

Brothers of the Christian Schools
RELAF NEWSLETTER

N° 19





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Chief Editor

Br. Pierre OUATTARA

Assistant Editor

Br. Anatole DIRETENADJI,

Design and Translation

Br. Michel TOLOJANAHARY



Dear Lasallian, Dear Brother,

What is your hunger? What is your thirst? Do you know them? If so, to what extent then stops your hunger? How far does your thirst go? The answer to these questions will tell us who you are, how deep your person is. You are indeed as deep as your hunger and your thirst...

It is true that *"in a world with many voices and different values, we are tempted by the lure of apparent good. To possess and to control seem to give us great satisfaction and yet it is unable to meet its promises. In the end we learn that it is temporary, bland and without substance. Gradually, as we grow, we learn that what satisfies our deep human hunger is generosity; we learn the deep satisfaction of giving with joyful freedom."* Unfortunately, not all children have access to that education that teaches them to discern where to find the real good...

According to regional specificities of the different schedules, it is in stress, fear if not anxiety that end of year exams are prepared. Following these exams, it is the tradition in our educational works to award, in addition to better performances, better progressions and attendance, dedication award, better camaraderie ... I remember one student who, despite receiving the *best friend award* of her class, was unfortunately expelled from the School for an insufficient score in academic results. The denominations of these awards can vary, the most important thing is: to draw the attention of our students to all true values, those that make the Lasallian and that are precious to build our humanity...

In our world tormented by violence of various crises, we need persons who are profoundly human; saints ... Blessed are you, the Lasallian Educator by vocation, who make your students discover their real hunger, their true thirst...

Sincerely yours in De La Salle,
Br. Pierre OUATTARA.



Constitutions

« Unity of heart and mind among the Brothers of the Region and all those who are committed to the mission is established and increases through effective communication and exchanges. The Region enables those who work in it to co-operate and benefit from a common vitality, as well as from a closer contact with the Centre of the Institute.» (R art. 135)

1. Pastoral Ministry of Vocations and memory of the Lasallian Mission in Africa.

We find the origin of our different vocations in the great figures of the Lasallian Educational Mission like Brother Raphaël Louis Rafiringa (1856-1919) beatified in 2009. The intercession and influence of our Brothers and Lasallians are powerful means for the pastoral ministry of vocations. The history and memory of the pioneers of the Lasallian Educational Mission in Africa, most of which is still unknown, deserves to be written and valued.

« For a pastoral ministry of vocations to become an effective invitation to share the life of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, it is necessary: – that by their own lives, the Brothers witness to the presence of God among people, to the liberating force of his Spirit, and to the tenderness of his love; – that communities which make a point of being open and welcoming, put into practice, in a fraternal and apostolic way, the words of the Gospel "Come and see"; – that the Institute works effectively to renew itself by responding to the most urgent needs of the world of young people waiting to be evangelised.» R. 86

« The pastoral ministry of vocations normally depends on the educational values of the establishments and movements that young people and adults belong to. The promotion of a culture which takes vocations into account makes individuals aware of their gifts and invites them to put them at the service of others. » R 84.2

«First-hand experience of the poor through voluntary service, and living and working with them, offers young people the opportunity to understand the value of a vocation and the service of others.» R 84.3

2. The Lasallian Mission in Africa :

Seized by the situation of abandonment of the many children left to themselves in our continent mainly in urban areas and in response to the contemplation of the salvation plan of God, we, Brothers of the African Region and Lay Lasallians associate ourselves to the Lasallian charism, in order to create and to put within the reach of the most unprivileged quality works for human and Christian education in a context where education tends to be reduced to business assets.

The institute invites us to strengthen our solidarity and at the same time to be self-sufficient. We understand that the main objective of the Institute's policy is our *self-management* at the local level with self-sufficiency of qualified personnel and finances and its Educational Mission. The community and the Mission are, in this sense, two different domains of action. If it seems unrealistic to aim for short-term self-sufficiency, we must however adopt good management practices and investment for self-management. The self-management of our Districts, Delegation and our Region is for us a question of dignity and responsibility.

3. Our vision towards the 46th General Chapter

Without realism, vision provides no dynamism and will transform us in no way. But realism without the spirit of faith may be simply paralyzing.

« For John Baptist de La Salle, the Christian education of the poor is the work of God and must be carried out by men led by the Holy Spirit. He invited the Brothers to unify their life: "Make no distinction between the affairs proper to your state and those of your salvation and perfection". Faced with the challenges encountered in his ministry and in his personal and community life, the Brother recognizes an invitation from God to deepen his communion with him, with his Brothers and with those entrusted to him. » R 63

Taking into account the different propositions of the Acts of the 45th General Chapter, our Region develops its own vision on the following points: **communication, bilingualism, higher education, self-management, a significant common work of our option for the most unprivileged, catechism, Pastoral Ministry of Vocations.**

4. The Structures for the unity of the Region :

To achieve the objectives of its vision, the Region has set up effective structures. These are mainly:

- The Regional Office. Its running depends on the financial resources and on the personnel of the Region.
- Project Office which should manage projects in the Region. Restructuring: undergoing process that should reinforce the unity of the Region.
- Committee for the project of a Lasallian University in Africa.

This text is also available on our website:

www.relaf.info

Abidjan: Formation session on the Rule

St. Miguel community is the Inter-African Scholasticate for the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Francophone Africa. It consists of Brothers with temporary vows, accompanied by a formation team of three Brothers. As a house of formation, its objective is to help young scholastic Brothers to deepen the meaning of their consecration and to prepare them for the exercise of their mission as catechists and educators (GF. 226 and R. 99.5). To do this, in addition to their training at the CELAF Institute, the community includes in its program Lasallian courses held every Tuesday afternoon in order to help the Scholastics to be more interested in the history and the life of the Institute.

For this year, the Lasallian course took on a particular character, given the event that marked our Institute, namely the revision of the Rule. This is why its goal was to understand the need for a revision of the Rule and its characteristics. To do this, the Scholasticate community called upon Brothers who were living in Abidjan and who participated in the Regional CIL on the Revised Rule held in Abidjan from August 10 to 28. These were: Br. Pierre OUATTARA, General Councilor, Br. Anatole DIRETENADJI, Regional Bursar and Administrator, Br. Michel TOLOJANAHARY, Regional Secretary, Br. Rodrigue TOEPPEN, Director of the Scholasticate and Br. Sante CLERMOND, Master Student at CELAF Institute and a member of Bon Pasteur Community.

The first presentation was by Brother Rodrigue TOEPPEN, Director of the Saint Miguel Scholasticate community. Based on Circular 469 and the texts of the 43th and 44th General Chapters, his presentation was all about *"The purpose of revising the Rule"*.

The objective of this course was to show the different changes and new realities in the world that required the Institute to adapt, to rediscover and redefine the meaning of its vocation. These changes include the changes in the world, but also in the Church as well as in the Institute. As for the changes in the world, this can be summarized by the following social changes: the transition from *status* to *contract* with consequences such as the cult of self, the question of gender, the family crisis and marriage for all ..., globalization and development of "societal" selfishness.... Regarding changes in the Church, the emphasis was on the impact of Vatican II.

Finally, with regard to changes in the Institute, we can note the development of reflections (the Brother's identity, the evolution of the concept "association" and the new understanding of the Brother's mission as well as the shared mission) and the empirical fact (the decrease of the Brothers, the aging of the Institute and the existence of "new communities" in the Institute). (*To be continued...*)

*The Editorial Team
St Miguel Scholasticate (Abidjan-Côte d'Ivoire)*



Congo: The Brothers, towards professionalizing finances

On 4th February 2016, School Leaders, Community Directors, accountants, Bursars of Christian schools in the District of Congo - Kinshasa were in formation at the Provincial House in Kinshasa. This formation was all about budget development, maintenance of accounting records and the operation of the "Skulu" software to professionalize the financial management practices, according to the enlightened vision of Brother Visitor, Firmin Phambu, and legal representative of the Christian Brothers in Congo - Kinshasa.

The formation was animated by Mr. Gabriel Nsilulu and Mr. William Wila respectively editor and general manager, and accountant of CFAO Office.

By organizing this training, the Brother Visitor promised to give the best of himself to ensure transparency and thus to distance ourselves from the "prejudices or stereotypes" which Africans are often subject to in financial matters.

He intends to see this dynamic taken up in all schools and communities to end the opacity in the management that characterizes some of them and that is often a source of tension.

Those who are responsible for management should learn more about management accounting software and some computer skills in order to fight amateurism and strive for excellence. Each structure will be equipped with high performance computing tools.

The need for radical change is the only purpose of this training session. *"When looking for a radical change in our mindsets, we need well-managed finances because without finance we will not know how to support our missionary policy,"* said Brother Visitor Firmin. Brother Visitor invited all participants to take advantage of this training by learning the basic concepts of elaborating and planning a budget.

*Br. Norbert FUTU
District of Congo Kinshasa*



Nigeria: Update from Mount La Salle College

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In the latest update from Mount La Salle College you were informed of a series of important events within this academic year. After the All Catholic Secondary Schools Games Competitions were concluded, the School Annual Cultural Festival emerged. It was held in the month of March, 2016.

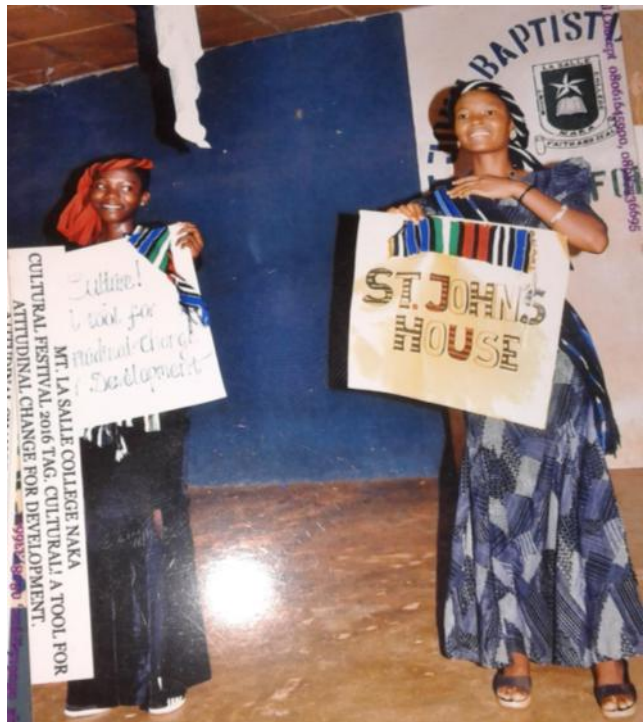
Cultural Festival at Mount La Salle College - March 2016

The different Houses of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John competed for the events.

It was the day the students displayed their rich cultural heritage. Nigeria is a multicultural nation. The students of Mount La Salle College, Naka come from different ethnic groups with varieties of cultures and traditions. Other schools were invited to participate and see the students exhibit their talents and skills.

The Festival was marked with dances, dramas, songs, acrobatic displays, and a host of other events.

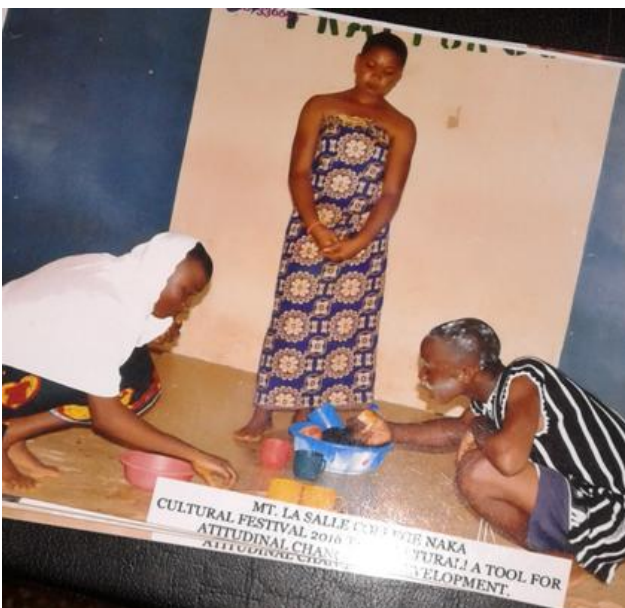
In his speech to declare the festival open, the Principal of Mount La Salle College, Naka, Brother Patrick Obam fsc, welcomed all the participants and dignitaries present to the College and to the Festival.



He said that all of us present here came to witness the celebration of our culture and tradition. He further said that the aim of this year's festival was to cherish our culture.

As the theme of this year's cultural festival says; 'Culture - a Tool for Attitudinal Change for Development', the Principal urged the students to have a change of attitude towards our culture; that change of attitude would prevent our culture from becoming extinct. He told the participants that though the events were competitive, they had come to enjoy themselves.

*Br. Patrick Obam,
Principal Mount La Salle College - Naka*



Leadership Workshop at Mount La Salle College



It is a standing practice in Mount La Salle College, Naka to prepare senior students for leadership roles. It is with this background that the Principal of Mount La Salle College, Naka, Brother Patrick Obam fsc organised leadership workshop for the second year senior students of the College. The workshop took place on the 23rd of April, 2016.

The workshop aimed to prepare the students to take up leadership roles as Prefects in the various areas of the school programmes.

The presenters in the workshop were three parents of our students. The parents were: Sir David Yongu, Dr. Audu and Mrs. Akaa Louisa.

The theme of the workshop was, 'I am the Good Shepherd' (John 10:14). Sir David Yongu spoke on 'Authority to Serve'. Dr. Audu spoke on 'Authority', while Mrs. Akaa Louisa spoke on 'Relationship'. It was a significant and enriching workshop.

The posts of responsibilities available for the prefects include; Senior Prefect, Head boy and Head Girl, Labour, Kitchen and Dining, Dormitories, Punctuality, Health and Sanitation, Sports, Culture, and Religious Affairs.

The Principal, and the Dean of Students Affairs, Mrs. Ugwuanyi Edith appreciated the contributions of the organisers and presenters of the workshop and urged the participating students to make use of the knowledge they got from the workshop in their daily duties when they become prefects eventually.

*Br. Patrick Obam,
Principal Mount La Salle College - Naka*



Rwanda

Feast of St. John Baptist de la Salle

On 15th May, all Lasallians from Rwanda celebrated Saint John Baptist De La Salle, the Founder of the Brothers of Christian schools and Patron of all Christian Educators.

The theme of the year was "**Lasalliens vainqueurs de l'ignorance**". This theme was very significant for all Lasallians. Through this theme we were all reminded that we have a long way to go, by working hard in order to fight against ignorance. The launch of these theme was opened by the acts of mercy done by the Students from *Académie De La Salle* who collected some items like cooking oil, rice, soaps and different other items in order to help the needy. The students from TTC DE LA Salle guided by Young Lasallians organized a fundraising with the target of helping the needy.

The Brothers organized a novena which led the students and the Brothers to the Feast well prepared spiritually and mentally. The different themes were shared in two of our schools.



Those themes were, the life of the brothers, that of saint John Baptist De La Salle and the virtues of a good teacher and the theme of Catholic Church year of mercy. In those topics the Brother were emphasizing the theme of the institute. This sharing was very rewarding because the students came to know more about Saint John Baptist de La Salle and the life of the Brothers in general. We identified four sub-themes for four days. On the eve of May 14, the students of both schools organized a social evening during which they performed dances, poems, plays and different other shows.

The celebration of Eucharist began at 10:00 am with a Mass led by His Excellency Kizito BAHUJIMIHIGO. In his homily he reminded us that we have to become like children because children have a clean heart.

During the Eucharist celebration, 40 students received the sacraments of Christian initiation and the bishop told them to go and act in the church by using the graces received.

After the Eucharist, guests, Brothers, students, alumni and teachers gathered at the *Groupe Scolaire De La Salle* to continue the celebration. A great person and former student of GROUPE SCOLAIRE DE LA SALLE, Senator SEBUHORO Célestin, was present. In his talk he underlined the holistic education received from the Brothers. He encouraged the students to benefit from the education provided by the brothers while they are still in school because this is the basis of our daily life.

Before closing the ceremony the Bishop reminded the students not to commit sin and to hate the eternal fire. The ceremony ended at 5:00 pm with a prayer.

Br. Ferdinand BIZIYAREMYE
Delegation of Rwanda



Congo : Fiftieth anniversary of De La Salle College

"Fifty years of educational partnership with the Congolese state, work done by the Christian Brothers. They have been working hard to ensure quality education for young people." said Brother Firmin Phambu Ntoto, Visitor and Legal Representative.

May 16, 2016, the De La Salle College, established in 1966 commemorated its 50 years of existence. For 50 years, this school has been able to include its name, in golden letters, in the annals of education in the city province of Kinshasa. Great intellectuals, good citizens and more consecrated persons, many occupying very high positions in the public administration, in the Church and in international organizations and private companies, passed through this College.

The Christian Brothers arrived in Boma where they took possession of the Colony School on October 9, 1909 and departed through the Congo - Belgium, the current Democratic Republic of Congo. Arriving in Leopoldville, now Kinshasa, the Brothers opened a school on the Kilimani Mountain. A business school was opened in September 1960. It was then transferred in September 1966 to the town of Gombe near the Provincial House of the Brothers. The school would later be called "Official Institute of Commerce and Administration - Paul VI", with the main objective of training managers in administrative services. Since 1966 to date, the school has successively borne the following names: "Institute of Commerce and Administration Paul VI", "FUNDI Institute", "November 30 Institute" and finally has been known as "De La Salle College" since September 1996.

The De La Salle College has always rejected the idea that ignorance is the destiny of the poor. For the Holy Founder to whom we must give special recognition has made the education of poor his central priority.



(center) Br. Firmin Phambu Ntoto, Visitor

Brother Gomes MAFUCA, Director of the College took the opportunity of this Golden Jubilee to invite the various educational partners to consolidate the achievements of the Lasalian heritage and to strengthen the unity which is the thread of action undertaken within the College.

The cultural day of the fiftieth anniversary of the De La Salle College was not only a great achievement from an organizational point of view but also a favorable moment for the students to prove their intellectual dexterity.

Given the efforts of the leadership in the college, the Institution "Les Ecoliers dans le monde" targeted the school as part of the 5 pilot Colleges of the capital in the Democratic Republic of Congo Kinshasa. The De La Salle College will receive its award and trophy "Notre beau métier" on June 25, 2016 at the Grand Hotel in Kinshasa from the Minister of Education.

Br. Norbert FUTU
District of Congo Kinshasa



Rome: Brother Visitors' Meeting

We were a group of 26 Visitors, called by the Superior General, Brother Robert Schieler, to meet in Rome from 30 May to 8th June. From all Continents and the five Regions of the Institute, there were 13 Visitors, 11 Auxiliaries, a President of Delegation (India) and a Delegate (Belgium). The three languages were represented in such a way that the Francophone group, mainly represented by RELAF, was the smallest in number. The Spanish speaking group was from RELAL and the District of ARLEP. The English speakers included Visitors from RELAN and PARC. We all had the experience of international meetings.

Our session had several objectives which included: *To do an initial evaluation on the implementation of the orientations of the 45th General Chapter, throughout the Institute, strengthen the leadership role of Visitors and make suggestions for the Intercapitular in 2018.* The Superior General and all the members of the General Council were with us and other Brothers of the Generalate, particularly the Secretary General, Brother Antxon and those responsible for formation.

We dealt with many very interesting topics: *the implementation of the propositions from the last General Chapter, the reality of our Districts, and the finances of the Institute ...* The central theme was that of *the accompaniment of Brothers and Lasallian as well as the leadership in our Districts and Delegations.*



In its simplicity and clarity the fraternal sharing experience of the Superior General of the Marist Brothers on leadership was very enlightening. We also loved the sharing by language groups and by Regions. This allowed us to share in a fraternal manner concerns and successes. More informal meetings and "socials" also contributed to the success of this meeting.

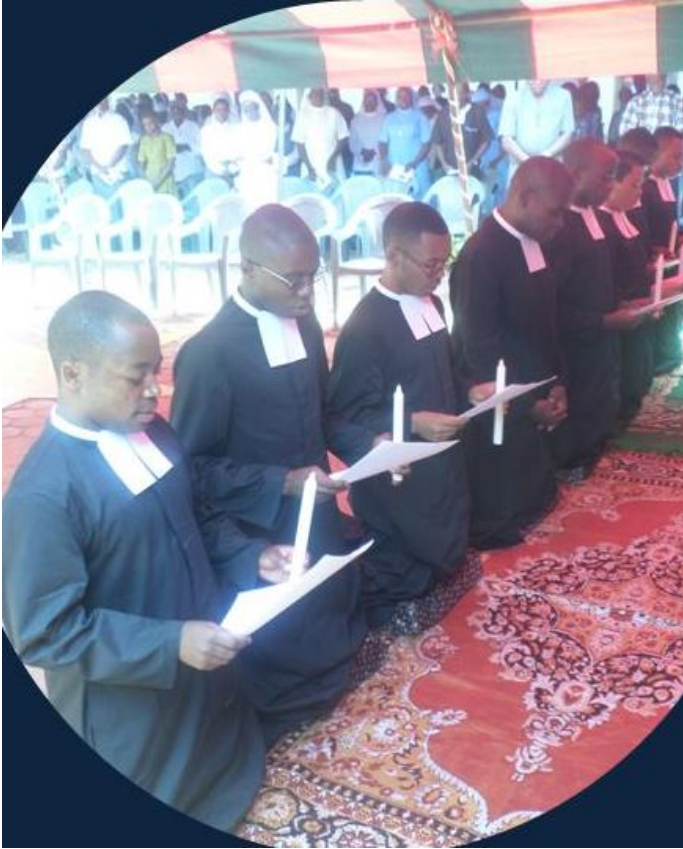
These 10 days of sharing helped us also to have a more universal vision of our Institute, the challenges it is facing and we were encouraged to work with a great sense of Institute. The times of prayer and Eucharistic celebrations, in three languages, were very beautiful. These moments of prayer took place in the Holy Trinity Chapel which we inaugurated. A large icon of the Trinity of Rublev presides over the chapel. The closing and sendoff ceremony celebrated in the sanctuary of St. John Baptist de la Salle particularly touched us. The Superior General and the General Council have given us words that will remain in us as a sign of the sending off and of God's presence in our ministry of animation.

Br. Joan Sala Coll
District of Antananarivo



Bobo Dioulasso

Seven new Brothers of the Christian Schools



The Institute of the De La Salle Brothers welcomed seven new Brothers in the Region of Africa. They said their "yes" to God the Trinity on Friday 10th June at 9 am before an assembly of more than two hundred witnesses. Religious, Priests and Laity came to support them on this occasion, at the Interafrican Novitiate Our Lady of Grace in Bobo Dioulasso. The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Father Guy Sanon, Parish priest of the Cathedral. At the time of the consecration, Br. CONSIMBO Sylvain, Director of the Novitiate, presented the seven Brothers, who chose Saint Miguel FEBRES CORDERO as their Patron Saint, to Br. Julien DIARRA, Visitor of the District of West Africa. The latter received their vows in joy.

Of everything that particularly marked the assembly, the individual symbols selected and developed by each one of them throughout their formation journey were especially important...

District of Antanarivo:

Br. Jean Delar LAVA: The **strawberry** that "reveals perfect beauty and dedication."

Br. Olivier HAVITRINIHAINE: The **rock**, which means "happy is he who built his house upon the eternal rock."

Br. Marie Wunie FANJANIRINA: The **rose** to express that "for the sake of a rose, the gardener becomes the slave of a thousand thorns".

District of Congo Kinshasa :

Br. Alcène TUNGULUKA: The **palm tree** to express that "The Just will grow like palm tree" (Psalm 92, 13)

Br. Edmond Edwige NDONGALA: The **monstrance** to symbolize that "God alone suffices."

Delegation of Rwanda :

Br. Théoneste TUYISENGE: The **rainbow** which means « I do set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth » (Gen 9, 13).

Br. Célestin SEHABIRE: The **star** which means: "source of joy and orientation."

These symbols will lead the newly professed Brothers through their entire religious life. Our prayers are with them.

*Br. Jacques MONCHÉBI,
Novitiate Formator*

Burkina Faso

Updates from the Vocation Promoter of the District of West Africa

D-Day"! Guiloungou, May 7, 2016. The day of the Brothers: Gabriel Zabramba, Raoul De Anton, Paul Kabore and Luis Alvarez, the Day of the District of West Africa, happiness and joy for all Lasallians and the Christian community in Guiloungou where Brother Gabriel Zabramba comes from. Mass presided over by Archbishop Emeritus of Ouagadougou, Archbishop Jean Marie Untani Compaore in the presence of Brother Pierre Ouattara, General Councilor, representing the Superior General ... The celebration of the Jubilee in Guiloungou was an opportunity to promote Lasallian vocations. Many of our aspirants were present ... They were very happy to have met other aspirants and were stimulated in their vocation. It was an opportunity to entrust them to the Virgin Mary.



On May 14, on the occasion of the feast of St. John Baptist de la Salle and the College Day, the Brothers' community, teachers and students of the Pierre Kula College in Diébougou celebrated the Golden Jubilee of religious life of Brother Paul Kaboré called 'PAPY'; this in the presence of his sister and some alumni, parents, friends and other nearby religious communities. [...]



On May 26, the Vocation Committee of our District held a meeting at De La Salle College in Ouagadougou, to respond to questionnaires from the Secretariat for Formation in Rome; to think about promoting Lasallian vocations in general (teachers and Lasallian Sisters); to prepare the visit to Burkina of the De La Salle Sisters from Akassato during the holidays; and to ensure that the aspirant vocational camp preparations next August are going on well.



On May 28, I went with the Brother Paul TOE and Brother Hermann KABORE to the Lasallian College in Kongoussi for the closing Mass of the school year, the College Day and the blessing of the new building. The Mass was presided over by the Bishop of Ouahigouya, in the presence of Brother Visitor and many Brothers who made the trip to Kongoussi. The celebration was beautiful; students and leaders expressed their joy by singing and dancing. We also hope to have many Brothers and Sisters because many more young people have expressed interest in the Lasallian vocation.



On Sunday 29th May in Saponé where we participated in the celebration of the Blessed Sacrament before meeting some aspirants present. Four more were added to the group. We handed over to them invitations to the aspirants' camp to those who are in class 5 and beyond. They are four in number. Let us pray for these young people so that they may find God's grace.



On Friday 10th June, while the Novice Brothers made their first profession of vows in Bobo Dioulasso, we were in Bérégadougou at CLIMA Center (Centre Lasallien d'Initiation aux Métiers d'Agriculture) where we received the Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province. Four out of the six were able to make the trip. After a presentation of the community, of the work and the content of the training, there was a meeting with the trainees before the guided tour in the farm which ended with a fraternal meal and gift giving to the Bishops. The gifts included a ram, egg platelets, bananas and monringa powder. Let us note that the Bishops appreciated what is done, encouraged and are willing to contribute to promote the Center. Heavy rain watered Bérégadougou just after they departed.



Br. Mathurin Ouedraogo
Vocation Promoter, District of West Africa

Blessed Br. Raphaël Louis Rafiringa: Figure of the Lasallian Mission

In continuing to make known the great figures of the Lasallian Mission in RELAF, we now provide this section of our Newsletter through which you will learn more about the life of Blessed Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa.



From Firinga to Brother Raphaël Louis Rafiringa

Beatified on June 7, 2009 in Antananarivo - Madagascar, the Feast of Blessed Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa is celebrated in the Church every year on May 19. It has been exactly seven years since we witnessed the celebration that officially placed him among the Blessed. Today, like Father RAMAHERY, a biographer of this first Malagasy Religious, some of us wonder if a new biography is still to be justified. Certainly! It would be good that our readers, all Lasallians get to know better and revitalize themselves in the life of this "*authentic Malagasy, ardent patriot, protector of orphans, friend of the poor, defender of the Catholic faith and, through and through true Lasallian ...*"

In fact, we cannot claim to know the history of Blessed Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa without referring to that of the establishment of the De La Salle Brothers in his native land, Madagascar. By referring to that history, we recall that in the contemporary history of the Church in the Island, the sons of St. Ignatius were the first missionaries that sowed the grain of the Catholic faith. At the time, Madagascar (District of Antananarivo today) was still part of the District of Reunion. This is explained by the fact that the agreement on the establishment of the De La Salle Brothers, to start a school in the capital at the request of the latter, was signed by Br. Jean de Matha, Visitor of the District of Reunion and Father Jean Baptiste Cazet, Superior of the Mission in the Island.

It was on 23rd October 1966, a month before the arrival of the first three De La Salle Brothers to discover the country of our Blessed. These were Brothers Gonzalvien, Ladollien and Yon, who arrived in Madagascar on 24th November 1966. [...] With fifty students, the future St Joseph College Andohalo (Today Lycée Privé Saint Joseph Andohalo) was then entrusted to the three pioneers.

Only three years later, at the invitation of Brother Gonzalvien and after blessing of his family that Firinga, the future Blessed, began to come to the school of the Brothers. But how did his name "*Firinga*" come about? Why is he today called Raphael Louis Rafiringa?

Our sources reveal that the origins of Blessed Rafiringa go back to King Andriamasinavalona (1880) of whom Andriamahazo, his father was one of the descendants. Andriamahazo (the father of the future Blessed) and Ramahay, his first wife, had three daughters including Rantoandro. He abandoned his name "Andriamahazo" and called himself Rainiantoandro, which means father of Rantoandro.

Later, precisely after the death of Ramahay, he contracted another marriage with Rahaga who gave him seven children; the fifth was the Blessed Rafiringa. At the birth of the latter in 1856 in Masoandro (Antananarivo), his parents, who only had only daughters were very happy to have a boy for whom they chose the name Rakotonirina (which means *Mr. Rakoto* or *the desired*). But this name only remained a wish for the family because the *Mpanandro* (a deviner), who was consulted to name their child, decided otherwise. The reason according to the deviner was that "*when death will hear pronounced this beautiful name, it will take the child and he would not live twenty two moons.*" This is what brought the father of the child to change the name of *Rakotonirina* into *Firinga*, which means "filth". Since then, he bore the name "Firinga" to which the particle "RA" was added as a sign of respect when he became adult. It was only at the age of thirteen, at his baptism, that he received the name *Raphael* to which was added the name of *Louis* at his habit taking as a Religious of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Thus, the name Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa remains forever. (*To be continued...*)

Br. Michel Tolojanahary

A formation session on the Rule will be organized in the Delegation of Rwanda from 27 June to 4 July 2016. The General Councilor (Br. Pierre Ouattara) and the Delegate of the Superior General for Rwanda (Br. Anatole Diretenadji) will be there as resource persons.

The Committee for the creation of an African Lasallian University will hold its first meeting at the Regional House in Abidjan—Ivory Coast from July 17 to 18, 2016.

Calendar of the General Councilor

May 22 — June 25	6 th Session of the General Council
June 25 — July 4	Formation session on the Rule in Rwanda
July 5	Regional Office
July 17—18	Meeting of the Reflection Committee for the creation of an African Lasallian University.
July 19	Retreat, homeleave
August 2 — 7	Visit to Madurai
August 7— 14	Visit to Manila, Visayas, Mindanao (Philippines)
August 15—17	Pastoral Visit with the Superior General and the General-Council in Vietnam
August 18	Departure from Ho Chi Minh pour Rome

Calendar for Pastoral Visit of the Superior General in RELAF

October 17 – 24, 2016	Delegation of Rwanda
October 25 – November 7, 2016	District of Central Africa
November 9 – 18, 2016	District of Antananarivo – Brothers Visitors' Conference
December 5 – 10, 2016	Eritrea
January 15 – 22, 2017	South Africa
March 11 – 13, 2017	Mozambique
March 14 – 18, 2017	Kenya
March 19 – 24, 2017	Ethiopia
March 26 – 31, 2017	District of Gulf of Benin
April 1, 2017	Nigeria
April 2 – 8, 2017	District of West Africa
May 1 – 10, 2017	District of Congo Kinshasa
October 15 – 30, 2017	Visit of the General Councilors to RELAF
October 31 – November 2, 2017	Closing of the Superior General's Pastoral Visit