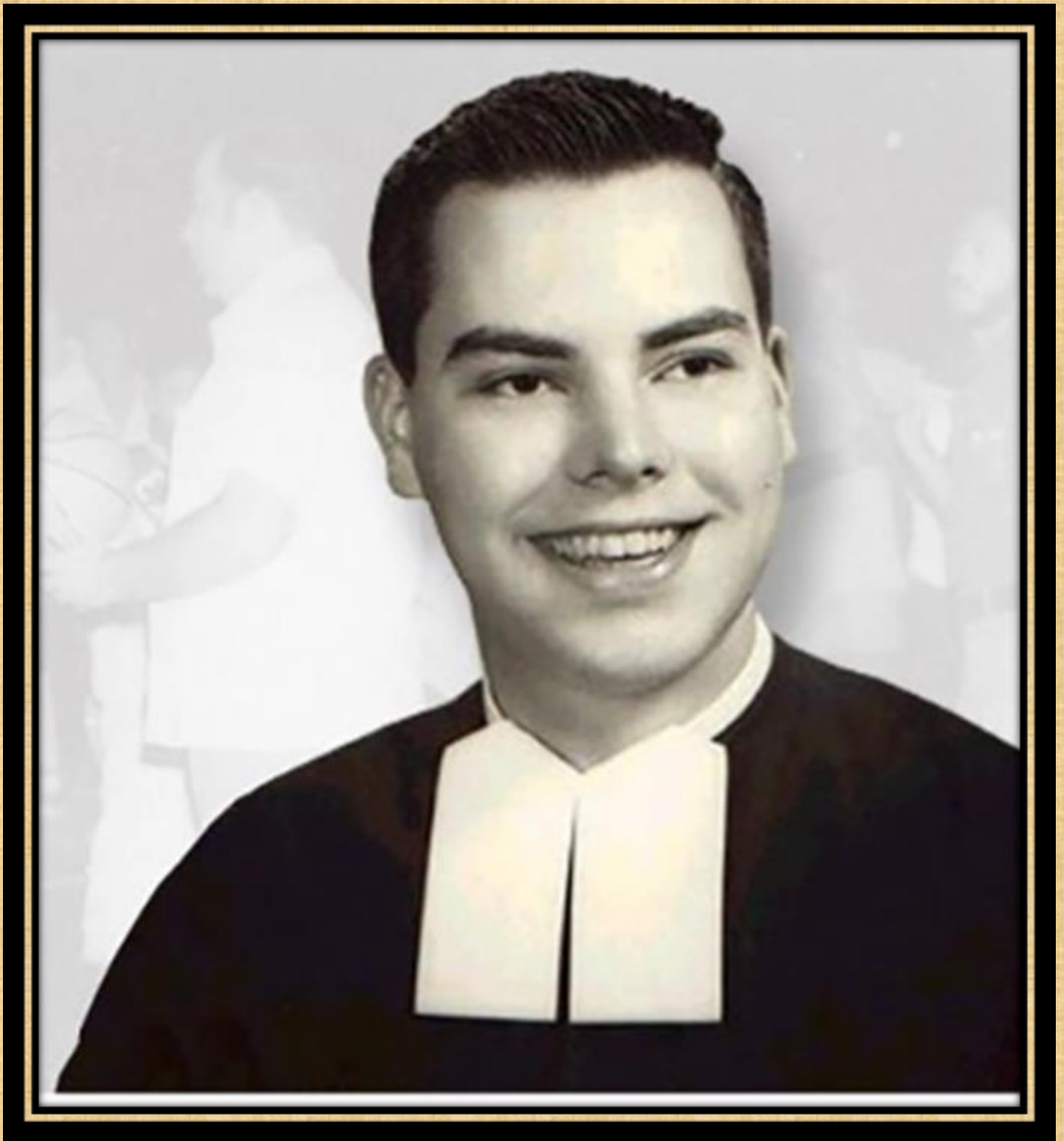


# RELAF NEWSLETTER N°33

Brothers of the Christian Schools



**Lasallian Region of Africa**



December 2019

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*RELAF Newsletter is a publication of the Brothers of the Christian Schools by the regional team*

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# EDITORIAL

The Superior General, Brother Robert Schieler, announced to us in a letter dated December 3<sup>rd</sup> the beatification of Brother James Miller. "Brother James (1944 - 1982), he says, was martyred on February 13, 1982 in Huehuetenango, Guatemala, where he will be beatified on December 7<sup>th</sup>." This beatification evokes for me the thirst for happiness that inhabits human beings. This thirst for happiness seems to me to be the mark in us of a vocation. But it is sad to see how often we go wrong in our search for happiness. We are looking for easy happiness, without morality, without virtue. We neglect "the needs of the soul", the interior life. Some people are convinced that the richer they become, the happier they will be, the more money they get and the happier they will be... However, more money creates more needs for them and what previously seemed superfluous, then becomes necessary...

Happiness is a mission to ourselves. I can say at the same time that I **am** and I **have** a soul, a soul that I can lose. I'm an accountant for myself. But self-possession is not in itself a goal but it is simply a transition, a trial, in other words a mission towards oneself. God entrusts us to ourselves to know to whom we will surrender. The example of Blessed man given by James Miller does not possess himself but to surrender himself to God by devoting himself to others. Gustave Thibon rightly said: "Thirst for happiness: What ambitions You want this, this, and that again Very good, but are you worried about whether all these things want you? You seek to gather happiness. Seek rather to make you worthy to be plucked by happiness. When you are pure enough, happiness will follow you wherever you go, wherever you hide."<sup>1</sup>

Chesterton further specified by saying: "Good and evil, joy and sorrow being inextricably linked here on earth, the real problem is not to be happy or unhappy: it is to be both at the highest level of oneself. » Brother James Miller was killed on February 13, Valentine's Day, "el día del cariño", lovers' day at this time in Guatemala. Love is precisely what brings the blessed to the highest level of himself. James Miller, a religious of great simplicity, nicknamed "Brother fix it", "Brother to know how to repair everything", was convinced, because of his love for disadvantaged young people, that Huehuetenango was the place where he should be despite the risks for his life.

As we close in December the celebration of the tricentenary of the birth in heaven of Saint John Baptist De La Salle, the beatification of Brother James Miller strengthens our conviction that, thanks to the charism received from John Baptist de La Salle, great things are still possible. May this Advent season, with the intercession of our Blessed Brothers, be a time of grace and conversion for us Lasallians.

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. Fruitful Advent time to all!

Brother Pierre Ouattara  
General Councillor

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<sup>1</sup> Gustave Thibon, L'échelle de Jacob, 1942.

# RENEWAL OF THE VOWS OF 12 BROTHERS OF THE DISTRICT OF ANTANANARIVO

During the week of September 16th to 25th, 2019, the Brothers of the Christian Schools of the District of Antananarivo organized a meeting called "District Days" followed by an annual retreat. This was held in Soavimbahoaka with a view to sharing the experiences lived during the school, apostolic and academic year by the various leaders.

The "District Days" allowed the Brothers to share and witness their experiences of life and mission in their respective communities and educational environments. In total, twenty-nine (29) heads of Lasallian entities presented reports on their activities. If these testimonies make it possible to share the solidarity commitment lived during the previous years, they also give the courage to keep it on, and improving it. The outgoing scholastic Brothers played the tasks of moderation and secretary of this annual meeting.

After this meeting, another meeting was scheduled, an annual retreat. As planned, this was animated by Brother Sylvain CONSIMBO of the District of West Africa. During this time of rupture with the daily rhythm, we had enough time to pray, meditate and even discern in order to revitalize our personal, community and apostolic lives. A trilogy of the Jubilee Year was the subject of our retreat: "One Heart, One Commitment, One Life". We thank the preacher for his accompaniment and witness of life.

At the end of this retreat, twelve (12) young Brothers renewed their "yes" to God in the footsteps of De La Salle and Blessed Raphael Louis Rafiringa in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The

Brother Visitor of the District received their vows. And the Elder Brothers supported them with prayer and presence at this celebration. The number of young Brothers, twelve, is significant by its symbolism. This number expresses what is completed, what forms a whole, a harmonious and perfect unity. In the Bible, the number 12 wears a particular importance: "the 12 sons of Jacob, the 12



tribes of Israel, the 12 stones, the 12 apostles, Jesus at 12 years old, the events that occurred at the 12th hour". Also the 12 months of the year.

May the Guardian Angels help and encourage our young Brothers to be better in order to revitalize the District of Antananarivo.

Brother Jean Délar LAVA

District of Antananarivo



# GOOD BYE BROTHER BAKO

The beginning of the New Year 2019-2020 has not only changed the dates in the calendar or changed some names on a list of the staff. In the regional house of Cocody Danga, there is above all a community at the service of the Lasallian Region of Africa (RELAF) and as in any community, each member, each Brother who makes it up, is unique. The functions, they always remain but the Brothers come with their particularities and leave with their mysteries and our common history, all full of multi-coloured souvenirs.

the art of synthesis, to carry perfectly out your primary role as Regional Secretary.

Regional coordinator for communication, you were the main person in charge of the Newsletter, which you were presenting and embellishing with care and art. In our Regional Community, you also had many functions related to the world of young people: Regional Coordinator for Young Lasallians, member of the International Council of Young Lasallians, regional representative for the Young Brothers... All this made you an expert in remote relationships. And



Therefore, on the departure from our community of our good Brother Pierre Aymard BAKO I would like to address him and revive some good memories that he left us. It is difficult to say everything, as his personality is so rich and endearing. Let us start at the beginning.

Although the youngest member of our community, you have shown yourself to be intelligent knowing many languages. Liélé and Swahili of course, but also English and French, languages that no longer hold any secrets for you. In addition, other languages were waiting in your study agenda. This allowed you, with

it is no secret that this also led you to fly several times a year to Rome.

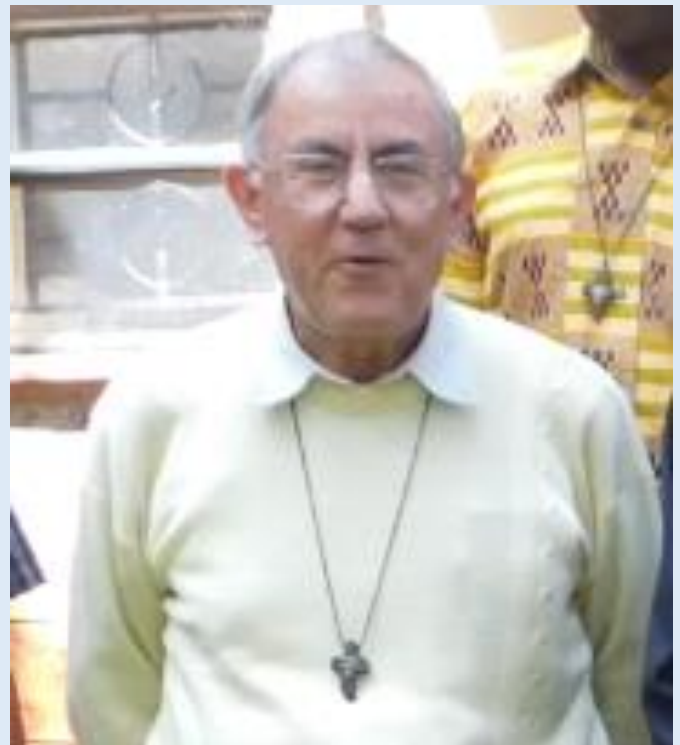
With you we were aware that we were constantly living with a musical artist. Considering your creativity in animating community prayers, we were not surprised to discover you as the author of several CDs where, with your beautiful melodious voice, you made love shine for your vocation and for the children. The young people of Burkina Faso, your native country, also benefited from this when you released your first album. I witnessed the ovation of people from Bobo Dioulasso. As a young person, you

loved sports and did not miss the daily basketball game with your friends for anything in the world. The bike left by Brother Anatole allowed you to have another circle of friends during your weekly outings. Above all, you were a good Brother and a friend in community, knowing how to bring joy to it and willing to engage yourself for any service. Moreover, as a trendy youngster, you brightened us up with your fun or informative messages from the Net. When Christmas was approaching, you were willing to promote the decoration of our common places. No need for a ladder to fix the garlands: a small chair was enough for you to reach the ceiling... You did not only have the art of friendship among the people of our species: our brave dog, whom you fed and cared for, was for you like the faithful companion of the young Tobit. No wonder he wants to show you his sympathy in his own way: by making your sneakers his own to the point of chewing them to the brim. There we clearly saw a lack of harmony in the communication between the two of you, because you responded with strong admonitions when it had a look of misunderstanding and rasping for no reason.... In any case, we, your community members, knew how to appreciate with gratitude the walks where, as a regular guide, you took us to good places and with a steady hand.

Thank you Brother BAKO for all you have been during your term with us, so short but so fruitful. We wish you good success with your students and the joy of serving the Lord in your new community of Nouna.

Your departure was also an opportunity to open up to other encounters, especially with the arrival of

Brother Etienne SAWADOGO whom we welcome into the community.



Brother Joan SALA

Regional Bursar

# ANTANANARIVO : PERPETUAL PROFESSION

**O**n Friday 27th September 2019, Brother Rado RANDRIAMANGA and Brother Olivier RAKOTONIRINA, following the example of the two disciples of Emmaus, convinced of God's call, responded to it. This deep conviction led them to make their perpetual vows in the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The extract from the second letter of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthian: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2Cor 12:9) was chosen by the elect of the day as "motto". To highlight this perpetual profession, that confirms and expresses the definitive "yes" to God's call to his two servants, a Mass was celebrated in the Chapel of Saint Jean Baptist De La Salle. It was presided over by His Excellency Bishop Pascal ANDRIANTSOAVINA, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Antananarivo. This Mass was animated by the voice of a special choir composed of the young Brothers, the young Guadeloupiana De La Salle Sisters and a representative of the Brother Rafiringa Choirs. The postulants also added salt to this celebration by performing different dances. It was beautiful and memorable; happy are those who saw and witnessed it; but happy are also those who contributed to the success of this ceremony, for Jesus is always in their hearts. After having called each professed by his own name, the very dear Brother Mamy, Visitor of the District of Antananarivo, local representative of the Brother Superior General of the Institute, read the letter addressed to the heroes of the day from the Brother Vicar General of the Congregation. This was followed by the homily of the president of this celebration. During his sermon, three points were highlighted: faith in God, humility and

self-control. Of his intervention, Bishop Pascal ANDRIANTSOAVINA will say, "Whatever is your social or religious rank, have confidence in God and be a person in whom we can trust"; "humility is the first condition to have access to heaven"; "self-control is the most indispensable quality in the life of consecrated persons". In short, trust in God who calls us, for He has promised to assist us.

In order to solemnize this perpetual profession which



engages the totally the professed Brothers in the Lasallian educational mission in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a dialogue between the Brother Visitor and the elect Brothers of the day was conducted. After that, they received the blessing of the Bishop and their respective families.

The moment of the vows had finally arrived, so it was with total frankness and humility that each of them



pronounced their vows in the company of the Brother Visitor and supported by the elders and young Brothers in the Congregation. Fraternal congratulations by priests, religious men and women and representatives of the families were permitted during the Mass, but after the Mass it was the turn for the guests and friends to address them their greetings, congratulations and encouragements.

For the speeches, the representatives of the two families of the young professed Brothers took the floor to greet, congratulate and encourage their sons



for the total gift of their lives in the service of children, especially the poorest. Then the professed Brothers took the floor, followed by the Dearest Brother Visitor. Finally, the Bishop addressed a word of encouragement to the professed before granting the solemn blessing.

After Mass, a lunch was prepared in the main hall so that religious and biological families could express

their immense joy towards God and the heroes of the day. During this ceremony, the Choirs (Chorale Frère Rafiringa, Antsa Faravohitra), the team from Studio La Salle and the young Brothers of the Christian Schools created a festive atmosphere. The dance with Ivorian music "ZOKO" performed by the Brothers also marked the day's event. Finally, the cake was shared before the "afindrafindrao", a traditional dance from Madagascar that solemnly opens the festival. And the party continued up to the afternoon with karaoke and dancing. This is how the celebration of the perpetual profession of the two Brothers of the Great Island took place. Let us carry them in our prayers so that they may always be faithful to the Lord whose steps they have promised to follow forever.

Brother Jean Délar LAVA

District of Antananarivo



# DELEGATION OF RWANDA: A TOTALLY FREE SCHOOL



**T**he School Saint Jean Baptist De La Salle of Kirenge is a private Catholic school, founded and directed by the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Rwanda since 2006. Its purpose is: to help children from poor families to access a quality education; to evangelize these children through school by insisting on the values of human and Christian solidarity.

The School St. Jean Baptist De La Salle of Kirenge is located in the Northern Province, in Rulindo District. It is built on the side of the Kisaro hill near the paved

road from Byumba to Musanze, a district known for the most visited gorilla's mountain in Rwanda.

The history of the school begins in Kirenge in 2006 when Brother Cyrille WIEME (Belgian) built a kindergarten class for poor children on the land given by one of a parent (Bernadette NYIRABAKINA). Later, he realized that a primary school was needed for these children to continue their studies.

The given land was not large enough to host the primary school buildings. Thus, he found it necessary to build 6 classrooms on the other side of the village (some 500 metres away) from the primary school. As he was old at this time, Brother Aniceto, who had just

arrived in the community of Kisaro, took over from him. Brother Aniceto is the one who took responsibility of managing this school project for the poor and made it grow to its current state. He was the first Principal of the school.



The school was officially inaugurated on 27 December 2007 with the status of a “Catholic private school” belonging to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Out of concern for the basic education of poor children, the Brothers were led to introduce the Common Core (the college) which was created on July 19, 2013, the day of official recognition by the Ministry of Education.

The school started as a Preschool Saint John-Baptist De la Salle Kirenge. Then it became Saint John-Baptist de La Salle Preschool and Primary School of Kirenge. Finally, it took the name Saint John-Baptist de la Salle School of Kirenge with its three sections: nursery, primary and secondary.

Since its creation, until today the school is actually free. It works thanks to the generosity of foreign donors. Students do not pay any school fees, but their

parents can contribute by working at the school. The question everyone is asking is: “how long will this situation last”? This question is a question of the future but also of faith. Let us not forget that “the spirit of this Institute is a spirit of faith” which commits the Brothers “to consider nothing but through the eyes of faith, to do nothing but in the sight of God, to attribute everything to God” (R6). Indeed, in faith the Brothers of Rwanda learn to discern with the signs of the times. This spirit of faith inspires them with an ardent zeal to serve those entrusted to them and to collaborate with those who share this mission.



The spirit of faith and zeal inspires our action but does not prevent us from thinking about the sustainability and other challenges of the work. Today, for example, through success and good academic results, we are confronted with many requests from parents who want to bring their children to that school. Should we close our ears so that we do not hear them or should we find a solution to their request without betraying





the vocation of the school? Fortunately, for the 2020 school year we have 6 new classrooms: one was built by SEMIL youth and 5 others were built by the Rwandan government. These classrooms could help to welcome other children from the vicinity of the school whose parents can afford the school fees and whom the school's donors are not ready to fully support.

The education of poor children is the greatest concern of the Brothers in Rwanda, but given the crisis that the public school system is facing and the drop in the quality of education, we must expect a new type of educational poverty to which we are called to find solutions. One of the solutions that is within the reach of our school is not to have a large number of children per class (at most 35 students). We avoid overcrowding in our classrooms, so that the teacher can take care of everyone. Because of that, total population of the students is not too high. That is why last school year we had 324 students, 122 of whom were girls. Next year we will increase the number of classes and the number of students up to 425.

Brother Juvenal NIYONZIMA BANGA

Delegation of Rwanda





# NEWS FROM THE SECTOR OF NIGERIA

**D**e La Salle Brothers of Nigeria had two major events within the last couple of months, September and October respectively. These events show that the Sector is moving forward with the help of God who is our soul strength.

The two events are:

- ❖ Inauguration of La Salle Primary School, Naka, Benue State, Nigeria.
- ❖ Perpetual Profession of Br. Stephen Inja FSC.

## INAUGURATION OF LA SALLE PRIMARY SCHOOL, NAKA.



The Sector Coordinator, Br. Moses Abunya, led the commissioning of La Salle Primary School.

The primary school was opened officially on the 23rd of September 2019. The inauguration was done in the

presence of all the Brothers in Naka community, Parents and guardians of our Pupils, as well as elders and Youths of Onmbasha village. Friends and well-wishers who had been eager to see the dreams of the Brothers come to actualization were in full attendance.



During the reception, the Sector coordinator, Br. Moses Abunya, gave a brief history about the Lasallian Vision and mission for the good people of Naka who had generously given land for the Lasallian mission to take root in their land. He thanked all our donors who helped financially for the completion of the structure. The school began with 18th loveable number of pupils for this academic year. Teachers and Brothers are already touching hearts and making La Salle Primary School a destination of envy for children within the Naka greater area. The Brothers are grateful to all who have participated in this miracle of divine providence for a vision that began with a zero budget to a hero status. Phase 2 of the school is envisioned, and donors are invited to help make that phase a reality too. No donation is too big or small.

## PERPETUAL PROFESSION OF BR. STEPHEN INJA

The perpetual profession of Br. Stephen Inja, was held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cathedral, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria on the 12th of October 2019.



The Holy Mass was presided over by His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr Wilfred Anagbe Chikpa, CMF, 13th Priests concelebrating, who came to witness and to celebrate with Br. Stephen Inja. Br Moses Abunya, Sector Coordinator for Nigeria, representing the provincial of Lwanga district of Africa received Br Stephen's vows in the name of the Superior General, Br Robert Schieler.



The Cathedral was full with families, colleagues, friends, and sympathizers who came from far or from near just to be part of the celebration.

On the 13th being the next day a thanksgiving Mass was held in Br Stephen's home Parish, at St Peter's

Catholic Mission Ujamaityu Agboughul, Benue State, Nigeria. Br Stephen is on his way to our new mission in Issah, Wa diocese, Ghana.



In summary, all the occasions were joyous and colourful.

We give God the glory and praise for the developments so far in the Sector of Nigeria, which serve as hope for the young ones who are also part of the Mission.



Brother Richard AGRUMON

Secretary of the



**T**he community of the scholasticate of Saint Miguel turned to the Lord to entrust its members, its projects and dreams to him through a community recollection that began on Saturday, September 21st with evening pray and ended on Sunday, September 22 with a Mass.

Already on Saturday, September 21, Brother Director Bertin, has indicated the theme and brought some ideas for reflection and meditation. This theme focused on cultural and charismatic diversity: source and richness for fraternal life in a community. Brother Marc FIGARO helped us in meditation by leading this recollection.

From the outset, Brother Marc underlined the conceptual foundations of the theme. He clarified the notions of diversity, culture, charism to instruct us afterwards on what cultural diversity and charismatic diversity are; realities that we live and experience every day in community. Coming from several countries, the life of the Brothers bears witness to a cultural diversity. The Brothers have different ways of thinking, feeling and acting with regard to their cultural particularities. According to the facilitator, this diversity is a source of wealth and a sign of the vitality of our community. Religious life is lived in a fraternal community, he said, and it is a good witness to see Brothers from different cultures forming a fraternal community. And all this is a richness for a more fulfilled life together.

Brother Marc FIGARO did not ignore the dangers associated with this cultural diversity either. In his presentation, he had the genius to ask a relevant question in order to bring the whole community to better understand the interest of such a recollection,

such cultural diversity: is it not that the cultural diversity is also a source of conflict between men or between Brothers who live together in a religious community? In community, we live together with our differences and Christ is the only reference, He is the one who is the bench mark. Brother Marc invited us to welcome each other without prejudice or biased ideas.

In addition to this cultural diversity, there is also the charismatic diversity that characterizes our community. As Brothers of the Christian Schools and Brothers of St Gabriel, we live the same charismatic reality but in different ways, the educational service of the poor. And this is a richness for the community. In our community, we feel the presence of each congregation through external signs such as robes and crosses. And all this contributes to the community life rich in experience.

According to the facilitator, our fraternity must integrate cultural and charismatic diversity, so that to eliminate interpersonal and cultural conflicts.

In reaffirming the strength and richness of the cultural and charismatic diversity of our community, the Brother wished with faith and confidence that we would accomplish greater and wonderful things. A call to strengthen and improve our fraternal relationships and may Jesus live in our hearts forever!

Brother Elisée

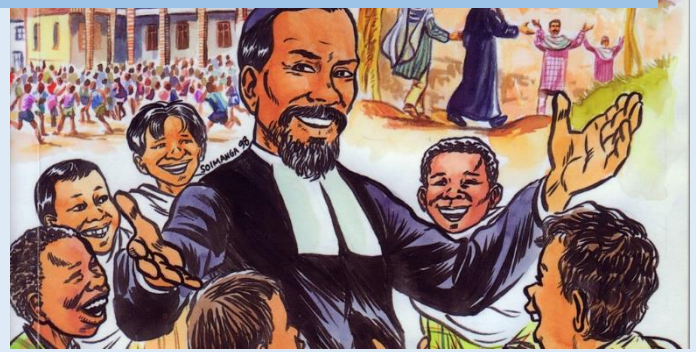


# ON THE PATH TO HOLINESS WITH BROTHERS JAMES MILLER ET RAPHAËL LOUIS RAFIRINGA.

With the celebrations of the tricentenary of the birth in heaven of John Baptist De La Salle, it is also relevant to connect with certain Lasallian icons who, like John Baptist De La Salle, remain a source of inspiration and enthusiasm to grow the Lasallian charism. Two of these icons are Brothers James Miller (beatified on December 7th 2019) and Raphaël Louis-Rafiringa.

Indeed, the lives of these two Brothers can support each Lasallian in his vocation by enlightening each one about what it is to be Lasallian. In this regard, through their examples and actions, Blessed Brothers James Miller and Raphaël Louis-Rafiringa realized John Baptist De La Salle's vision by serving others with "a heart filled with ardour to do well" (MD 30.3.1).

As we know, vocation, although it is God's call, also finds its inspiration in the examples of prominent people such as saints, martyrs or the blessed. The



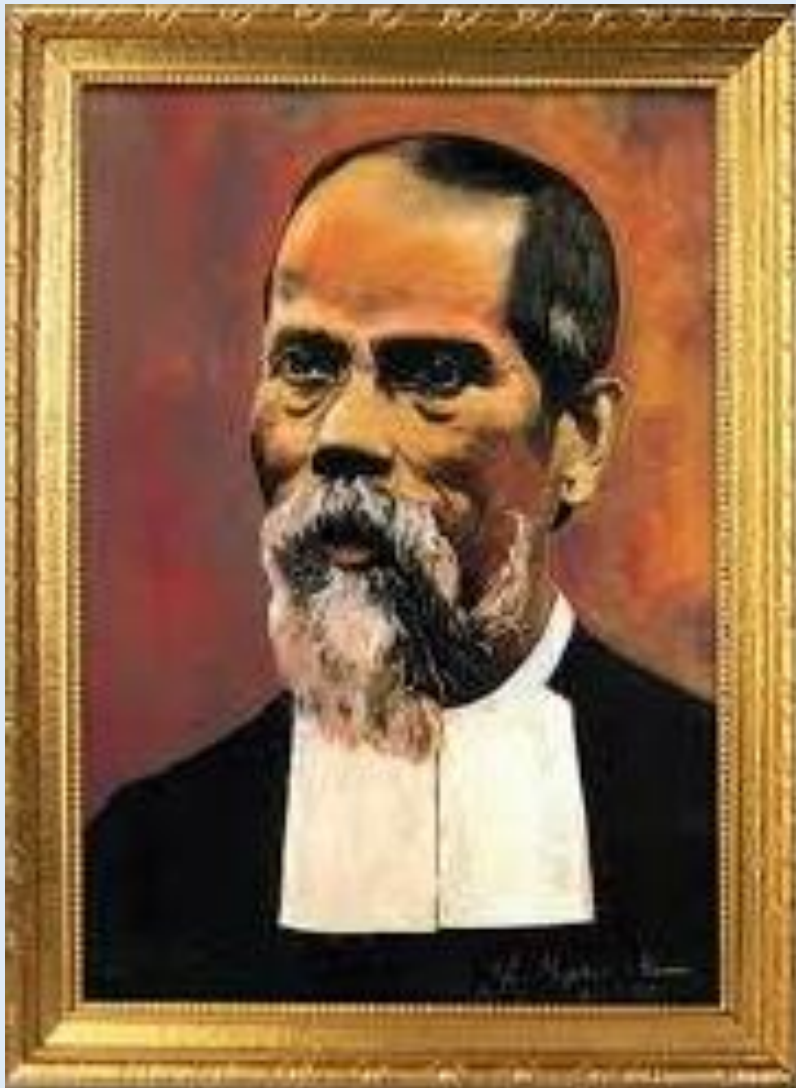
experiences of the Blessed Brothers Miller and Rafiringa are one of the fundamental assets for promoting vocations. During their lives, they have



manifested enormous spiritual and human values that can greatly inspire every Lasallian today. These two Brothers remain worthy references to pray and invoke their intercession for a fruitful mission. The works of Miller and Rafiringa as contemporaneous Brothers on the path to holiness, call upon every Lasallian to defend

the cause of young people, especially those who are vulnerable. "I find it very satisfying to work among the very poor here in Nicaragua," said Blessed James Miller. Our two Blessed Brothers made no distinction between doing and being. Everything they

have done seems to follow the example of the Virgin Mary, who lets God's will be done in her life, or to have as a reference "Thy will be done" in the prayer of the Our Father (Mt 6:10). Blessed James Miller and Raphael Rafiringa were inspired by the Gospel to put God in the middle of their activities and lives. They were faithful disciples of the Founder, Saint John Baptist De La Salle. "Your zeal must go so far in this that to achieve it, you are ready to give your very life, so dear to you are the children entrusted to you " (M 198:2). For this reason, Blessed Miller and Rafiringa are models of



holiness in the path of perfection to which his baptismal commitment invited every Christian. They remain faithful examples of Christ for those who have chosen consecrated life.

In conclusion, Blessed Miller and Rafiringa will always be remembered for their testimony to the Gospel message of freedom, peace, justice and truth. In this regard, their lives enlighten those who are committed to valuing and living the Lasallian principles of faith in the presence of God, service to the poor and advocacy for social justice, inclusive

community and respect for others, and quality education. Like Blessed Miller and Rafiringa, today's Lasallians continue to experience different kinds of hardships in their ministries. Serving the poor is more

than ever an urgent call in a world plagued by war, famine, immigration and natural disasters. Thanks to the courage and dedication of Blessed Miller and Rafiringa, Lasallians can overcome any temptation to be discouraged and find creative ways to innovate in their tasks. After all, every Lasallian needs a reference to support his vocation or commitment. This

requires contemplation of those who have charted the path to holiness through the witness of their lives. Saint John Baptist de La Salle, Blessed James Miller and Raphael Louis-Rafiringa are examples of this. May our Blessed Brothers James and Louis-Rafiringa continue to help us to become aware of the needs of our time.

Brother Guillaume YAME  
District of Gulf of Benin



## FORMATION SESSION « TUTTI FRATELLI 2019 »



From 8 September to 5 October 2019, the inter-congregational experience organized by the "All Brothers" group brought together 60 religious, coming from 35 countries and belonging to 14 different Congregations at the General House of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rome.

The common thread of this year's meetings was to reflect on the identity and mission of the religious brother, sharing ideas and experiences. During four weeks, five objectives were proposed:

- To create a new space of intercongregationality among the religious families participating in the "Tutti Fratelli" Group.
- To provide an opportunity for continuing formation which includes a focus on the service of leadership and animation.
- To provide participants with tools to make changes in the communities of Brothers in the face of

the new realities of Religious Life that we are living with boldness.

- To deepen the identity and mission of the religious Brother in relation to the animation of religious and pastoral communities.
- To strengthen the ties of the Group "Tutti Fratelli" (Rome) with religious Brothers from other latitudes who encourage the communion of religious Brothers in their place of origin.



During the first week, we focused on the identity and



mission of the religious brother, sharing experiences and points of view together. The second week, the theme of new spirituality for the religious brother, "a much more apostolic and contemplative spirituality, which manages to integrate life and the ecological dimension", have been discussed. The leadership in the community, the discernment and the accompaniment of the brothers were instead the food for thought of the third week, while the last cycle of events proposed to address the current challenges for the religious brother.

Within our experiences we saw that there are many challenges that open up for the religious Brothers: from helping children and people vulnerable to the vocational culture, from secularization to interculturality".



An increasingly connected and interconnected world thanks to the use of technological devices that allow us to reach every corner of the planet. The challenge for religious Brothers is therefore to be a point of reference within a reality that is so complex and constantly in being.

The meeting that was attended by six Brothers of the Christian schools was an experience of brotherhood and opportunity to reflect on the mission of the religious Brother.

The intention of the meeting between the different Congregations is to deepen their shared identity; sharing ideas that can help them grow in their vocational journey of each one. "The most important element is being Brothers; the awareness of being Brothers because Jesus made us such. This fraternity is what we want to communicate to the people around us. This fraternity is the message of the Gospel that we want to convey".

Five Superiors General, Br. John Kallarackal of the Brothers of St. Gabriel, Br. Ernesto Sánchez of the Marist Brothers of Schools, Br. Robert Schieler of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Br. Javier Hernando of the Brothers of the Holy Family and Br. René Stockman of the Brothers of Charity, has participated at the end of these four weeks full of contributions and testimonies.



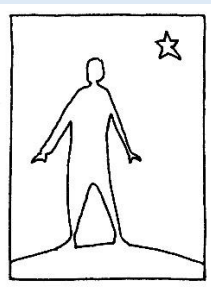
Brother Ferdinand BIZIYAREMYE

# THE THREE GATES OF WISDOM



A King's only son was a young, courageous, skilful and intelligent Prince. To perfect his learning of Life, he sent him to an Old Wise Man.

"Instruct me on the Path of Life," asked the Prince.



"My words will vanish like the traces of your footsteps in the sand," replied the Wise Man. However, I would like to give you some hints. On your way, you will find 3 doors. Read the precepts indicated on each of them. An irresistible need will push you to follow them. Do not try to turn away from it, for you would be condemned to relive repeatedly what you have fled. I can't tell you anymore. You must experience all this in your heart and in your



flesh. Go, now. Follow this road, straight ahead. »

The Wise Old Man disappeared and the Prince set out on the Path of Life.

He soon found himself facing a large gate where it was written:

"CHANGES THE WORLD"

"That was my intention," thought the Prince, "for if some things please me in this world, others do not suit me. "And he started his first fight. His ideal, his ardour and his vigour pushed him to confront the world, to undertake, to conquer, to shape reality according to his desire. There he found the pleasure and in the exhilaration of the conqueror, but not the appeasement of the heart. He managed to change

some things but many others resisted him. Many years passed.

One day, he met the Wise Old Man who asked him:

"What did you learn on the way? »

"I have learned," replied the Prince, "to discern what is in my power and what escapes me, what depends on me and what does not depend on me".

"That is good," said the Old Man. Use your strength to act on what is in your power. Forget what escapes your control. "And he disappeared.

Shortly afterwards, the Prince found himself facing a second gate. It reads as follows:

"CHANGES OTHERS"

"That was my intention," he thought. Others are source of pleasure, joy and satisfaction, but also of pain, bitterness and frustration. "And he rebelled against anything that might disturb him or displease him among his fellow men. He sought to change their character and remove their weaknesses. This was his second fight. Many years passed.



One day, while meditating on the usefulness of his attempts to change others, he met the Wise Old Man who asked him:

"What did you learn on the way? »

"I have learned," replied the Prince, "those others are not the cause or source of my joys and sorrows, my satisfactions and disappointments. They are only the revealing or the opportunity. It is in me that all these things take root. »

"You are right, said the Wise. Because they awaken in you, others reveal you to yourself. Be grateful to those who make you feel joy and pleasure. However, be it also towards those who bring suffering or frustration to you, for through them Life teaches you what you still have to learn and the path you still have to follow. "And the Old Man disappeared.

Shortly afterwards, the Prince arrived at a gate where these words appeared:

"CHANGE YOURSELF"

"If I am the cause of my problems myself, which is what I still have to do," he said to himself. And he started his third fight. He tried to change his character, to fight his imperfections, to remove his defects, to change everything he didn't like about himself, everything that didn't correspond to his ideal. After many years of this struggle, in which he had some success, but also failures and resistances, the Prince met the Wise Man who asked him:

"What did you learn on the way? »

"I have learned," replied the Prince, "that there are things in us that can be improved, others that resist us and that we cannot break. »

"That is good," said the Wise Man. »

"Yes," continued the Prince, "but I am getting tired of fighting against everything, against everyone, against myself. Will it never end? When will I find rest? I want to stop the fight, to give up, to renounce, to leave everything, to let go. »

"It is precisely your next apprenticeship," said the Wise Old Man. But before going any further, turn around and contemplate the path taken. "And he disappeared.

Looking back, the Prince saw the third gate in the distance and noticed that it had an inscription on its back side that said:

"ACCEPT YOURSELF. »

The Prince was surprised not to have seen this inscription when he first walked through the door in the other direction. "When you fight, you go blind," he thought." He also saw, lying on the ground, scattered around him, everything he had rejected and fought against in him: his defects, his shadows, his fears, his limits, all his old demons. He then learned to recognize them, to accept them, to love them. He learned to love himself without comparing, judging or blaming himself. He met the Wise Old Man who asked him:

"What did you learn on the way? »

"I have learned," replied the Prince, "that to hate or refuse a part of myself is to condemn myself to never being in agreement with myself. I have learned to accept myself, totally, unconditionally. »

"It is good, said the Old Man, it is the first Wisdom. Now you can go through the third gate again. »

As soon as he arrived on the other side, the Prince saw the back face of the second door in the distance and read it:

"ACCEPT OTHERS"

All around him, he recognized the people he had known in his life; those he had loved as well as those he had hated. The ones he had supported and the ones he had fought.

But to his great surprise, he was now unable to see their imperfections, their defects, what had once bothered him so much and what he had fought against.

He met again the Wise Old Man who asked him:

"What did you learn on the way? »

"I learned," replied the Prince, "that by being in agreement with myself, I no longer had anything to blame others for, nothing to fear from them. I have learned to accept and love others totally, unconditionally. »

"That is good," said the Wise Old Man, "That's the Second Wisdom. You can walk through the second gate again.

When he arrived on the other side, the Prince saw the back face of the first gate and read it:

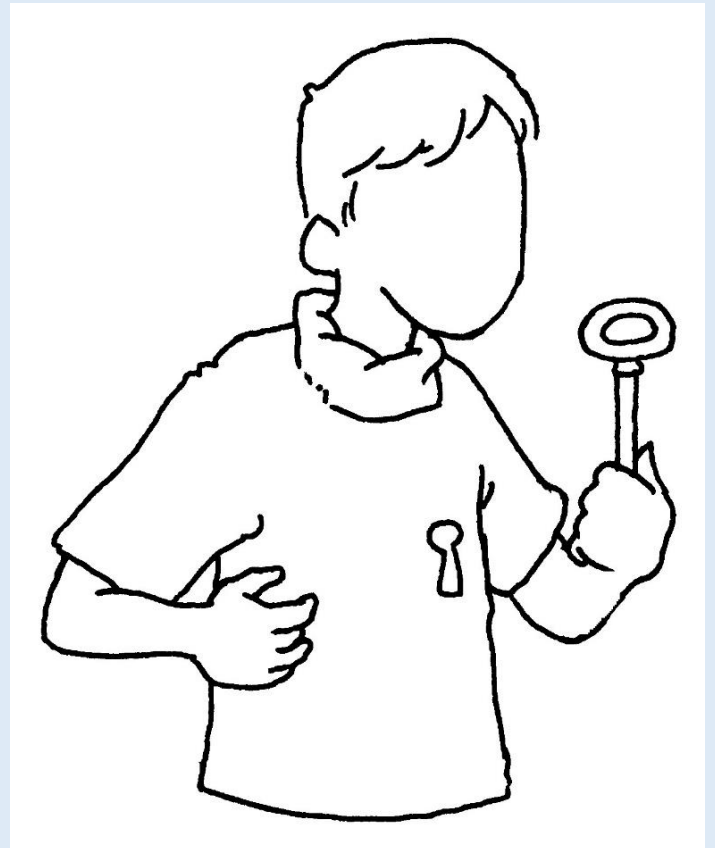
"ACCEPT THE WORLD"

Curious, he thought, that I did not see this inscription the first time. He looked around him and recognized the world that he had sought to conquer, transform and change. The brilliance and beauty of everything struck him. By their perfection. Yet it was the same world as before. Was it the world that had changed or his look? He met the Wise Old Man who asked him:

"What did you learn on the way? »

"I have learned," said the Prince, "that the world is the mirror of my soul. That my soul is not seeing the

world; it is seeing itself in the world. When it is cheerful, the world seems cheerful to her. When it is overwhelmed, the world seems sad to her. The world is neither sad nor cheerful. It is there; it exists; that is all. It was not the world that bothered me; it was my idea of it. I have learned to accept it without judgment, totally, unconditionally. »



"This is the Third Wisdom," said the Old Man. "You are now in agreement with yourself, with others and with the World. "A deep sense of peace, serenity and fullness invades the Prince. He got peace of mind in a deeper silence. "You are now ready to cross the last Threshold, says the Wise Old Man, that of the passage from the silence of fullness to the fullness of Silence. And the old man disappeared.

Brother Jean Hérault

District of Middle East



# MADAGASCAR : GOLDEN JUBILEE



**S**aturday, September 14th, 2019, feast of the Glorious Cross, which is linked to the consecration of the Basilica of Anastasia, is also the day on which Brothers Hilaire RAHARILALAO and Vincent RAZAFINDRAKOTO celebrated their 50 years of religious life in the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The jubilarians, to support all that will mark this golden jubilee celebration, has chosen "His love is for ever" Psalms 135.

Indeed, for 50 years of service to the Institute and the Lasallian Educational Mission, 50 years of perseverance in the faith for human and religious education, they have given themselves to follow Christ the Educator. They have been good Lasallian Masters and have inspired teaching collaborators, especially consecrated persons. In the course of time, we remembered the edifying speeches of Brother Hilaire RAHARILALAO. He was the first Doctor of the UCAO (Catholic University of West Africa), full member of the Malagasy Academy of Arts, Letters and Sciences, former Brother Visitor of the District of Antananarivo and former Vice-Postulator for the cause of canonization of Blessed Rafiringa. We have in mind his pedagogy of repetition, his different compositions of religious songs inserted in the

"Ankalazao ny Tompo". We had noticed the discretion and wisdom of Brother Vincent RAZAFINDRAKOTO. He has been in charge of so many communities and schools in several localities of the District, such as Saint John of Antalaha, Saint Joseph Boys of Tamatave, etc. Just a few memories among so many others to say how much they served in the District and therefore in the Institute. A Mass of thanksgiving, presided over by His Excellency Bishop Fidelis RAKOTONDRIANA, Bishop of Ambositra, marked this golden jubilee. During this Mass, the Jubilarians renewed their vows as religious Brothers of the Christian Schools. Then they received the medals of "OFFICER", "PRO DEO ET ECCLESIA" for having totally given themselves to the service of God and the Roman Catholic Church of Madagascar during 50 years: mission of teaching and education. At the end of the Mass, there was sufficient time for the usual speeches. First, the representative of the family of the elected representatives of the day took the floor then, Brother Mamy Olivier RABARONE, Visitor of the District of Antananarivo, followed by the representative of the Jubilarians and finally the Bishop who ended with the apostolic blessing. As usual, the "nofon-kena mitam-pihavanana", a fraternal agape marked this jubilee. The fraternal meal and the sharing of the cake further enhanced the event. Let us pray for them, that God will grant them health, the courage to continue the journey in the Lasallian Educational Mission and that we will gather around them for the DIAMOND Jubilee!

Brother Jean Délar LAVA

# GREEN LOOP PLAN

**C**reating protected nature areas may help prevent conflicts!

Most of us feel comfortable and at peace in nature. This is why the International La Salle Institute for Sustainability of the Environment (ILISE/Victorin), headquartered in Chicago, USA, wants to use nature's power to improve peace in the

expand coexistence across the local community involved.

For this reason, Dr. Montoya conducted an investigation with several researchers from Lasallian universities to analyze various conflicts around the world, and to study the positive impact of introducing Green Loops across the globe. Using the research



world. ILISE/Victorin believes that we can promote human justice and human rights through sustainable development education and projects.

Dr. Martin Montoya, FSC, Executive Director of International La Salle Institute for Sustainability of the Environment (ILISE/Victorin) created the “Green Loop” concept with the purpose of promoting hope for peace among young people through activities in natural areas as a neutral place, and henceforth

findings, Dr. Montoya designed the Green Loops plan.

This plan is a guide for actions that can help preserve and maintain natural areas and avoid radicalization. The aim is to improve the lives of young high-risk people that could be shattered by the current and future conflicts in a globalized world. For these reasons, according to this Green Loop plan, all institutions that have a nature area or are close to one,



have an important community function. These institutions can become the best allies to improve tolerance and peace between local young people and their environment.



The “Green Loop” plan is classifiable as an excellent and simple strategy to introduce social and environmental education in academic environments. The “Green Loop” plan entails five steps:

- By determining the natural area
- Identifying on the people involved and possible conflicts
- Consolidating the Education for Sustainable Development
- Establishing eco-friendly environmental activities
- Using communication, and being transparent.

Currently there are three Lasallian educational centers implementing this Green Loop plan. These centers are located in high conflict areas around the world:

Bahay Pag-asa Youth Center in The Philippines  
St. Paul Secondary School in Kenya,  
Socio-educational center of Fratelli-Rmeileh in Lebanon.

The coordinators of these educational centers strongly believe in the philosophy of the Green Loops plan to help them save nature and bring about armistice among settlers in places where local conflicts currently exist. In addition, Green Loop projects have the invaluable support of De La Salle Solidarietà Internazionale ONLUS in Rome, Italy, who is sponsoring this initiative to find grants support.



The establishment of a Green Loop in an unsettled area can contribute to a peaceful coexistence. Expanding the Green Loop plan in these natural areas around the world, can be beneficial in bringing people together with the same hope for peace, as well as to help set aside differences and avoid conflicts. If your educational center would like to implement the “Green Loop” plan, please feel free to reach out to De La Salle Solidarietà ONLUS: [www.lasallefoundation.org](http://www.lasallefoundation.org), [foundation@lasalle.org](mailto:foundation@lasalle.org)

Brother Gus du Midwest  
District des of U.S.

# NEWS FROM THE CONFERENCE OF THE BROTHER VISITORS, NOVEMBER 4<sup>th</sup> TO 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 IN NAIROBI



The conference of RELAF Brother Visitors was held on Monday, November 4, 2019 at the scholasticate in Nairobi. Brothers Amilcare BOCCUCCIA, Director of the Solidarity and Development Secretariat, Angel Diaz, Director of PROYDE, Joan SALA, Regional Treasurer and Etienne S. SAWADOGO, for translation, were also present. Here are some of the points discussed:

1. The reports of 2 regional formation sessions July-August 2019 were presented. The first one on association and mission brought together 21 Brothers, Sisters and Lay Delegates of AIMEL 2020. The second on creative fidelity, mission and vocation of a Brother, had with 17 Brothers participating and 3 Guadalupana de La Salle Sisters. These participants are expected to share what they have received in their Districts and Delegations.
2. Preparation of the International Assembly of Lasallian Educational Mission in Rome from May 3 to 16, 2020. The Conference was informed and reflected on the proposals made by the delegates of the Region to AIMEL. The three proposals, concerning identity, vitality and transformation, were developed during the formation session on association and mission in Abidjan.
3. Formation of Formators in March 2020 at the Institute Centre. In addition to the names already proposed by the Districts/Delegation, three other participants representing the common formation houses will be sent on behalf of the Region.
4. Regional formation 2020. Two regional formation sessions are planned from June 15 to July 3 in Abidjan. The first has as theme Saint John Baptist de La Salle, a mystic in action and the second, evangelization and the pastoral ministry of youth. The total number of participants will be 25. They are potential or already active Formators.



5. CLAF 2020 for future perpetual professed: it will take place from August 1 to 29, 2020 in the District of Central Africa. A total of ten participants are expected.
6. Evaluation of the strategic plan of the Region: a good number of proposals have been completed or are in the process of being completed. A round table discussion was held to assess the progress made in the pastoral ministry of vocations promotion in the various Districts and Delegation. At the regional level, Brother Sawadogo Etienne Sombéwendé has been appointed Director of the NGO CARLA. The Districts/Delegation were congratulated for sending articles for the Region's Newsletter. They were also encouraged to organize annual meetings of young Brothers.
7. Location of the Inter-African Novitiate of Our Lady of Graces. Due to lack of rooms in the current site, it was necessary to find a second site for the French-speaking Inter-African Novitiate. Steps are being taken to find a sustainable solution on a site of our own, where we could gradually relocate the current Novitiate.
8. Report of the Inter-African Novitiate of Our Lady of Graces. The novices are 19 for the first years and 18 for the second years. They are accompanied by 5 formators. The conference took note of the community project, the start of the new community year report and the budget sent by the Inter-African Novitiate of Our Lady of Graces
9. Report of the Scholasticate of St. Michael: There are a total of 26 scholastics, including 7 scholastics of the Brothers of St. Gabriel accompanied by three FSC formators and an elder of the Brothers of St. Gabriel. The start of the new community year report, the community project and budget were reviewed and approved by the conference.
10. CELAF report: CELAF has a total of 201 students. Under the leadership of the Director General, accompanied by the Executive Committee composed of three Brother Visitors, the reflection is continuing with a view to a better and broader offer of services.
11. The Brother Visitor of the Lwanga District of Africa gave some information about the English-speaking Novitiate and Scholasticate in Nairobi. There are 21 scholastics, 10 of whom speak French, accompanied by three formators, and 7 novices, accompanied by three formators.
12. Personnel prevision at the regional level: the establishment of a list of competences observatory, particularly for staff intended for formation centres, for the Region has begun. A letter will be sent to each Brother Visitor to update it as needed.
13. Issa, the school in Ghana, in the diocese of Wa, is built by the government. It has already opened its doors and has 93 students. The community has 3 Brothers.
14. La Salle Rumbek School in South Sudan started in March 2018. The work extends over 48 hectares of land. The construction of the fence has been fully completed since May 2019. Work is in progress to develop the facilities, build classrooms and the community house. The demand for places is growing. This

year, there were 186 applications for an available capacity of 45. The Brothers' community works in perfect collaboration with the Loreto Sisters. A request is addressed to the Brother Visitors for staffing for this work.

**15.** The Superior General has appointed a strategic committee to study the La Salle University of Africa project. Qualified academic staff must be prepared.

**16.** A meeting of the Bursars with the General Bursar is scheduled for April 14-15, 2020 in Abidjan.

**17.** Miscellaneous:

- International Assembly of Young Brothers and International Symposium of Young Lasallians planned for 2020: the representative of the Region for both is Brother Pierre BAKO.

- Mater Christi: formation of Novice and postulate masters is planned over 9 months for this pastoral year.

- Update of the RELAF Directory: it is requested to inform the Secretary of the Region of any changes.

The next conference will take place from 02 to 05 November 2020 in Abidjan.

# MERRY CHRISTMAS 2019

Fraternité des Frères Chrétiens (F.F.C.)  
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For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him « Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace » (Is 9, 5)



The Community of the Regional House  
Wishes you

**Merry Christmas and  
happy new year 2020!**

Brother Pierre OUATTARA

Brother Jean SALA COLL.

Brother Ferdinand BIZIVAR EMYE

Brother Étienne S. SAWADOGO

Live Jesus in our hearts ... For ever!



# BROTHER GENERAL COUNCILLOR'S CALENDAR

<b>November</b>	
November 4-6	Conference of the Brother Visitors in Nairobi
November 24 or 25	Abidjan-Rome
November 27-29	Board meeting Solidarity South Sudan. Rome
December 1 <sup>er</sup>	Tricentenary closure celebration
December 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Rome-Abidjan
<b>December</b>	
6-8	Community recollection
December 16-24	Démarches administratives au Burkina Faso
December 26 – 31	Chapter of the District of West Africa
<b>2020</b>	
	Assessment of the celebration of the tricentenary/AFEC Assembly in Abidjan
25 January	Abidjan-Rome
January 27 to March 9	17 <sup>th</sup> session of the General Council
10 March	Rome – Jacksonville/Florida
March 10 to 20	Visit in Gainesville
Saturday 21 March	Jacksonville-Boston
Saturday 21 March 11h 47	Arrival at Boston , Providence
Sunday 22 March	Narragansett ( FEC Community)
March 23-24	Ocean Tides, La Salle High School, Providence
March 25	Providence- Montreal
March 26-28	Montréal, Québec City
March 29	Montréal-Philadelphia
30 March	Postulancy, La Salle University
Tuesday 31 March	Philadelphie-Ocean-City, New Jersey
<b>April</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> to 3 April	End of the pastoral visit to RELAN
April 4 or 5	Boston – Abidjan
April 14 and 15	<b>Meeting of the bursars/general bursar</b>
May	
May 1 <sup>st</sup>	Abidjan- Rome
May 3 to 16	International Assembly (AIMEL)
9 May to 12 June	18 <sup>th</sup> Session of General Council
June 13 - 14	Rome- Abidjan