



RELAF NEWSLETTER N°46

Brothers of the Christian Schools



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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| EDITORIAL | 2 |
| Do not wait! | 2 |
| The 7th RELAF Assembly | 4 |
| De La Salle Academy: donations to Kibali | 8 |
| A silver jubilee is worth celebrating! | 9 |
| To the Lasallian fountain!..... | 10 |
| Living the Lasallian charism | 11 |
| Taekwondo Cadet Championship, Kigali-Rwanda | 13 |
| Women in the Lasallian family, today | 14 |
| Young Lasallians in Kenya | 15 |
| Mozambique sector: testimonial on returning from studies | 16 |
| Silver jubilee of Brother Moses ABUNYA | 18 |
| Lasallian formation in Rwanda: identity criteria for the vitality of Lasallian educational institutions..... | 20 |
| Flood at Nyundo art school - Rwanda | 22 |
| Sixtieth anniversary of Saint John of Cocody parish | 23 |
| Happy birthday to you, Brother Étienne!..... | 23 |
| Happy birthday to Brother Anani Valère | 25 |
| Acrostic from the catechist's son to the Brothers..... | 27 |
| Prayer for peace..... | 27 |
| For your texts to be published..... | 27 |
| General Councillor's calendar | 28 |

EDITORIAL

Do not wait!

The Leavening Project, the Institute's second official publication after Circular 478, was inspired by the dream of the 46th General Chapter: *"We are one Lasallian Family, with diverse vocations; leaven for a more fraternal world, sent forth to encounter God in those who are poor, and promote justice¹".*

Through the seven paths of transformation, this dream is intended to be an attempt at a Lasallian response to the current challenges facing the world and the Church. The Leavening Project comes as an invitation to embark *together on a pilgrimage to the peripheries*.

The Leavening project is like a royal voice of synodal experience, a pastoral choice made by the General Council to engage in Lasallian conversations with all Lasallians, even those who share the same mission. This invitation concerns all those who reflect on the meaning and value of the service the Institute offers to society in general, but especially the service it offers to those who live in places where they have been isolated and ignored.

In these very places is our God, who does not want any of his sons to be lost. When God asks Cain *where your brother is*, it is precisely because He does not want any of His children to be lost. This is the key question that motivated the Leavening Project, a question every Lasallian is called to ask himself or herself.

Dear Lasallian brother or sister, do you need a strategic plan, a structuring project to take care of your brother or sister who is ill, in difficulty or in need? Should you wait for an order from your superior, your community or work director to be sensitive to a situation of injustice and suffering suffered by your brother or sister? Is it necessarily up to those in authority to indicate the places from which you should ask yourself disturbing questions? *The 46th Chapter has made a clear choice and challenged you to make "the peripheries, your place"*. It is a place that will enable you to discern your way of welcoming others and question your way of living in fraternity.

The best way to begin this pilgrimage without delay, no matter where your mission takes you, is to seek first and foremost to renew your own *"vocation starting from who you are and who you want to be, identifying the best of your story and setting in motion a transformative and incarnational movement of who you are called to be"*. In short, it is a process of radical transformation and conversion. This will only be possible if you return to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, breaking through your indifference and letting yourself be touched by God, the living presence of the poor.

In a concrete way and without waiting for a community or institutional plan, you are invited to go and meet the people living in your surrounding peripheries. You will undoubtedly find lonely, marginalized, neglected people; and people excluded from community circles. You can seek to meet

¹ Texts in italics are quotations from Circular 478 and the Leavening Project. The deliberate omission of precise references is an invitation to read or reread these two important Institute documents.

them and get to know them. From this encounter, you may develop empathy, an essential quality that fosters social and professional relationships, develops self-awareness and contributes to a fairer world. It is about being more open and welcoming, more sensitive towards your brothers and sisters who do not just have material needs to satisfy, but who sometimes need a simple glance of love, tenderness and listening.

Dear Lasallian brother and sister, do not wait! Have you ever read Circular 478 and the Leavening Project? I have not. If you have not, it is never too late. Both documents contain very important guidelines for the coming years. You can now start your own personal Lasallian pilgrimage to help you transform your *own inner life, to generate other lives by making a radical commitment in your daily life to the collective construction of a fraternal world that practices justice, peace and care for our common home.*

Dear Lasallian brother and sister, in inviting you to start with personal initiatives, I am not promoting individualism. Nor am I telling you to neglect community or institutional initiatives, which are highly recommended. I am simply pointing out that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve a collective transformation without going through individual transformations, because for me, "**walking together**" means "**the sum of individual walks**". In other words, just like *leaven - something small, hidden, [seemingly insignificant], but which is indispensable for the leavening of a great mass* - you can lead others to *find the deepest meaning in their lives, as St. John Baptist de La Salle and his first companions did. You can be responsible for the well-being of others.* The example of your La Salle Academy classmate can serve you well. **Do not wait!**

Brother Anatole DIRETENADJI,
General Councilor

The 7th RELAF ASSEMBLY

From April 02 to 05, 2023, the Lasallian Region of Africa (RELAF) held its 7th Assembly at the Capuchin Brothers' St Padre Pio Spiritual Animation Center in Abidjan. Among the 38 participants, Brothers and lay people (Mrs. Rose NANEMA and Mr. Roland Kouabena YAO), 27 of whom had full rights, the presence and very enlightening contributions of the Brother Vicar General Carlos Gabriel GÓMEZ RESTREPO and the Executive Director of "Solidarité et développement", Amilcare BOCCUCCIA should be highlighted.

Chaired by Brother Anatole DIRETENADJI, General Councilor for the Region, this Assembly is a concrete expression of the following commitment of the 46th General Chapter:

"Organize in each Region, within a maximum of one year from the publication of the Chapter documents, a meeting, forum or assembly suitable for defining at the regional level the co-responsibility strategies necessary to complete the process of 'appreciative inquiry' according to the keys provided by the Chapter's work". (Cir. 478, Commitment P1, p. 49).

Work began with a prayer, with theme inspired by the "Leavening Project": *"Journeying and growing together in the mission in Africa"*. Led by Brother Valère ADONSOU, it provided an opportunity to listen to and meditate on the Word of God, the gospel on the parable of the leaven (Lk 13:20-21), and to entrust the Assembly's work to God.

The opening ceremony was marked by speeches from Brothers Anatole DIRETENADJI and Carlos Gómez, and the introduction of participants through a group dynamic to break the ice.

At the start of his speech, Brother Anatole invited the participants to observe a minute's silence in memory of all the Brothers who had recently passed away in RELAF.

He pointed out that the holding of this Regional Assembly in Holy Week is a "happy providence" for the sanctification of each of the participants and for the Assembly itself.

He outlined the orientations of the General Council for the organization of this 7th Regional Assembly, in a context of synodality and the 46th General Chapter. He also recalled the objectives of the RELAF Regional Assembly as set out in the Statutes. He thanked all the commissions and teams who had worked to prepare it, and all the participants for their availability.

Brother Anatole insisted on the new character of this 7th Regional Assembly, saying that "Assemblies follow one another without resembling one another", due to its main source of inspiration which is the dream of the 46th General Chapter: *"We are one Lasallian Family, with diverse vocations; leaven for a more fraternal world, sent forth to encounter God in those who are poor and to promote*



justice". A dream that must be supported and nurtured by values such as "prophetic audacity, solidarity, interiority, the culture of encounter and commitment [in promoting integral ecology]".

Recalling the dream, the values, the paths of change or conversion defined in *Circular 478*, he invited all participants to draw inspiration from them and to exploit them with intelligence and wisdom to advance Lasallian communities and works in the Region. He declared the 7th RELAF Regional Assembly open with the invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Periphery.

Brother Carlos, after thanking Brother Anatole for his invitation and for the fraternal welcome extended to him by the Brothers, made it clear that his address was a sharing of ideas to help reflect on the changes to be made during the course of the work. Taking as his starting point two questions relating to the newness of the General Chapter and the Gospel, he invited the participants:

- To be light, memory, passionate, radically available in mission, witnesses and leaven for a fraternal world;
- To be converted and open to the decisions of the 46th General Chapter in order to meet those who are poor;
- To share the same dream with our lay partners.



Referring to the *Leavening Project*, Brother Carlos encouraged the Brothers to:

- Change your glasses to look at realities through a new prism; *to read the proceedings of the 46th GC, which invite us to leave our comfort zones, our old ways of thinking;*
- to take up the question "Where is your brother?" which is posed to the whole Lasallian Family and its members at various levels, in order to go to the various peripheries and respond to the needs of those who suffer.

He pointed out that this Annual General Meeting is a place to reflect on new ways:

- To see and understand the peripheries in which young people live;
- To be promoters of fraternity, justice, peace and integral ecology;
- To reflect on the Brothers' interiority and inner life, on spirituality in our communities, on our commitment to catechesis, the Brothers' main function.

The Assembly, in line with the vision of *Laudato Si, Fratelli Tutti*, the *Global Educational Pact*, the *Acts of the 46th General Chapter* and the *General Council's guidelines for the operation of the Region*, redefined the Region's objectives. A commitment was also made to carry out the six conversions proposed by the 46th General Chapter (Circ. 478, pp. 14-15).

In the same context, certain articles of the Statutes have been modified and others integrated. This is particularly true of those relating to **regional structures and bodies**, including **collegial decision-making bodies and commissions**. New in this aspect is the **Regional Council of the**

Association for the Lasallian Educational Mission (CRAMEL), and the Regional Assembly for the Lasallian Educational Mission.

In addition, the Brother Visitors' Conference will create commissions "according to the vision of the Region and in the spirit of the orientations of the General Council".

Taking into account both the "new operating format without the General Councilors as regional coordinators" and its conflict with articles 136.2 of the Rule and 25.2.1 of the Administrative Directory, articles have been adopted accordingly:

- The Brother Visitor, President of the Conference, carries out his duties "under the responsibility of the elected General Councilor from the Region";
- The holding of "virtual meetings" by the Conference of Brothers Visitors "to solicit the support of the General Councilors accompanying the Region in the management of certain files";
- The change from "Regional Team" to "Regional Office", which can be "decentralized and/or in situ".

The second highlight of the Assembly was the adoption of a new strategic plan for the Region. The vision that guided and determined the four priority areas, proposals and strategies is formulated as follows:

"Lasallians, Brothers, Sisters and Lay people, committed to transforming lives in Africa through quality education, with a preferential option for the poor, evangelization and promoting justice".



Each of these areas is well contextualized and includes specific themes:

- The MEL Association and formation are part of this *quality education*;
- *Evangelization and catechesis* for the themes culture of vocation, Young Lasallians and the Life of a Brother;
- *The promoting justice* encompassing the themes of justice, peace and integral ecology
- The *resources* domain, where governance, communication and resource management structures are taken into account.

The example of the contexts of two themes - Association for the MEL and formation - gives an idea of the relevance of the strategic plan's proposals and strategies.

The Association for the Mission was contextualized as follows:

"In view of social issues and the various forms of poverty in Africa, Lasallians are committed to promoting quality education that takes into account all the dimensions of the person and the four types of relationship he or she is called to form: with oneself, in solidarity with others, with nature and, on a spiritual level, with God. An educational action that holds together the growth of the person in his faculties, his social integration, his ethical and social sense and his openness to transcendence" (Pope Francis, Laudato Si; Fratelli Tutti, Global Educational Pact).

And that of formation: *"For a quality education, RELAF Lasallians need to renew and deepen (Cir 478, 2.1) their interior life and to have a formation that is multidimensional, systematic, integral and flexible" (Cir 478. Prop 2.5).*

Implementing the proposals of the strategic plan is a major challenge to be taken up over the next seven years by the Brothers' Conference, the Brother Visitors, the Brothers and Lasallians, and those in charge of communities, works and the various structures and bodies of the Region, and indeed of the Institute.

Indeed, an enormous potential for renewal in educational ministry, interior and professional life lies in proposals such as the *"promoting quality, transformative, holistic education for all"*; *"the multi-dimensional, systematic formation of Lasallians to better take charge of integral education"*; the *Brothers' recognition of and commitment to their fundamental identity as catechists.* "

Taking the floor at the end of the proceedings, Brother Vicar General Carlos GÓMEZ, in addition to expressing his gratitude for the openness and hospitality of the participants and the quality of the exchanges, recalled the difficult and permanent question relating to the "Leavening Project": "Where is my brother? Where is my sister? It's a question we need to reflect on and pray about together, in the context of our environment. The effectiveness of this project, through resolute commitment, will strengthen those of peace, justice and integral ecology.

In addition to the need for conversion, he stressed the need not to lose sight of our identity as Brothers, and to *"make ourselves more visible to our students, colleagues and many others"*. The dream of the General Chapter, he pointed out, which we must not give up, is to *"blaze new trails and bear witness to Jesus Christ"*, to persevere in *"helping those most in need"*. Finally, he underlined our commitment to higher education and the *"essentially African face of the Church and the Institute"* underway, and the responsibility and challenge for Africa in this regard.

May we pray together for our communities, our works and those involved in educational ministry in the Sectors, Delegations and Districts, so that the actions defined by the new strategic plan are carried out in a dynamic of synodality and in a spirit of faith and zeal. May the Holy Spirit inspire us to build new paths that transform lives. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint John Baptist de La Salle, Blessed Brother Raphaël-Louis Rafiringa and all the Saints and Blessed of the Institute intercede for us. We pray Amen.

Brother Valère Anani ADONSOU,
Regional House -Abidjan

ACADÉMIE DE LA SALLE: DONATIONS TO KIBALI

In March 2023, our school, Académie De La Salle Byumba in Rwanda, organized an event to collect donations for the poor children of the Group scolaire Kibali. Students from our school donated school supplies (notebooks, pens, exercise books), hygiene products (soap, paper, sanitary towels) and clothing. Some also donated money.



The Principal, the Physics teacher and some students went there to present these gifts as representatives of our school. They introduced themselves and greeted the students of Group scolaire Kibali. The donations were handed over to the needy students. Certain items and products (towels, toilet paper and clothing) were kept in specific locations for use at the appropriate time.

The students at our school have seen and learned many things. For example, that they have the privilege of learning in a good school. Or that there are people living in very difficult conditions where getting food is a problem. It made them think about the food they throw away and the clothes they have in abundance, while others struggle to get them.

On their return, the representatives recounted the distribution session and testified to what they had seen. The head boy said: *"There are students who need our help as comrades because they live a harder life than we think. Some of them eat only once a day. Some have to eat at school because of poverty at home. They let their brothers and sisters eat what the family has prepared. Back home after school, they have to do housework without being able to revise what they have studied"*.

The head girl also took the floor. She thanked everyone who had helped them. She went on to say, *"We should have a heart that loves to help others because when you help, you are helping God and blessings will follow you wherever you go."* She added: *"The pupils at Groupe Scolaire Kibali go to school wearing rag-like torn clothes and old shoes. And yet, these children also have dreams and goals of becoming important people in the future."*

Even though these students live a very difficult life, they love others and have a good heart. They like to play volleyball, soccer and other games with students from other schools. They never forget the people who have helped them.

Three days after the donation, they expressed their gratitude. They remembered our names precisely, and implored God's blessing on us.

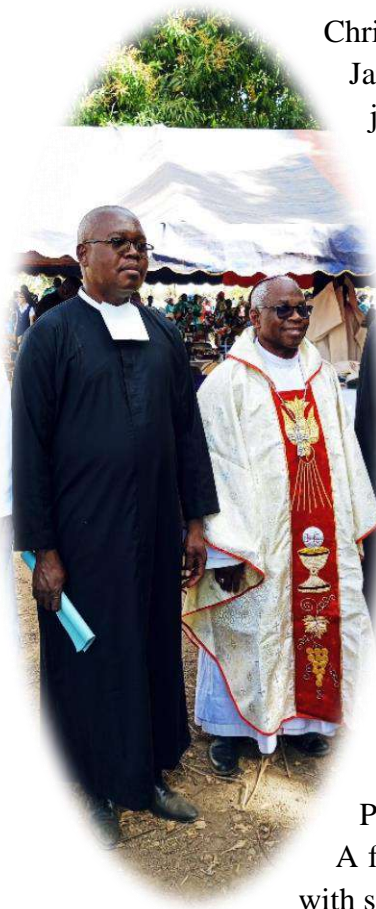
After this very moving experience, our plan is to run other campaigns of this type, mobilizing all the students, and collecting more donations. Giving is not a question of quantity or expensive objects. Giving must come from the heart.

Salama ISHIMWE

Senior Three, Académie de La Salle

A SILVER JUBILEE IS WORTH CELEBRATING!

Yes, it is said that *"25 years is not 25 days"*. It was in this spirit that the Christian Brothers of DILAO joined Brother Innocent SOMDA on Saturday, January 28, 2023, to give thanks to God and rejoice on the occasion of his silver jubilee of consecrated life.



Brother Innocent SOMDA took his first vows on July 27, 1997 in Toussiana, Burkina Faso, after completing his novitiate in Kinshasa, Congo. In his native village of Dalgan-Gouri, around the Bishop of his Diocese of origin, His Excellency Bishop Der Raphaël Koussiélé DABIRE, a large congregation from the four corners of the country shared in the Brother's jubilee joy.

It was a wonderful opportunity to give thanks to God for Brother Innocent's life, for his religious commitment, and for all his service in the fight against ignorance. This step of faith was also a wonderful opportunity to promote a vocation to religious life. On the same occasion, eight children and two couples, all from his extended family, received the sacraments of baptism and marriage respectively.

It's worth noting the presence, alongside Brother Innocent, of two other Brothers from his Novitiate group, Célestin KIENTEGA and Jean-Palmier LUTEMONA.

A fraternal sharing took place after the Eucharist, and the festivities continued with song and dance until nightfall.

This thanksgiving could also rightly be seen as part of the guidelines of *'Circular 478'* and the *'Leavening Project'*, which invite us to *"make the peripheries our place"*. Dalgan-Gouri, which belongs to the parish of Maria-tanw, is some 300 km from Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, and 65 km from the Cathedral of the Diocese of Diébougou, which houses it. The faces of the villagers were filled with immense joy at the large number of people who had come from far and wide to commune with them, and for our Brother who was honoring his native village. Let us always go to the peripheries, where we'll find our brothers, our sisters, our neighbors.

Ad multos annos Fratri Innocent SOMDA!

Brother David Frédéric OUEDRAOGO,
Lasallian District of West Africa (DILAO)

AT THE LASALLIAN FOUNTAIN!

In an effort to make the Lasallian charism better known and to root it in educational communities, the Saint Jean Baptiste De la Salle KIRENGE school hosted a Lasallian formation session on March 4, 2023. The theme was *"The values of the Lasallian family"*, and was led by Brother Ferdinand BIZIYAREMYE.

Twenty-four educators took part in the meeting, which was held in an atmosphere of prayer. The animating Brother reminded participants that the large Lasallian family is made up of several components. They complement each other and work together to perpetuate the Lasallian heritage through these five values: faith, fraternity, service, justice and responsibility. These values are spread out over the five arms of the Star, which orients young people towards the Light, Jesus Christ, the way of truth.

Faith is a Lasallian value towards which all others converge. Participants were invited to let themselves be guided and led by faith in the Triune God in their educational mission. It is this same faith that is the founding spirit of the Institute. To see, do and consider everything in the view of God.

The second value, **fraternity**, by virtue of its quality, serves as a criterion for verifying faith. Hence the invitation to participants to let themselves be inhabited by a shared love that creates unity and fraternal communion.



With regard to the value of **service**, it was emphasized that etymologically, to be at the service of others means to be their "slave". It is in this perspective that teachers are encouraged to *"make themselves slaves"* in the manner of Christ, for the good of the children entrusted to them.

As far as **justice** is concerned, employees were invited to make it their daily weapon. *"Let us be just to ourselves, to our team-mates and to those under our care, following the example of our Father in Heaven (Mt 5:48)"*. As for **responsibility**, Brother Ferdinand referred to Marcel Jaeger's quote *"From the principle of responsibility to the process of empowerment"*. It is not enough to be responsible for a good educator, if not to help the beneficiaries of his or her education to be responsible too. In conclusion, he reminded us that the star that bears these values refers to the one that guided the three Magi (Mt 2:1-15); it is also a special point of reference for all those who drink from the same fountain bequeathed by our Founder.

The creation of two different stars (one in motion and the other at a standstill) marking the end of the session, to underline the synodal Lasallian march in this process of *"Lasallianization"*. *"If we*

walk, let us walk together, and if we stop, let us stop together": let us make this slogan our own, as we join hands in fulfilling our educational mission. For without a spirit of association, there can be no results. In other words, education becomes sterile. As the saying goes, "*It takes a village to educate a child*". And for a good Lasallian educator or member of the Lasallian family, it is very important to embody the five values that were the focus of this Lasallian formation.

Brother Jean d'Amour TUYISENGE

Delegation of Rwanda

LIVING THE LASALLIAN CHARISM

John Baptist de La Salle was born on April 30, 1651. He founded the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (De La Salle Brothers) in 1680. He died on April 7, 1719, was canonized on May 24, 1900 and proclaimed Patron Saint of educators on May 15, 1950.

According to the liturgical calendar, he is celebrated in the Church on April 7, the date of his birth in heaven, meaning his death. Since this date generally falls during Lenten Season, the Institute celebrates La Salle on May 15, the date of his proclamation as heavenly Patron Saint of all educators. De La Salle left many legacies for us Lasallians and for the world of education, including: *The conduct of the schools, Letters to the Brothers, Meditations for the time of the retreat, Methods of mental prayer, The twelve virtues of a good teacher and many others.*

My reflection is on the theme of **living the Lasallian charism.**

Charism: Lasallian charism has sustained the Institute for over 300 years. So, what is a charism? A charism is a grace, a gift of the Holy Spirit to an individual to respond to a particular need in the Church and Society at a particular time in human history and in a particular locality. A charism is first and foremost intended to respond to a particular challenge in a particular locality. Whenever the People of God are faced with challenges (health, education, social life, etc.), God sends His Spirit into the heart of someone who takes bold steps to meet that particular challenge. For John Baptist de La Salle, it was primarily aimed at the children of artisans and the poor of Reims and other towns in 17th-century France.

A charism is the application, the practical means of responding to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Daniel's story is a good example of a charism at work. What Daniel did, saving Suzanne, is not charism. What drove Daniel to do what he did was charism. It was the same in the story of St. Francis of Assisi. The specificity of the Lasallian charism is association for the educational mission. The originality of the Lasallian charism is the fact that lay people in the Church, constituted as a fraternity, carry out an educational ministry together, particularly for the benefit of the poor.

In Lasallian schools, the charism can be grasped through "interpersonal and community dynamics" oriented towards a human and Christian education. An education that promotes the integral development of the person, helping him or her to blossom intellectually, physically, psychologically, morally and religiously. The charism is put into practice when educators and all the adult staff of the educational community bear witness to their communion by being brothers and sisters to each other and elder brothers/sisters to those entrusted to their care.

Spirituality drives the charism. It is made up of three fundamental elements: faith, zeal and community. *"The Spirit [...] of faith, which should induce those who compose it to not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in the view of God, and to attribute all to God"* (Rule, p. 12). Trust in God, a passion for God, is converted into a zeal, a commitment to make the means of salvation available to children and young people. *"Community is the way in which Lasallian spirituality comes to life and is sustained and maintained. It is the driving force behind Lasallian education"* (Lasallian Spirituality Today, n°15).

This spirituality is lived out through the practice of looking at things in faith. It involves reflecting on everyday experiences in the light of the Word of God, and discovering the presence of God who loves and acts.

In the same way, each Lasallian school is run as a faith community. The Lasallian school becomes a means to salvation, a means to winning the souls of our students to God. We do not just teach students, we *"teach the minds, touch the hearts, and transform the lives"* of the children who pass through our hands.

Call to action: For the continuity of the Lasallian charism, then, we are called to some concrete actions:

- **A call to understand Lasallian charism and spirituality.** This is the essence of our life as De La Salle Brothers, and Lasallians. We must strive to know and understand the Lasallian charism. We must be able to understand and differentiate the charism from the mission/apostolate.

- **A call to live our charism.** The charism, the fraternity for the educational ministry, must be carried, promoted and incarnated by every Lasallian.

- ***Passing on the Lasallian charism and spirituality***

The various components of the Lasallian family, with the particularity of their vocation itinerary (Brothers, Sisters, Lay people, Signum Fidei...) need an adequate appropriation of the Lasallian charism and spirituality. To this end, all means, frameworks (formation sessions), experiences and stages of the vocational itinerary (initial formation, new teachers, new Signum Fidei members...) are to be taken into account and put to contribution. The various spiritual exercises (meditation, prayer, recollection, annual retreat, spiritual guidance...), the educational relationship, the needs, realities and life experiences of the learners, daily life... are all channels for transmitting and appropriating the charism and spirituality of the Institute.

- ***Sharing charism with others:*** A major difference between charism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the idea of sharing. Normally, when someone receives a gift, that gift is for the person; he/she can do whatever he/she wants with the gift. This is not the case with charism. A charism is received to be shared, to be put at the service of the community, and of the whole Church. There is no such thing as a charism for personal or private use. "You have received freely, give freely". Hence the efforts of Institute government everywhere, in the formation of our lay partners in Lasallian spirituality. Pope Francis recognized this effort, when he said: *"[...] If I have understood correctly, the congregation of brothers devoted to teaching, like those at La Salle, have done a good job [...] Forming lay people with their spirituality with good criteria and wisdom [...] the Lasallian Brothers have done a good job in forming their lay people in charism, spirituality and mission..."*



Let us not be jealous when our lay partners are passionate about La Salle. We are the heart, the engine and the guarantors of Lasallian spirituality. We must strive to know, live and be ready to share the Lasallian heritage with all. We must nurture the spirituality we have inherited and live it accordingly.

Brother Wole Patrick OLABANJO,
Scholastic Director, Nairobi-Kenya

TAEKWONDO CADET CHAMPIONSHIP, KIGALI-RWANDA

On April 2, La Salle Homa Bay took part in the "Rwandan Open Cadet Taekwondo Championship" in Kigali. This was a friendly invitation from the Rwandan Taekwondo Federation to school and college teams prepared by the Kenyan Federation of this martial art. La Salle School Homa Bay, as a registered member of the Kenyan Federation of Schools and Colleges, had the opportunity to take part. The event was co-sponsored by the Kenyan Taekwondo Federation and La Salle School Homa Bay.

Our students were selected for their second place overall at the Taekwondo championship held in December on the south coast of Mombasa.



In Kigali, our students were confronted with modern electronic protection equipment that they had never used in Homa Bay before. This type of equipment helped them to progress in terms of techniques and skills against their opponents in Rwanda. It was also the first time they had taken part in a regional event of this level.



In the end, they were able to obtain four bronze medals and one silver medal; a fine performance for beginners in their junior category. It was also motivation for the team for their future tournaments scheduled throughout the year.

Brother Anthony ONYANGO OLOO,
School Director
La Salle Homa Bay - Kenya

WOMEN IN THE LASALLIAN FAMILY, TODAY

A CIL (Centre International Lasallien) program on the theme: *Women in the Lasallian Family: Moving Forward Together as Leaven for Transformation*, was held in Rome at the Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, from April 17 to 28, 2023, bringing together 50 Lasallians. The group included women, men, sisters and brothers from all regions.



The first week was marked by an opening address by Brother Armin LUISTRO, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and participants followed lectures on women in the life of the Founder and the founding of the Institute, women in the Bible and the early Church, and an in-depth examination of the **"Report of the Needs Assessment Study of Women in the Lasallian Family."** The remarkable presence and active participation of women in Lasallian works in recent years was discussed, as according to recent statistics, lay women occupy a prominent place in the Lasallian network (56%).

All these presentations enabled participants to recognize the impact of women in the formation of children and young people. The women also expressed their wishes to better accomplish their mission.

The first week ended with a day of spiritual recollection to enable participants to reflect on Lasallian feminine spirituality.

During the second week, the Solidarity and Development Secretariat hosted a day presenting the realities, challenges and obstacles facing women and girls in today's world, including access to education, injustice and lack of inclusion.

Presentations on how to support and accompany women and girls in the Lasallian Family in the areas of spirituality, Lasallian Formation and Association were also given. The theme of Lasallian leadership was also addressed, and participants assessed the needs of women to foster their commitment to the Lasallian mission. To this end, at the end of the meeting, individually, by Region, and in language groups, all participants had time to plan initiatives and programs to support women and girls.

This CIL enabled me to realize the singular place occupied by women in education, to understand that to serve is to rule, that to educate is a noble ministry at the service of humanity. I also liked the metaphor of the "Church of the apron", where the layperson, the consecrated person and the priest put on the apron of service to others. This is the Church of Jesus, whose only sacred adornment is to take the cloth and gird it (Jn 13:2-5) to serve others.

Edith TOUVI,
Signum Fidei of Togo, DILAO

YOUNG LASALLIANS IN KENYA

The group was born in 2007 in Nairobi, precisely at Tangaza University and more specifically at CTIE (Christ the Teacher Institute for Education). The main players in this movement are young students, in formation stage or former students, young Brothers, teachers and members of the administration. It is coordinated by the Brothers in the spirit of Saint John Baptist de La Salle's charism for Christian educators.

The Brothers' role is to ensure that everything runs smoothly according to the Lasallian charism, while uniting the young people in the same human and Christian values. As for the young people themselves, they demonstrate maturity, dedication and commitment to the smooth running of the group.

Young Lasallians are involved in the Lasallian Educational Mission through various activities carried out in their environment. All of the above are dedicated to helping change and transform the lives of young people, especially the poor, through education. They have in mind the mission and vision of CTIE: *"CTIE strives to prepare educators, educational leaders and lifelong learners committed to transforming society through education and other human service-oriented activities"; "CTIE transforms society by empowering learners to lead ethical lives of service and leadership"*. Let's not forget that this movement revolves around three pillars: Faith, Community and Service, which help young people stay focused in the charism of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

Each academic year, the "Young Lasallians" movement holds an opening and closing meeting. These meetings first bring together the leaders, including Brothers and coordinators. These meetings are held to establish a schedule of activities and evaluations for the movement.

During this academic year 2022-2023, the Young Lasallians had set themselves a number of goals to achieve and activities to carry out to reinvigorate their commitments following De La Salle. The objectives were to extend the movement beyond Tangaza, to the various neighboring Universities. In doing so, young people share their own experiences with their friends, while explaining what the movement is all about. A good number of young people attended because they felt touched by the way of life of young Lasallians, bearers of fraternity between brothers and sisters, living together in communion and brotherhood, but also faith in God, who is the author of everything. It is important to note that the fraternity that reigns within the group allows everyone to feel loved and considered. It is lived out in moral, spiritual, material and financial support. In this spirit of solidarity, young people are open and willing to help members who are overwhelmed by a problem.

Recollections, days of reflection and Eucharistic celebrations have been the spiritual means of animating a spirit of faith, zeal and collaboration among the young people in the group throughout the academic year. The themes are well chosen and adapted to the different situations

of our daily lives. Spiritual exercises help young people to strengthen their faith in God. A number of acts of charity and goodwill have been demonstrated throughout the year.

Planting trees on the grounds of the Saint Charles Lwanga Scholasticate community allows the brothers to absorb pure oxygen. Through this activity, the young people participate with the spirit of the Holy Father, Pope Francis who says in one of his encyclicals, "*the environment is our common home.*"

A visit to the "Good Shepherd" center for children living with disabilities (cerebral palsy, autism, etc.) The youngsters were very dedicated and committed to the services. They brought a few gifts to support the children and the religious who take care of them. It was an act of faith and fraternity that the young people showed towards the children. A gesture much appreciated by the religious in charge of the center. The smiles on their faces gave the young people joy and confidence, as part of this benevolent look at the poor and marginalized, with a view to supporting and accompanying them in their handicap.



At the end of the academic year, a meeting is held to evaluate and give guidelines to the young people, leaving on long vacations, so that they are always animated by the spirit of faith, communion and service in their respective families. The closing of the activities for this academic year 2022-2023 was marked by the presentation of certificates of recognition for the active participation of some within the "Young Lasallians" group for more than two, three and four years.

All in all, we can say that the Young Lasallian Movement is international in scope, and aims to support young people in their faith journeys to reach out to those around them and build a better world.

Brother Dieu Merci NLANDU KALAMBOTE,
Animator of KYLA (Kenya Young Lasallian Association)

MOZAMBIQUE SECTOR: TESTIMONIAL ON RETURNING FROM STUDIES

A young Brother from Mozambique shares his experience after his professional studies at Tangaza University College.

Greetings, dear De La Salle Brothers and Lasallian collaborators!

I am delighted to share my life story with you, as a Brother who recently returned to the Mozambique sector (Charles Lwanga district) after years of study in Kenya. My journey of education, growth and spiritual development can be a source of inspiration for others. I am delighted to take this opportunity to share my experience and welcome back.

➤ **The road to Kenya - Expanding horizons through knowledge**

I am Brother Manuel Luis Fernando, the first Mozambican Brother sent to Kenya for the Novitiate and Scholasticate with a deep desire to broaden my understanding of religious life in fraternity and enrich my ability to serve our Congregation.



Immersed in the renowned Tangaza University College, I engaged in rigorous studies with renowned professors and explored the wisdom of linguistic textbooks. My commitment to scholarship is exemplified by the words of Proverbs 18:15: *"The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it."*

During my time in Kenya, I had the privilege of studying the cultural and historical contexts of biblical teachings and society in general, as well as in the world of education. I was inspired by this passage in Romans 12:5: *"So in Christ, though many, we are one body, and each member belongs to all the others."*

➤ **Spiritual growth and community - Embracing unity in diversity**

During my studies, I was also an active member of the De La Salle Centre community in Kenya. My experiences testify to the strength of unity and the power of embracing diversity. By participating in interfaith dialogues, attending worship services of various denominations and building lasting relationships, I have witnessed the beauty of De La Salle's worldwide Christian fellowship.

1 Corinthians 12:12 beautifully sums up the essence of my stay: *"Just as a body, though one, has many members, but all its many members form one body, so it is with Christ."* I collaborated with students, Sisters and Brothers from different countries, engaging in respectful discussions that led to a deeper understanding of our faith. This reminds us of our common love for Christ, which transcends borders and denominations.

➤ **Coming home - A joyful reunion and continued growth**

The news of my return spread like wildfire, filling their hearts with anticipation and gratitude. The Sector actively prepared for my return home, adorning our chapel with vibrant

decorations and organizing a grand celebration. They remembered the parable of the prodigal son in St. Luke's Gospel 15:22, where the father exclaims, "*Bring the most beautiful robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.* "

➤ **Happy reunions - Sharing blessings and wisdom**

The long-awaited day arrived, and my heart filled with joy as I returned to our area. Tears of joy flowed freely as they embraced me, thanking God for my safe return. The special service held in my honor was a testament to their love, appreciation and desire to learn from the wisdom I had gained.

My audience was attentive to the stories of my encounters with other Brothers of other nationalities, scholars and students who inspired me during my studies. I shared profound teachings from the Bible, such as Psalm 133:1 "*How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity*". It reminded me of the meaning of unity and the blessings that flow from it.

As I begin a new chapter of service to our congregation and sector, I look forward to much inspiration and renewed dedication. My journey has convinced me of the transformative power of education, the strength of community and the indissoluble bond that unites us as followers of Christ.

I remain hopeful that I will continue to grow spiritually, acquire new knowledge and contribute to our congregation and our sector. This is my story to highlight the need to seek knowledge, welcome diversity and strengthen our faith. Let us strive together, and may the Lord help us to create a vibrant community that reflects the unity and love of Christ.

Warm greetings!

May the Lord bless you!

Brother Manuel Luis Fernando,
Charles Lwanga District

SILVER JUBILEE OF BROTHER MOSES ABUNYA

Every year, Lasallian institutions celebrate May 15, Founder's Day or Saint La Salle's Day as it is known here in Naka. Mount La Salle College and La Salle Primary School in Naka and La Salle College in Ondo always anticipate this day as a special one, and most students never forget such a day. This year's May 15 took on a special cachet because of another celebration associated with it. Brother Moses ABUNYA's 25 years of commitment, service and fidelity to God's people.



Brother Moses is currently Auxiliary Visitor of the Lwanga District. He is set'95 graduate of Mount La Salle College in Naka, founded in 1982.



The event was honored by two Bishops, Brother Betre FISSEHA, Lwanga District Visitor, Priests and Religious, Lasallian students, parents, ABUNYA's family, Christians and people of good will from Naka and beyond.

The Bishop of the Diocese of Makurdi, Most Revd. Dr. Chikpa Wilfred ANAGBE, CMF, in his homily, highlighted the contributions made by Mount La Salle College, Naka to the nation. The Bishop highlighted the number of Priests, Religious, government officials and many others in different fields who have graduated from Mount La Salle. He appreciates the Brothers for having set and maintained standards for making Mount La Salle College in Naka, not an examination center, but an educational center. The Bishop pointed out that it is difficult to speak of fidelity in the religious, priestly, conjugal and business worlds. Fidelity is a virtue that is lacking in our world. We live in a world where everyone wants to be free from constraint and dependence. A world where no one wants to make sacrifices, but everyone wants everything to be easy, said the Bishop.

The Bishop encouraged Brother Moses ABUNYA to move forward. He noted that many Priests and Religious want to be part of the Congregation on their terms, not the Congregation's terms. Age is success, and what we celebrate is success. We celebrate fidelity and commitment. He gave examples of how fidelity is interpreted in our world. One example where a divorcee writes about commitment in married life: how to live a faithful married life? This attitude has created motivational speakers who continue to deceive people. It is necessary for people to pay attention to the deceptions of seductive speakers. The Bishop noted that once you have answered the call to be a Religious, you must not go back.

The Brother Visitor of the Lwanga District, in his address, underlined the qualities of Brother Moses ABUNYA; he noted and described Brother Moses as intellectual, well educated, sociable, respectful, joyful, humble, obedient, open and trustworthy. The Visitor appreciated him for his life in the congregation and prayed that he would continue to live his spirit. These qualities made him the best choice as Auxiliary Visitor of the Lwanga District. He is among the happiest Brothers in the District and probably in the Region and the world, says the Visitor.

Brother Moses thanked everyone who had gathered for the event. He emphasized how filled with joy he is to see all these participants. He is grateful to everyone for coming to celebrate with him and for their various contributions to this event.

Most Revd. Dr. Isaac BUNDE DUGU, of the Catholic Diocese of Katsina-Ala, emphasized how Brother Moses' presence brought the events to life while he was still working as pastoral coordinator at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria. He described Brother Moses as a great and accomplished man. He came to celebrate his dedication and love of God. He came to celebrate a great and close friend. The Bishop concluded his remarks with an invitation for a young diocese to collaborate with the De La Salle Brothers.

The celebration ended with a reception after Mass, with parades, cultural dances and sports. This event was witnessed by Lasallian schools in Nigeria and other schools in Naka. It was a great day of joy and thanksgiving.

You can send your messages of congratulations to Brother Moses ABUNYA.

E-mail: abunyam81@gmail.com

Video of the Eucharistic Celebration: <https://fb.watch/kP2BQ6XX5w/>

Brother Cornelius UCHENNA

LASALLIAN FORMATION IN RWANDA: IDENTITY CRITERIA FOR THE VITALITY OF LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The identity criteria for the vitality of Lasallian educational institutions are principles that make it possible to distinguish the characteristics of Lasallian education and the way in which they are lived.

This was the theme of the workshop organized by the Lasallian Delegation in Rwanda. This two-day formation session brought together 95 Lasallians, Brothers, Guadeloupean Sisters and lay people. The various presentations emphasized the vitality of our Lasallian educational mission.

Living in a Lasallian ministry requires not only knowledge, but also vitality, so that those served perceive the greatness of this ministry. This is done by providing quality education that compassionately responds to people's needs. An African proverb says: "*It takes a village to educate a child*". That's why Lasallians, Brothers, Sisters and Partners work together to provide an integral education for children and young people.

To begin with, we need to remember some of the inspiration we received from our founder Saint John Baptist de La Salle where he used the following biblical terms - teachers are like "*ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ*". This word reminds us to always remember to be advocates for young people and adults, especially the most vulnerable in the place of Jesus Christ, and to act as he did when he taught people justice. As Lasallian teachers, we must improve ourselves and live the spirit of zeal in educating children for God and for the Society. And that brings us to the next question: How does Lasallian education serve?

Lasallian education responds creatively to the needs of the people it serves, in keeping with the Lasallian style of being open to all people, regardless of race, class, religion, ability, strength

or weakness. This helps to consider each child in all his or her dimensions with a view to growth. To meet the needs of young people, we cannot forget to proclaim the Gospel explicitly, accepting religious pluralism with respect and hope, in addition to the basic needs of life and understanding.

St. John Baptist de La Salle speaks of the vocation of the teacher in his *First Meditation for the time of retreat*: "That it is God who, by his providence, has established Christian schools" because "he wants them all to come to the knowledge of the truth [...] that all may be saved. God by



his mercy has given you such a ministry [...] to instruct by teaching, and to exhort, by exciting those (children) who are entrusted to your care [...] for these children being simple and most ill-bred, it is necessary that those (teachers) who help them to be saved, do so in such a simple manner, that all the words they will say to them will be clear and easy to understand" (MTR, 193). Not only does Lasallian education meet the needs of individuals, it also provides quality education in all communities through accompaniment.

Having identified the needs, we need to educate these young people, especially those with the greatest difficulties, in such a way as to make them the focus of all educational programs/activities, and to go beyond exam success and academic results. This is done through accompaniment; because listening to the person you serve with compassion is the key to success. Building a culture of quality, Lasallian teachers continue to provide assessments that support students' ongoing achievements, and to be able to adapt experiences and methodologies to the needs of society and follow retraining programs.

Finally, as Lasallian educators, we must continue to consolidate the spirit of zeal in our minds so as to become capable of serving the young, the poor and the vulnerable by responding to their needs and helping them discover their role in building a better world in social and religious contexts through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

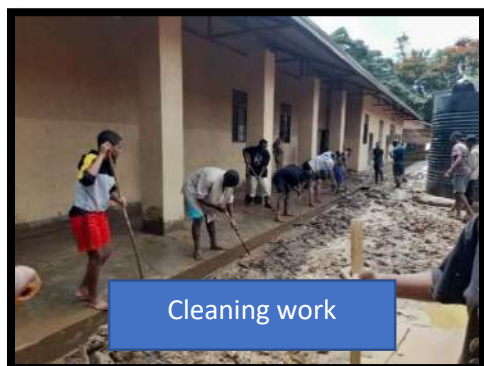
Mrs. Flora UWINEZA,
English teacher at De La Salle Teacher Training Center

FLOOD AT THE NYUNDO ART SCHOOL - RWANDA

History repeats itself. And when will the solution come? It was May 7, 2020, when the Nyundo Arts School was flooded by the waters of the Sebeya River. The boys' dormitories, refectory, classrooms, kitchen and food store were submerged. Sacks of rice, sugar, salt, corn flour and beans turned to mud.



It took the intervention of soldiers and prisoners to clean-up the school. The Brothers, who manage the school belonging to the diocese, with the help of others, made every effort to get the students back to school. The school is the only one of its kind in the country for over 70 years. The government also made an effort by building a wall in front of the school to block the water.



Unfortunately, nature has its laws. The same situation or story is repeating itself on the night of May 2 to 3, 2023. Three years, almost to the day! At 2 a.m., 178 boys were awakened by water; some, not knowing what was happening, complained that the principal had woken them during the night. When they set foot on the floor, they realized that their dormitory was no longer the same. Everyone made an effort to save what they could, while the older students, who had experienced the same

event in 2020, ran to the food store to save what they could lift. Sadly, the water was rising so fast that not much could be saved. After just one hour, it was time to run. The water was higher than the windows. Suddenly, history repeated itself. The classrooms, refectory, storeroom, dormitory, new kitchen, disciplinary office and workshops were filled with water.

How to go about it? This is a difficult situation as we approach the feast of the Holy Founder on May 15. Shouldn't we give thanks to God for sparing our lives? The students and staff of the school are mobilized for the clean-up. It is not easy, but it is possible. Thank you to the Government, which stepped in so quickly to provide our students with school kits. Exactly one week after the disaster, classes resumed, even though the students were not wearing uniforms. Clean-up work continued, but over the weekend. The feast of the Holy Founder was an occasion for thanksgiving, and a Mass was celebrated in the school chapel. But the question remains. When will a lasting solution be found?

Brother Ferdinand BIZIYAREMYE
Rwanda Delegation

SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARISH OF SAINT JOHN OF COCODY

On the occasion of the Jubilee of the Parish of St. John of COCODY, on Sunday May 21, the Parish made an act of gratitude to all the religious communities present in its territory. At the end of the Eucharist, over twenty religious congregations received a certificate of recognition signed by His Excellency Cardinal Jean-Pierre KUTWÀ and the parish priest, Father Hyppolyte AGNIGORI. There were 6 male congregations present: Brothers of the Christian Schools, Brothers of the Focolare Movement, Chemin Neuf Community, Jesuits and Dominican Brothers. Of course, the Sisters were in the majority, bringing their characteristic joy and spirit of service.



The Eucharist was presided over by the prior of the Dominicans, who reminded us that their community was at the origin of the parish of Saint John, and that the first parish priest was a Dominican father. It was a beautiful celebration, as the parish is wont to do. Afterwards, the religious were invited to enjoy a fraternal meal on the parish premises. It was an opportunity to make some wonderful discoveries, as the religious of the parish don't usually get together.

Brother Joan SALA COLL,
Regional House -Abidjan

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU, BROTHER ÉTIENNE!

April 24, 1983, a date to remember as a future great man came into this world on exactly such a day 40 years ago. You could have to be a griot to teach us all the implications that the birth of such a multifaceted character has brought to our society. Perhaps Brother Valère or Brother Pierre, who handle the pen and the spoken word so well, could tackle the task. For this is no more and no less than a little man predestined to dominate lightning and thunder. This is our future **Brother SOMBEWENDE**, named **Étienne** at his baptism, from the great Mossi **SAWADOGO** family, a Brother of the Christian Schools in the DILAO district.



In our small community, where members come and go, he is known as the man of relationships - for who does not know him and phone him? – He is known as the resourceful Brother, but first and foremost the Brother Secretary who solves all problems. A regional or executive secretary, depending on the circumstances. In any case, from his almost two-meter

height, he dominates at least two languages: that of the bushy-haired Boris Johnson, a bit like our "Trump", and that of his friend Macron, whose mere mention makes him jump. And let us not forget the language he speaks most intimately - Mossi - and bits of Catalan, which he likes to pronounce askew.

For a while, his favorite pastime was DIY and gardening. Corn and vegetables grew wonderfully, and papaya trees bloomed and lifted him to his knees, but he knew how to pick them no matter how high they were. However, when he decided to found a poultry parish, his ups and downs changed in the blink of an eye, as his parishioners had the mischievous pleasure of digging up all the seeds that our Brother was striving to bury in the ground. And if, by some misfortune, one did manage to germinate timidly, the little shoots of leaves became a feast for all the cacklers.

With motherly love, he set about making a worthy palace for his new boarders, so that the mother hens could have more comforts than their little heads could imagine, while keeping an eye on their lively offspring. Then he made sure the henhouse was put in order, for what the name evokes in the unconscious of disorder and cacophony is not undeserved. As a good disciple of De La Salle, he knows every "parishioner". At a glance, he understands what they want to tell him, and their language holds no secrets for him. He's happy to admonish those who do not respect their neighbors' privacy and lay eggs in their homes or even above them, using surprisingly gentle reasoning. But they're stubborn and won't listen to his friendly lectures.

However, there's still one big secret to discover: has he or has he not succeeded in awakening in them feelings of pride in the glorious future that awaits them? They should think about it, because the Brothers' feasts are celebrated according to very precise codes, and what is joy for some may not be for all.

For a while, he was preoccupied with a worry. The beautiful adventure of the henhouse parish gave rise to dishonest envy. Rodents had the audacity to surreptitiously enter the poultry kingdom, stealing their food and sometimes even their young. It was open warfare, and it is hard to say whether the victory was total. In any case, there was bloodshed. Cats and dogs came to his aid, but always with mixed results.

As I was saying, our illustrious Brother has many strings to his bow. Not least of which is his ability to cook, although I doubt his protégés would agree. He is also an all-round chauffeur who is always available and can be worked on at any time.

Our resident sacristan (perhaps that is why he is nicknamed the "curé du poulailler" - the priest of the henhouse) is always faithful to keeping the chapel prayerful and pleasant.

And what can we say about his liveliness in the community, brightening up conversation and setting the mood? In Brother Ferdinand, he found the perfect complement for regular, muscular walks. Brother Pierre, our fourth member, was happy to join in, making a perfect, well-matched trio.

Thank you, Brother Etienne, for who you are, for your dedication and your good humor. You willingly lend yourself to any service that is requested of you, those that require strength or know-how in many fields such as computing, communication, fountain maintenance... or simply to be patient when there is a sick person or to put up with us by correcting our faults and oversights.

Thank you, too, for all your contributions to the community, your communicative joy, your sharing in community prayers, your example of faith and uprightness. Your love for the Eucharist and for Mary is particularly evident in the care you take in preparing prayers, the rosary or deep bowing before the Blessed Sacrament. We wish you a very happy birthday, probably your last with us, and a pleasant stay in the United States, where you can continue your studies and prepare for your life as a Brother by being a model of creativity and dedication to young people.

Brother Joan SALA COLL,
Regional House -Abidjan

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO FRÈRE ANANI VALÈRE

The elders and sages of other times, despite their wisdom, knew how to call on griots to highlight the greatness of the heroes of times gone by. Since we do not have one of our own, because we want to pay homage to the griot himself, we are going to use our clumsy pen and the clumsy language of the man who once had this budding griot in his school when he was a young schoolboy in Togoville.

It is about a certain ADONSOU, born on a Monday to a courageous and determined mother, because as his first name ANANI indicates (among the Ewe of southern Togo), he is his mother's fourth boy in a row. It is a prelude to a novel. His father wanted more boys after only two and twelve girls with the first wives. And now his latest wife, our little boy's mother, has gone all out and fulfilled her husband's expectations by giving him this sixth strong, handsome boy. And to top it all off, at baptism he was named after the valiant Roman soldier Valerius, who gave his life confessing his faith. This predestined boy was born in a prosperous year. In those years, the Church was abuzz with the immediate preparation of the great Vatican II Council, announced by the good Pope John, carried along by the breath of the Spirit. When the Council was concluded on December 8, 1965, our little boy was barely 5 and a half years old, but his mind was attuned to this great sign of the times, and would be forever marked by the whirlwind of reforming thoughts springing from the depths of the Spirit. And he was only 8 years old when the great protests of May '68 broke out. The traces of these events can be seen in his enthusiasm to renovate everything.

Perhaps we did not know it then, but all of nature had announced the imminence of great events. One week before his mother was proclaimed blessed by giving the world a project by a



man of value, a tiny little week before that, a great earthquake, the biggest ever recorded - according to Wikipedia - took place in the south of the world's most stretched country, CHILE. And this country bears a striking resemblance to the little sausage that is the long Togo from which our little hero hails. It was noted with a magnitude of 9.5, the largest ever recorded, causing a great tsunami felt all around the Pacific: from Japan to the Philippines, from Alaska to the Hawaiian Islands. 1960, the year of our dear Brother's birth, was also the year of Africa's independence. This left him with a visceral love for the countries and people of this continent, with all its problems, strengths and hopes.

On the day he was born, May 30, a great light went out, but it will pass on its luminous torch to him, as Elijah did to Elysium. A giant of faith and poetry, Boris PASTERNAK, the famous author of *Dr Zhivago*, Russian by nationality and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, passed away, but another, a Togolese, came back to life, and I think the world gained a lot from it.

His keen antennae picked up not only the waves of the Spirit emanating from eternal Rome, but also those of the May '68 protest movement. His young child's soul picked up everything, and later he would synthesize it harmoniously with his studies in philosophy, pedagogy, science and catechesis, becoming a formator of formators. He would nurture generations of young people and adults through *Mater Christi* and his years as an educator and formator.

To cut a long story short, it would take books to explore every facet of our POLYEDRIC Brother, but let us take a leap and land on our computerized times.

Our regional community has just undergone a tsunami and has been renovated from top to bottom. It's hardly surprising that it took us a while to get our bearings. But the arrival of Brother Valère has been like a new Pentecost. If it took all the quiet energy of our valiant Councilor, Brother Anatole, to make the arrival of the precious pearl that is Brother Valère a reality, once it happened it turned all our community habits upside down: community sharing during and after meals when "time suspends its flight" as the poet said, prayerful prayers on new themes, through videos and PowerPoints of which he is a recognized specialist. We lose ourselves dreaming with so many discoveries and constructive dialogues. And we learn a great deal from his prodigious memory and wide-ranging culture, his wonder at creation and his rational faith in the virtues of ancestral and modern beliefs.

Thank you, Brother Valère, for your sharing on digital technology and your mastery of PowerPoint techniques, which make us want to venture into these modern media that both fascinate and bewitch us; thank you for your aptness, which makes us guess your long hours of reading and "buttock work"; thank you for your prayerful animations that make us want to be filled with God, thank you for your wonder at nature that opens our eyes to the beautiful and the gratuitous, thank you for your love of young people that spurs us on to dedication without measure, and thank you for being our Brother.

Once again, happy birthday, Brother Valère!

**Brother Joan SALA COLL,
Regional House - Abidjan**

ACROSTIC FROM THE CATECHIST'S SON TO THE BROTHERS

Born in Reims, Of **THE** Educator was Reborn in Teaching,
 Return to the poor the joy of your commitment.
 Or evangelize like *Jesus Christ* in the zeal
THE Meeting in faith, make the poor, the little ones, your friends, your cause.
 Real Holy Spirit will surround you, making you love God in all things.

Saint Jean Batiste De La Salle did it.

Are you ready?

I think it is worth it.

Brother Rodrigue Michel DONGMO,
 Scholastic, St Miguel

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, this land, our land AFRICA, welcomed You in the Holy Family of Nazareth: Joseph, Mary and the infant Jesus Christ. A land of peace that preserved You from the murderous violence of Herod. Tell me, please: don't You see the suffering, the misery and the death of your innocent children? Why so much violence and hatred? "I believe in God the Father Almighty..." You have the power to touch the heart of every man and convert it into a heart of flesh that loves in truth. God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, touch the hearts of your children on the continent of AFRICA and all over the EARTH, so that they may be filled with your LOVE, the source of true peace that lasts for eternity. Amen.



Brother Mougounsi François KIENOU,
 West Africa District

FOR YOUR TEXTS TO BE PUBLISHED :

- The text must not exceed 600 words
- The text must be dated and signed by the author
- Send a maximum of two well-chosen photos, 500kb maximum resolution.
- Respect the deadline reminded by the secretary.

General Councillor's calendar

- **March 26 to May 12:** Regional office, Abidjan / Ivory Coast
- **June 7 to 28:** USA - (San Francisco, Browning, Chicago, Philadelphia)
- **July 22:** Regional office, Abidjan / Ivory Coast
- **August 2 to 8:** Burkina-Faso, 1^{er} Chapter DILAO
- **August 9 to 20 :** Abidjan
- **August 24 to September 1:** visit to Paraguay and Argentina
- **September 1 to 16:** Norendino, Colombia (RELAN and General Councilor)
- **September 12 to 14 :** visit to Guatemala
- **September 25:** Opening of the plenary session of the General Council
- **October 5 to 19:** plenary session continued.

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE, PRAY FOR US.

LIVE JESUS IN OUR HEARTS, FOREVER!