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Chief editor: *Br. Pierre OUATTARA*

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

Infography and Translation: *Br. Pierre Aymard BAKO*

To send articles: *relaf@lasalle.org*

WebSite : *www.relaf.info*

Dear Brothers, dear Sisters, dear Lasallians

An assembly, midway between the 45th and the 46th General Chapters, brought to Rome the Brother Visitors, Auxiliary Visitors, Presidents of Delegations and Delegates. Assisted by the various Secretariats and Services of the General House, they worked with the Superior General and his Council from March 4 to 17, 2018. This intercapi-tular assembly aimed to evaluate the progress made in the realization of the propositions of the 45th General Chapter, to celebrate what has been already accomplished, to plan for the way forward and perhaps to highlight what proves to be impossible ... They also got to know what is being planned for the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the ascension into heaven of our holy Founder.

I am sharing with you some powerful words from the speech of Brother Robert Schieler, Superior General, addressed to the participants at the closing ceremony:



« We are blessed with so many good Brothers and Partners doing wonderful things for children, young people and adults. We have shared the richness and vitality of the global Lasallian Mission Through presentations, conversations, writings on windows (...). Each day we brought our experience to prayer and liturgy where we opened our mind and hearts to the Reign of God and the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.

During our inspiring and encouraging time together a new Lasallian ministry opened: a school for boys in South Sudan! Brothers, this is good news indeed! We as an Institute are ready to bring the Gospel, hope and Lasallian education to the youth of this newest civil war-torn nation. This is one more example of the vitality of the Lasallian mission today. This initiative, following the Fratelli Project, the other 50 new initiatives since 2014 reported by Solidarity and Development and the descriptions of existing and planned regional “Beyond the Border” project are just some of the good news I hope you will share with your Brothers and Partners. We are really « on the way » ! So many new ministries for the poor and vulnerable are waiting and available for young Brothers, Lasallians Partners and all our Brothers who desire to take part. (...) All of this is in addition to the great and extraordinary work already taking place in your schools and educational centers. Thank you, Brothers and Partners! »

I wish each one of you a joyful journey towards Easter!

Your Brother in De La Salle, Pierre Ouattara

Abidjan: Meeting of District and Delegation Secretaries

For the first time in the history of the Institute, all the secretaries of Districts of RELAF met to know each other, and to give themselves means to work together in synergy. The participants to this meeting were:

General Secretariat of the Institute: HNO Antxon

Secretariat of the RELAF: Brother Pierre Aymard BAKO

District of Antananarivo: Brother Cyrille

District of Central Africa: Brother Matthew and Miss Glwadys

District of West Africa: Brother Jean Bruno

District of Charles Lwanga: Brother Betre

District of Congo - Kinshasa: Brother Norbert

District of Gulf of Benin: Brother Michel

Delegation of Rwanda: Brother Emmanuel

From February 6 (arrival) to February 10 (departure), the 9 secretaries of the RELAF gathered in Saint Miguel scholasticate community to devote themselves, to fraternize for the mission of the secretariat. The Brother Secretary General set as **objectives** for this meeting:

To know each other, share the realities we live and the difficulties we encounter

To help the provincial secretaries of the RELAF in the implementation of the Administrative Directory and the Protocol for the management of administrative documents

To help secretaries be conversant with the data base of the Institute and after the session to be attentive to update progressively the data relating to educational centres, and the lay staff.



The Scholasticate was a conducive environment of silence and fraternity for morning prayers before the Eucharistic celebrations that were very well animated, thanks to the many talents in music. This was very helpful for personal prayers and reflection. We had delicious and healthy meals to keep us going.

Brother Antxon, from English to French, accompanied us with competence like an expert of the database of the Institute.

Brother Pierre Aymard Bako, the RELAF Secretary was the Angel of the session. He was very attentive to ensure that all was going on well. He was at the time organizer, assistant, facilitator and translator from English to French and from French to English.

The session ended successfully. We ended the session with the celebration of patron feast of Saint Miguel scholasticate.

*Brother Michel Koassi Messan,
District of Gulf of Benin*

Togoville: Signum Fidei Consecration and Silver Jubilee

During its 3th Chapter, held from December 23 to 29, 2017 in Vogán at the Sisters of the Cenacle Centre on the theme "In faith, let us discern and build the future", the District of Gulf of Benin celebrated on Sunday 24 December 2017 two major events. It was the consecration of the first member of the Signum Fidei Fraternity of the District and the silver jubilee of the Perpetual Profession of two Brothers.

In front of a large crowd that came for the event, the Holy Mass, which began at 9:00 am, was concelebrated by five priests, presided over by the Vicar General of the Diocese of Aného, Very Reverend Father Honoré AMEGIMON.

The celebrants were surrounded by Brothers of the District, Brother Paulin DEGBE, Visitor of the District of Gulf of Benin, Brother Julien DIARRA, Visitor of the District of West Africa accompanied by Brother Denis TRAORE, with the presence of an important guest, Brother Pierre OUATARRA, General Councillor, friends and members of their respective families. The liturgical animation was led by the school choir, under the direction of Mr. KOU-GLO Kossi Christophe.



It all began with a big procession in which there were the jubilant Brothers, the member of the Signum Fidei Fraternity and The Brothers. After the homily on the daily readings, there was the consecration of the member of the Signum Fidei Fraternity, that is, Edith TOUVI, teacher of Spanish at Togoville High School. Then, the Assembly witnessed the renewal of vows of Brothers Valère Adonsou and Michel Messan, act of consecration which marks the 25 years of perpetual vows of the two Brothers.

Everything happened in a prayerful atmosphere, filled with emotions that conveyed the desire of the celebrants to go a step forward on the path of lasalian commitment.

After the Mass, the Brothers' community invited the participants to a fraternal agape in the school hall where there was a sharing of dishes and gifts.

Everything ended around 2:00 pm with the departure of the Brothers to Vogán to continue with the District chapter.

Edith TOUVI, Teacher of Spanish at Togoville High School

District of Gulf of Benin

Tanzania: International tournament in Arusha 5

La Salle Catholic Primary School Nairobi attended an international tournament commonly known as the East Africa Chipukizi Cup which started on the 12th of December to 18th of December 2017. The tournament was held at Friedkin Recreation Centre (TGT) fields in Arusha, Tanzania which is located right opposite Arusha Airport.

The Tournament which was organized and coordinated by the Future Stars Soccer Academy under the stewardship of one Mr. Alfred Mateli, a very renowned coach in Arusha, attracted teams and clubs from different schools and clubs from three different countries in Africa: Teams and Clubs from Kenya, a Club from Ghana and two clubs from Tanzania. These teams participated in different matches grouped according to the age of the pupils.

Tanzanian teams were Future Stars Academy and First Touch Academy. The Kenyan teams were Ujuzi Soccer Academy, Soccer Africa Kenya, Soccer Talent Academy, Ligi Ndogo Academy, Moi Education Centre, All Saints Cathedral Primary team and La Salle Catholic Primary school team. The team from Ghana was the Icons football team.



La Salle school took a team of five categories: under seven boys, under nine boys, under eleven boys, under thirteen boys and under thirteen girls.

This was the first international tournament that La Salle school took part in since its opening two years ago. The teachers, parents and pupils who took part in this very significant event were very happy and thank the administration for having organized the event. This is the first step to a greater achievement at La Salle”, Mr. Kyale, the Head of Sports and Extra-curricular Activities Coordinator commented.

All the categories participated with a minimum of five matches per day. Under nine category were able to draw during their match while the other teams lost by a small margin. We look forward to training more and posting better results in future championships. “It was a good experience and valuable exposure to our team and the school in general.” Mr. Kyale commented.

Brother Michael Otieno

Lwanga District of Africa



Sharing of Brother Jacob on inter-religions dialogue

In the following lines, Brother Jacob gives us his reflection and his research on Islamology in five points. First of all, what definition can be given to inter-religions dialogue which is wrongly assimilated to interreligious dialogue? What are the forms of possible dialogue? For what purposes? And before ending with the conditions of a true inter-religions dialogue, he talks about the divine meaning of this dialogue.

What is inter-religious dialogue?

Inter-religions dialogue can be defined as the set of positive and constructive inter-religions relationship with people and communities of various beliefs, in order to know and enrich one another. It can therefore be said that in a certain way, everyone experiences it once they consider with kindness and respect the other religion and its believer. The believer cannot be dissociated from the religion carrying the message that makes them live.

The different forms of dialogue

There are various forms of dialogue: life dialogue constitutes the ordinary relationships of the neighbourhood, lived in a spirit of openness and good-neighbourliness. Dialogue may also take the form of a common commitment in the service of shared causes for life in society and for the good of all. Sometimes, a theological dialogue discussion happens when each person expresses what they believe in. But at this level we need to be very careful because it requires more specialization from either side with regard to the knowledge of the dogmas of one's own religious tradition. It also happens that dialogue takes the form of a more intimate spiritual sharing in which we can entrust mutually aspects of one's itinerary, his experience as a believer. Even the hermit in his solitude, can pray in dialogue, if he is in this openness of heart. This variety of forms of dialogue says a lot on its extent and its fertility.

Political purposes of dialogue

Inter-religions dialogue is needed, not as a luxury but as a necessity, for peace. We often assign to religions the responsibility of conflicts, sometimes wrongly. However, let's recognize that religions contribute, by deviating from the Absolute they witness, to amplify and radicalize conflicts that lead to unimaginable horrors. This drift should not hide the fact that religions are all carrying a message of peace as Pope Francis recalls about Islam : *"The affection for the true believers of Islam must lead us to avoid odious generalizations, because the real Islam and an adequate interpretation of the Koran are opposed to any violence."* (Evangélii Gaudium n°253).



In fact conflicts arise in the hearts of people. Religions have the duty to accompany people so that they find in themselves, through an inner healing and a progressive disarmament, peace to which they aspire. Dialogue helps each religion to live its message, to accomplish its mission in a peaceful manner and not to take the self for the Absolute. For every believer, he is a privileged means to enter into a larger plan of God and a communion which goes beyond the borders of the poor limits of exclusiveness. For the world, dialogue is a path of peace. But dialogue must be done in the face of headwinds. It is no secret to anyone that a lot of people prefer fishing in murky water. Yet, the religious thread is one of the most sensitive to blunt the critical spirit of believers of all religions. On the international scene, severe conflicts are amplified by political instrumentalisation of religion: the example of the Ivorian, Central African Republic, Israeli-Palestinian, DAECH conflicts... are proof to this. Religious difference like any other difference has its share of discomfort.

A confession/ conversion of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church has really become aware of the importance of dialogue and her role in the process of this dialogue, during the Vatican Council II. The church is committed to an authentic approach to conversion. She has declared her willingness to recognize the constitutive link which connects her to Judaism, to live in the esteem of Muslims, to testify of the respect for all the non-Christian religions: "For the first time in her history, she says in the conciliar text *Nostra Aetate* on "The relationships of the Catholic Church with the non-Christian religions: *the Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She considers with sincere respect these ways of acting and living, these rules and doctrines which often provide a beam of truth that enlightens all people.*" (N.E n°2)

In acting this way, far from relativising the truth, she recognizes even more its magnitude. The Church believes that the truth she confesses is the Christ, "the Eternal Word, Light from Light", a Christ who is disproportionately greater than she imagines. She confesses that he is mysteriously present and that a beam of his light passes through the other religions. She accepts not to have the exclusive possession. She recognizes a responsibility towards other believers. There is much to be done to implement this astonishing dimension of its mission.

In acting this way, the Church becomes an artisan of peace and a servant of unity in the world. For a person who would be only attached to dialogue for the sake of living together, of avoiding conflicts, defending the environment, building peace... as much as this commitment is necessary, that person would not have yet perceived the very nature of dialogue. If dialogue has undoubtedly a political dimension, it gives access to a mystery far greater.

Divine meaning of dialogue

Dialogue has a divine meaning that Pope Paul VI was able to express. The honest man sees in inter-religions and intercultural dialogue a necessity and a means to ensure peace. In addition to this, the Christian sees in dialogue, meeting of men and of believers between them, one of the preferred forms of God's alliance with humanity. Dialogue is the form that God took in history. The Bible tells how, in the course of history, God in a long and diverse dialogue established with man a conversation. God himself took the initiative of dialogue, so he gave it a divine meaning. Each of us has had in their life amazing and decisive meetings in which they were able to get a glimpse of this divine meaning. Jesus showed the strength of his mission by multiplying meetings. He allowed himself to be transformed by the meeting of the pagan woman or that of the Roman centurion. The dialogue which God had the initiative helps understand the kind of relationships we must seek to establish and promote with people in general and in particular with the believers of other religions. Dialogue can be experienced by everyone. It is not reserved to experts or specialists in Islam, experts in religious sciences or recognized theologians.

Conditions of dialogue

Inter-religions dialogue has its conditions. The person who goes to meet the other person does not silence his identity, far from running the risk to convert himself to another religion, he deepens his own faith through testimony and questions he welcomes. We have sometimes opposed dialogue and announcement. What a curious understanding of dialogue! What would be a relationship in which we would silence what we believe in? Where would be the respect due to self, to one's own faith and even more to one's interlocutor? On the contrary, what an extremely distorted understanding of the mission to think that we can announce without consideration of what the other person carries, outside of any dialogue! Inter-religion dialogue is not a pretext to pass on a message and succumb to proselytism. It is without limit and without calculation, except to distort it. The honest person demands it, freedom requires it. Dialogue is lived in a total openness. Christian de Chergé, Abbot of the Tibherine monks in Algeria, had said that "*We only meet the other where we look for him*". Anyone who is convinced that Islam is only violence will only find violence in it. Dialogue invites to conversion but the purpose is not a change of religion. Strictly speaking, we do not convert to a religion, we only convert to God alone. In dialogue, everyone is invited to turn more resolutely towards God, usually in their own religious tradition.

To conclude, let's say that culture is a powerful means to fight intolerance. It is therefore a duty to cultivate oneself. If intolerance is gaining ground, it can be linked to the fact that there is lack of knowledge about the other people's culture. Sometimes, we fail to see the full extent of the damage that can be brought about by the ignorance of others, the clichés or prejudice. It may happen that some of our lasallian collaborators, including some Brothers, wonder about the rationale behind a Brother who undertakes to study islamology. The approach undertaken in this article is not intended to convince anyone on the importance of this study option. I believe that its importance is self explanatory. It is rather an approach of fraternal sharing.

Brother Jacob SAWADOGO, student in Classical Arabic and Islamology

Brief News

1. *Opening of a new school in Rumbek*

Br. Bill Firman announced on March 14th the beginning of classes at Rumbek De La Salle High School in South Sudan with 24 students. Br Joseph Alak Deng, first director from South Sudan and Br Jean Pierre Mvumbi from Congo Kinshasa, are the pioneers of this new work.

2. *Silver Jubilee of CELAF - Abidjan Institute*

The CELAF - Institute celebrates 25 years of existence. Here are some events that will mark this jubilee:

- Workshop on formation offer with the participation of the Major Superiors and the leaders of formation houses, March 23rd
- Symposium on education. Theme: "Contribution of education to the meaning of human and otherness in Africa", May 11
- Eucharistic celebration of commemoration on May 12th.

3. The CIL, which is usually celebrated in Rome, will be held from 5 to 16 November 2018 in Nairobi, in the three languages of the Institute. It will be dedicated to the pastoral ministry of lasallian vocations. This offshoring will facilitate the participation of RELAF representatives.

4. Management and Investment formation for Visitors, Auxiliary Visitors and Bursars scheduled for 8-15 July 2018 in Ethiopia.

5. CLAF (thirty-day retreat) planned for August 2018 in Rwanda

Calendar of the Brother General Councillor

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Dates	Events
4 to 18 March	Intercapitulary
28 March	Permesso di soggiorno
17 to 19 April	Board meeting South Sudan /ROME
20 April	Trip Rome – Niamey
21 – 23 April	Visit to Lycée Issa Béri and the Community
24 April	Trip Niamey-Abidjan
MAY	
11 May	Colloquium CELAF Institute
13 to 20 May	Prospection visit in Ghana
21 to 25 May	Regional community annual retreat
26 May	Trip Abidjan- Rome
27 May to 24 June	12 th Session of the General Council

To visit the web sites of the Regions of the Institute

RELAF: Région Lasallienne Afrique-Madagascar. www.relaf.info

RELEM: Région Lasallienne Europe-Méditerranée. www.relem.org

RELAL: Region Latino Americana Lasallista. www.relal.org.co

RELAN: Région Lasallienne de l'Amérique du Nord. www.lasallian.info

PARC: Pacific Asia Regional Conference. www.lasalle-parc.org