

RELAF NEWSLETTER N°39

Brothers of the Christian Schools



Lasallian Region of Africa



JUN 2021

SUMMARY

EDITORIAL	2
MANAGERIAL PRACTICES, THE BASIS OF A COMPANY'S PERFORMANCE	3
SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE: A MAN OF FEC AND A FEC	5
IDENTITY AND VITALITY FOR THE MISSION	8
INITIAL FORMATION IN AKASSATO	10
WOMEN'S MONTH IN THE DISTRICT OF CONGO KINSHASA	10
A SCHOOL SUSPENSION THAT HAS LAST AND CONTINUES IN BATA AND MALABO	11
SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE, 71 YEARS OF HOLINESS CELEBRATED AT LA SALLE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN BOHICON, BENIN	13
NYIRAGONGO VOLCANIC ERUPTION	15
HOW DO WE CELEBRATE EACH CHILD'S INDIVIDUALTY?	16

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

B.P 1927—Abidjan 08 Côte d'Ivoire

Chief editor: Br. Pierre OUATTARA

Assistant editors: Br Ferdinand BIZIYAREMYE & Br Joan SALA COLL

Infography and Translation: Br Etienne Sombéwendé SAWADOGO

To send articles: relaf@lasalle.org

WebSite: www.relaf.info

EDITORIAL

Dear friends, men and women educators, lasallian men and women.

In order to place the diversity of the articles you are going to read in this Newsletter in their proper context, allow me to describe briefly the educational fact in all its amplitude. We may miss this fact in our ordinary lives; however, each one of us is in a **permanent situation of self-education**. If only because of the various laws and rules of life in society, which make it a **daily duty for us**. Education is therefore in reality an activity common to the entire society taken as a whole. The effectiveness of this activity is related to the quality of our living together in society. The statesman¹, the politician², the opinion leader³, the professional educator⁴ and the religious person⁵, **educators by duty** as are the parents in the families, have a major responsibility in this situation of self-education of society. The main stake of this situation of self-education is **the permanent formation and self-care of a given people**.

In the framework thus proposed, **the educator by vocation** sees fraternity as a vocation common to all. Fraternity, even when lived on the small scale of a local educational community, is a ferment for the development of the human potential of a society. Of course, we are not talking about those particular passive fraternities, which do not achieve anything substantial, which sometimes-even degenerate into parasitism, tribalism or xenophobia, when they do not lead to genocide. Fraternity, proceeding from a **life of charity**, is a work with an inclusive vocation that we can carry out anywhere, at any time, in any country, in any culture, while remaining open to welcoming others.

Fraternity, as a political project and as an ideal of personal or collective life, inevitably leads to the question: how can we love our ones without betraying humanity in its universality? That question, put into political language, becomes “how to reconcile the rights of the citizen with human rights”? If all men are born free and equal, we must acquire and learn citizenship. Such a distinction, on the political level, poses a problem from the point of view of charity. We cannot satisfy charity with the existence of persons deprived of their rights, because of poverty, ignorance, circumstances of war, ecological crisis, or social discrimination of any kind. Our Lasallian mission draws **its vitality** precisely from the refusal of such discrimination.

Bro. Pierre Saïdou OUATTARA.

¹ Members of government, members of parliament, magistrate or public servant...

² Political leader or activist, member of the ruling or opposition party...

³ Men of culture, writers, journalist or social activists...

⁴ Primary, secondary or higher education teaching professionals.

⁵ Religious leaders, pastors, priests, religious laity

MANAGERIAL PRACTICES, THE BASIS OF A COMPANY'S PERFORMANCE

Throughout their career, managers deal with multiple problems linked in particular to technological and financial evolution, the evolution of practices, professions and activities. Overall, they must constantly adapt and adjust their



upon and considered indispensable by most professionals in a field of activity” (Elisabeth Gauthier, 2012). If we consider this definition, we can conclude that good managerial

management style to the realities of their professional environment. Our experience as company directors (school and industrial) over the last twenty-one years has enabled us to measure the extent of the responsibilities and tasks associated with the role of manager. In this 21st century, the century of very small businesses, SMEs and start-ups, becoming a well-informed company manager is not an easy task. Many problems are likely to affect the efficiency or performance of companies.

These problems may be the result of a lack of openness to managerial techniques, which can jeopardise the company's strategic objectives.

What is the relationship between managerial practices and company performance? Managerial practices are a set of responsibilities and means exercised over people in an organisation. In a professional environment, they designate as *“a set of ways of doing things and behaviours that are agreed*

practices are the result of professional habits intended and recorded in a reference document that managers draw on. We are placing our reflection within the framework of an incentive for company managers to train and become more open to managerial “good practices”. In

other words, it responds to a concern for awareness and exhortation of all managers to appropriate modern managerial methods through training.

THE RANGE OF MANAGERIAL PRACTICES

A certain number of skills are essential for effective management: listening, friendliness, leadership, responsibility, communication, planning, etc. We have to learn and work on them on a daily basis.

The classic school of management had already begun to reflect on the manager's skills, which should be revitalised by the contribution of new managerial techniques. A judicious adaptation of these techniques to the context of the 21st century will make it possible to indicate the innovative ways of

performance in an increasingly turbulent and complex environment. An effective manager should have both skills and predispositions. "The Daily Manager, the 10 key roles of the Executive" presents us with an instruction manual on how to reconcile personal identity and professional practice. According to Henry Mintzberg, "there are ten different roles for managers. By roles, we mean a set of organised behaviours." (MINTZBERG, Henry, Le manager au quotidien, les 10 rôles du cadre, 2005.)

It is through his symbolic function that the manager is a "leader", it is also through it that he is an "entrepreneur" or "decision-maker", or holder of any other role. Furthermore, we can no longer take interpersonal and working relationships for granted. This implies that being a leader or manager today is demanding and therefore requires both a good management education and a certain flexibility to change. In order to develop and contribute to the performance of their organisation, the manager of today and of tomorrow must be able to create value and positively integrate what is happening in their environment.

Here are some of the skills and practices that managers need to prepare for.

- Creating value

"The sustainability of an organisation depends on the ability of its leaders to create sufficient value, wealth or satisfaction for its important stakeholder groups... (CLARKSON, 1995). Clarkson makes the manager an orchestra leader and a creator of wealth both intrinsically and materially.

Moreover, the hierarchical subordination that subtly induces a distance between the "principal" and the employee does not make the task of the company

manager in the daily management of his teams any easier. Top management is therefore tested.

- Capacity to "get things done"

The ability to get things done is becoming a "fundamental aptitude of the managerial function" (Christophe Perilhou, October 2014). It requires the head of the company to adopt a leadership posture through which he or she encourages the goodwill of his or her employees. As the most important stakeholder in the company, he or she is able to mobilise the support of the other stakeholders and their participation in achieving the objectives.

- Change management

Change management involves the implementation of actions that allow an organisation to adapt to the evolution of its environment. Kurt Lewin has defined a three-stage model for successful change management in an organisation. The first stage, known as the "Unfreeze" stage, is an awareness that change is necessary and unavoidable. At this stage, resistance to change appears rapidly. The manager must be able to convince employees that there is no other way out than change.

The second "Change" stage consists of defining the new practices that the manager has been able to integrate when he/she becomes aware of the changes in his/her environment.

Finally, "Refreeze", once the changes have been adopted, it is important to consolidate them through new working methods, new values etc.

- Lean Management

Lean management is a management technique that was formalised by American researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Based

on the Toyota production system, it aims to improve the performance of the company and the success of each employee. Four fundamental principles characterise the Lean management:

- Understanding customer needs
- Reducing production time
- Analysis, understanding and resolution of problems
- Federating and raising the awareness of employees

In view of the above, it is undeniable that our companies, through the managers who embody them, must reinvent themselves in order to develop. The great theories of management developed by scholars such as Taylor, E. Deming, H. Fayol have defined the main principles for leading and planning work in an organisation.

The principles of classical management, which are still relevant in organisations, must be able to evolve to take account of changes in the professional environment. (Digitalisation of services and activities, evolution of activities, etc.).

If the Toyota Company is a model of implementation of good managerial practices through the Lean Management method, can we say the same for all companies?

FOKA Stéphane,

Company director and entrepreneurial coach

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE: A MAN OF FEC AND A FEC

0. Introduction

In the Lasallian context, the acronym "**FEC**" stands for Brothers of the Christian Schools (in French: **Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes**). Within the Universal Church, "**FEC**" can refer to the three theological virtues: Faith (**Foi**), Hope (**Espérance**) and Charity (**Charité**). The theological virtues have God as their object. They guide a human being in his relationship with the world and with God. God himself gives to human being, the strength to live them.

This article highlights the image of St. John Baptist de La Salle as a man full of the theological virtues (**FEC**): Faith, Hope and Charity, and as an **FEC**: the Founder of the religious Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

I. Saint John Baptist de La Salle: A man of FEC

St. John Baptist de La Salle, Founder of the **Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes (FEC** that is: Brothers of the Christian Schools), is a virtuous man. Looking back on his life, we will understand that De La Salle lived in an extraordinary way the three theological virtues: **Foi, Espérance, Charité (FEC** that is: Faith, Hope and Charity), as recommended by the Church. He was therefore a man of:

1. **Foi (Faith)**: It enables us to believe in the revealed truths. Being a man of **faith**, Saint John Baptist de La Salle recommended to his Brothers to keep the spirit of **faith**, to see everything with the

eyes of **faith** (cf. R. art. 6). This **faith**, which allows us to believe in the revealed truths is a total abandonment to God; hence, the term "Signum Fidei", which translates as "Sign of Faith". The spirit of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a spirit of **faith**, characterised by an ardent **zeal** (cf. Rule 7). Yes, **faith** gives life to the just (Ha

2:4; Rom 1:17; Heb 10:38). Through faith, great things become possible (Mt 17:20; 21:21; Lk 17:5-6). **Faith** is one of the **three Lasallian values** (**Faith**, Fraternity and Service). It is the foundation of the Brother's consecration; it



comes from the Word of God which he hears and meditates on every day (cf. R. art. 64; Rm 10:17). It must be accompanied by works, otherwise it is dead (Jas 2:17). De La Salle accompanied his **faith** by good works: to educate humanly and in Christianity, the uneducated children. Through his **faith**, De La Salle believed in the future of his work, notwithstanding the internal and external obstacles he encountered, from his family, from civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and even from his own confreres.

In spite of all the obstacles mentioned above, St. John Baptist de La Salle did not feel defeated, he hoped for a better tomorrow for these young people. He was patient and persevered in prayer (Romans 12:12). He

put into practice this recommendation of the Holy Scriptures: "we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who are without **hope**" (1 Thess 4:13).

2. **Espérance (Hope)**: It enables us to **hope** for beatitude (from the Latin *beatitudo*), happiness. (Mt 5:1-12). The Scriptures tell us that **Hope** does not deceive (Rom 5:5). Faced with the situations of abandonment and distress facing the children of artisans and the poor in France 17th century, De La Salle was moved with compassion, for they were like a flock without a Shepherd (Mt 9:36). Ignorance being a scourge leading to perdition (Hos 4:6), De La Salle's aim in combating it was to give **hope** to these young people, the future of society. He wanted to bring them to believe in a promising future, to be literate and to know God.

Through **faith** and **hope**, Saint John Baptist De La Salle believed in the conversion of these neglected children. He therefore had love for his neighbour and for God: this is **charity**.

3. **Charité (Charity)**: It is synonymous of **love**, **benevolence**. In his **charitable** spirit, De La Salle did not tire of doing good (Gal 6:9). He fed the young, the poor, with material food: bread, but also with spiritual food: The Word of God. He gave young

people a human and religious formation. Certainly, the one who is well nourished by educational knowledge, will undoubtedly be able to nourish himself with physical food, working with both hands, without being a burden to anyone (2 Thes 3:8).

As another example of his charity, De La Salle began by inviting his first disciples to the family table, much to the surprise of his family who, like Jesus', thought he had lost his mind (Mk 3:20-21). He spent a large part of his income buying and distributing bread to the poor in times of famine (1684-1685). Yes, **charity** is a duty to give what you have to those who are in need.



Charity is **love** for God and neighbour, a love that must be lived without hypocrisy (Romans 12:9). Certainly, no one can claim to love God whom he does not see, if he hates his brother whom he sees (1 Jn 4:20). In other words, love for one's neighbour is the reflection, the thermometer of love for God. At the end of our life, St John of the Cross tells us, we will be judged on **love (charity)**. When John Baptist de La Salle saw the children of the artisans and the poor of his time, left to their sad fate, he saw in them the very image of God. Yes, the Holy Scriptures remind us of this: "...as many as you did to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). Yes, **love (charity)** is above all else, it is the bond of perfection (1 Cor 13:1-8; Col 3:14). Of the three theological virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity, Charity will remain forever. (1 Cor 13:13).

II. St. John Baptist De La Salle: A FEC

In 1680, a man, a French Priest: John Baptist de La Salle was touched by the situation of abandonment and distress to which the children of the artisans and the poor of the French society of the 17th century were given. Through the school, God used De La Salle as an "instrument" to bring his people out of

ignorance and the calamitous situation to which they were subjected. He therefore created a Congregation composed entirely of lay religious, the **FEC** (Brothers of the Christian Schools):

1. **Frères (Brothers)**: A religious. He lives in community and shares the experience of God with his confreres. They are all brothers (in Italian: Fratelli Tutti), (Mt 23:8).

2. **Écoles (Schools)**: A privileged instrument of the Brothers' apostolic action. The Lasallian School is open to all, without any distinction of race, ethnicity, or language. It is a sacred environment where we form men and women in their hearts, souls and heads.

3. **Chrétiennes (Christian)**: This school is said to be Christian because its mission is to transmit to children Christian values: prayer, work, sharing, humility, honesty..., including Faith, Hope and Charity.

Conclusion

The virtuous John Baptist de La Salle, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, lived fully the three theological virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity. Let us stress that there are also the so-called **cardinal virtues** (cardinal: from the Latin cardo: hinge, pivot). There are four of them: **Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice**. Among the 12 virtues of a Good Teacher listed by Saint John Baptist de La Salle, we also find the cardinal virtues, including **Prudence and Temperance** (synonymous with **restraint**). May God, through the intercession of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, help us to be men and women of **Faith, Hope and Charity**. Yes, **Faith** gives life; **Hope** does not deceive; **Charity** brings us closer to God and to our brothers and sisters; it is above all. Amen.

Live Jesus in our hearts! Forever!

Brother Pie NSUKULA BAVINGIDI

Brother Visitor of Congo Kinshasa

IDENTITY AND VITALITY FOR THE MISSION

I knew a teacher whose students said that he was capable of writing a doctoral thesis after reading a "graffiti" on a wall in the street. My pretension does not go that far. I only wish to express my joy at having received the Institute's document entitled "Identity Criteria for the Vitality of Lasallian Educational Ministries".

I have read it several times with great interest. I came back to

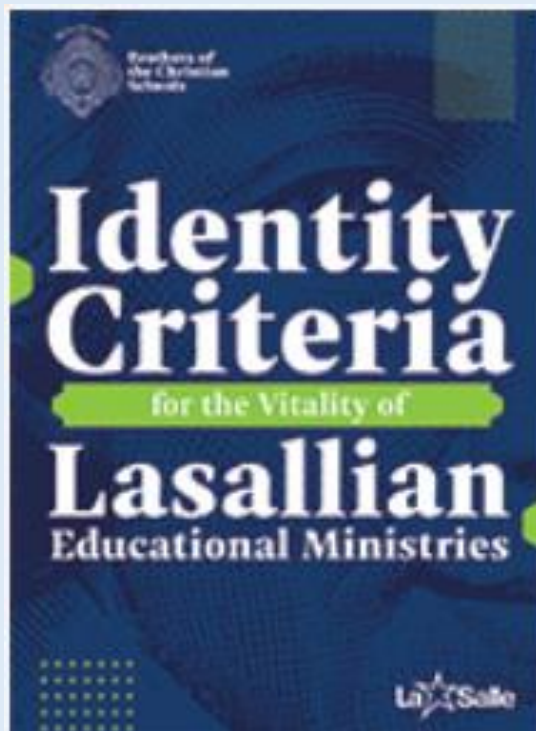
the title, which seems to me to be a concentrate of all the wisdom contained in the document. In addition, I said to myself, it is a good title for a good document.

Identity.

What can you do without identity? Whom can you communicate with if he/she does not know who you are? How can we educate if students and their parents, society, do not know who we are?

This is a well-known question for companies. The first thing you can find on a company's web page is the link where it says "Who are we? ".

It is true, it is important to make yourself known. However, more important than telling others about who we are, is to know how to tell ourselves, Lasallians, who we are, when we work in the mission. How can we go for a mission without knowing who we are? The same thing would happen to us as to an adolescent who, without a well-formed identity, goes adrift, succumbs to fear and sometimes bounces in to



aggression. This is what happens to us when we feel like crushed by the weight of the educational task.

I am very grateful for this document because it presents us with clarity, the criteria of our collective identity.

Identity is not static but rather dynamic, as Erik H. Erickson reminds us. Identity sprouts from an original seed (always myself); from a gift, that precedes us. We carry the DNA

of Jesus and De La Salle. However, it is also a reality that this DNA should develop and adapt itself according to time, circumstances and the needs we are facing.

Vitality.

The presence of the concept Vitality touches me in our educational documents. This concept seems to me to be extraordinarily enriching our cultural treasure.

In Europe, we were used to seeing the word "quality" used, in Latin America and Africa the word "excellence".

The title of the document could have been "Criteria of quality/excellence of Lasallian Educational Ministries". However, no! It is vitality. Because that is the objective, to generate, to accompany, to make possible the life of children and young people, through the vitality of the educators and of the educational action.

“Quality” is good. Nevertheless, we often understand it as a game, where we have to multiply the activities in the work, convinced that the more activities we multiply, better will be the quality of the work. The aim is to prepare students for more opportunities in the work place and in social relations.

“Excellence” is also good, but it leads to a competition, to rivalry to reach the first position.

Vitality is something deeper than, as deep as life itself. Vitality speaks to us of being sensitive to the life of those who make up the educational community and especially of children and young people. Physical life, but also psychological and spiritual life.

Vitality is also educational action that we should built on flexibility, adaptation, the confluence of ideas and efforts offered with full gratuity. Vitality means offering all our strength to transmit life. This is the motto of our next General Chapter: "Building new paths to transform lives".

On the Lasallian educational mission.

Yes, we are not at the beginning of time. We are continuing what others have begun. There have been people who have invented and we are trying to reinvent ourselves. Some have innovated: Jesus, De La Salle...; others discovered this innovation and passed it on to us through the testimony of their lives. We continue this project, sustained by the impetus that comes from the past, and propels us towards the future.

How can we go on mission every day if we do not know who we are and where we come from? How can we know who we are if our identity is not renewed in the mission? How can we be full of vitality if we do not feel the élan that launches us into the future?

The title represents an energetic circle that carries us from the beginning to the end and from the end to the beginning, and so on.

We should rediscover our identity so that our mission be truly Lasallian.

We need to revitalise our mission so that in it we rediscover each day who we are.

May we allow ourselves to be carried away by the impetus of the Holy Spirit, so that our lives may be a contribution to this very vitality.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to the production of this timely document.

F. Juan Pablo Martín.

Delegate of the Superior General for Rwanda

INITIAL FORMATION IN AKASSATO



Some months ago, the communities of the Guadalupana Sisters of De La Salle and the Brothers of the Christian Schools have welcomed each two postulants. They are postulants Chantal SAWADOGO and Pascaline SAWADOGO from Burkina Faso, Anicet from SABA and Innocent DJATO from Togo. They are having a wonderful experience among the Sisters, the Brothers, the teaching staff and the students. They are receiving the different formations linked to their stage, i.e. the postulancy. The Brothers and Sisters are giving these formations. The postulants also undergo a pedagogical immersion experience at La Salle Catholic Primary School in Akassato. Summing up his experience, one of the postulants said, “My contact with the primary school children made me discover that they are friendly. If you love them, they stay close to you and don't want to leave you”. Some of the postulants are also providing Catechism classes. There is a missionary and apostolic joy in each of these young people in formation. Let us pray for them and the other young people in formation.

Brother Guillaume YAME,
Community of Akassato (Benin).

WOMEN'S MONTH IN THE DISTRICT OF CONGO KINSHASA

On the closing of the month of the Women, the members of AMEL (the Association of Lasallian Mothers Educators) from the District of Congo Kinshasa met on Saturday 27 March 2021 around the Brother Visitor Pie NSUKULA, Legal Representative. During this meeting, we discussed several themes, including

- Feminine leadership in the Lasallian milieu" developed by the President;
- Mama Educator, rise up and participate in the emergence of the Congolese nation" developed by the Brother Visitor.



From this theme, four points follow:

- The presentation of the origin of the celebration of 8 March;
- The origin of women according to humanity;
- The place of women in the home and in the society;
- The place of women in the Lasallian educational environment.

Following the various interventions, the assembly raised questions and concerns, which received satisfactory answers. At the end of the conference, the mothers welcomed and expressed a keen interest in the new work undertaken by the District: The LaSalle University in Congo Kinshasa. They asked for leaflets to popularise it. After a photo session, a community meal with the guests followed.

Mrs Christiane Mabika
President of the Association of Lasallian Mothers Educators (AMEL).

A SCHOOL SUSPENSION THAT HAS LAST AND CONTINUES IN BATA AND MALABO

A point of view on the issue...

In our previous article, we presented a set of verbatim. That was a result of a survey carried out with four interviewees from our La Salle de Lea College on the issue of the suspension of face-to-face classes in the cities of Bata and Malabo.

In this article, we aim to deconstruct the previous work. I mean, to leave the transcript and the analyses made (but too long to present them to you here) to share with you our observation of the school news in our mission country.

As a reminder, following the ministerial order N° 02/2021 of 26 February 2021, all the educational centres and schools in Bata and Malabo stopped their activities. We welcomed and lived this interruption, while the football fields and other sports halls, the markets and the houses transformed into bars continued to attract and gather colonies of people. Most of those people being without protective masks. One might think there is no risk of contamination in these places! Below is a photo taken on Saturday 29 May 2021 at the Mondoasi market: how ironic! In this market, located in the city centre of Bata, there is no risk of contamination!

After long weeks of waiting, some desperate parents had no choice but to send their children to other schools in the small cities of the country such as Mongomo, Ebebeying, Ebinayong, etc. Some parents, more or less well off, opted to send their children to neighbouring countries such as Cameroon, Gabon or Spain. This poor generation of sacrificed and displaced young people will certainly have to do a lot of effort to readapt to these new schools environment. They will have to adapt to a

new rhythm and way of teaching, to new faces of teachers and classmates. The most difficult situation will be to get used to a new foreign educational system, especially in the countries where they will have to try to master the French language. Will they manage? To each his own!

One of the challenges for Guinean students in the final year of secondary school is the “selectividades guineana y Española” exams. These are probationary tests to enter universities in Equatorial Guinea or Spain. How does the Government or the ministry in charge of education think it can achieve a certain



justice or equity in the content of these exams and selection criteria?

On the evening of 22 May, the national television announced that schools in Malabo would resume classes on Monday 23 May: this is indeed the case. In recent weeks, there has also been an exodus of students to this city. What about the resumption of school in Bata? At the time of writing this article, the decision-making authority in Bata had not yet said anything on the subject. “When are you resuming?” This is a legitimate question to us from some parents, as if the Brothers were working at the Ministry of Education. We continue to wait, to hope that the resumption day is near. Even with an extension of the

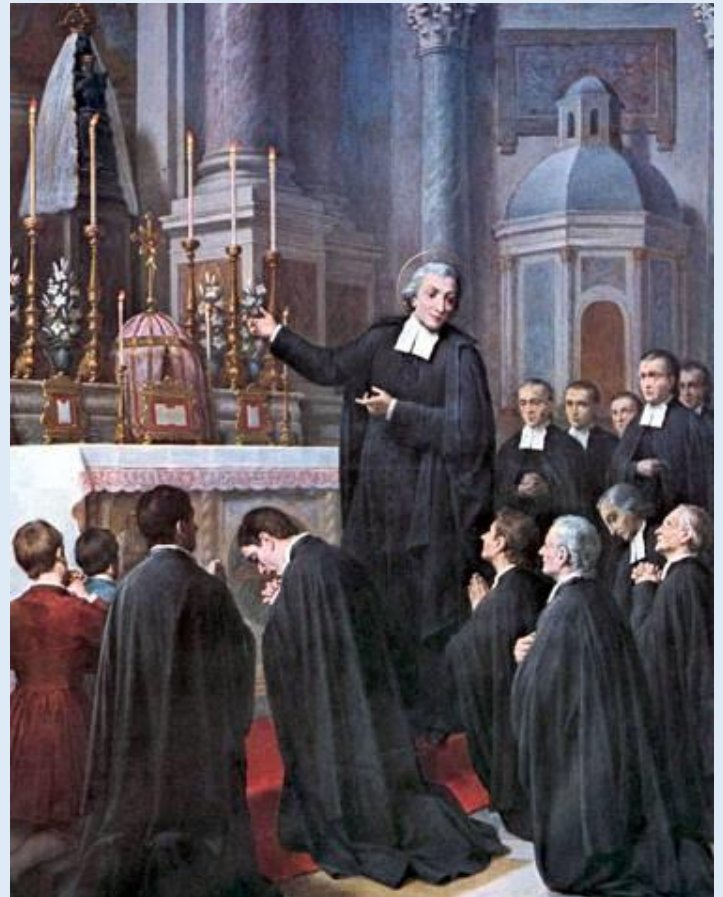
school year, as it would seem to be the case, some will be better off than others will. We should console ourselves with the idea that education, or even life, has always been unfair: there are always those who are better off, those who are worse off and those excluded.

As far as we are concerned in that challenge during this time of suspension of classes, at the La Salle School of Léa, what have we done? With the accompaniment and guidance offered to us by our dear Brother Director, we tried as much as possible to make the pupils work, at least those who remained in the city. Once a week, i.e. Tuesdays for those in the High School level and Wednesdays for those in the Middle School level, they come to collect subjects and homework carefully prepared by their teachers. They have to work on them at home and submit them the following week.

Unfortunately, some pupils, especially the most vulnerable ones, do not live with their parents or accompanying adults. In addition to the living environment, which is often not conducive to learning, the latter exploit the children by imposing domestic or commercial tasks on them. As a result, we realise that some are meticulously taking advantage on the distance learning, by doing seriously their homework. Alongside them, we have some who take pleasure in copy pasting here and there data from books, internet, or from the work of their fellow students in the neighbourhood. They just take the ideas, without reformulating them in their own terms. The most vulnerable or simply the lazy ones choose to hand in the work without processing it.

What then should we do? We should continue keeping the faith and hope that divine grace will act. We are hoping that our students and teachers will know how to do their best in the next meeting for giving and receiving at the classes' resumption.

May Saint John Baptist De La Salle, Patron of all Christian educators, intercede for us!



Brother Parfait Francis FADANKA,
Mission Bata-Léa, DAC.

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE, 71 YEARS OF HOLINESS CELEBRATED AT LA SALLE INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN BOHICON, BENIN

May 15, 1950 - May 15, 2021, it has been 71 years since the Church proclaimed Saint John Baptist De La Salle, the Patron Saint of Christian Educators. Like other Lasallian schools and institutes in more than 80 countries around the world, La Salle International Catholic School in Bohicon,



Benin, has celebrated the Saint of the Day.

Started on May 12, 2021, the activities marking the 71st anniversary of the said proclamation of Saint John Baptist De La Salle continued on May 14. It ended on May 15 with several religious, educational, and recreational activities on the menu.

Who is Saint Jean Baptiste De La Salle? What are the actions that earned him this honour? In order to answer these questions, a video followed by discussions was the first highlight of the first day. In fact, on Wednesday 12 May, learners and teachers, after having proudly performed the national and Lasallian anthem at the foot of the flagpole in the presence of the Brother Director. Then followed for about forty minutes of video projection in the meeting room, on the life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. Brother Paco FALLADO, as a good communicator

and teacher, was able to satisfy each of the participants through comments, questions and answers. "The Brothers, on the one hand, and the teachers-collaborators that we are, on the other hand, are only perpetuating the religious and human work that God began so well in the modest person of Saint John Baptist De La Salle. Our Patron Saint had no other eye

than for a quality education accessible to all children, rich and poor alike and a good formation of teachers", will Brother Paco say. In addition, the eliminatory phase of the budding Geniuses game, which focused as much on the life of the Saint as on course questions in French and English, was the second activity that ended the first day (half day) of the festivities. To commemorate a Saint is not only to take part in the mass said in his honour but also and above all to implore his intercession with God for us the living. Indeed, the day of 14 May, the second day of the festivities, began with a mass of thanksgiving celebrated by Father Aristide VISSIENON, parish priest of Our Lady of the Annunciation of LISSEZOUN. From his homily, we retain that the wish of Saint Jean-Baptiste De La Salle was always to have educators with Christian charisms. He wanted experienced educators in their task and who give a

good religious and human education to the innocent souls that are the children. Are we not call to imitate them in order to have access to the Kingdom of Heaven? Cf. Matthew 18,3.

Religious and especially human education does not exclude the cultural domain. So, several cultural activities marked the second day. However, as we use to say, a hungry stomach has no ears. Therefore, the learners first revived themselves in the canteen and then attended various performances such as the ballet presented by the troupe "Les Anges Lasalliens". This was as an appetizer. As for the resistance, various choreographies performed by the group "The Lasallian Star" followed by several presentations of tales, poetry, songs and sketches in French and English. For dessert, we had a breathtaking interpretation session. Let us not that all these activities were organised by all the teachers under the supervision and effective presence of the Brother Director.

For the children acquire skills and knowledge are not only through didactic documents but also through various games. Indeed, the children develop their capacity for reflection through various games, if these aim to nourish their sense of reflection and positive curiosity. On the afternoon of Friday 14 May, various games were set aside. We had the final of the budding Geniuses (at the end of which the teams "La Gazelle" and "Les Combattants" from primary school year 3 and year 4 respectively were the winners). Other games were the sack race, the race between the tyres, the game of hoops and scissors and finally the colouring and dancing competition, all of which gave the right to small

motivational and consolation gifts. Everyone had something to celebrate.

What marked the May 15, the last day of the festivities was the meditation and an agape between the Brothers of the Lasallian community of Bohicon and the teachers of La Salle International Catholic School of Bohicon.

Brother Sévérin N. TANWOUNE and Brother Gilles M. DENAKPO led the introductory prayer. Then, we had a brief exhortation by Brother Paco FALLADO who did not fail to remind the



teachers to give to the children an education according to the Spirit of Christ. After the meditation, in a festive joy, we walked towards the school canteen where delicious meals were impatiently waiting. Thus, in the image of the first community of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Brothers and collaborators together conjugated the verb "to enjoy" in the Love of Christ. "Taste and see how good the Lord is" Psalm 33. Yes, how good it is for brothers to be together, united by the Love and Spirit of God. All united around a Saint and a Star, it was three days of intense moments of joy given to the children and teachers of ICS Bohicon. We shall meet again next year for more jubilees.

Live Jesus in our hearts! Forever!

Maxim OROUKOTAN

NYIRAGONGO VOLCANIC ERUPTION

Fraternity in difficult times makes great things possible. This is what happened to the Nyundo Art School (a Lasallian school of the Delegation of Rwanda). After the volcanic eruption of Nyiragongo followed by great earthquakes, this school found itself living this Gospel extract: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took me in" Mt 25, 35.



Nyiragongo is the most active volcano in the Great Lakes region of Africa and the most dangerous in Africa. It is located in the

east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, not far from the city of Goma, capital of the province of North Kivu and bordering the city of Gisenyi in Rwanda. On the night of Saturday 22 May to Sunday 23 May 2021, the volcano erupted. The lava engulfed several villages in eastern Congo. Fortunately, the lava stopped at the gateway to the city of Goma.

Two days later, the volcano calmed down, but there is great fear of another explosion. A series of earthquakes followed this eruption and the population on both sides, Goma in Congo and Gisenyi in Rwanda, experienced this ordeal for a whole week. Following these violent tremors, we witnessed a large migration of the population of the city of Goma who took refuge in the city of Gisenyi and its

surroundings. The town of Gisenyi suffered the consequences of these tremors. We had a long crack in the town of Gisenyi, dividing it into two parts. The material damage is considerable. More than 1200 houses damaged and 467 houses destroyed according to information from the local authorities, roads destroyed, the town's Mosque damaged...

Because of this panic, some activities in the town of Gisenyi in



Rwanda have temporarily stopped. In particular, the town's market, commercial shops, banks and schools in the town have closed. To cope with this situation, the authorities of Rubavu District decided to evacuate the schools in the city of Gisenyi to other schools not damaged by the earthquakes. Thus, on Wednesday 26 May 2021, our Arts School in Nyundo, located 8 km from the town of Gisenyi, welcomed 430 students from the Gisenyi Science School (GSS). Despite the accommodation capacity of the Nyundo Art School, which is 270 students, the school had to



accommodate this big number of students. Given the tragic situation due to the floods that the school had suffered, we had no choice but to offer some of its buildings, some classrooms and one of the workshops

transformed into dormitories for these poor young people. The big problem was to find a dining room for them. Having no other solution, they take their meals in the open air.



Thank God, despite this situation, the school affected by the eruption did not suffer any loss of life. As for the Art School, classes continued. We should remember that this

art school is the one that has suffered from flood on two occasions. Despite the limited means, with goodwill and the spirit of fraternity, great things are possible. Help us to implore God's mercy to save us from this plague. Long live Jesus in our hearts, forever!

Brother Jean René HABINEZA
Delegation of Rwanda

HOW DO WE CELEBRATE EACH CHILD'S INDIVIDUALITY?

“Know your students individually and be able to understand them.” John Baptist De La Salle.

Each child is unique – a carefully crafted gift from God created in His own image- one of a kind! In the busyness of the day to day, it can be difficult to remember to celebrate the individuality of every child entrusted to our care. We Lasallians have been gifted with a treasure, our teaching vocation. How do we use our gift to show appreciation and nurture our students to ensure that they become the best they can be?

As we follow in the footsteps of De La Salle and accompany our students on their Lasallian journey let us take time to really get to know them, to spend time with them and find out about their interests; engage in conversations that create opportunities for sharing of thoughts, likes, dislikes, feelings, opinions; look into their eyes, put away all distractions and let them know how important they are; use affirming language to underline how much we value their individuality.

By showing them trust and respect we empower them by allowing them to take the lead, to make decisions. When is the last time we said YES to an idea that was not ours? Individuality is encouraged by creating opportunities for change, so let us be non-judgmental when new perspectives are shared - maybe the solution may not be the one we would choose but who is to say that the adults have all the right answers!

Remember the words of De La Salle:

“Be warm-hearted to everyone, speaking to others in a gentle and respectful way.”

Mary HYAM

De La Salle Holy Cross College, Johannesburg