

RELAF NEWSLETTER N°43

Brothers of the Christian Schools



Lasallian Region of Africa



Jun 2022

SUMMARY

EDITORIAL	2
CHRISTIANS, WE ARE NOT ALONE	4
LASALLIAN DAYS: LA SALLE, OUR TREASURE!	6
IN SEARCH OF THE COMMON	7
CELEBRATING DE LA SALE IN RWANDA AFTER COVID-19	9
MADAGASCAR: LASALLIAN WEEK	11
A COLOURFUL PASTORAL YEAR	12
WHAT NEW PATHS TO TRANSFORM LIVES?	14
RWANDA: A SCHOOL IN THE CAPITAL CITY	17
THE DE LA SALE CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN AKASSATO CELEBRATES ITS PEWTER JUBILEE	18
TRIBUTE TO BROTHER PEDRO MARIA ASTIGARRAGA	20
LIST OF THE 21 NEWLY PROFESSED BROTHERS OF RELAF AND RELEM	23
BROTHER GENERAL COUNCILLOR'S CALENDAR	25

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. Anatole DIRETENADJI

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

Sentinels of hope!

Dear Brothers and Lasallians, this is my last editorial as General Councillor. My term as General Councillor came to an end with the 46th General Chapter, celebrated in Rome from 1 to 22 May 2022. Brother Anatole Diretenadji, the new General Councillor, and I have agreed to meet again in Abidjan for the handover of responsibilities from 24 August. The transition between the new and the former government of the Institute is planned from 2 to 9 October in Rome.



My heart is full of gratitude to you who have contributed to the regular release of the Newsletter, our space for sharing and exchange. Each release allows us to lift a corner of the veil on a little part of our "common" evoked by Brother SOMÉ Marc. By revealing the "common" that runs through our different activities and identities, the release of the Newsletter nourishes our sense of belonging, the feeling that we are not alone, as explained by Mr FOKA Stéphane. In the eight years spent as member of the General Council, I feel that I have received much more than I have given. The fulfillment of the tasks related to my mandate has concretely produced a dilatation of my heart to the regional, ecclesial and global dimensions of our educational mission.

We are locally and globally "La Salle"; that is our pride. But if "La Salle" represents our common treasure, we are called not to hoard it for selfish enjoyment, but to make it bear fruit. Making such a treasure bear fruit requires creativity. The ultimate goal of all creativity in Lasallian education has always been to transform lives. But whose lives can we transform if we do not begin by transforming our own, personally and communally? Only the conversion of hearts can open our eyes to new paths for the transformation of lives. This conversion commits us first to **revisit** our hearts. What spirit of faith is at work there?

We live in a time when a faith that has not undergone any personal conversion ends up in indifference and tepidness among the educated and in superstition among the simple. In the thinking of John Baptist de La Salle, we are witnesses of Jesus Christ in the world of education¹. If we are indeed his disciples, then what is important is not the glory of shining in the outer light of popularity but being illuminated by the inner light of a personal knowledge of Jesus. For us, the word "God" is not an empty container to be filled at will. God himself has taken care to give content to his name. The Word became flesh! Jesus removes any pretext for human

¹ Cf. The Declaration on the Lasallian Educational Mission; Rome 2020. P. 64

arrogance to decide, on its own, what God is! While we wait to pass one day with the body, let us learn to pass with the heart to Him who does not pass².

The transformation of lives is verified when there is an effective transformation of hearts in the sense of a conversion to the least, to the poorest. We are preferentially at the service of souls in need of light and truth. *“Dear spiritual sons of John Baptist de La Salle, I urge you to deepen and imitate his passion for the least and the excluded. In the wake of his apostolic witness, be protagonists of a “culture of resurrection”, especially in those existential contexts where the culture of death prevails. Do not tire of seeking out those who are in the modern “tombs” of disarray, degradation, malaise and poverty, in order to offer them the hope of a new life³”*. Let us ask our Mother, the Virgin Mary, for the grace to stand with her at the foot of the various crosses of our world as sentinels of hope.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Brother Pierre Ouattara.

² Cardinal Cantalamessa, 15 April 2022; Good Friday: the dialogue of Jesus and Pilate.

³ Pope Francis, at the audience on the occasion of the tricentenary of the Eternal Passover of John Baptist de La Salle

CHRISTIANS, WE ARE NOT ALONE

"Christians, we are not alone", seen through the eyes of faith as a theological virtue, is a truism. Indeed, we know that the word "Christian" comes from the word "Christ" which is the translation of the Greek Khristos. The word Khristos itself is translating the Hebrew word Massiah



designating the "Messiah". That is, the "Anointed of the Lord". The one consecrated by a divine anointing with holy oil. Clearly, the Anointed receives his anointing from someone else. He is not alone.

On the other hand, a Christian is someone who has faith in Jesus Christ the 'Anointed One' and who has received baptism in the name of the "Father", and of the "Son" and of the "Holy Spirit". So logically, the baptized is not alone. It was at Antioch that the followers of Jesus were first given the name of Christians. This suggests that they claimed to be people invested by the 'Father' and the 'Holy Spirit' in Jesus Christ. They were not alone.

Most trends of Christianity (Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant) confess a single one God in three hypostasis: 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit', equal and participating in one essence (consubstantiality or homoousia). These trends of Christianity are not isolated.

These considerations help from time to time to step back and consider the long-term effects.

Know that the Kingdom of God is not only beyond our strength. It is even beyond our vision as it invests us in following Christ, sent by the one God, "Father", "Son" and "Holy Spirit".

Our efforts as Lasallian Christians are only a small part (area or segment of education)

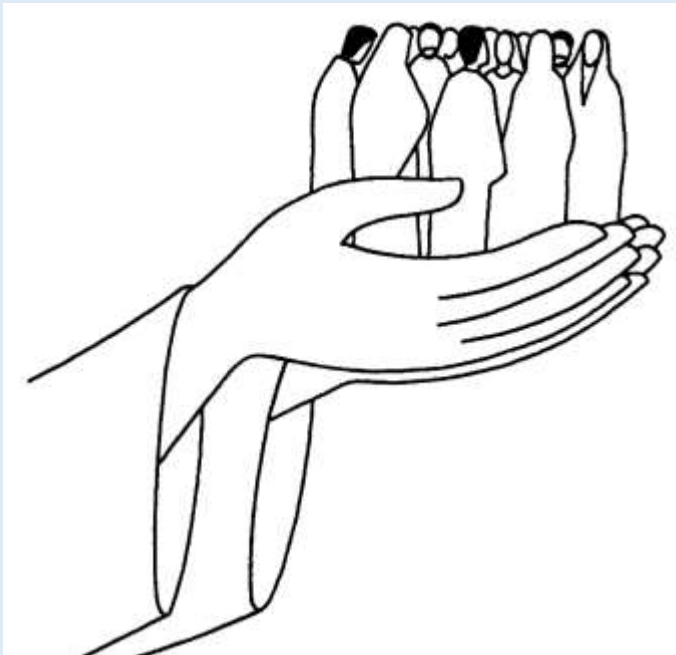
of the magnificent enterprise of God's work. Nothing we do is complete or perfect; it is another way of saying that the Kingdom of God is always growing beyond us and our strength set alone. We are not alone.

In other words, this is what it is:

We are planting seeds that will one-day grow. We water seeds that somebody else has planted have, knowing that they hold the promise of the future. We lay the foundations that will need to grow further. We provide the seeds that produce effects far beyond our capacity, our expectations.

We cannot do everything on our own, and noticing this gives us a sense of liberation, to be able to do something and do it well.

It may be incomplete, with many possible slip-ups, but it will be a beginning, a step along the road to the Kingdom, an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest. Twelve (12) Apostles yesterday (Christians of the first hours), a multitude of bishops and Christians today despite persecutions and



We are workers, not the master builder. We are ministers, not the messiah. We are prophets of a future, of a work that does not belong to us. "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). In doing so, we will be able to say at our last day "Father! Into your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46) or "In all things I worship God's will for me. Christians, we are truly not alone!

temptations. We can thus appreciate the significance of «But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26) And then: " Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age". (Matthew 28:19-20). We are not alone.

We may never see the result of our actions, of our activities. However, there is a difference between the master builder (God) and the worker (the Christian). So do not worry. The Christian, like the worker, is at the service of God made man. To be at the service of oneself alone is a kind of "Judas Iscariot", a betrayal, a forfeit, the fruit of: "the arrogance with which we want to emancipate ourselves from God and be nothing but ourselves, the arrogance with which we believe we do not need eternal love, but with which we want to master our life alone." (Benedict XVI).

FOKA Stephane

(inspired by a text from Saint Oscar Romero, canonised on 11 October 2018)

LASALLIAN DAYS: LA SALLE, OUR TREASURE!

The bilingual school “La Salle International Catholic School” (La Salle ICS) also celebrated the commemoration of the proclamation of Saint John Baptist de La Salle as the heavenly patron of all



educators. Among the activities organised for these Lasallian days was an activity that had a symbolic, spiritual and playful connotation. The game called "Treasure Hunt" attracted a good number of children who were particularly motivated to go in search of this treasure. The theme of the game was "Saint John Baptist de La Salle, our treasure". Yes, De La Salle represents a giant treasure for the educational world, Lasallian and nonLasallian. Our task as Lasallian educators impels us to be instruments of the Lasallian heritage. We help these children and young people to discover in De La Salle a life of holiness given entirely for others, to get others out of situations of precariousness and abandonment. In order to discover this treasure, we choose some educators of the school to serve as clues and bridges leading to this treasure. We had formed four teams with the names of Lasallian saints: Saint Miguel Febres Cordero team, the Blessed Raphael Louis Rafiringa team, the Saint Mutien Marie team and the Saint Bénilde team. In fact, the educators are the gateways for the children to conquer the treasure. Thus, the children must follow the instructions and advice of these "elders" to

achieve their goal. That goal is to be men and women steeped in values for a just and fraternal society, with less violence. Furthermore, educators have the duty to set a good example for the children and to be mediators for them. The names of the teams were intended to propose to the children Lasallian models of holiness so that they would imitate their example in the search for this precious treasure. What an enthusiasm the children have shown in playing and acquiring these different teachings, these values! We imprinted in the children's hearts, with the grace of God, the spirit of listening and paying attention to the instructions and advices of their "elders". We imprinted the spirit of teamwork and collaboration between comrades because to discover the clues and move forward, it was necessary to collaborate to find the answers to the enigmas. Also the spirit of fraternity because in the same team there are children



from different levels of class. Finally, the spirit of mutual acceptance because in the same teams there are the strong and the weak. At the end of the game, the Saint Mutien Marie team composed of ABETY Exaucé (Year 3), OREKAN Aimé (Year 4), Jéred (Year 5), AHINDE Kayssia (Year 7) and GUEZODJE Kéziah (Year 7) discovered the treasure.

Thus, they became Lasallian ambassadors to their classmates. They become Lasallian torchbearers wherever they are.

The Brother Director, Paco Francisco FALLADO SALVADOR, presented the awards to the lucky winners at the foot of the flagpole after the performing of the national anthems and those of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

Through the intercession of St. John Baptist de La Salle, may we always seek to find new ways to transform lives.

Brother Élisée Lare, La Salle ICS Bohicon.

Lasallian District of West Africa (DILAO)

IN SEARCH OF THE COMMON

The theme of "common" is central to the Chronicles of the 46th General Chapter. Different Brothers from different Regions of the Institute wrote these. Each chronicler gives us his own tone on the "common" which shifts the queries and obliges us to establish links in order to better profit from these chronicles. My intuition appears in the form of a question in Chronicle No. 7: "How to link all the themes of the Chapter? This is what justifies my article: what about the theme of the "common", the "together", the "internationality" of the Institute at the 46th General Chapter?

In fact, these themes do not impose themselves without a careful reading. In his opening remarks, the outgoing Superior General addresses the Capitulants and reminds them: "*We have been called here by our Brothers*"; "*together and by association*

our charism calls us [...]"; "*we gather as a community of faith*";

"in personal and community prayer"; "*we share this communion and charism with tens of thousands of lay people, Sisters and clergy*", etc. We should do a common work: "*Build new paths to transform lives*", as the motto of the General Chapter implies. In the Chronicles, the theme of the "common" is not standing for its own sake, but it is present. Indeed, in the chronicle of 3 May 2022, we choose several words from the conferences, including "interculturality", "association", "synodality" and "dialogue". Similarly, in the chronicle of 5 May, we find the idea of "common" through the diagnosis of the problems of our time: climate change, nationalist populism, the complexity of human sexuality, the scourge of war, the global pandemic. We must understand that one individual cannot solve these

problems. It is "together"! We are all involved in one way or another. We cannot address them separately, in isolation. It is together that we seek "new paths to transform lives". We must look at the whole range of these issues.

In the chronicle of 7 May 2022, we mentioned fraternity as "a common task". It is necessary to



articulate the "common" and the "personal", "complementarity and interdependence", "being together, living together, thinking together, working together, and celebrating together". It is necessary to "really put things in common while respecting differences" if we want to live harmoniously.

The Capitulants identified the values that must accompany today's challenges and the conditions to make them effective. If we look at the values mentioned by each region, we can see that there is still something "common" everywhere:

RELEM: Interiority, solidarity, audacity, culture of encounter

RELAL: Audacity, integral ecological commitment and authenticity

RELAN: Vulnerability, audacity and perseverance

RELAF: Solidarity, hospitality and conversion

PARC: Audacity, justice and communion.

The individual dimension appears imperceptibly through the words "interiority", "vulnerability", and "conversion". The chronicle of 11 May 2022 points

out that two words recur in the values common to all the Regions of the Institute: boldness and solidarity. What will we live together? We presented what we are going to live and do together as paths that can transform lives:

- Evangelisation and education for the poor (justice and peace),
- Spiritual life: return to the Gospel, radical availability of the Brothers,
- New structures of leadership and governance,
- Integral ecology,
- Association for a bold and prophetic Lasallian family,
- Vocation and accompaniment,
- Solidarity, viability and sustainability,

These seven paths of transformation take into account the individual and collective dimensions. It is the conviction, the seriousness and the excellence of each Brother that will enable us to travel these paths together. It is also the desire of each Lasallian for a committed life for the integral education of children and young people that will bring about the expected transformations. There are not only structures and institutions that we should transform. Above all, it is necessary to transform lives, persons. This begins with the conversion highlighted by RELAF. We need the conversion of hearts, that is to say, a return to Christ and to his Gospel as interpreted by John Baptist de La Salle. I am guessing that it is not a question of putting everything on the floor and start from scratch. That would be an illusion. In order to maintain continuity and innovation, there is a transitional phase, which requires regular individuals be training in order to awaken their consciousness to the new possibilities of action. For if the best soups

are made in old pots, they can also be made in the newest ones. However, you have to be around them to prevent them from scorching the soup because the pots heat up faster than the old ones. The same applies to structures and institutions that are "strong", "consolidated", and "indestructible". Nevertheless, beware of the ideology of the newness.

I am afraid that we sacrifice or forget the personal dimension in favour of the collective dimension; that the structures and institutions are more important to us than the quality of the people in charge of running them.

Brother Marc SOME, fec.

Lasallian District of West Africa (DILAO)

CELEBRATING DE LA SALLE IN RWANDA AFTER COVID-19

This year, 2022, the celebration of the feast of St. John Baptist de La Salle at the Delegation of Rwanda came at a time when the country was beginning to regain the various freedoms that existed before the pandemic. It was possible to hold meetings with a small number of participants, gatherings without social distancing and without masks. Making sure of course in doing so, that one had received at least two shots of anti-covid-19 vaccination!

In Byumba, where the Provincialate of the Brothers is located, there are also two very close works, almost geographically mixed up: The Teachers Training College (TTC) and De La Salle Academy (a school starting from Nursery to Year 10 classes). They celebrated De La Salle on 28 May instead of 15 May. This was because of the consecration of the new Bishop of Byumba on 14 May 2022. The young people of our schools were significantly involved for an event.

The celebration of De La Salle was an occasion of great joy for three main reasons. First, a large number of children and young people from our schools received the sacraments of Christian initiation. Secondly, the Bishop Emeritus Servilien NZAKAMWITA wanted to say an official goodbye to the Brothers and young people he loved so much and who returned it to him well. Finally, it was the return of parents, neighbours and friends to the event of this celebration, after having been for a long time without daring of thinking about it because of COVID-19.



The Bishop Emeritus thanked the young people and the Brothers at length for what is being done, especially in the area of Christian formation of children and young people. He promised to continue keeping good relations and to remain open to different invitations or requests.

The Director of Education, at the level of the Gicumbi/Byumba District, was the political guest present. He is a former student of TTC De la Salle in Byumba. As soon as he took the floor, he invited all the alumni of the school present to introduce themselves. All of them were happy to have benefited from the opportunity of a lifetime through the Brothers' school. The political guest therefore encouraged the current students to let themselves be educated, to love the school, their teachers and their parents.

The president of the parents' committee, who was also present, made a point of introducing her two sons who have already finished their studies at TTC De La Salle. She made it known that both of them had a very good job even before their school certificates were issued, because coming from a Brothers' school is sufficient proof of a quality education.

The Brother, President of the Delegation, welcomed the presence of all the personalities who had responded to the invitation. He warmly thanked the teachers who, day and night, work for the success of their pupils. He invited the children and young people to take advantage of the qualities of their educators and to keep De La Salle at heart, a family of which they will be a part for the rest of their lives.

The young people and children from both schools, well trained, entertained the audience with their various dances and the youngest were the most

impressive. They danced so well that the Parish Priest invited them to the farewell party for the Bishop Emeritus, which was to take place the following Wednesday evening. The Vicar General offered them a trip to the southern part of the country for the closing ceremony of Christian Unity Week.



Each celebration of De La Salle, here and elsewhere, always leaves lessons, joys and challenges. The growing number of children and young people who have only our schools to prepare them for the sacraments of Christian initiation obliges us to maintain and care for our catechetical programme, and especially to ensure a good follow-up after the sacraments.

Brother Jean Bosco BIGIRIMANA,

President of the Delegation of Rwanda

MADAGASCAR: LASALLIAN WEEK

The Lasallians of Madagascar, especially those from the capital city, lived from 15 to 21 May 2022 in an atmosphere of joy, because of being very rich in events. It was rich in events because of the three great dates, celebrated in three different works. First, on May 15, Lasallians met at the Holy Family Institute in Mahamasina, which was celebrating the opening of its 75th anniversary. This work includes both formal and technical education. The first stage of the celebration was a mass of thanksgiving presided over



by the rector of the Catholic University of Madagascar. Fraternal agape and dances marked the second stage.

However, beyond this jubilee, our Founder Saint John Baptist de La Salle brought the Lasallians together for this day. Celebrating Saint John Baptist de La Salle reminds us of our source as Lasallians. The Founder remains our first model in following Jesus Christ. Keeping this in our mind is necessary because, as we say, “you cannot really know where you are going until you know where you have been”. In other words, celebrating St. John Baptist de La Salle is a way of drawing on the past with a view to **“LOOKING FORWARD”**⁴, or better still, to prepare a better future.

In Madagascar, in addition to St. John Baptist de La Salle, Lasallians also celebrate Blessed Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa, a Malagasy pioneer of the

Lasallian vocation, four days after the date of May 15, that is to say, on May 19. We celebrated this feast in two ways. The first way, which is the second highlight of the Lasallian week, took place on May 19



in a Brothers' high school in Antananarivo. The celebration also coincided with the opening

of the 65th anniversary of this school. Apart from the mass as the first activity marking the opening of this event, other activities also had taken place, particularly the students' carnival, the demonstration of a taekwondo martial art group, etc.

A great mass at the sanctuary of Blessed Raphael Louis Rafiringa on Saturday 21 May 2022 closed this Lasallian week. This brought together all the Christians of the capital city and even those from other regions who have a special devotion to the Blessed Brother. It was also part of the celebration of the 13th anniversary of his beatification.

We never cease to give thanks to God who continues to act in his works placed in the hands of the Brothers and Lasallians for the benefit of children and young people, especially the most deprived.

Brother Omard,

District of Madagascar

⁴ Motto of the 18th Chapter of the District of Madagascar in force

A COLOURFUL PASTORAL YEAR!

Faithful to its mission of human and spiritual education, the “Collège Tounouma Garçons (C.T.G. - a secondary school-), in Bobo-Dioulasso, began its school and pastoral year on 17 September 2022. After nine (9) months of hard work, both at the level of the students, the teachers and parents, we are on the threshold of the summer holidays. Several activities have marked the pastoral life of this work. These include the mass at the beginning of the school year, the Ashes Wednesday mass and the weekly masses. We had also “the little Christmas” celebration as well as the daily rosary recitations during the month of the rosary. Not forgetting the Friday’s way of the Cross-during the Lenten season and finally, the legendary feast of 15 May celebration.

Let me give you some feedback. Christmas was particularly exciting in Tounouma. Indeed, the celebration of early Christmas, commonly called “Little Christmas”, was a source of great joy, which marked the end of the first term at the Collège. After the evaluation tests of the term, the minds of the students (from the youngest in the Year 7 up to the eldest in the Year 13), were fixed on the announced



celebration of the "Little Christmas". Each class subsequently set about putting up a breathtakingly

beautiful decoration. The Collège's seventeen classrooms were aesthetically pleasing. In addition, each class also set up cribs. One may wonder if the baby Jesus Wouldn't be embarrassed on which crib to choose on his arrival at the C.T.G.? Beyond this



material preparation for the coming of the Messiah, the school also set about preparing hearts. On 18

December 2021, a Eucharistic celebration brought together the students, teachers and the students’

parents to give thanks to God for the first term. Indeed, we completed this term peaceful and successfully. We brought our concerns and supplications to the feet of the Emmanuel, the long-awaited saviour. After this blessed birth of Christ in the hearts, there was a great rejoicing within the school through the sharing of a sober meal for each class and dances here and there. Jesus Christ was born at the Collège de Tounouma Garçons. We marked and rewarded the decorations and cribs. The joy of Christmas lit up the faces like the star of Bethlehem.

Furthermore, a fundamental event that left its mark on our minds was the improbable 15th of May - Saint John Baptist de La Salle - Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools - Heavenly Patron of Christian educators. We celebrated on the 14th of May at the Collège Tounouma Garçons through many activities. Everybody eagerly awaited this event. One could note the excitement during the preparations weeks before. Bernard OUEDRAOGO (accompanied by other presbyters), Director of the Catholic Education, was full of praise for the Saint of the day. He noted the enormous contribution of the Sainte to the Church and to the educational and catechetical mission. As for Brother Director of the work, Wenceslas SOME, he briefly outlined in his closing remarks, the history of De La Salle. He also presented the current mission assigned to the descendants of De La Salle, before giving his thanks. Subsequent to this beautiful Eucharist celebration, came the time for the final of ANGELIC VOICE. That is a gospel song competition that had been prepared for a month before 14 May. The students of the Year 12 (D2) distinguished themselves by the mastery of their voices, the harmony of the team and the mastery of the imposed song. They were the lucky winners. At 12 noon, the august assembly had a great banquet. The celebration of the school's patron saint ended in the afternoon with football matches and a recreational evening. It is worth noting the massive participation of illustrious guests such as those in charge of other Catholic schools in the city, the Brothers from the Novitiate and from the Provincial House, the guests from the parish of Tounouma, many parents of students, former students and above all, the current students of the school.

The De La Salle Brothers founded the Collège de Tounouma Garçons in 1959. It had eight hundred and ninety (890) students in this school year 2021-2022. Its pastoral activities were part of the implementation of the theme of the school and pastoral year: "Lasallian of Tounouma, **with Jesus Christ**, in faith, hope and discipline, **transform your life and that of your community**. We must recognise that we made notable progress in the pastoral ministry in this year, but efforts remain to be made for the spiritual awakening of the youth.

See you in October for the continuation of the pilgrimage of the Lasallian educational mission.

Happy holidays to you all!



David Frédéric OUÉDRAOGO, FSC
Lasallian District of West Africa (DILAO)

WHAT NEW PATHS TO TRANSFORM LIVES?

This question is a reflexion on the theme of the 46th General Chapter held in Rome from 1 to 22 May 2022: "Building new paths to transform lives". While we await the decisions of the General Chapter for the period up to 2029, we can allow ourselves some quick reflections from the next door. Talking about "new paths" assumes that the old ones are out-dated, impassable or that we want to make new paths in addition to those we were taking until 22 May 2022. What are our old paths that no longer transform lives but resist change?

In this article, I would like to venture a fearful answer from two philosophical and theological sources. I would like to show that the new Lasallian paths inevitably pass through the human person, the promotion and protection of the common good, and Christ as the Way of life.

The theme of the General Chapter led me to revisit the book by the philosopher Saïdou Pierre Ouattara entitled, "Quel chemin vers une patrie en Afrique?" (i.e What path towards a homeland in Africa?) Published in 2006 by the UCAO/Abidjan Editions. For Pierre, as for the General Chapter, it is a question of a search for a path for human being and by human being. In fact, in the first chapter entitled "l'Africain en quête de sa patrie" (i.e the African in search of his homeland)⁵, Pierre reflects on the condition of the African man/woman who feels lost in the encounter with modernity which has become aggressive. The numerous problems of Africa made Pierre say that Africans are lost in their land, their homeland, which has become foreign land to them. It

is in this context that the philosopher's question arises: "What path towards a homeland in Africa?" According to Pierre, "the human being is the path" but "a path to be created" (p.23) because nothing is mapped out for him in advance. No other continent or people should show him this path and indicate who he is. In other words, the path of the African is not that of Europe, even if the news of recent years forces us to think the contrary. Where do migrants go? Why do they go to Europe? This is precisely Pierre's criticism because some people think that the future of Africa is Europe (cf. Saïdou P. Ouattara, 2006, p. 24). The path for Africa is Europe! Nevertheless, what does the philosopher mean when he speaks of a path? Pierre defines it as follows: "What we are suggesting in any case by the image of the "path" is the fact that the human being, as freedom, is a *trail drawn towards his will*, a will enlightened by thought" (p. 24). When he fulfil this condition, man "walks towards the truth of his being", he says. Man asserts himself and takes his place in history when he does not forget "the requirement to think" in order to be truly what he is. This requirement forbids him to look through the eyes of others, to mirror himself in the dominant social language in order to be himself. This reflection by Pierre highlights the capacity of man to think for himself without mimicry in order to inhabit the world with others. For "to reflect is not to consider oneself passively in the mirror of social language; it is properly to set out towards the place of the truth of one's being, the place of true birth to oneself" (p. 22). We presented Thought or reflection as a path for the man who wants to discover 'his authentic reality'. Pierre regrets that "the African does not manage to set

⁵ Saïdou P. Ouattara, 2006, p. 17

out on his journey..." (p. 24). He is as if he has broken down, parked at the mercy of thinking passers-by. This man cannot set out on the path to find the truth of his being. In fact, Pierre imparts that if Africa does not find itself, it is because it has "resolutely turned its back on its origins" (p. 27) and it "cares more about its "form" than its soul" (p. 29). He says that African "went wrong". He missed the path, the bend in the road when he needed to negotiate it. Therefore, he drove off the road into the scenery. The quest for one's own being is the real path. This is where I see the relevance of my question: what new paths to transform lives? If the philosopher points to the "quality of being" as the path, the believer can confirm this intuition in the light of Christ.

I would now like to show that the Church has already proposed an answer to this fundamental question in the encyclical letter *Redemptoris hominis* (RH) of Pope Saint John Paul II. The Pope pays deep attention to man and presents him as the path that the Church must go through because he is created in the image of God and because he is "the only creature on earth which God willed for itself" (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 24). This is why "for the Church all ways lead to man" (RH, no. 14). Man is much more the end than the path. We can define this man, concrete and singular, as a personal being and at the same time as a community and social being. He has an intelligence, a will, a conscience and a heart. It is a matter of "the holistic man" in all his dimensions. Indeed, the different dimensions of man are paths that we should explore in order to reach him in a unified way in his body, mind and soul. According to Saint John Paul II, "this man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: he is the primary and

fundamental way for the Church, the way traced out by Christ himself [...]" (RH, no. 14 §1). Every man without exception, is at the basis of all the other ways the Church must walk (cf. RH, no. 14 §3) because man has been redeemed by Christ and because every person is henceforth united to Christ "even when man is not aware of it" (RH, no. 14 §3).

If Saint John Paul II teaches that man is the Church's path for her mission and action, it is worth repeating that the same man is the path to transform lives in the ministry of education. There is no other path than the man himself. The foundation of St. John Paul's message is Christological. Christ journeys throughout human existence through his Incarnation and then his death and resurrection. Through these two mysteries, "Christ united himself with each man" (RH, no. 13). The exhortation of Saint John Paul II is that "each person may be able to find Christ" because Christ is the one who must travel the path of our life in the company of each person (cf. RH, no. 13). Clearly, Christ is first the Way of man when man welcomes him to transform his life. This is the teaching of Jesus to Thomas, who asks him about his imminent departure: "I am the way and the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6). Jesus Christ is the way for everyone to the Father because no one goes to the Father but by him (Jn 14:6). Christ is our path! We must therefore start from Christ (the path) and walk to meet man. We now know the way: it is that of the Good Shepherd. Jesus himself said, "I am the door for the sheep" (Jn 10:7) or "I am the gate; if anyone enters through me, he will be saved" (Jn 10:9). Do we still need to answer our initial question, which I will repeat here: what new paths can transform lives?

The use of the plural suggests that it is not about Christ. We have to look for something else, another path. However, the "lives" are those of men. The path that leads to man is Christ. What then? What is the follow-up to our question? In reality, we are looking for activities, for action plans to better act in the company of man. Pope Francis' address to the participants of the 46th General Chapter removes the ambiguity. Indeed, all paths lead to man. Our plans of action are to be "interpreted in Christ" in order to translate them into "fullness of humanity". In his address to the capitulants, Pope Francis quotes St John Paul II and his encyclical *Redemptoris Hominis*: "Man is the way of the Church". Francis presents this sentence as a motto of John Paul II that Lasallians could make operational: "You put this motto into practice in your educational mission", he says. The new actions, the new plans should aim at "making the human being grow according to Christ". Christ is the path to transform lives. Christ alone has the capacity to change our lives. He alone shows us the path: love. Therefore, man remains the path for every Lasallian. More precisely, what new directions can we propose to avoid the scene as presented by Pierre Ouattara?

My hypothesis comes from the Chronicles of the 46th General Chapter. Chronicle No. 12 tells us that the Capitulants retained seven paths of transformation. What is remarkable is the theme of the "common" which recurs in the opening words of the Superior General, in the Chronicles of 3 and 4 May; 5 and 6 May; 7 and 9 May and 11 and 12 May. In reality, all the paths lead back to a fashionable expression, "holistic education". I hypothesise that the new directions must take the path of the common good. It seems to me that this pathway responds to the

challenges of our time presented by the former Superior General Robert in his welcoming words to the Capitulants: pandemics, war, suffering, despair of the young, famine, religious wars, financial crises, etc. Brother Robert's conclusion leads me to propose the common good as a human path to becoming more human, the "*vere humanum*" according to the Second Vatican Council: "Whoever loses his way," says Pope Francis, "can transcend, that is, go beyond himself, see beyond his local educational centre and his District, and open himself to a new horizon. This is important advice for us as members of a worldwide Lasallian Family. As Capitulants, we represent more than our respective Districts and Delegations. We are members of one Institute. We have incredible power for good when we make the most of our international network. This is only possible from the perspective of the common good that we should promote and protect for children and young people, for Brothers and other Lasallians. In short, the pathway to transform the lives of Brothers and Lasallians and then that of their students is the pathway followed by the Nazarene: man and his liberation from all slavery.

Marc SOME, fsc

Lasallian District of West Africa (DILAO)

RWANDA: A SCHOOL IN THE CAPITAL CITY

The Delegation of Rwanda has five works, all of which are located in rural places. These works, which are mainly properties of the host dioceses. They are open to children from modest families.

Since 2008, the project of a school and a community in Kigali the capital city has been a dream. In order to help the Delegation to become self-sufficient, the Centre of the Institute, through the Solidarity and Development Secretariat, has initiated the project of a school in Kigali. This school, which is supposed to accommodate children from nursery to secondary school, will have a capacity of more than a1000 children will.



Given the scale of the project, we divided it into phases. Of the first 4 phases, two are supposed to be ready before September 2022, which would allow the Delegation to start the school year in September 2022. The school will have at least 15 classrooms ready. It will initially cater for the nursery children, and the first three years of primary school, depending on whether parents have registered their children.

The school is located in an area of the city of Kigali that do not have too much population yet. It is located at about 6 kilometres from the city centre. It is in a place where the need for a school is very real. The nearest school is a public school, already overcrowded, some 4 kilometres away.

This school is supposed to be a source of income for the Delegation in order to support its other works with very little means and great financial difficulties. It will also be an opportunity for the Brothers of Rwanda to bring their experience of the Lasallian educational mission to Kigali where different religious teaching congregations such as the Jesuits, the Salesians of Don Bosco, and the Brothers of Saint



Gabriel already have schools. We hope that their experience in a big city context will inspire us.

Our thanks to the Centre of the Institute for this work, which it continues to support, and for the fruitful accompaniment of the Solidarity and Development Secretariat. It is a good experience for the Delegation of Rwanda in terms of large projects. May Christ the Lord of the harvest accompany us in this dream of a human and Christian education of quality provided to the children of the capital city!

Brother Jean Bosco BIGIRIMANA,

President of the Delegation of Rwanda

THE DE LA SALLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN AKASSATO CELEBRATES ITS PEWTER JUBILEE



It has been 10 years since the Lasallian educational mission made its way into the Archdiocese of Cotonou and its surroundings. That was through the De La Salle Catholic School Complex of Akassato, which opened its doors in October 2011. We celebrated the opening of the jubilee on 20 November 2021 with the celebration of the Perpetual Vows of Brother Séverin TANWOUNE. It was the eve of the 320th

anniversary of the "Heroic Vow". We remember this vow that Saint John Baptist de La Salle and Brothers Gabriel Drolin and Nicolas Vuyard pronounced on 21 November 1691! Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the District has postponed the celebration of the jubilee to this year 2022.

To mark the end of the jubilee year, we had chosen the dates of 27 and 28 May 2022. We filled these days with sports, cultural and spiritual activities. In addition, we had the celebration of thanksgiving mass on 28 May.

The whole Lasallian educational community rejoiced through activities. Among others, we had the caravan, basketball and football matches, traditional dances, the spiritual concert, public speaking, the budding genius, the exhibition of art objects and beadwork. The entire educational community including parents and former students attended the Eucharistic celebration. It was presided over by Father Epiphane AKPITY, Diocesan Director of Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Cotonou. During this mass and in his speech, Brother Marius BOYA, the current Director General paid a vibrant tribute to the District of ARLEP, to Proyde, to the





Secretariat of Solidarity and Development of the Institute, and to the Brother Visitors Jose Manuel Sauras and Paulin DEGBE. He did not forget the first Brothers of the community, namely Brothers Juan Arranz Gonzalez, Silvano de Frutos, the late Paco Martinez, the Brother Directors Paco Fallado and Rodrigue TOEPPEN, respectively first and second Director General of the school complex. He did not



forget the Guadalupana De La Salle Sisters and all

those who have worked from the very first hours to give birth to this Lasallian work of Akassato in Benin. He mentioned specially the educational team who spare no effort to ensure that the school results are always brilliant. Let us note that the choirs "Les Echos de La Salle" of the nursery and the secondary school took advantage of this jubilee to make their existence official. On this occasion, the Parents' Association offered two guitars to encourage the music classes and to accompany these choirs in their activities. Delegations came from Togo, Burkina Faso and Bohicon to experience the event. Fraternal agape took place at the end of the mass.

We wrote a page of history with this pewter jubilee. Let us pray that the Lasallian educational mission in this school complex will continue to build new paths to form and transform lives for a renewed humanity.

Brother Guillaume YAME from Akassato,
Lasallian District of West Africa (DILAO)

TRIBUTE TO BROTHER PEDRO MARIA ASTIGARRAGA

Saint Mary's Cathedral of Conakry

25.05.2022

Brother Pedro Maria Astigarraga, Director of the "Centre de Formation Professionnelle de La Salle" in Conakry, passed away on Monday 16 May 2022, from a short illness. His rich missionary journey took him to all the countries of the District of the Gulf of Benin where he spent the most of his time. His passing away on Guinean soil has aroused much sadness and compassion among the authorities, the faithful and the former students. We can note the confirmation of it from this conclusion drawn from one of the testimonies about Brother Pedro:

“Africa conquered the heart of Pedro Mari, but Pedro Mari conquered the heart of all Africans with whom he had contact”.

His Excellency Bishop **Vincent Coulibaly**,
Archbishop of Conakry,

His Excellency Mister **Cristian Font**,
Ambassador of Spain to Guinea

Reverend Concelebrating Fathers

Civil and religious authorities gathered here

Dear Brothers and Sisters in consecrated
religious life

Dear fellow teachers and members of the
administration of CFP de La Salle

Dear students and former students of CFP de
La Salle,

Dear friends and sympathisers of Brother
Pedro,

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,



We have just said a final farewell to our Director, our friend, our collaborator, our sympathiser and our Brother, Pedro Maria Astigarraga. This celebration also bears witness to the fact that the Church, through the calling to God of its children, celebrates the Paschal Mystery of Christ. He himself experienced death, but he passed from death to life. So all who believe in Jesus share in the hope of his resurrection. The deep sadness and anguish imposed on us by the severe reality of Brother Pedro's sudden death cannot be borne without the faith and hope that we have as believers

Since his death, we continued receive messages of condolences. People who come to testify to the availability and generosity with which Brother Pedro rendered his many services. A nun from the

parish of St. Joseph the Worker told us that the death of Brother Pedro made many people cry.

Allow me to give you a brief summary of his life

Brother Pedro was born on 31 January 1948 in Sestao, Spain. After his primary education, he entered the Brothers' formation house in Irun in September 1960, when he was only 12 years old. He took the religious habit in 1964 and made his first vows in 1966.

After his religious and university studies, he worked for a few years in his country and offered himself for the missionary adventure, which led him to Venezuela in 1979. There, he spent 5 years in an agricultural high school in San Carlos. He also taught geology applied to agriculture at the Public University.

His mission in Africa started in 1984 in Equatorial Guinea in the city of Bata. He stayed there for only 2 years. In 1986, he arrived in our province in West Africa and took over the direction of the "Centre de Formation Rural de Tami" in the Northern part Togo for 9 years. He took a short break during the 1994-95 school year for retraining in Montpellier, France.

In 1995, he took over the management of another rural training centre in Togoville in the southern part of Togo. In 2001, he received the obedience for Ivory Coast in the midst of the socio-political crisis and spent 3 years in a technical formation centre in Daloa. His stay in Conakry started in 2004 and will last 17 years in 3 periods. In 2010, Brother Pedro asked to return to Spain to be by the side of his parents who had become very old. This lasted only 4 years!

In 2014, after my appointment as provincial, he accepted my invitation and decided to return to

Guinea on the condition that I should not give him the position of director. In 2016, he took over the direction of the Centre out of compassion for me. He saw that I was struggling to find a Brother Director.

In 2018, he decided to return definitively to Spain. He made it! A year later, his successor Brother Christophe Traoré fell ill while I was in Spain for a meeting. Therefore, I needed someone to help while



Brother Christophe recovered from his illness. After a meeting I had with Brother Pedro in Madrid in 2019, his sympathy for me brought him back. This time, we made an agreement for 3 months. He did 3 years and finished his life journey here in Guinea.

Our educational mission will continue from now on without Brother Pedro, from whom we keep the fraternal love, the zeal in the mission and his total dedication. Despite his age, he believed in his strength at the age of 74 years and continued to serve in a country he loved so much. He expressed his love to continue his mission in Africa. God, in this Easter season and the day after the feast of our Founder St. John the Baptist, is holding out his hand to him: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; Come and share your master's happiness. (Mt 25:21).

THANKS

Our gratitude goes first to His Excellency the Archbishop of Conakry Vincent Coulibaly. From the very first hours, he has shown us his closeness and his concern.

He spared no effort to involve himself in the announcement of the death made to the General Secretariat of Religious Affairs, the Apostolic Nunciature in Guinea, the Spanish Embassy in Guinea, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Professional Training...

Our gratitude to His Excellency Mister Cristian Font, Ambassador of Spain in Guinea and to his services who did everything possible for the transfer of the body to Spain.



Reverend Father Parish Priest of St. Joseph the Worker, I would like to thank you and all your collaborators, your Vicars, for the assistance, the masses and the prayer sessions.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Consecrated Life, once again we have shown our unity, and we witness that communion and fraternity are possible. Your prayers and your presence this evening show this even more. Blessed be God in his workers of the Gospel.

Our gratitude to the former students and teachers who did everything they can, to assist Brother Juan in the

administrative procedures for the repatriation of the body.

We do not forget all those who work behind the scenes, the parishioners, the choir members, the readers and the entire people of good will, who are always at our side. May you all be blessed by the Lord, who alone can fill the great gap left by Brother Pedro, who has returned to him to receive the inheritance promised to us: eternal life.

Dear Brother Pedro, you have spent more time here in Guinea than in the other countries where the mission has taken you. Now that you have finished your earthly journey, pray that we will have vocations in Guinea to continue our mission to the youth.

You will remain in our hearts and we will be forever united in the Lord.

All your Brothers of our Province are saying "See you in the bosom of the Father!"

Go in peace, my Brother, and remain forever in the Peace of God!

Amen

Brother Paulin DEGBE

Provincial Superior, DGB.

List of the 21 newly professed Brothers of the Lasallian Region of Africa (RELAF) and that of the Middle East District (RELEM)

Date of First Vows: Tuesday 14 June 2022

Brother Visitor: Brother Julien DIARRA, Lasallian District of West Africa

I. District of Central Africa

- 1- **KASSOURE** KesseWale François
- 2- **TEFOUYIM DONGMO** Rodrigue Michel
- 3- **MAWOH** Mc Pius WIRBA

II. Lasallian District of West Africa

- 1- **DAKIO** Mognounsi Blaise
- 2- **SABOUE** LonkounDanniel

III. District of Madagascar

- 1- **FANOMEZANTSOA** Claudien Régis
- 2- **HARIMANANA** AndriamasimbolaFinaritra
- 3- **RABEMANANTSOA** Jean Joseph
- 4- **RAHARILALA** Bien Nico Jubio
- 5- **RANDRIAMAHENINA** Daniel
- 6- **RANDRIAMANAMPY** Jean Jacques

IV. Delegation of Rwanda

- 1- **NDAHAYO** Jean-Pierre
- 2- **HATANGIMANA** Antoine
- 3- **TUYISENGE** Jean d'Amour

V. District of Congo-Kinshasa

- 1- **BILIMA AYONGO GBOLI** Alain
- 2- **NDAYI DIKETUANGA** Mechack
- 3- **NSASI KHONDE** Damien
- 4- **NZAU MBIMBA** Dimitri
- 5- **NZUNGU MAKOKA** Kevin

VI. District of the Middle East (RELEM)

1. **Fakher** Mahdi Mina Abdelmalak
- 2- **Shenouda** Atef Labib Gendy



BROTHER GENERAL COUNCILLOR'S CALENDAR

Dates	Activities	Place
22 July to 3 August	Meeting of the General council	Bogota
10 to 21 August	Meeting of the General council	Nairobi
23 August to 4 September	Meeting with Brother Pierre	Abidjan
September	Meeting of the General council	Rome