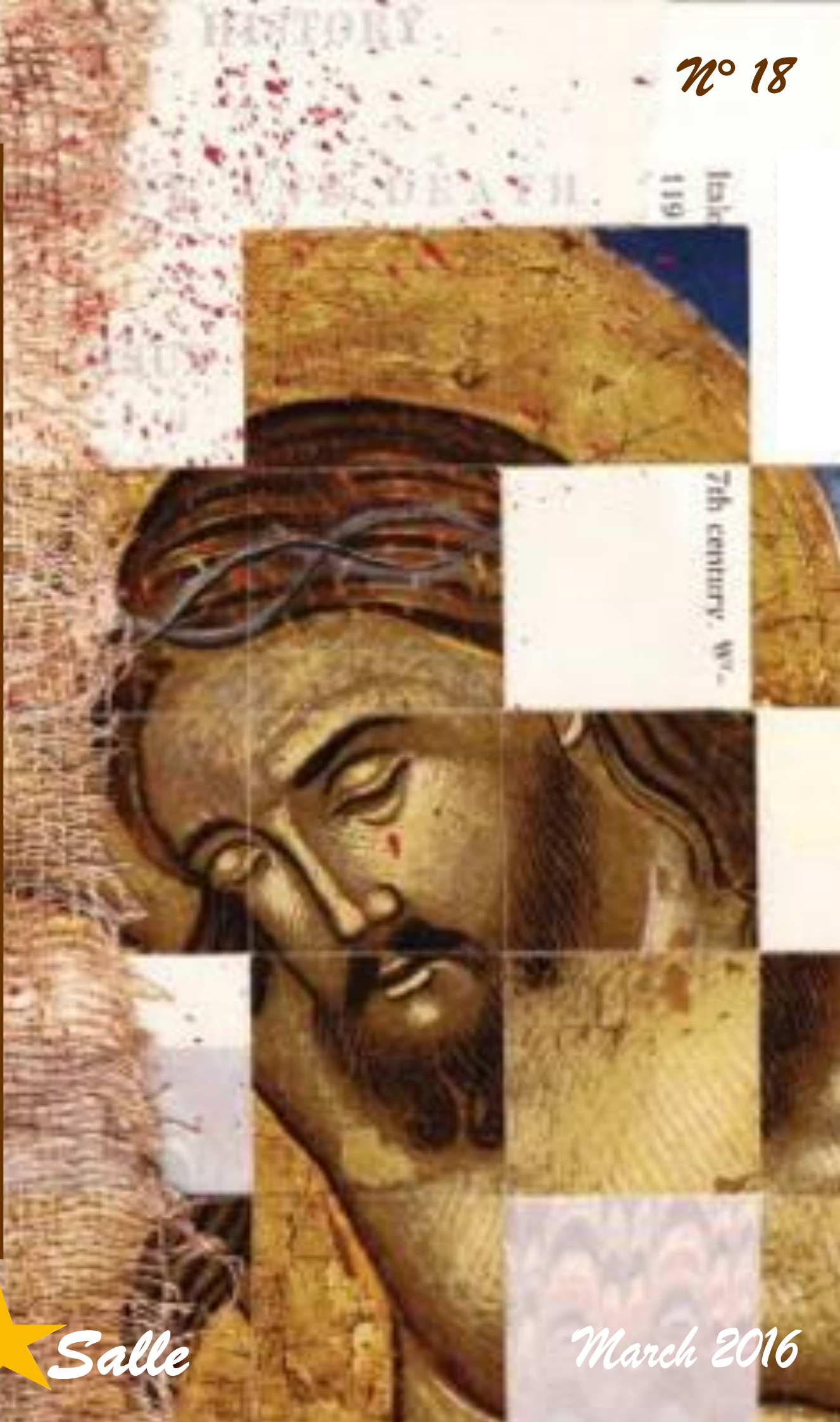


Brothers of the Christian Schools

RELAJ NEWSLETTER

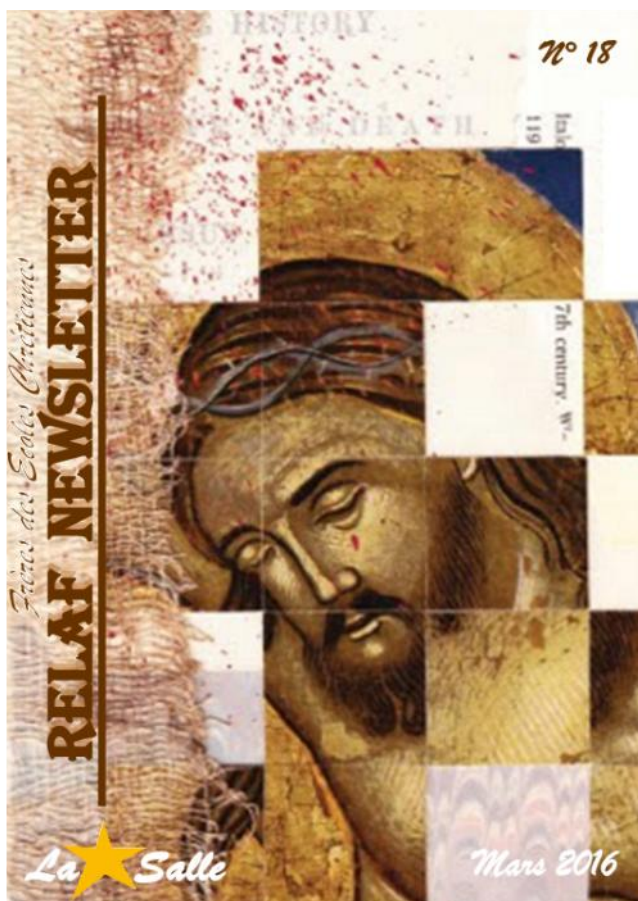


March 2016



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Editorial

Dear Brother,
Dear Lasallian,

In order “to respond boldly and creatively to the urgent needs of the vulnerable that are found on ‘the borders’ (immigrants, refugees, the homeless, unemployed youth...)”, the 45th General Chapter (see Circular 469; p. 28-29) invites each one of us (Brother, Lasallian, Community, District, Region, Institute...) to go beyond the borders:

- Our own geographical borders, to places where the Institute is not yet present;
- Our own personal borders, to places that challenge our comfort zone and, at times, our personal ability ;
- Our own congregational borders to a shared common project;
- Our own cultural or religious borders, to a work where people of different creeds share the same mission;
- Borders of our own official retirement age, to volunteer work with the most vulnerable ;
- Our own borders of academic and social prestige, to work with and for the poor ;
- Our own borders of self-interest, to commit to community service ;
- Our own borders of discouragement, to a place of hope;
- Our own borders of pre-established structures, in order to generate a space for freedom and apostolic creativity;
- Our own borders of consumerism in order to create a world that is more inhabitable, just and in solidarity with others.

Specifically, Propositions 19 and 27 are in line with this:

“That each Region of the Institute, before the intercapitular meeting, will have begun an initiative that will deal effectively with the needs expressed in the metaphor of ‘beyond borders’...”

“That the Center of the Institute guarantees an international community of Brothers and Volunteers in each Region where vocation ministry and discernment will be offered in the context of a community life dedicated to the service of the poorest.”

What significant initiatives do we have in the Region? In our Districts and Delegation, we already have such initiatives, new or old, that would need to be further strengthened, consolidated. In this issue of our RELAF Newsletter, the articles of Brother Bill and Brother Gilbert as well as that of Akwaba Center talk about these initiatives. At the Regional level, one or other initiatives are possible within the means that we shall be able to put together.

The Lord calls again: "*I heard the cries of my people ... Whom shall I send?*" Dear Brother and Lasallian, whoever you are, are you ready to go beyond your borders whatsoever? Contact us and express your availability...

Br. Pierre OUATTARA
General Counselor for RELAF.

South Sudan



SOLIDARITY with SOUTH SUDAN

3

Following the peace agreement signed in 2005 between Sudan and South Sudan, the Sudan Catholic Bishops asked the Superiors General in Rome to help them to address critical educational, health and pastoral needs. So it was that after a period of investigation, **Solidarity with South Sudan** was formed with the Mission to create self-sustainable educational, health and pastoral institutions and programs that will help to empower South Sudanese people to build a just and peaceful society.'

The first Solidarity members came to South Sudan 2008, creatively merging the talents, abilities, energies and charisms of many religious congregations - priests brothers and sisters living in mixed communities and working collaboratively. Solidarity currently has religious from 20 congregations and 16 nationalities working in South Sudan. Brother Pierre OUATTARA fsc is a member of the Governing Board of the project. Three De La Salle Brothers are among those in South Sudan, including the Executive Director, Brother Bill Firman fsc, and the Director of Teacher Education, Br Denis LOFT fsc, both from Australia. There are eight African members, including Br Joseph ALAK fsc, who was born in South Sudan. Solidarity trains primary school teachers, nurses and mid-wives as well as offering pastoral and agriculture programmes. All tuition is in English.

Help wanted: Short-Term Volunteers, 2016 & 2017

From time to time, Solidarity accepts short-term volunteers to work alongside the 'permanent' *Solidarity* tutors in South Sudan. Openings exist for tutors to work in primary teacher training, computer education, nurse and midwifery training, pastoral programmes such as trauma healing, and agriculture. The peak demand period is January and February when in-service teacher training is offered at several locations but help is appreciated at any time during the year, except in December when students and many staff are on vacation. The normal minimum length of time for a volunteer is two months but in special circumstances, shorter placements could be possible.



Br. Joseph ALAK, fsc

No prior experience as a tutor of teachers or nurses is necessary but volunteers must be qualified. Persons with good practical skills could also be used for project maintenance and development. Volunteers either pay their own way to South Sudan or are sponsored by their congregation or employer. Solidarity make all arrangements within South Sudan for meals, accommodation and transport of volunteers, at no cost to the volunteers. There is an application procedure to be followed, which includes obtaining a health clearance and, for religious, approval from the relevant Superior. Living conditions are normally good with en suite rooms but there is no air conditioning and it will be hot. If you are interested, **further information** can be sought from Br Bill FIRMAN fsc, Executive Director, brbillf@yahoo.com.au or go to the Solidarity website, www.solidarityssudan.org

Br. Bill FIRMAN
Executive Director

In the previous issue of our Newsletter, we published a brief history of the De La Salle Brothers' presence amongst the Baka people. In this current issue, we are presenting to you an outline of actions carried out by the Brothers for the last four decades.

The longevity of the De La Salle Brothers in the education of pygmy children is justified by the originality and specificity of the work required by the peculiarity of the forest people and the efforts to find an adequate response to the education of their children. Thus, after independence, the Government opted for the settlement policy, including consolidating bands and communities of people scattered in the forest to build villages along forest tracks. From villages joint together, administrative units were therefore established. And the independent Cameroon took control of its destiny and that of the future citizens.

A very complex beginning

The Baka people were not exempted from the settlement policy of the Government. The young State of Cameroon, left the French protectorate, ordered the Baka pygmies out of forests to settle along the newly marked trails. But the Baka people lived in small bands, four to six families, scattered everywhere in the great equatorial forest. Bondage relationships arose between newcomers on the trails and the Bantu who were already established there recently and then formed large villages.



These alliances continue to this day between these two peoples (Baka and Bantu).

Whit regard to educating young people and children, Baka children were quickly assimilated to Bantu children without their specificity being taken into account. For the former, the experience was only for very short duration. Many failures were recorded even for those who were enrolled to school by force. For a Baka child, the life of quiet and peaceful freedom of the forest was much preferable to the rigid requirements and constraints of the modern school.



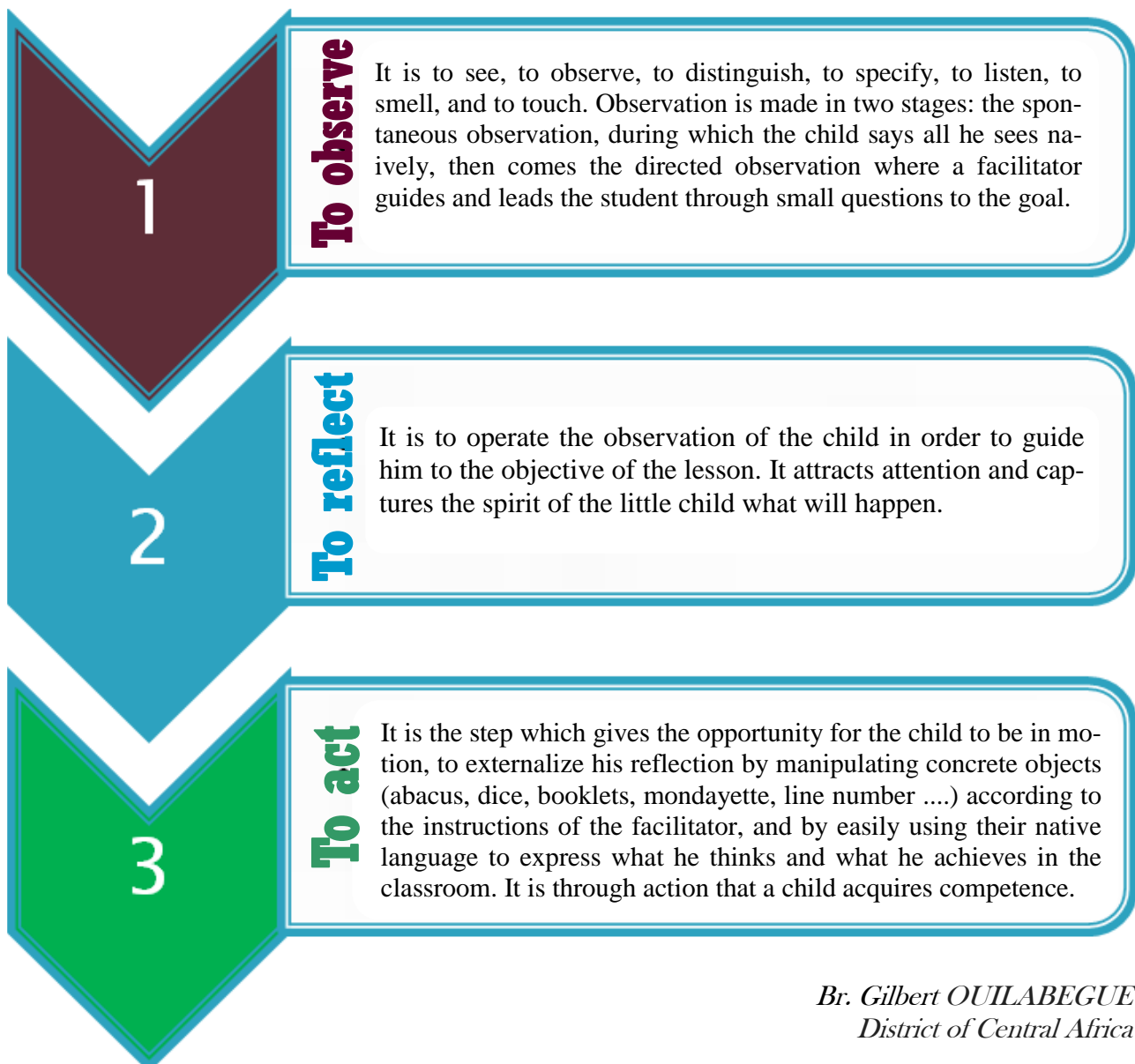
... Before ORA (Observe, Reflect Act) by Brother Anthony H. came...

Given these numerous failures, and following the traditional mode of education of children in the forest, Brother Antoine HUYSMAN was given the task to find the magic formula to bring the small Baka to love being in the classroom for an entire day. Thus, the method ORA (Observe, Reflect and Act) is gradually established. Based on traditional education (observation and imitation of adults), the ORA method

was intended to implement in the classroom these traditional principles for modern education of children by teaching them to read, count and write.

Intended for children aged 5 to 8 years, the ORA method is especially interested in early childhood and its immediate environment is the forest. For a period two years, ORA1 and ORA2, the pre-school of a Baka child was made for him to join his compatriots in formal and official schools (known in Cameroon as "public primary school").

The meaning of ORA



*Br. Gilbert OUILABEGUE
District of Central Africa*

In the two previous issues of our Newsletter, we published the summary of the Regional CIL on the Revised Rule, held in Abidjan from 10 to 28 August 2015. In this issue, we are presenting to you the continuation of the said summary which was written by Brother Rodrigue TOEPPEN, Director of Saint Miguel Scholasticate, Abidjan - Côte d'Ivoire.



[...] The vow of association, together with that of stability in the Institute, expresses the specificity of religious consecration of the Brothers for the glory of God: it strongly unites every Brother to the Brothers, while it broadens and strengthens the solidarity spirit of belonging to the whole Institute. This charismatic dynamism raises the Brothers creativity to bring the best possible and sustainable response to the needs of the beneficiaries of their mission. It leads them to understand and to live their other vows in this perspective. It is this vow of association that establishes the community and supports the mission which in turn justifies the consecration. But it is important to distinguish the vow of association that the Brother makes and the dynamism of the association which may include Lay people and Brothers without confusion of each one's vocations.

It is indeed the charismatic dynamism of this vow of association of the Brothers among themselves to fulfil their mission that explains the association with the lay people. It is the brightness of that charism that radiates the lay people and brings them into the Lasallian community. The brothers are not the only guardians of the charism given by God to Saint John Baptist de la Salle, for the service of the Church and the world. This is what article 28.3 of the Rule expresses and summarizes in the following words: *"The dynamism of covenant which manifests itself within the community of the Brothers links also the Brothers to all those who commit themselves in the Lasallian mission"*.

This dynamism of covenant reminds primarily the covenant made individually and as a community with the Most Holy Trinity through consecration.

Such an understanding of the centrality of the vow of association in the heart of the Revised Rule presents us with a challenge of formation for a better understanding of the identity of the Brother, a formation that will last a lifetime. This concept of formation reminded by Chapter 6 of the Rule was addressed by Brother Jesus Rubio. According to him, the major shift in the way we view formation shifts from a linear view to a more holistic and systemic view. In other words, the current scheme is about the formation as a whole, a formation that takes place at any time and that lasts a lifetime. This is to prevent separation or dichotomy between initial formation and continuous formation. It is observed indeed in recent years, a tendency to give much importance to initial formation and less emphasis on continuous formation.

The Rule sought to reduce the use of these two terms as different processes. Formation is unique, continuous and permanent, of a whole life and for the whole life. This formation is primarily driven by the community, because the community is the framework, the subject and the agent of formation.

Without neglecting the personal aspect of formation, the Rule (R.81) emphasizes the fundamental role of the community in the formation.

This is simple to understand for Lasallian who form themselves in the community (framework) by following Jesus together as a community (subject) through community discernment and by the community (agent), through its mediation. It is indeed, the community, in our itinerary, which supports us, encourages us and challenges us. It is our first accompaniment. This accompaniment is also effective through very concrete interpersonal relationships. These relationships help us to grow in humanity and in our vocation. But this accompaniment is also provided by concrete persons, that is, the elder brothers who need to be formed on this. In this formation, it is important to prioritize the preparation of the Brother as a catechist as Articles 82, 93 and 99 of the Revised Rule remind us.

This demand of formation should already be at the heart of Lasallian pastoral vocations. And this is a novelty in the Rule. Indeed, in this Rule, the vocation of the Brother is put in the context of the ministry lived in common or the association for the mission (R 11) in which there is a variety of Lasallian vocations (R.84). This term Lasallian vocations evokes not only the vocational aspect, but also the charismatic aspect that places the Brother in a vocation for a mission shared by other Lasallians, as explained by Brother Alain Houry. This concern for vocations which the Rule refers to as the vocation culture must be supported by the entire community and by each individual Brother. Similarly, works and movements (R.84.2) can be considered as helpful for the pastoral of vocations only if they awaken, accompany and discern the daily calls of God.



Photo: Participants from the District of Gulf of Benin

Finally, formation is a process that the Brothers live to better answer the call and the calls they receive from God. That explains why formation is closely related to faithfulness. Plans and programs are important. But the people, together with their history are even more important.

It is therefore understandable that the first concern of the pastoral of vocations is primarily the Brother who is available and who should be given all the care so that he remains faithful to the Rule and to his vocation

But how does one remain faithful to his vocation in an environment where religion does not always mean spirituality? How can one remain a worthy son of St John Baptist de la Salle in a world where the idol can take all the faces, all shapes and all colours? How can one be *imago dei* in these moral and spiritual upheavals of our time in which the matter now seems to shape the mind?

*Summary by Br. Rodrigue TOEPPEN
Director of Scholasticate Saint Miguel (Abidjan)*

Photo: Br. Alain HOURY (center) with two participants (Bros. Louis Pierre and Anatole) during an outing in Yamossokro



Cross College "Water Drive"

« ...It will be a *Holy Year of Mercy* » - Pope Francis

De La Salle Holy Cross College has been completely overwhelmed by the community rallying to help the children in drought-stricken communities, after their recent 'Water Drive' appeal. The College's Principal, Ms Debbie Harris, was asked for help in January with the desperate water situation at their sister school, Holy Cross Primary in Aliwal North. The pupils there had no water, the taps were dry, and the children were drinking contaminated water in desperation. The DLSHCC Environment Committee immediately launched a 'Water Drive' on Wednesday, 20/01 - and were 'flooded' with water donations!



To date, 10 trucks have left the College with over 46 tons of water, 2 JoJo tanks and a pump - collected from the College, local community and participating schools and churches. Water was sent to Sr. Bridget at the Holy Cross Primary

school for distribution to her pupils, their families, a creche, old age home and the Dukathole location. Water has also been sent to the Kraaipan rural community in the North West Province for distribution to 3 schools, an old age home and the hospice.

De La Salle Holy Cross College would like to thank everyone for their interest, support, compassion - and mercy! Well done - a huge difference has been made in many drought-stricken communities.

*Liz WESTHUIZEN,
De La Salle Holy Cross College*





LENT is here again. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. It is a period of 40 days and 40 nights dedicated to Prayer, alms giving and abstinence and fasting in the Church. Students of Mount La Salle College, Naka, led by their Principal, Brother Patrick OBAM marched to the Church in the early hour of February 10th 2016 to receive ashes on their foreheads.

During the homily, the Priest, Rev. Fr. Gabriel AKUMBA CSSp, preached on the theme, “Generosity”. He encouraged all faithful to be open handed to the less privileged, the poor, and the vulnerable. This gesture, according to the priest appeals to God more than spending many hours in the Church in the name of prayer and devotion.

The month of February this year is significant in the story of Mount La Salle College, Naka. Significant in the sense that many memorable events are bound to happen. First and foremost, the month ushers in Lenten Season which started with Ash Wednesday with the students turned up in mass to receive ashes on their foreheads. Secondly, the popular ‘All Catholic Secondary Schools Games’ is taking place in Mount La Salle College, Naka, the tournament the school hosted long time ago. Thirdly, the School Cultural Festival will take place in this month of February.

All these and many other events will come your way in my subsequent story of Mount La Salle College, Naka.

The Handover Administration of Mount La Salle College, Naka

The Visitor of Lwanga District of Africa, Brother Ghebreyesus HABTE appointed Brother Patrick OBAM fsc, as Headmaster of Mount La Salle College, Naka in July, 2015. The Appointment was made known to Staff and Students of the College by the Sector Coordinator, Brother Simon KESIKI fsc, on the 8th December, 2015 during the Send-forth Party of the former Principal, Brother Wole OLABANJO fsc. The announcement was received with joy amidst mixed feelings. In his handover speech, Br. Wole thanked all that contributed to his successes during his four years administration of the School. He expressed his satisfaction



Bros. Patrick and Wole

over the work of the the Vice Principal, Academic, Br. Patrick OBAM under his administration through whose efforts, the College recorded academic excellence. He urged the Staff and Students and the entire community of Naka and its enveron to support Br. Patrick OBAM who was appointed to take his place, after he might have gone.



On his part, Br. Patrick OBAM fsc (photo above), thanked all the people who, despite their tight schedules attended the send-forth party. He acknowledged the effort of Br. Wole OLABANJO, the outgoing Principal through which the school has moved from the staganated state to a virbrant and progressive state. He told all present at the occasion that his administration would take the foot steps of his predecessors of the school right from the inception of the College, since 1982.

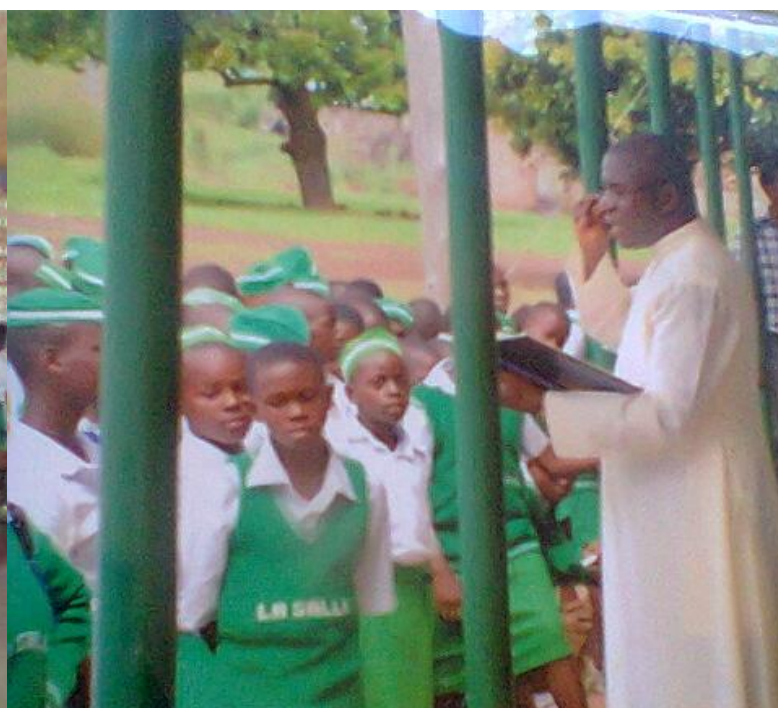
Quoting the Bible from St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians where St. Paul says: *"I planted the seed, Appolo watered it, but God has made it grow"*. Br. Patrick OBAM said that he came to water all that his predessors planted. He relied on God's Providence for the growth. The occasion was marked with speeches, dances, songs, gifts, etc. More important was the the symbolic handover of the School Flag.

Appointment of the College Counselor

In the month of November, last year, Mount La Salle College, Naka lost one of her staff, the male Counsellor. He was an English, and Literature-in-English teacher. He died of liver problem. In 2013, he won an award as the best English Teacher in Benue State. He served the school for 10 years.

It became necessary to appoint another male counsellor to take his place. Brother Ade OLOGBENLA fsc was appointed to take the place of Mr. Titus AKA. The Management of the school thanked Br. Ade for accepting to work in the school as counsellor. This week all is set for All Catholic Secondary Schools Games to be held in Mount La Salle College, Naka. We will keep you informed soonest.

Br. Patrick Obam, fsc.
Principal of Mount La Salle College



« Political life in Burkina Faso has been eventful in recent years and Lasallian School alumni are at the heart of this political animation to build a society that aspires to peace, freedom, democracy and fraternity. Thus, two of our former students have succeeded at the Head of State. This is what the article by Brother Raoul is all about. He hopes that Lasallian values of faith, fraternity Service, embodied by politicians from the great Lasallian Family, flourish for the benefit of the whole nation .» (Br. Paul TOE)

The year 2015 has been a year of intense political life in Burkina Faso, given the many challenges including the organization of presidential and legislative elections that the Government of Transition faced. But no matter how humble and discreet the Lasallian family in Burkina Faso, it cannot deny the fact that the national political events also require legitimate pride. Of course, this pride calls for responsibility and greater rigor in the human and Christian education it offers to children and youth.

Over the year, three former Lasallian students positively stood out on the national political scene. This is "M'Ba Michel" (dad or grandpa) as the people fondly called him. His real name Michel KAFANDO, of diplomat training and profession is a former student of Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle College in Ouagadougou (1956-1963).

Following the popular insurrection on 30 and 31 October 2014, the "people" went to get him from his farm to make him the President of the Transition.



He stood out by his rigor at work and being outspoken. We note that during the Transition, heavy justice issues buried under the previous regime were revealed. After the Transition, "M'Ba Michel" returned to his farm on December 29, 2015. And it is now Roch Marc Christian KABORE, another former student of the same Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle College (1968-1975), who heads the "the Land of honest people". Note that the new President of the Republic was the one sponsoring of sixtieth anniversary of the College celebrated in 2014. He enjoys a profound respect of the people for his humility, generosity, courtesy and his political experience.



[...] These three figures positively marked the political life of Burkina Faso...:
1: Rock Marc Christian KABORE ; 2: Michel KAFANDO; 3: Zéphyrin DIABRE

While assuming his collaboration with the outset regime of Blaise COMPAORÉ for twenty-five years, he recognizes himself of not being hunted by any scandal. If there should be a small regret with his election to the Presidency, it would probably be the risk of not having the opportunity to see him regularly at the 9am Mass at the Cathedral accompanied by his wife.

Rock was in competition with thirteen other candidates. His main challenger, Zéphyrin DIABRE who came second, is also a former student of the same school.

He rewarded the people of Burkina Faso with a gesture that will never be forgotten. Before the official publication of the results by the body responsible for organizing the elections, he did not call Rock, as it is done elsewhere.

DIABRE went "himself" in person to Rock headquarters to congratulate him and encourage him. There is an implicit instruction given to all the youth of Burkina Faso that politics is not synonymous with hatred and political opponent is not an enemy to be defeated.

These three figures positively marked the political life of Burkina Faso in the year 2015, and as Lasallians, we should present them as example to the younger generations, and we should celebrate the chance of having men who share the Lasallian values of faith-brotherhood Service. Our prayers are with the authorities of the nation for peace, stability and development in the country.

*Br. Téfio Raoul TRAORE
District of West Africa*

District of Gulf of Benin :

Perpetual profession

On Saturday January 30, in the church of Saint Monica in Dapaong, Brother Guillaume Damessonou YAME made his profession «Most Holy Trinity... I consecrate myself to you... all my lifetime». Mass was celebrated by the local Bishop Mgr Jacques ANYLUNDA, surrounded by fifteen priests. It commenced at 9.30 with an elegant procession made up of Novices, Brothers, Guadeloupan Sisters and Priests.

In his exhortation, Brother Paulin DEGBE, Visitor, recalled the demands of religious life embodied in the act of perpetual profession, bringing together three select biblical texts (Ex 3, 1-15; 1Cor 13, 1-13 and Lk 10, 25-37) relevant to the occasion. The high points of the ceremony were the call of the Brother making profession, his dialogue with his parents, his dialogue with the Brother Visitor, the Litany of the Saints chanted in Moba (the native language of Brother Guillaume), the *Veni Creator Spiritus* and the act of religious consecration. The signing of the register was followed by accolades and congratulations to the newly professed. Those present included local clergy and religious, the family and friends of Brother Guillaume and the people of the host parish of Dapaong.



There were some specially invited people including the Episcopal Vicar, the Dean of Calavi in the Archdiocese of Cotonou, two religious Sisters from the same deanery, the parish priest of Akassato, a big representation of pupils and teachers from La Salle Akassato, where Brother Guillaume taught for three years, three Brothers and a Postulant from the District of West Africa, nine Novices and the Novice Master from Bobo-Dioulasso, not forgetting the former students and the group of Lasallian Youth from Lomé.

In his closing address, the bishop underlined the significance of the event which also marked the end of the Jubilee Year in the Diocese of Dapaong. And he went on to sing the praises of the vocation of Brother Guillaume, the eldest son of his parents.

The celebrations were enlivened by the parish choir of Saint Cecilia, and they ended at around 1.00 p.m. A fraternal meal followed in honour of the occasion, and old acquaintances were renewed. Let us pray for Brother Guillaume YAME in his lifelong commitment to the education of children in the footsteps of Saint Jean-Baptiste De La Salle.

*Br. Jean EZIN
District of Gulf of Benin*



Akwaba Center

Akwaba Center located in Abobo, one of the poorest neighborhoods of Abidjan in Ivory Coast, began the year with a new initiative to reach out to young people living in the street.

To date, the Mobile Listening Point goes around at night to talk with street children and to raise awareness that living in the streets is not healthy and that night is very dangerous. Today, Akwaba, through the NGO of De La Salle Brothers in Africa, CARLA (Confédération des Associations du Réseau Lasallien en Afrique) and with the financial support from the Embassy of France set up a *Mobile Listening Point*.

Mobile Listening Point



This *Mobile Listening Point* is an adapted tricycle motor-bike (equipped with a bathroom, a refrigerator and a table with chairs and shelves) to provide street children a place where they can talk with psychological assistance to help them get out of street life.

The *Mobile Listening Point* goes out three times a week and each time in a different part of Abobo headquarter.

*Mr. Javier LARIOS,
Responsible for CARLA NGO*



Internal view of the Mobile Listening Point

The Monthly Lasallian World Youth Day Bulletin

Did you know?

More than 50 Brothers are present in the District of Poland, working alongside Lasallian Partners.

They are active in six ministries, including two schools, and they are also strongly involved in providing services for handicapped children. Their ministries can be found in different parts of Poland. Although there is no ministry or community in Krakow, there are many in and near Czestochowa, which is an hour and a half away from Krakow.

Dear Lasallians,

The World Youth Day 2016 is coming soon. Taking place in Krakow, from July 25th to 31st, it will be an occasion for young people from all over the world to gather as a Church and to celebrate their faith together, under the theme "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*" (Mt 5:7). Many Young Lasallians will be attending, whether with a group organized by their District or institution, or through their parish or any other group.



We are happy to officially announce that the Lasallian Family will also have its own opportunity to gather! On the afternoon of July 27th, Young Lasallians attending World Youth Day will come together to encounter one another and celebrate their Lasallian identity and their belonging to the Church. The gathering will also be attended by Br. Robert Schieler, Superior General, who will address the young people present and invite them to deepen their commitment to the Lasallian Mission.

So if you are going to World Youth Day with a group organized by your District or your institution, ask your group coordinator to get in touch with me at abeland@lasalle.org for more details, and if you are going with your parish or any other group, get in touch with me so we can make sure you don't miss out on anything!

See you in Krakow!

Antoine Béland
International Coordinator for Young Lasallians
abeland@lasalle.org



From now on, there will be a monthly update on World Youth Day and on the Lasallian Gathering. You will find practical details, reflections, tips on how to prepare yourself and your group for the gathering, as well as interesting pieces of information. Keep an eye out every month!

The Conference of Brother Visitors will take place from 14 to 16 March 2016 at the Novitiate, Our Lady of Grace in Bobo Dioulasso - Burkina Faso

The International Council of Young Lasallians will hold its annual meeting at the Generalate, Rome - Italy from 20 to 25 March 2016

Few dates to remember

March 19	Saint Joseph	Solemnity
April 7	Death of SJBDL	Memory
April 26	Our Lady of Good Counsel	Memory
April 30	Birth of SJBDL	Memory
May 15	Saint John Baptiste de la Salle	Solemnity
May 19	B. Br. Raphaël Louis Rafiringa	Feast

Calendar of Br. General Councilor

Date	Venue	Events
January 24—March 5, 2016	Rome	5 th session General Council
March 14—16	Bobo Dioulasso	Conference of Brother Visitors
March 17	Abidjan	Regional Community
April 4—15	Abidjan	Lecture at CELAF Institute
April 4—15	Abidjan	Lasallian studies at Saint Miguel Scholasticate: Centrality of the Vow of Association
April 19—21	Soudan du Sud / Rome	Board Meeting South Sudan/Rome
May 22—June 25	Rome	6 th session General Council