

Brothers of the Christian Schools

La ★ Salle

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Chief editor: *Br. Pierre OUATTARA*

Assistant editors: *Br. Ferdinand BIZIYAREMYE & Br. Joan SALA COLL*

Infography and Translation: *Br. Pierre Aymard BAKO*

To send articles: *relaf@lasalle.org*

WebSite : *www.relaf.info*



Dear Brothers, dear Sisters, dear Lasallians

The reading of the various articles of this Newsletter N°25 was encouraging for me. After reading them, you will easily understand why they are placed under the theme of hospitality. If, on the occasion of Christmas, we don't speak about hospitality when then would it be?

Christmas, for us Christians, is indeed God in search of hospitality in our world. It is Joseph and Mary, seeking a home in order to surround the birth of their child with a minimum of decent conditions. To grant hospitality is a matter of trust. Trust, we grant it without even thinking, to those belonging to our familiar universe. To trust is an ordinary need of our condition of being vulnerable, dependent on each other. Without a minimum of trust, it becomes difficult to live together. But it is not easy for the poor and the foreigner to find hospitality where one trusts only the rich, the powerful, the national or people of one's ethnic group are trusted. By seeking wealth and power, the human being seeks to protect himself from his vulnerability. The hospitality of the world depends, in a general way, on how human beings relate to their vulnerability and the satisfaction of their security needs. Trust is scary because it means taking the risk of being abused, betrayed. Our trust makes us dependent on the gentleness and on the good will of others.

In faith, **pure act of trust**, we accept that our life is no longer under our control. What gives the necessary courage to such an act of trust, pure, that is to say, free and without guarantee, is love. "Love is an act of faith and who has little faith has little love." 1

In love, faith and reason always walk together until the time when the necessity comes for a decisive act of freedom hidden at the bottom of love. In faith, there is always the issue of the relation of the human being to his own vulnerability. Where the human being, despite his vulnerability, has faith in himself and in his creative abilities, a more hospitable society is possible. As Africans, do we have faith in ourselves? Do we give faith to our youth in itself? For the Christian, Christmas, it is God who puts his faith in the human being up to abandon himself into his hands. This faith of God in us is proof of his love. He acts and gives us faith in ourselves only if we allow this love penetrate our heart. He does not want to be God without us.

Pure, the act of faith is at its root an act of freedom, that is to say, free, a kind of jump in the void. It gives us courage to face the future. The hope, the personal commitment that we put in our faith, makes it a source of dynamism and enthusiasm for our life. To love, at the very root, means to entrust oneself taking the risk of being lost. Love, at this level of depth, becomes not only an act of pure faith but also an act of hospitality. Don't we actually say of a person that we love, that we "hold him in our heart"? Hospitality of the heart doesn't need justification; it is given. To create hospitality in the world, we must start by giving it to Jesus in our heart. To love to the extent of making it an act of faith is scary. Yet, it is with the eyes of faith that the other, other from another country, another ethnic group, from another religion, can truly be seen as a child of God, a brother, a sister. The other is not a limit to my own self but the beginning of my humanity, the threshold where we start to truly exist as human being.

May we, in celebrating Christmas, become this new humanity in Christ Jesus.

Your brother Pierre Ouattara

Jean-Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* . P.148.

# Abidjan: Goodbye to Br Anatole, former bursar of RELAF

The final departure from Abidjan of Brother Anatole DIRETENADJI, former Regional Bursar and now Visitor of the District of Central Africa, has been marked by a memorable event organized at the regional house.

This event took place on Friday, 27 October 2017. A thanksgiving mass was celebrated in the Community chapel at 6:30 pm. Brother Pierre OUATTARA, General Councillor for RELAF, thanked the Brothers from Saint Miguel and Akwaba Communities, Father Rodrigue from the Jesuits' Community, and Mr. Charlemagne who joined the regional community to celebrate this Eucharist.

By starting this event with mass, we want first of all to thank God for the past six years Brother Anatole has been at the service of the Institute through the service of regional bursary, to entrust his new mission in his District of origin in God's hands and to pray also for his successor, Brother Joan SALA COLL, from the District of Antananarivo, who wholeheartedly accepted the call of a mission in the regional Team.



The assistance was then led to the dining room for a fraternal meal. This was a time of gentle atmosphere to appreciate Brother Anatole and the admirable work that he has done for both RELAF and the Institute. Brother Anatole seized the opportunity to thank the community and all the Brothers. He did not fail to express his gratitude towards all those who have supported him.

The ceremony ended with the giving of tokens to Brother Anatole: the first symbolizes his role as provincial and the second symbolizes his footsteps as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and emulating the example of Saint John Baptist de La Salle who left everything to devote himself to the human and religious education of poor children.

*Brother Pierre Aymard BAKO*  
*Regional Secretary*





# Interview with Brother Hilaire RAHARILALAO



*In 2012, while CELAF-Institute celebrated its 20 years of existence, I had the joy of doing an interview with Brother Hilaire who happens to be the first Director of CELAF. By the grace of God, our first meeting took place on 31 July 2017, at the Generalate in Rome where Brother Hilaire is in charge*

*of archives service of the Institute while giving a hand to the service of Postulation for the cause of Saints. Grabbing the opportunity, I took advantage of the situation to get a few words with him, which I happily write down on the occasion of CELAF silver jubilee.*

***Brother Hilaire, could you introduce yourself to the readers of the RELAF Newsletter?***

Born on November 16, 1949 in Ambohimahasoia, a small town in the High Plateaus of Madagascar, I am the second born of a large family of 8 children – 5 boys and three girls and parents from the rural area of Betsileo raised in Christianity. As a student of the Brothers from primary school up to secondary level, I went to the novitiate and I made my first vows in 1969. After the years of temporary vows including a time of military service, as a young Brother, to the national Malagasy Navy, I made my perpetual vows on my birthday in 1980.

***You have known the beginnings of what is today the Catholic University of West Africa (UCAO). Could you tell us your experience as a student?***

In 1976-77, I had first known, as part of the 2nd generation of students, what was the Higher Institute of Religious Culture (ISCR), a new foundation of the Regional Bishops' Conference of West Africa (CERAO) located in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, which subsequently became the Catholic Institute of West Africa (ICAO) and which has developed into several departments in the Sub-Region, to become in the year 2000 the Catholic University of West Africa (UCAO). My journey as a student was marked at the beginning by the motto: "Africa Nova Patria Cristi" as well as by a recent publication of the Regional Church: "Becoming a Christian in Africa" (Koumi, 1976), and especially by the academic objective established that stipulates a better knowledge of the African man and his universe meeting a novelty: the Gospel and its proposal of Christian life. It is in such a way my journey as a student took place: 1976-1978: undergraduate; 1979-80: years of Empowerment for the Doctorate. During my 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the Theology Faculty, I was elected students' President. 1980- 1983: years of Research and Teaching in Madagascar. 1984-1986: Preparation of the thesis.

***First PHD holder of UCAO, could you tell us about the conduct of the historic ceremony of your thesis defense?***

It was on 20 June 1986. There was nothing historic about it except the fact that it has been the first PHD thesis defended in this young faculty of theology. An event that promoters did not fail to exploit: posters, newspapers, radio, TV. The defense was presided over by 5 members of the Jury among whom there was His Excellency Archbishop Anselme Tidianma SANON, Archbishop of Bobo-Dioulasso, African theologian of international span, lasted from 08:30 am to 12:30 pm in the presence of, among others, Bishops members of CERAO, His Eminence Cardinal Bernard YAGO, Archbishop of Abidjan and Grand Chancellor of the Catholic Institute of Abidjan, the Rector (Muslim) of the Government University of Abidjan, some from the University and from the Catholic world of the Archdiocese. The Brothers from the Sub-District of Gulf of Benin of the time were present. The special note did not fail to be mentioned by a member of the Jury: "The author of the thesis is not a priest; he is a Brother! "

***What was the problematic of your PHD thesis? What re-reading do you make of it in today's international and intercultural context of dialogue?***

It is a PHD thesis in Biblical Theology entitled: "Church and Fihavanana in Madagascar. It is hermeneutics of the Christian reconciliation according to St Paul (2 Co, 5.17- 21)". Structured in 2 great parts divided into 4 sections and subdivided into 16 chapters, this thesis of 620 pages has been published in 1991 and was reedited in 2007. This tells you the relevance of the problematic which, on the basis of the Pauline experience of the announcement of the Gospel in the cultural Greek community of Corinth as an act of "reconciliation of God with man," challenges the Malagasy context of evangelization battling the cultural value of the "fihavanana" which was used to translate the word reconciliation, as an expression of being-man and of being-in-the world, in a permanent quest of relationship with the other, the others and the Entire-Other. The issue is whether such a value that is lived in an inclusive dimension at the family, parental, social, cosmic ancestral, transcendental levels is capable of receiving the proposal of a New "fihavanana", that of God proclaimed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ ?

The rereading of the Pauline theology of reconciliation (2 Cor 5, 17-21), which the Conciliar Decree of Vatican II on the missionary activity of the Church (*Ad Gentes*, 22) corroborates has opened the way to inculturation, or the living and joyful encounter of the Gospel with culture, which is a dual requirement for both faith and culture, regardless of time and the context dominated today by globalization and interculturality. Is this not also the basis of a biblical theology of creation, of Incarnation and Redemption as part of the advent of a "new land" (cf *AP 21.1*) and the commitment to a new world order (cf *Laudato IF*, 1, 11, 89) consecrated to God and to his kingdom?

***As a member of the Association of African theologians, could you present the objectives of this Association and your personal contribution to the activities of the Association?***

The proposal for such an association is born in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in 2007 and it held its Statutory Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2010 with the election of the President, the Bureau and the Scientific Committee. Not to be confused with the Ecumenical Association of African theologians.

The ATA is an interdisciplinary research group in African theology bringing together theologians from local Churches of all major linguistic areas of the continent. Its objective is multiple considering:

- On the one hand, the itinerary of African theology since the days "Black priests ask questions", title of a book published in 1956 on the role of the Church in Africa before independence until the advent of the first African Synod with the impressive document "The African Bishops speak ... (1969-1992)", revealing the proposals of the Bishops of Africa;

- On the other hand, the challenge of research work and publications at the service of the Churches of Africa that the SECAM chairs, collaboration at all levels, given the new socio-cultural, religious, political and economic contexts, in an Africa in mutation, which today raises many burning questions of theological order for the work of evangelization of the African continent.

Personally, I participated in the two meetings of the foundation of the ATA on the topics: "Evangelization, theology and salvation in Africa" and "Faith, Culture and Development in Africa". Then as a member of the Forum Faith-Culture-development in Madagascar, I participated in the international symposium held in Rome on 24-25 April 2014 on "the Church in Africa: from the Vatican Council II to the third millennium. Tribute from Africa for Popes John XXIII and John Paul II". In addition, ATA overcame the challenge of the publication of a bilingual dictionary of African theology for which, I contributed in the drafting of two articles.

***As the first Director of the CELAF-Institute, can you instruct us on the beginnings of this initiative of a Lasallian higher institute in francophone Africa?***

An adventure! But an adventure which was worth it given that it was a project of the General Council of the time which, not only believed in it, but also had a great vision of the future of Lasallian Africa, I would say to the extent of faith and hope of its members among whom Brother Vincent Rabemahafaly. CELAF is an ex-nihilo creation whose direction and implementation of the project have been entrusted to two persons: Brother Paco Martinez for the material aspect and the construction of the campus, and myself for the administrative and the academic organization. Within the space of two years (1990-1992), everything was ready, or almost, because we were forced to launch the first academic year in October 1991 in the facilities of the Catholic Institute of West Africa (ICAO) in Cocody, in the presence of the Brother Regional who represented the Conference of the Brother Visitors, the new Formation team of the inter-Districts scholasticate, the Rector of ICAO, the first

teachers who were then Brothers that I had recruited from European countries (France, Spain, Italy, Belgium) and of the first generation of 17 Scholastic students. The official inauguration of the new-born baptized Lasallian African Centre (CELAF) had taken place on the day of the Epiphany, 5 January 1992 in its brand new site at Riviera III, after a Eucharistic celebration presided over by Cardinal Bernard Yago, Archbishop of Abidjan, in the presence of the highest authority of the Institute, Brother Superior John Johnston, Brother Visitors from Africa, the Brothers from the Sub-District of Gulf of Benin, many religious men and women in Abidjan as well as faithful from the parishes of Abidjan.

***What memories do you hold from your mission in CELAF?***

A lot of memories in 7 years (1990-1997). But I will list the names of the companions of foundation, Brothers and lay collaborators, as well as their successors whose presence and commitment are worthy of praise have supported me in the trials, just as they have contributed to give CELAF a spirit, a language and a practice of science in human and Christian education, up to making CELAF to be today an international unavoidable reference in the field of academic training in the responsibility, in the world of education in the African setup. Its objective: "to train Educators of top level for a new Africa" was not a vain word. I am far from forgetting all the approaches made here and there to obtain the academic recognition of CELAF diplomas: the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of West Africa (UCAO) in Abidjan under the aegis of the Roman Congregation for Catholic Education, the Ecole Normale Supérieure of the University of Abidjan, the African and Malagasy Committee of Higher Education (CAMES). A great exemplary collaboration which exceeded the national, regional and continental borders, extended to other Church institutions, to many religious congregations and various dioceses of francophone Africa.

***What could be, in your opinion, the future prospects of CELAF-Institute?***

Some know what can be expected of a Higher Institute of Pedagogical and Religious Sciences. Personally, I have always nourished the idea of a Lasallian University in Africa - or in Madagascar - as an instrument of taking into account the problematic, of teaching, research and publication meeting the contexts which prevail today in the Lasallian Educational Mission. The existence since a quarter of a century of our higher institutes in the English speaking zone (CTIE, Nairobi), and in the Francophone zone (CELAF, Abidjan) represents an asset, with others to be promoted, in collaboration with the International Association of Lasallian Universities (AIUL/IALU) to consider this other structuring adventure, pledge of a new inspiring breath to our mission to African youth, facing new "situations of abandonment", if not poverty, which have no name in Africa. In this future prospect, my question is as follows: Did we reflect on answering and in our way, the call of the Church in Africa made by the successive synods of 1994 and 2009 in terms of Universities and Higher Institutes (cf *Ecclesia in Africa*, 103 ; *Africae munus*, 136) ?

***What message do you want to send to the Lasallian Family in Africa? And to the CELAF educational community?***

For me, to speak of the Lasallian Family, in Africa or elsewhere, is to speak in some way, as Pope Francis says in his Encyclical, of "our common home", not so much to be safeguarded, but especially to be given face and vigour, to be treated, to be loved as a privileged place of giving and receiving, because it is also "of a very great importance" for many people who do not have a future. In the same way, I would say the same word of encouragement to the great family of CELAF educational community for the mission which is theirs, today and tomorrow, in Africa.

*Interview conducted by  
Brother Raoul TRAORE*





# Ouagadougou : Dedication of Br Pierre Ouattara's book



*"Educating to vulnerability: an emergency of our time", that is the title of the book that has just been published by Brother Pierre S. Ouattara. The ceremony of dedication was held on 16 November 2017, in Ouagadougou at Mercury Library. In this book, the author goes against the current ambient mentality where vulnerability is viewed as a negative thing. For him, vulnerability and hospitality are two sides of the same coin and vulnerability sets up the duty of hospitality. Brother Ouattara thus presents vulnerability as a virtue, a value to which we must educate our society if we do not want to lose our humanity.*

"The exploits, facts or wrongdoing of the warrior and technocrat man, on the great stage of the world, urge to meditate on the meaning of human stay ", as written on page 4 of the book. As a Church man, Brother Pierre S. Ouattara therefore does not fail to ponder on this major and current topic. But, he surprises with his original approach, by proposing education to vulnerability. Yet, in the general understanding, vulnerability is viewed as a negative thing. But, the author presents the issue differently, as a value, and even as a virtue to which every human being has the right.

In this book, the author mentions several facets of vulnerability. He speaks of God's vulnerability that is discovered in the Christianity through the figure of Jesus Christ, but also the child's vulnerability who teaches adults to be responsible and to control themselves when they are dealing with a child. He also speaks of women's vulnerability through which man could best learn thanks to the tenderness shown in the woman. He presents tenderness as a strength which proves to be strong against itself. That is why, in this book, Pierre Ouattara offers a new way to live our world: the culture of hospitality through education to vulnerability.

Education to vulnerability, in this book, has two meanings.

First, it is presented as education to the conscience of vulnerability. Then, education to vulnerability is presented as "the fact of leading people and human communities to discover, at the heart of their vulnerability, the energies, the resources of the mind and of the heart with a view of creativity to cure wounds, to bounce back from shocks, to rebuild, to reinvent oneself after violent and traumatic experiences".

In the light of environmental problems, and particularly global warming, the author believes that we did not know how to live in our world. The worse is that he regrets we have made it and we are making it more and more inhospitable, hence the importance to learn how to best inhabit the earth. And, that is the whole relevance of his project of education to vulnerability. "I reflect on the problematic in a comprehensive manner in line with education that will be different from education that we have practiced until now. I mean by different education, an education that teaches children to live where they live, to be attentive to their environment, to pay attention to the house where they live, to the street, to the compound, the vegetation so that children instead of watching TV and be bombarded by images coming from elsewhere, may know a little better their environment and be able to overcome the challenges of the environment where they live," he explains, at the end of the ceremony of dedication of his book.

Certainly, to present vulnerability as a value to which we must be educated appears as a challenge. But, the author shows the emergency of overcoming this challenge if human beings do not want to lose their humanity and permanently compromise their possibility of survival in a world which, by their fault, has become paradoxically less hospitable in spite of the extraordinary progress in science and technology. He also has the genius of convincing the reader on the positive value of vulnerability whose conscience sets up the duty of hospitality that corresponds to the right to vulnerability...

*Retrieved from LeFaso.net*

*Author: Moussa Diallo, journalist at fasonet (published on 20 November 2017)*



# Rwanda: Talent show day at TTC de La Salle

The entire lasallian family at TTC De La Salle Byumba participated in a talent show day on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Together with its teaching staff, the school administration led by Brother Maurice BURASA organized the day to help students have an open forum where they can practice what they learnt in class in response to the current Rwandan curriculum (Competence Based Curriculum). It was an opportunity for teachers to show their different abilities and share their life experiences as well. It was time to learn from each other. With the talent show day, to everybody at TTC De La Salle, new skills were shown/acquired to others and a percentage of ignorance was eliminated.

## ***A word on TTC De La Salle***

De La Salle Teacher Training College (TTC) is a high school at the secondary level. It trains young, sometimes adults as well, to the teaching career in primary schools. The training program is subdivided into four options, mainly TSS (Teaching Social Studies) where trainees learn to teach geography, history, religion, music,... the second branch is TML (Teaching Modern Languages) having its candidates learn to teach English, French, Kinyarwanda and Kiswahili. The third branch focuses its studies on Teaching Sciences and Mathematics (TSM). ECLPE (Early Childhood and Lower Primary Education) is the fourth teaching branch that trains future caregivers of the young ones from age 3 to 9.

## ***Summary on various activities carried out***

As it was planned, students and teachers had to present skills depending on the area of studies. It was possible to go out of one's field as well provided it was for the good of all.

With their sweet voices, students studying to teach Social studies showed up with a nice melody chanting our founder's journey on this earth. They also presented brief biographies of different important Figures.

"...We shouldn't sacrifice our future because of riches, gift and/or any different temptations...." This was the main lesson from a well-played sketch that TML group presented. Being part of their possible future orientation, they gave us a slight idea on how news are prepared then presented.

From what we already have in our daily life, something of greater importance can be gotten. This is what TSM group helped us understand when they got electricity just from normal Irish potatoes. More to this, participants were able to see how calculations are made for long/short range missile to get sent.

Finally we got to see various teaching materials prepared by the ECLPE students. Pairing their listening and visioning capacity help small children understand their lessons. Learners understand better when they practically see what they are taught. We got to be reminded the importance of teaching aid in teaching and learning.

The idea to have a talent show day came in order to try making a link between the old curriculum that was knowledge based to the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC). CBC aims at inculcating students with skills and right attitudes in addition to knowledge. For instance in languages, the students learn competencies in reading, writing, listening and speaking. The students also learn social skills that are found in crosscutting issues such as hard work, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, citizenship, national identity. With the country's education orientation, we hope to have such more occasions so that students can get opportunities to have their knowledge put into practices as they learn from each other.

*Brother Jean Paul NIYONSHUTI*

*Delegation of Rwanda*





# Burkina Faso : 2017~2018 school opening at La Salle~Badenya

La Salle-Badenya School, after a few months of holidays, resumes classes. As soon as 6:30 am, the school compound was filled with noise and with the up and down movements.

On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2017, Badenya re-opened its doors. This event brought the school community together.

Around 7:30 am, the ceremony began with the national anthem in the presence of primary and secondary school students, teachers, students' parents and guests. Speeches followed afterwards: the staff representative, the parents' association (primary and secondary) and the Brother Director.

The general message was about good wishes for the school year. They call upon everyone to work for the good running of the activities and the achievement of the objective of our theme of the year entitled: Lasallian, in faith and humility, let's make together our academic year a success.

We were blessed to welcomed Brothers Aimé Sanou and Gabriel Somé, who newly arrived at La Salle-Badenya community.

The whistle blew at 8:30 am, and the students accompanied by their parents returned to their respective classrooms to confirm their presence.

The classes resumed this Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 7:30 am.

*Mrs Rose Laetitia*

*Headmistress at La Salle Badenya Primary School*



# Burkina Faso : inter~schools competition in Ouagadougou

Students from La Salle-Badenya Primary School participated in an inter-school drama competition. The general theme of this competition organized by the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement was "Humanitarian values in the school community".

For 10 minutes, students from La Salle-Badenya have captivated the attention of the jury on their theme about solidarity in the school community. Through this sketch, they emphasized the complementarity between the social classes (the poor needs the rich, the rich needs the poor).

Given the relevance of the content of their theme, they were awarded with the second award of the competition by the jury.

Congratulations to the students from La Salle-Badenya Primary School who brilliantly managed to embody their theme.

*Mrs Rose Laetitia*

*Headmistress at La Salle Badenya Primary School*



# Interview with Brother Jacob SAWADOGO

*Dear brother Jacob Yacouba Sawadogo, you've just spent several weeks in Lebanon. We would like you to share your Lebanese experience by answering these short questions.*

**Brother Jacob, in what context did you go to Lebanon?**

I have been to Lebanon for a two-month language course (August-September) during the summer holidays. This stay is in the context of my islamology and classical Arabic language studies. It is an internship that is part of the requirements of the training program of the Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica (P.I.S.A.I.) based in Rome. Its purpose is, first of all, to familiarize myself with the Arabic language and to be in direct contact with Muslim civilization and culture. The second thing was to translate a text from Arabic to French through the help of someone who knows very well the Arabic language. The text to be translated is entitled: ***Education and formation of the person according to the Islamic values***. This text is an extract from the book: The religious texts and the Islamic heritage: a critical reading, of Ahmad El-Neifar, Tunisian writer. From this translated text, I must pursue the drafting of my Master II project, in order to prepare for the defense next June, *in Cha Allah*.

In Lebanon, I was hosted in the Fratelli Project Community, located in Sidon, 30 km south of Beirut. The community has organized a summer camp of three weeks in which I participated.

**Could you describe in few words Lebanon for us?**

Lebanon is a country of 10.452 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of about 6.359.000 inhabitants. It is the smallest country in the Middle East. Majority of the landscape is mountainous and extends about 220 km from the north to the south and, about 50 km from east to west. It shares its borders with Syria to the north and to the east, and with Israel to the south. It is bordered to the west by 220 km from the Mediterranean Sea.

The official language is local Arabic, followed by French and English. One of the particularities of Lebanon is that it is a country where more than 17 religious denominations coexist. In this connection, Pope John Paul II, during one of his visits to the country, made a statement which became famous in Lebanon: "*Lebanon, more than a country, is a message*".

Its history, its political system and the variety of its culture, its religious diversity and its geography make it a unique and original country in the Middle East. Between its independence in 1926 and the beginning of the civil war which ravaged it from 1975 to 1990, the country has experienced a period of relative economic prosperity and political stability, thanks to the strong growth of the sectors of agriculture and services (banks, tourism). During this period, Lebanon was considered as the strongbox of the Levant and as the Switzerland of the Middle East, because of its weight and its financial power. After the war, the country underwent a difficult decade. But from the years 2000, it found again the path of development and acquires gradually its economic strength of the olden days.



The field of education is invested by the religious institutions, among which the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the Marist Brothers, the Jesuits.... More than 99% of the population is educated. The government provides free education to all students. The school level in Lebanon is one of the highest in the Middle East. It is the country with the most educated people compared to its population. That is, one doctor for thirty people. Another characteristic is that its Diaspora is larger than its resident population.

**Tell us a little bit about the Fratelli project**

The Fratelli project started in 2015, under the inspiration of two religious congregations to respond to an education need: the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Marist Brothers. At least two major occurrences have contributed to the realization of the project. On the one hand, the invitation of Pope Francis to go to the peripheries to announce the Good News; and on the other hand, the suffering of children refugees from Syria and Iraq, fleeing war. The premises of Fratelli are the buildings of the former school of the Marist Brothers. This school was founded in 1962, but during the civil war, it had been abandoned and subsequently occupied by members of the military. Up to now, half of the school serves as a military camp to a large contingent.

Two Brothers were the precursors of the Fratelli mission: a Lasallian (Brother Andrés Porras from North Mexico) and a Marist (Brother Miquel Cubeles from Barcelona). They were joined by Brother Isaac, Marist, coming from Spain. The Fratelli Community maintains cordial relations with the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Marist Brothers of Lebanon.

The Fratelli project aims to be a second chance school: it allows refugee children to continue studies in Lebanon. The level of Lebanese school being very high, a child coming from Syria or Iraq needs remedials before being able to integrate the official school. Fratelli serves as a means for this purpose. But initiatives are always taken to broaden the field of action of the Fratelli project. It seeks to get involved and to adapt to the environment.



### ***What were your activities in Lebanon?***

Fratelli's activities are of two kinds: school and extracurricular. During the school year, there are Lebanese formators who animate the school. Majority of children are Syrians, but there are a few Iraqis and also Lebanese. Lessons are delivered throughout the school year and during the holidays there is camp.

I participated in the summer camp organised by the educational community of Fratelli in August 2017. The organization and the animation of this camp interested me a lot.

In the course of the three weeks, we facilitated more than 400 children whose age varies between 5 and 15 years. For a better organization, we began by establishing an interior regulation of 22 articles, then we chose the theme which is: **"In search of the treasure"**; and finally composed the anthem of the camp.

The major theme of the camp was divided into several sub-themes, ranging from living together to the environment and body hygiene. Each day had therefore its theme. The schedules were established in such a way to have theory and practice on the day's theme.

Given the big number of children, we split the group into two; that of before noon and that of the afternoon. Each group was in turn subdivided into 5 levels according to age. The facilitators were composed of volunteers coming from Spain, Syria, Mexico, Burkina Faso and teachers from the Fratelli project (Lebanese). The activities were intense, harsh but interesting.

The children were transported by bus. In the morning we went to pick them in their homes around 8:30 am and we also dropped them home at 1:00 pm. The Group in the afternoon was coming at 1:30 pm and returned at 5:30 pm.

The purpose of the camp's theme (**In search of the treasure**) was to raise awareness in each child that it is itself its own treasure. At the end of the camp, each child received as a gift a key holder with their image on it.

### ***What lessons do you draw from your Lebanese experience for our country and for our District?***

The lesson to be drawn from this internship is first of all a sense of joy to have been able to carry out this project, to have shared my experiences with other people and, especially, to have contributed to the happiness of these children in a situation of vulnerability.

Through the visits that I made to the tourist sites and the different Lebanon cities, I never ceased to make comparisons with my country. And many feelings, sometimes contradictory, crossed my mind. Sometimes, the admiration for this country well built in terms of housing, infrastructure and the performing educational system. And sometimes, lack of understanding regarding the economic delay of my country. What a frustration! Sometimes, a vague impression makes me say that in my country, there is more of neglect in the maintenance of things than in poverty. An economist once said, I quote: **"In most of the third world countries, it is not the lack of resources that is the major problem but rather the use of resources"**.

Compared to the District of West Africa, the District of Proche Orient has gigantic schools (more than 3500 students for some schools), well equipped and well maintained. But in terms of vocation, we have more new comers than them.

I conclude this sharing of internship experience by thanking all those who have helped me at all levels to achieve my project. I remember in a special way the Fratelli project community which warmly welcomed and hosted me.

*Interview conducted by Brother Téfio Raoul TRAORE*



# Message : Auctioning of human beings in Lybia



## People for sale

Exposing migrant slave auctions in Libya

The US CNN Reporters' coverage [on lives being auctioned in Libya](#) hit the headlines a few weeks ago. It is naturally with horror that we learned about this degrading treatment inflicted on our brothers and sisters in humanity. This phenomenon of flagrant violation of the dignity of the human person is a decline of several centuries in the history of humanity.

These young migrants endured hardships in search of a better life, only to find themselves caught between the claws of groups moved by shameful reasons. It is not enough to say that this situation sparks lament, revolts and condemnation from all over.

As young lasallian educators, we would like to contribute in building "Africa". This message is not intended to add lament. It is not necessary to add a lament to other lamentations. Our objective through this message is, to modestly, invite our African brothers and sisters to stop being pitiful.

In order for Africa to stop being pitiful, we suggest a few guidelines:

First Africa should be aware of its current capacity. Then, we, as Africans, should know that changing Africa into hell or into Eldorado is in our scope and only depends on us. Finally, we should undertake humble initiatives to develop our continent.

Certainly there are structural problems, and no one will disagree with Pope John Paul II, when he speaks of "structures of sin". However, discreetly, each one of us can always open up a path that will weaken these structures of sins. The good strategy here is certainly not to attack them from the front, but rather to empty them of their toxic and evil substance.

All this seems very theoretical. But sometimes, in suggesting guidelines, one may indulge into being a prescriber of panacea. Hence the invitation we are sending to each educational community to rethink its educational project by taking into account that the development of Africa passes through the development of the village where our school is, and even passes through our school. This means empowering African youth with power of action on their environment.

A short example to illustrate what we should perhaps stop doing: geography classes in our regions often reveal a series of problems faced by populations, such as unemployment, disparity between training and employment, desertification, the STI, the dependence of agriculture on natural hazards, the divagation of animals.... And in a systematic manner, the solutions are always the same: the State must, the State must, the State must. Giving the responsibility of transforming a fact into a challenge in order to overcome it, to an actor both hybrid and scattered like the State, does not help us to move forward. Because, this way of behaving does not do anything, but in addition, it makes us look like things.

We are not powerless spectators or witnesses. Each one of us is an actor, an actor who can open up a path to strongly impact on the phenomena which, until now, are undefeated, certainly, but which are not invincible. The culture of fear will not get us out of the problem. "Yes, we can!" Barack Obama once said.

In addition, an aspect that our educational projects could take into account is that true happiness is not elsewhere. It is among us. Why always leave? Let's build our "Paradise" where we are, instead of going elsewhere to build or take advantage of the efforts of others. It is by being actors that our youth will deploy their ingenuity, their energy for a surprising development of our continent. Thus, they will be able to fulfill themselves, estimate themselves and enter head high in history.

This testimony of a young African who sells different items in Europe illegally reveals that happiness is not where we think it is: *"Back at home, when I watched TV and saw Europe, walaï, I would have never imagined such suffering. You see, I often carry items which weigh about 100 kg, I must permanently be on the lookout to avoid being taken by the police. What I get cannot even allow me to live. I saw some of our brothers looking for food in the dust bins, walaï, back at home, when I would take off my shoes, I wasn't the one to take them inside the house. And here, you see! I am behind my mates who remained in the country. They all have families of their own, they can afford the minimum for their families. And me!"*

[The Ghanaian President Nana-Akufo-Addo](#) says that we want young Africans to remain in Africa in order to contribute to the development of our continent.

Your Brothers, Guillaume Damesonou YAME  
and Téfio Raoul Traoré



'All the ends of the earth have seen  
the saving power of God' (Ps 98:3)



Br Joan SALA COLL



Br Pierre OLATTARA

The RELAF regional

Team wishes you

**Merry Christmas**

**Happy New Year  
2018**



Br Ferdinand BIZIAREMYE



Br Pierre Aymard BAKO



Dates	Events
<b>22 December 2017</b>	Abidjan – Lomé
	23 December District chapter of Gulf of Benin
<b>30 December 2017</b>	Lomé- Abidjan
<b>2018</b>	
<b>January</b>	
<b>5 January at 4: 00 pm</b>	Abidjan : general assembly of Brothers
<b>25 January to 3 February</b>	South Sudan; School in Rumbek
<b>February</b>	
<b>4 to 28</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> session of the general Council
	Renouvellement du permesso.
<b>March</b>	
<b>4 to 18 March</b>	Intercapitular
<b>18 March to 15 April</b>	Visit in the District of France
<b>April</b>	
<b>17, 18 et 19</b>	Board meeting South Sudan/ Rome
<b>20 April</b>	Return to Abidjan

To visit the web sites of the Regions of the Institute

RELAF: Région Lasallienne Afrique-Madagascar. [www.relaf.info](http://www.relaf.info)

RELEM: Région Lasallienne Europe-Méditerranée. [www.relem.org](http://www.relem.org)

RELAL: Region Latino Americana Lasallista. [www.relal.org.co](http://www.relal.org.co)

RELAN: Région Lasallienne de l'Amérique du Nord. [www.lasallian.info](http://www.lasallian.info)

PARC: Pacific Asia Regional Conference. [www.lasalle-parc.org](http://www.lasalle-parc.org)