the Chapter assume certain experiences, too slow or too fast, of the association manifested itself. As for emotion, it was very intense during the election phase, especially the election of the Superior General. Note that several Brothers shade tears of joy as the emotion was strong. It was so beautiful!

A Chapter of hardwork

All the stages of the Chapter required an intense presence to reflect, listen, discuss, pray, discern, decide. Several Saturdays during the Chapter was occupied for the work in plenary and committees had sometimes to work on Sundays. At times, we did not always know exactly what to do. This situation nearly influenced negatively the spirit of the Chapter. Another point that nearly degenerate the climate of the Chapter was the second vote for the adoption of a proposal that had previously been rejected. This gave the impression that influential groups had been formed to pass their ideas at all costs.

The inspiration of Chapter

I am delighted that the Chapter was inspired by the experience of the Founder and the first Brothers; more precisely by the letter Parménie; Vatican II, apostolic exhortation of our beloved Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium*, recent publications of the Institute, and experience of each Region and District.

The Government of the Institute

I am pleased that the 45th General Chapter has established a government that a Brother Visitor called "*unité d'élite*". Indeed, all members of the General Council seem to be men of vision, rigorous, able to take courageous decisions and assume their consequences. One Brother said that it is a "*government of intellectuals*" because many are Doctors. The election of the government members rather took place in an atmosphere of brotherhood, meditation and prayer, so that one can say that this is a Government of God's Will.

The Chapter: Divine and human work

At the end of the 45th General Chapter, I could say that it was truly a divine-and human work. Indeed, men have worked; men have influenced or sought to influence Him. But in the end, the sharing of experiences made it possible not make it a Chapter of a District, but the Chapter of the Institute. Thus, we can say that the Spirit of God breathed. He continues to guide our Institute and the whole Church.

Brother Raoul TRAORE
District of West Africa



Brief info



Mr. Javier Larios

We, the RELAF Regional Team are happy to receive Mr Javier LARIOS who will be in charge of the creation of a Lasallian NGO for RELAF.

Mr. Larios is from Spain and has worked for 9 years as a Volunteer at the De La Salle Professional Training Centre in Guinea Conakry
Karibu Javier !

Brother Superior General, Robert SCHIELER, will participate in the RELAF Conference that will take place from 4 to 6 November 2014 in Abidjan-Côte d'Ivoire. During his stay, Brother Superior General will have the opportunity to visit Brothers' communities and Lasallian Works here in Abidjan. Note that it is not a Pastoral visit.
Akwaba dear Brother!



**Br. Robert Schieler,
Superior General**



Br. Domingos Faz Ver

Brother Domingos Faz Ver has completed his mandate as the Director of *CAFOP Lasallien - CELAF Institut d'Abidjan* and has begun a new mission in his Sector (Mozambique). Brother Alexis Hetukudila from the District of Congo Kinshasa is the new Director of CAFOP. Muito obrigado Querido Irmão Domingos and welcome dear Brother Alexis!



Br. Alexis Hetukudila

Some dates to remember

4 th– 6 th November	RELAF Conference—Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)
6th November	Blessed Leonardo José and his Companions, Martyrs in Spain
16th November	Blessed Aurelio María and his Companions , Martyrs (Almería, Spain)
17th November	Dedication of Saint John Baptiste de La Salle Sanctuary

