

E - HORIZONS

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INTRODUCTION

E-HORIZONS is published twice a year at Mont La Salle, under the invoked patronage of the Most Blessed Virgin, for the De La Salle Christian Brothers of the District of San Francisco. The journal contains articles, notes, reviews, position papers, and memorials on religious and educational matters, as well as occasional poetry. Copies are sent to Brothers listed in the e-mail address directory found in the District website

(www.delasalle.org)

as well as to several Affiliated Members, to many Lasallian Partners, to administrators in various Districts, and to other supporters of the work of the Brothers on the West Coast. Also, a few hardcopy versions of this e-mail attachment go to a small number of Brothers and others in missionary work who do not have e-mail.

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(EXCERPTS)**Robing Ceremony for Christopher Patiño***(And welcome for Novices Br, Peter Nguyen and Br. John Luczkowski)*

By Br. James Joost, FSC

.....

And then there is Saint Christopher. His origins are dubious, shrouded in mystery. But the stories about him tell us that he was definitely a helpful guy to travelers. He would not have been arguing along the road as the apostles in the Gospel and definitely would have been welcoming the little children in the name of Jesus. If St. Christopher had been a Brother, students might say about him as he moved on from their school, “He has done so much for me and my family, I don’t know how to thank him. I want him to know that I am going to work really hard in school. My spirit and the spirit of all the other students will be with him.”

At one level, Robing is about taking on a modified identity, lining up our name with the heritage of namesakes that come before us: our patron saint name, Brothers who share a common name, but most importantly, the name, “Brother.” All three of our new Brothers have committed themselves to a year of deepening the name “Brother” in light of Jesus’ call in the Gospel to welcome the name of Christ that is within others and themselves. All three have committed themselves to forming community in the name “Brother” in light of Paul’s urging to the Colossians to bear with each other and forgive so that the virtue of love can act in binding them together with each other, with God that is within, with our traditions and mission, and with those to whom we minister.

At another level, Robing is about marking a recognition in ourselves as Brothers that our individual name is becoming more of our communal name, “Brother.” When a student says about one of us, “He is a great teacher and Brother because he can inspire other young students to become Brothers.” Or a student says, “He is someone who lets you know all the good you have in yourself. He brings out your spirit.” Those students are seeing the greater presence of Jesus active in all of us as “Brother” and we draw strength in that larger, deeper spirit.

One story about Chris-- it’s a story about many of our vocations. At Bahay Pag-asa in the Philippines where Chris worked two summers, there is a boy named Billy. Like the other boys there, he had to go to jail—very poor kid, caught in miserable living conditions, making a poor decision. At age 16, Billy had about a grade 2 education. He made up for it with a genuine friendliness, loyalty, and honesty that amazed all of us there.

One day Billy and I were sitting and talking—lots of time for it there. Billy said, “Brother, Mano Chris wants to be a Brother?”

I said, “He’s thinking about it. What do you think—should he be a Brother?”

Billy said, “Brother, he’s already a Brother, he doesn’t know it yet.” And then Billy laughed, the way he always does when he know he is right.

I said, “Well, keep praying for him so he figures it out.”

Billy said, as Filipinos do, “Yes Brother.”

....[M]any of our students, articulate better than we can, who we are. They, like Peter's students at Hudson Catholic in Jersey City and John's students at West Catholic in Philadelphia, are ever grateful for the mysterious but powerful way they have been "Brother." Peter, John and Chris are the community of saints in their lives for who they have been. May your year this year become one of deepening your understanding of God working through you, through us. To live our life having our students say, "He is someone who lets you know all the good you have in yourself. He brings out your spirit" and to have them recognize that spirit as the spirit of God working through them is not a bad way of life to dive into.

BROTHER VISITOR'S REMARKS AT ROBING
September 2, 2007

Brothers, this is the first robing ceremony we have had in our District since the year 2000. Even though the Regional Novitiate has been in session here twice since that time, our District has been seven years without a novice. So this is an occasion for joy and special celebration. We have just welcomed Brother Chris into the Institute and all three novices, Brothers John, Peter, and Chris to our District. The presence of three novices for our Region witnesses to us that young people today, few as they may be, still heed the call to become Brothers. I think an occasion such as this also reminds us of the challenge of vocation ministry today. I hope it stimulates us to fulfill better our personal responsibility for vocation ministry. Besides the efforts most of our local communities make to welcome young men who show interest in us and to pray that they will respond to God's call to join us, those of us individually who work with young people directly and get to know them well need to have our eyes out for those who demonstrate qualities that would enable them to become good Brothers. These young men we need to invite, not necessarily directly to become Brothers, but to consider seriously a vocation to our way of life.

I am among those who believe, first of all, that we Brothers are essential to the continuance of the Lasallian educational mission and, secondly, that God has not ceased to call young men to our Institute. But, as we know, God works through us humans, and unless we are visible and inviting, these young people may never hear that call.

The presence of our three novices is testimony to the fact that God's call is answered positively today even in the face of awareness of our diminishing numbers. We need to take hope from

that and strive to keep a steady, even if small, number of novices coming each year—if not from each of our individual Districts, at least from within our Region.

So, let us continue to pray throughout this year for Brothers Chris, John, and Peter, that this novitiate year will be one of transformation for them, and let us pray and work that others may follow them so that at least for the District of San Francisco the seven years of famine may be followed by seven years of plenty or at least seven years of sufficiency!

Please stand now and join in the singing of *Honneur a Toi*.

SAYINGS

Lyndon Johnson when president said: The hardest job of a president is not to do what is right but to know what is right.

Ambrose Bierce wrote something like this: History is an account mostly unreliable about events mostly unimportant perpetrated by leaders mostly scoundrels.

Metanoia in the view of J.K. Galbraith: "Faced with the choice of changing one's mind and proving that there's no need to so, almost everyone gets busy on the proof."

Mark Twain is quoted: "The person who doesn't read good books has no advantage over the person who can't read them."

George Orwell: "Sometimes the first duty of an intelligent person is the restatement of the obvious."

Gloria Pitzer: "About the only thing that comes to us without effort is old age."

Archbishop Romero: "We are workers not masters of His word, ministers not messiahs."

Also: "The Kingdom does not exist only through our efforts; it extends beyond our vision."

BROTHER COLUMBAN DERBY (1914-2008)

Brother Jonathan Cord

"This is what the Lord asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8, *The Jerusalem Bible*)

It seems to me that these simple words of the prophet Micah can be applied to Columban and the way he tried to live as a man, as a Christian, and as a Brother.

WALKING HUMBLLY WITH HIS GOD: Columban did not want a eulogy at his funeral liturgy; but, in his obedient way, he stipulated that if the Brother Visitor were to so direct, a reflection of some sort or other would be tolerated. Some years ago, in a lapse of good sense and right judgment, Columban told me that I would be the one to do that, should there have to be any words at all. He didn't ask me, he told me. I didn't have the temerity to contradict him. He probably thought that I was a safe bet. On occasion, some of us may have experienced a less than humble Columban, but he did have a keen appreciation for his own dignity and that of others and he would use his personal and official authority to promote whatever he thought was for the good of persons, institutions, and situations. We can appreciate the complexity of the human condition and acknowledge that people may mellow over time. Columban much more often than not accommodated the human condition in others. Many of you here know Columban much better than I, especially those of you who lived with him or encountered him in the earlier years.

ACTING JUSTLY, DOING JUSTICE: As has been written in his obituary notice, Columban had a sense of what was right and just and helpful unto salvation for the many people in his life, including the Brothers, and especially his students, whether as a Director-Principal of schools from the age of 27 for some 15 years, as a Director of communities for some 24 years-some 40 years altogether; and always as Teacher--for nigh on to 60 years. A touching example of Columban's love for students and the enduring relationships he enjoyed with so many of them was his determination, God willing, to attend all of the Golden Diploma ceremonies for the Sacred Heart High School men who graduated during his tenure as Principal, a tribute to them which he joyfully fulfilled nine times from 1995 to 2003.

As has been noted elsewhere, Columban became an accomplished organist, who from the age of 17 could have come to grace the concert circuit as a career musician. Columban integrated his musical talent and aspirations into his vocation as a religious Brother, gracing many a sanctuary and ennobling many a worship service, etching a career which spans schools and communities as well as the Archdiocese of San Francisco and St. Mary's Cathedral and, even to the end, Mont La Salle Chapel and especially the Sunday liturgies. Columban believed very strongly in the spiritual power

of Mont La Salle, and especially the liturgy celebrated here, to affect the lives of those who come here. He was determined to maintain the Sunday liturgies and he was devoted to the people who come and especially to the women and men of his beloved choir and the other liturgical ministers.

Columban was for most of his life what Brother Arnold Stewart would call a "chancel prancer." He was ecumenical before his time, daring to set foot in some of the great non-Roman Catholic churches of San Francisco in pursuit of quality music, liturgy, and preaching: First Congregational Church on Post Street, Grace Cathedral atop Nob Hill, the Church of the Advent on Fell Street, and his beloved Trinity Church down Gough Street. Columban would amaze me with his recall of people and events, saying, for example, "I remember when in 1937 Dr. Brookman said such and such in one of his sermons..." Columban spoke with great appreciation and affection for his music teachers and associates at Trinity, especially Benjamin Moore and Harold Mueller, as well as other men and women such as Richard Purvis at Grace Cathedral,

Columban would reminisce about Episcopal Bishops Karl Morgan Block and C. Kilmer Myers, and, although rarely and with chagrin, James Albert Pike. There were Dean Gresham and Dean Julian Bartlett. Columban would talk about those who "toppled over to Rome," most notably John Henry Cardinal Newman. I think Columban was a not-so-closeted Anglican, but he was too faithful to Rome to ever topple over to Canterbury. Columban had the joy of visiting Rome on two occasions and many of us have seen the wonderful photograph of him and Pope John Paul II reaching out for one another.

On the Napa scene Columban would talk about Father Stephen Carpenter at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Reverend Virginia Pearson at First United Methodist Church, and especially Pastor Owen Grams at Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Columban hosted many choral and organ concerts at Mont La Salle Chapel by church and high school choirs of the Napa Valley. No less enthusiastically Columban honored his Roman Catholic heritage, from St. Mary's Cathedral to his own St. Kevin Parish where he would stay a few days every year and enjoy catching up on parish gossip with Marie and Annabelle Johanson.

LOVING TENDERLY: Tenderness may not be the first quality that would leap to mind when many of us think of Columban. I did not know Columban in the good old days. I first got to know him a bit when he was Director for two years at De La Salle Concord. Columban had the habit of sitting in the living room in the evenings, enjoying cigarettes and postprandials while reading or thinking or praying, or all three. Brother David Brennan and I were very young then and we would come back to the house from the school between ten and eleven o'clock most nights. We would peer through the hallway windows to see if Columban was in the living room, which he almost invariably was. If we felt up for it we would join him, knowing that we were in

for an hour or two of conversation, smoke, and bourbon. We learned a lot in those days. Columban always beat us to the chapel the next morning.

Columban could be gruff. He could frighten horses and small children. I imagine that he could frighten students quite easily. I suspect that not a few Brothers were frightened as well. His look in photographs and in the flesh often appeared severe. We all know the hand gestures and the voice. Beneath it all was a tender heart~ even a sentimental one at times. One example is Columban's abiding admiration and affection for the Guadalupana Sisters who ministered at Mont La Salle for some ten years. He appreciated their ministry but even more their serene presence and spirituality. Columban, the man who for much of his life would not get in an airplane, made several flights to Mexico to see the Sisters and to fulfill his devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Columban had a special regard and respect for the Mexican and Mexican American cultures and people which he expressed most immediately toward those of them who minister at Mont La Salle in so many ways. Columban appreciated and enjoyed the many women in his life, from his mother and his sister Roberta Julie to those who ministered during my years at Holy Family Community in the nineties, including Quilla, Kay, Paula, Modayne, Thelma, and Estella. In the right circumstances Columban did not mind being fussed over.

A CONCLUDING THOUGHT: Columban was what we educators like to call a life-long learner. Prayer, Scripture, theology and reading of all kinds were fundamental to Columban's life. He read deeply and widely but the Scriptures were always primary. He grew in prayerfulness, and in anticipation of his death. I know that Columban was ready and apparently God was ready for him. For a man so devoted to liturgy and the Eucharist, it is fitting that Columban departed on the Feast of the Epiphany and that we celebrate his life today as we are about to conclude the Christmas Season with the Baptism of the Lord. Incarnation, Manifestation, Immersion, Conversion, Transition, Resurrection. The cycle for him is complete.

"This is what the Lord asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God."

Thank you, Columban, for showing us how. Thank you, God, for giving us Columban.

EULOGY AT THE FUNERAL OF BROTHER ANTONIO GONZAGA

Brother James Riordan, FSC

In the late 1980s, the District initiated the oral history project. The very first oral history was a series of interviews with Brother Antonio. The interviewer and transcriber was Brother Hilary LaTour. With Brother Antonio as the subject, you know that the document is very thorough and filled with details. It was published November 1990.

The custom is that the subject of the oral history asks someone to write a brief introduction to the document. Brother Antonio asked me to write the introduction. I read the almost sixty-page oral history and wrote a one page introduction in which I tried to capture the spirit of Brother Antonio. I wrote in part:

*The core of Brother Antonio's life is to be **fully engaged**. His entire career as a Christian Brother has been devoted to the energetic and wide-ranging service of the Church, the Brothers, his students and former students, and a host of others—from the members of his family, to the neediest elderly, to the most recent immigrants and refugees. Retirement for Brother Antonio at the age of sixty-five in 1988 was only a mid-life course correction and an administrative technicality. He continues to pour out his seemingly inexhaustible supply of energy on his many projects, services and ever-expanding interests. Brother Antonio is, indeed, **fully engaged**.”*

He was fully engaged in all aspects of his life—as a religious Brother, as a teacher and life-long learner, and as a guide and caregiver.

Antonio was born Simeon Hael Gonzaga on September 20, 1923, in the city of Manila. He was not raised by his parents. In fact, he reported in his oral history that he saw his father only once, and that he had died when Antonio was about five years old. He lived with his paternal aunt and uncle and his grandmother. His grandmother's name was Rafaela Villasante. She was principally responsible for his religious and social formation and his early education. She spoke Spanish and taught young Simeon his prayers and catechism in Spanish.

In his oral history Brother Antonio says that his grandmother “was very important [to me] and had a tremendous influence on my life. Looking back, I would say that my values come from her.”

His grandmother was his first teacher, especially in the faith. He reports that when it was time to come in from play, his grandmother would call him—"I can see her on the balcony, her white hair, and she would call to me that it was time to come upstairs [and pray the Angelus]. She is the one who would tell me that when the Pope wakes up early in the morning, he opens the window and blesses the whole world."

He recalled that "It was a happy setting then as I was growing up—until the war broke out. That was a catastrophic turning point in our routine of relationships—by this time I was about college age."

The war ended his studies at the Dominican Santo Tomas University. He does not report that he or his family was ever in any physical danger. Brother Antonio's elementary and high school education had been mostly in American schools in Manila. He grew up knowing four languages: English, Spanish, Tagalog, and Chinese, Chinese because his house was adjacent to the Chinese sector of the city. He said many years later that the multi-ethnic environment of his youth didn't bother him at all and "that's why here in San Francisco—when it comes to ethnicity and all that, I glory in it all!"

After the war, he finished his studies at Far Eastern University—graduating in June 1949 with a degree in Commerce. While a university student he worked during the day and went to class at night. He worked for the U.S. Army Signal corps.

After graduation, he struck out on his own. Like many Filipinos, he went to Guam looking for work and excitement. He found work but no excitement. It was in Guam that he began to develop his interest in the religious life.

As the end of his time in Guam approached (1956), he began a serious conversation about his future with a local priest, Father Cernauskas, a Stigmatine Father serving at a Catholic school. The priest encourage him to seek out the De La Salle Brother in Manila in order to fulfill his desire to enter religious life. Brother Antonio followed the priest's advice but decided to do so in the United States instead of the Philippines. He arrived in San Francisco in 1956, worked at UCSF in the food service department, and contacted Brother Edward Behan, the Vocation Director for the District.

Brother Antonio entered the postulancy here at Mont La Salle on February 2, 1958. He reported that his time in the Novitiate was difficult because he was

thirty-five and most of the novices were eighteen and nineteen. He soldiered on with the support of Brother Pius, the Novice Director, and moved on to the Scholasticate in August 1959. He stayed a short time at Saint Mary's College—he already had a college degree. He was sent to La Salle College in Philadelphia and completed his studies there in June 1962 with a Master's Degree in theology.

His first teaching assignment in the District was at Sacred Heart High School. He stayed at Sacred Heart from 1962 until 1977. His teaching work was the usual set of classes—religion, algebra, world history, and Spanish. But his greatest experience those first years was being moderator of the freshman class. His love for this assignment provides an insight into this attitude toward students and teaching—he said in his oral history:

“Being moderator of the freshman class was a big highlight in my life. How I really put them together was [a] big pride in my life. [I would] constantly meet with them, call them up, counsel them. It was fun to put them together as a class . . . you have to really mold them to come together as a class. I have that as a fond memory. It was a great experience. . . I got to know them all . . . I believe that those were my greatest moments at Sacred Heart. To be able to see them all the way until they graduated.”

Brother Antonio continued to serve the District and Institute in many places while assigned to Sacred Heart and after his first assignment there ended in 1977. He served as a faithful and committed community Brother, an effective teacher, and a dedicated student—in Guadalajara; the Philippines; Fresno; Tijuana; San Antonio, Texas; Juneau, Alaska; Madrid, Spain; Guatemala; St. Michael's Parish and St. Ann's Home with the Little Sisters of the Poor, both in San Francisco and in many other places not recorded.

In 1983 he returned to Sacred Heart and began a whole new adventure as a volunteer with a myriad of agencies serving the elderly, immigrants, refugees, abandoned youth, crack babies, and the homeless. He was always looking for new challenges and ways to stretch himself in learning and service. Finally, in 2003 at the age of eighty and in declining health, he joined the Holy Family Community at Mont La Salle. There are three short statements written about Brother Antonio that form a wonderful summation of his life—a life fully engaged.

Kathy Lorentz, a teacher at Sacred Heart Cathedral Prep, wrote to the parents of students in 2006:

“When I first started teaching at SHCP more than ten years ago, Brother Antonio was my mentor. Among the valuable lessons he taught me was the importance of the ministry of presence. Brother Antonio is a living example of this ministry. When he no longer taught, he made it a point to be in the halls, in the lunchroom, at the games, and at every new teacher meeting. He took seriously his call to serve. Brother Antonio used his physical presence to be Christ’s body among us.”

The second short statement was written in September of 1990 by Don Climent, the Director of the International Rescue Committee in San Francisco:

“Since Brother Antonio first began volunteering with the IRC over one and a half years ago, he has made a positive difference in the lives of many refugees from Bulgaria, Hungary, and numerous republics of the Soviet Union. He has actively sought out newcomers in need of help adjusting to their new environment. He has not restricted himself to easy situations with simple solutions but has acted with wisdom and patience in determining when and how he can truly be useful, neither avoiding difficulties nor overestimating his capabilities, and always following through with thoroughness and compassion.”

Finally, the third statement: Remember Father Cernauskas—Brother Antonio’s spiritual mentor on Guam? In his letter supporting Brother Antonio’s application to the religious life he wrote in 1958: “I would say that Simeon is an example of a young man who was willing to sell all that he had to that he could follow the Master.”

Truly—a life fully engaged.

John Paul II, in *Splendor Veritatis* 54 quotes Saint Bona - aventure: “Conscience is like God’s herald and messenger; it does not command things on its own authority, but commands them as coming from God’s authority, like a herald when he proclaims the edict of the king. That is why conscience has binding force.”

EULOGY AT FUNERAL OF BROTHER CHRISTIAN CONNERS
 Brother Brendan Kneale

It is easy to eulogize a person of many virtues: Brother Christian was a man of faith and zeal, of frugality and generosity, of humor and seriousness, of regularity and adaptability, of quiet and volubility, of prayer and action. And he had many other virtues.

Everyone who knew Brother Christian can testify that he was an unusual and even amazing man. The Oral History Project for the District details, in Brother Christian's own words, fascinating accounts of his varied life before joining the Brothers at age forty-one, and also hints at the piety and devotion characterizing his Catholic life as a layman. These included his quite active involvement with the Knights of Columbus in Santa Rosa and a pilgrimage to Rome, and it also includes accounts of his struggles during the Great Economic Depression of the 30's, his various jobs, and his remarkable life in the Armed Services during World War II as a member of the Coast Guard's Construction Battalion, assigned mostly to the Pacific islands. (It is no accident that he was prepared to work in construction, since his father was a well-known contractor in Northern California and in fact once got him a summer job in 1934 working on the north tower of the Golden Gate Bridge.) Chris liked to tell how among his fellow servicemen he exploited his own bland and innocent appearance by winning consistently at poker, even sending a considerable amount of money home to his bank in Santa Rosa!

The circumstances of his joining the Brothers were unusual—as was his subsequent career; unlike most Brothers he spent almost no time teaching in the classroom. He tells how he had made up his mind, after a retreat at El Retiro, to be a Jesuit Brother and had made a formal application to become a postulant, but a few days later he met a diocesan priest and, accidentally, also Brother Paul Figueroa, who persuaded him otherwise.

As we said at the start, regularity and dependability characterized his religious life, and hard work characterized his time in various apostolic endeavors. For example, the Community Brothers at the College could always count on him to help with any of the Brothers who were sick. Among those he personally attended to were Brothers Austin, Matthew, and Alfred, as well as to chaplain Father Ed Moss and even a College janitor, Rudy Valencic. And all the faculty members could depend on him to supply and maintain audio-visual equipment for their classrooms. The College library, where he was stationed, could call on him in any emergency. His non-threatening, though somewhat eccentric, personality made him very popular. June Allen, long-time secretary to the College Librarian became his friend and champion.

Over the years at the College he worked very hard for the Director of the Library, Brother Dennis Goodman, both during and after hours. For example, after hours and on weekends Brother Dennis was very interested in planting trees on the campus, and he drafted Christian for some of the backbreaking work. Fourteen years ago the two of them retired at the same time here to Mont La Salle. In their new surroundings he and Dennis planted and maintained a fine grove of small redwoods now grown into large trees. At the same time he continued in his old age to be a bulwark of Community life, with a particular devotion to the Rosary, to concern for the sick, to visits to the cemetery, and to helping with chores even after he was wheelchair-bound. He would faithfully pick up the mail and the daily paper, and haul large bottles of drinking water to the corridor dispenser in the Community. Brother Arnold recalls that he saw him in his wheelchair sitting in the rain waiting for the mailman and wearing his mailbag over his head! Even when bedridden and incapacitated, he wanted to know if these chores were being attended to. In his last years, even though he could not read or hear well, he was faithful to chapel prayers and Community social life. He had some old fashioned notions about diet and good health—but of course, since he lived well into his nineties, becoming the "dean of the District," his special health notions actually paid off.

Speaking of Chris's notions and ideas, Brother Richard Orona tells a revealing story about him. In the Holy Family Community the opinionated Chris used to protest and argue stubbornly with the District Health Coordinator, Patricia May R.N., who finally asked the Community Director, Brother Ronald, what to do about it. Brother Ronald recommended that she say to him, "Brother Christian, you don't know everything." When she tried that ploy on Chris, he paused meditatively and slowly repeated the phrase, and then perked up saying, "But in this matter I do!"

One affliction which Chris endured for many years, and for which he was well known, was a kind of Tourette's Syndrome, an unpredictable blurting out of a loud but incoherent yelp. It embarrassed him a lot and he prayed for relief. But the only relief he seemed to receive was that these outbursts never occurred in the Community chapel or in church.

Brother Thomas Jones recalls that he once stopped by Chris' room in the Holy Family Community when the latter was about 92 years old, very blind and hard of hearing. Chris didn't have much to say, but he did remark, "You know, I don't think I have ever been happier in my life than I am right now." That may not

have been true during the past two or three weeks, but he bore his afflictions as well as could be expected, and a large group of Brothers were gathered around his bedside for the final rites. May he rest in peace along with the many Brothers who preceded him.

MORE SAYINGS

G.M. Trevelyan: Education ...has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading.

Confucius: The nature of men is always the same; it is their habits that distinguish them.

H.G. Wells: Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.

Sacha Guitry: You can pretend to be serious, but you can't pretend to be witty.

George Santayana: The quality of wit inspires more admiration than confidence.

La Rochfoucauld: Hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue.

J.A. Holmes: Speech is conveniently located midway between thought and action, where it frequently substitutes for both.

Norman Cousins: History is a vast early-warning system.

It is said that an expert may be right, but when he is wrong, it is for a quite sophisticated reason.

JUBILEE TALK, March 2007

Summary by Brother La Salle Bossong

I give thanks to God for the grace to serve Him and others for the past sixty years as a Christian Brother. I want to give very special thanks to my mother for the gift of life since, according to her doctors, her life was in danger if she gave birth to me. They advised abortion. She would not allow an abortion to take place and insisted that she was willing to die in the process of giving me birth. She lived to be seventy-four years old, and I have lived to my present age of seventy-seven thanks to her courage, her love and her deep devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

When I was twelve years old, I attended Star of the Sea grammar school in the Richmond District of San Francisco. Under the urging of a teacher I went to a Eucharistic Congress celebrated for Catholics at Kezar Stadium. I was sitting in the stands with other Catholics, when at the beginning of the ceremony, a procession of priests and religious entered the stadium: Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans and others dressed in their distinctive religious habits. The last to enter the stadium was a person in the strangest of all habits—a black robe with two white flaps for a collar. A person next to me commented, “There’s a Christian Brother. If you send your child to his school, he’ll straighten him out.” I was duly impressed, but I said to myself, ‘I’m not going to be anyone I saw in the procession, and of all the ones I saw, I certainly would not be one of those (the Christian Brother).’ Well, it just shows how God’s providence may have other things in mind. The Brother who was the one entering the stadium was none other than Brother Columban whom we are honoring this evening at his seventy-fifth jubilee as a Christian Brother. He was also the one who sat at a portable organ in Kezar Stadium that day and played the music for the occasion.

Toward the end of my eighth grade at Star of the Sea I was invited to take the scholarship examinations at St. Ignatius, Sacred Heart, and St. Peter’s High schools—which I did. I won

the scholarship to St. Peter's, a Christian Brothers' school located in the Mission District. What a providential turn of events—if it wasn't for that scholarship I probably would have gone to St. Ignatius, which was close to home. Who knows? I might be a Jesuit today. The good Lord save me!

And who was the principal at St. Peter's? None other than Brother Columban. He was a marvelous model of a devoted, talented and faithful Brother.

During October of my freshman year Brother Thomas Levi came to our class to give a talk on the vocation to the Brothers' life. He invited anyone interested in more information to see him. I went for an interview, and before I knew it, I was signed up on the spot to go to the Junior Novitiate at Mont La Salle. I credit this quick decision to the graces of the daily Masses which I had begun to attend in the eighth grade and to the good example of the Brothers at St. Peter's. I spent three and a half years in the Juniorate under the direction of Brothers Celestine Cormier and George Kohles. On my entering the Novitiate and receiving the Robe, Brother Thomas Levi was my sponsor. Brother Pius Figueroa was the Director of Novices. Brothers Mel Anderson and Haig Charshaf, celebrating here this evening, were members of our group dedicated to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. At the end of the year we made our first vows and entered Saint Mary's College. We graduated in 1951.

My first teaching assignment was to Garces High School in Bakersfield. What better example for a young Brother than the members of that Community. It included Brothers Xavier, Raymond, Justin, Gerald, Leonard, and Adrian. After two years I went to Cathedral High School in Los Angeles where Brother Bertram was principal, and Brother Liguori Edward, vice principal. The latter became my mentor, and I eventually shared a close friendship with him.

Over the following years I served at La Salle High in Pasadena, San Joaquin Memorial, La Salle in Milwaukie (where I

served as founding vice-principal and the second Director), Justin-Siena High, and finally now at Cathedral High. For advanced study I was happy achieve master's degrees in both philosophy and theology, to attend the Sangre de Cristo sessions twice, and to attend CIL. On other occasions I was able to spend a half year studying with Matthew Fox, and spend time at the Karl Jung Institute in Zurich. My extracurricular activities included several years as tennis coach, ten years as moderator of school yearbooks and school paper. Being Religion department chairman was also among my assignments.

I thank the Brothers for allowing me to continue teaching in my seventy-seventh year, and I hope to continue as God allows. Former students of mine enjoy reminding me of certain memorable things in my classroom teaching—what I called the “Four Steps to Truth,” as well as the use of a pair of rocks in class. These I often named “Huber and Hildegard” as symbols either of God or of the process of learning.

A final thanks to the Brothers for all they have done for me and in a special way to my students for their presence and for allowing me to give some guidance to their lives. The greatest treasure of my experience has been that of having been called “Brother.”

Law and Grace.

“St. Augustine admirably sums up the Pauline dialectic of law and grace: ‘The law was given that grace might be sought, and grace was given that the law might be fulfilled.’ Love and life cannot be thought of first and foremost as a kind of precept, because what they demand is beyond human abilities.”

Section 23 in *Splendor Veritatis*, Pope John Paul II.

EXCERPTS FROM LETTER BY BROTHER DAVID LIAO

Summer 2007 ... 6th Summer English Reading Program

[Note: for several years Brother David, former Visitor in Malaysia and occasional guest in this District, has operated a Lasallian school on ancestral property in Changjiao, on mainland China. The school emphasizes the English language and computer training. Ed]

Greetings from Changjiao. Peace and Joy is with you.

It had been a long, hot and busy summer for us here in Changjiao. Today 20th August we are house bound as typhoon Senpa hit the coastal region of Fujian and send lashing rains into the hills of Fujian and northern Guangdong . All government relief agencies including all village officers are on full alert. The rain is a welcomed change from the heat of the summer where temperature reached 40 degrees Celsius for the first few days of our programme. I wish to put on record our thanks to a Singapore Lasallian who insisted that air-conditioners be installed and paid for all expenses incurred. I could not have taught continuously for four and a half hours if not for the comfort of air-conditioning in the study hall. Volunteers from Malaysia and Hong Kong also enjoyed the comfort of air-conditioned sleeping quarters for siesta and a good night's rest. Our local volunteers also benefited from the air-conditioning as most of them decided to move in after the HK volunteers left.

On 17th August, the main summer activity of LSSC ended on a high note. The growing popularity of our Summer English Reading Programme is evident in the number of outstation students from throughout Guangdong and neighbouring province of Fujian . We registered a record high of 429 students this summer. Those who could not be accommodated asked to be given a chance at the next Winter Holiday Programme in mid January 2008, another annual programme which until now has been exclusively reserved for local Changjiao students and regular weekend students. We foresee a multiple increase in the number of weekend students when LSSC reopens for English tuition classes 22nd September.

During our post-programme evaluation, we concluded that an on-going student-teacher training programme has to be initiated immediately to nurture the human resources necessary to keep up with the rapid development of LSSC as a much sort after English learning centre in Dabu-Huliao. I plan to invite about 20 Junior High school students to participate in this training programme. Selected students will be required to report to LSSC every Saturday evening for training. They will stay the night at LSSC and will conduct the Sunday morning classes for Primary students. They join the high school class at 10 a.m. on Sunday before going home at noon.

This year, registration for local and regular students was scheduled for Saturday and Sunday 7th & 8th July in order to train a group of local students. A total of 97 students were registered in a very orderly manner. Registration for outstation and new students was scheduled for 14th & 15th July. The local authorities, political secretary and village headman, were asked to be on hand to identify the applicants as first preference was to be given to relatives of villagers from outstation who would form one queue and new local students form the other. On paper the plan looked good but on Saturday morning 14th July, it was total mayhem. Our hamlet of Baijiang never ever experienced such crowds. I had to leave my post interviewing students to intervene twice as some unscrupulous parents got involved and led their children to jump queue. Thank God, in spite of the chaos, registration and interview was successfully completed by 1 p.m. on Sunday 15th. We were able to post up the class list by Tuesday 17th July and thus gave us a breathing space to make final preparations to welcome the Hong Kong student volunteers.

The key personnel for this summer were volunteers from Malaysia . They are the veterans of Summer 2006, Mr. Wang Chee Seng and his wife Ms Ho Poh Lin from Penang . The newcomers are Mr. Martin Lee and his wife Ms Lily Leong from Ipoh. I was greatly relieved when they arrived safely on the evening of Saturday 14th July. With their arrival, I was confident that we could manage although the number of students almost doubled the 2006 figure of 246 students to 429 students. At our first meeting, we decided to rent a double story house for the tutoring classes. After inspecting it we were still apprehensive as to whether there would be sufficient space. Then two families offered their ancestral halls. We decided to accept the offer of one that is near to our tuition house. A massive cleaning operation was organized the next day as both premises were not lived in and had been used as store rooms for many years. Our local students came in strength to help. Many hands make light work. Both premises were ready for use within 3 hours.

The Hong Kong student volunteers arrived in two batches. La Salle College volunteers of 12 students accompanied by their teachers and three parents arrived in the comfort of a specially hired coach on Friday 20th July. They were quartered in a house nearby that was rented specifically for the purpose. Our local students were on hand to welcome them. That very night, Mr. Wang and I realized that something was not right. The LSC volunteers kept to themselves because of the physical separation and were not interacting with our local students gathered at LSSC. We decided to shift all the volunteers to the two air-conditioned rooms at LSSC. When the 9 St. Joseph's volunteers arrived on Saturday 21st July, the moving operation began. Literally speaking, the volunteers had to make their own bed. Each room could accommodate 5 double decked beds. It was a busy afternoon for all as we got organized. The local students were on hand to lend assistance whenever needed.

This year, we installed two spin-dry machines to alleviate the laundry problem that we faced last year.

That evening, we held our first combined gathering for all, the adult staff, the HK volunteers and the local volunteers. It was a getting to know you session as well as a getting to know the aim and purpose, the organization structure and methodology of LSSC Summer English Reading Programme. On Sunday morning, I gave an overview of our "PinPhonics" English reading method, developed over the last 5 years specifically to overcome reading problems faced by students in China. It is a method somewhat unique to LSSC. Our local volunteers are familiar with it as they are all LSSC students whereas it is a completely new ball game to the HK volunteers. In the afternoon, Mr. Wang put the volunteers through a dry run for the movement of students from LSSC to the tuition house and the tuition hall.

This year we provided a simple Handbook for all teachers and students. It was a brilliant move suggested by Mr. Wang the day after he arrived. I already had my lessons plans ready for 60 students per class and teach 4 classes 2 hours each. We had to change plans to run 5 classes of one and a half hour each, 3 junior classes of about 100 students each and two senior classes of about 60 students each. I locked myself in one night to pull together the key elements of my teaching materials into a simple and easy to use handbook. We spent two days and nights printing and putting 500 books together. Mr. Martin had to work overtime as he was in charge of the printing but we only have a small three-in-one printer to work with. We certainly require a proper photocopying machine for the future.

On opening day 23rd July, the section leader of Baijiang, Mr. Black, was co-opted to direct traffic to avoid the traffic congestion and confusion that we saw during the previous registration weekend. The atmosphere early in the morning was somewhat festive as on the average each junior student was accompanied by at least two or more adults. Baijiang had never seen so many motorbikes and cars queuing to come in. It was estimated that day and each day following, more than a thousand people come into Baijiang in a variety of transport.

Mr and Mrs Wang put a firm hold on discipline from the very start. The students lined up in a quiet and orderly fashion when attendance was taken. The problem was with parents and on lookers who were talking and commenting on what they witnessed. Thank God, we did not have to deal with them as they obediently stayed behind a line we designated as no admittance except for students with our LSSC name tag. The discipline and orderliness of students at LSSC is admired and greatly appreciated by parents. Local teachers as well as our teachers from HK also expressed amazement. In just two days, the pattern was set. Parents and taxi drivers ferrying students knew exactly where to drop off their charges and where to pick

them up. Students knew where to wait, when to line up to join the classes and to move in an orderly manner from the study hall to the tuition house and the tuition hall.

This year, of the 429 students accepted, 377 wereMany of them are children of teachers. Based on past and especially this year's experience, we found that most secondary school students are locked in a mindset that every word must be taught before they can read it. This is because in most schools in China today every English word is taught exactly as a Chinese character is taught, i.e. as a separate and unique "pictograph". Most students do not know how to use the vowels to pronounce a word alpha-phonically. Next year we must limit new admissions to primary 4 and 5 students. We found that primary students are free from the mindset of older students and are like sponges readily soaking up the "PinPhonics" method of reading. Secondary school students have already acquired bad reading habits that are difficult to change in just 20 days of summer lessons.

We thank God that in spite of the unexpected increase in the number of students we managed to run a very successful programme. We added line dancing to our evening activities..Lily and Martin were a great husband and wife team for the task, with Lily taking to the floor and Martin in control of the PA system providing exhilarating and pulsating music that made Baijiang come alive. The line dancing evenings not only brought students back to learn and dance but also provide an evening entertainment for villagers young and old who sat around and watch. Alternating with line dancing the Hong Kong volunteers ran the popular evening socials. Both SJC and LSC volunteers came well prepared for the task. It was full house every time. In fact I had to invite different classes for each evening or we would not have been able to accommodate the numbers turning up.

Last year, we experimented using of poems and lyrics of songs to facilitate the reading process. We felt it was very helpful. This year we added singing into our regular lessons...It was an instant success.,,Students were more willing to read songs repeatedly so that they can remember the words in order to sing. Furthermore they found that if they could read fluently, they could keep up with the rhythm of the music and sing well. The lyrics of the inspirational songs used also provided the basic ideas for discussions for the senior classes. The last day of the course ended powerfully and emotionally when we combined the classes, filling up all the space available at LSSC, singing the ever popular song "It's a small world" and the inspirational song "Tomorrow will be better" with its powerful chorus:

....

....

We are very grateful and proud of local team of 7 university, 16 secondary students and 3 primary students. After the departure of HK students they ran the tutoring sessions efficiently and effectively. Our student-tutor ratio was 3:1 or less for the first two weeks because of the presence of the 21 HK volunteers. The ratio became 4:1 for the last two weeks. In spite of the heavier workload per tutor, the tutoring was more intensive and better organized as all local tutors are familiar with the PinPhonics reading method.

What can I say except to thank God for the gift of many Lasallians whose spiritual, moral or financial support enable LSSC to exist and function as an example of gratuitous education service to youth and nation here in Changjiao, China. Our handbook this year is aptly entitled:

La Salle Study Centre. Changjiao.

Christianity: A Religion of History, Not of Myth

If we push this history aside Christian faith as such disappears and is recast as some other religion. So if history, if facticity in this sense, is an essential dimension of Christian faith, then faith must expose itself to this historical method—indeed, faith itself demands it. ...The conciliar *Constitution on Divine Revelation* makes the same point quite explicitly The Pontifical Biblical Commission document on the interpretation of Holy Scripture develops the same idea....

The historical-critical method—let me repeat—is an indispensable tool, given the structure of Christian faith. But we need to add two points This method is a fundamental dimension of exegesis, but it does not exhaust the interpretive task for someone who sees the biblical writings as a single corpus of Holy Scripture inspired by God

...It is important— and this is the second point—to recognize the limits of the historical-critical method itself....The method's first limit is that it has to leave the biblical word in the past. It is a *historical* method., and that means that it investigates the then-current context of events in which the texts originated. ...To the extent that it remains true to itself, the historical method not only has to investigate the biblical word as a thing of the past, but also has to let it remain in the past... it cannot make it into something present *today*

Benedict XVI, *Introduction* to book, **JESUS OF NAZARETH**, pp.. xv and xvi..

DOCTRINAL NOTE ON SOME ASPECTS OF EVANGELIZATION

[An official summary of a recent Vatican document on the difference between proselytism and missionary work treats a question that is of worldwide concern to many other religions. A note from Rome reported by Zenit news service summarizes Church practice. Excerpts follow. Ed.]

SUMMARY POINTS (Excerpts)

I. Introduction

1. The *Doctrinal Note* is devoted principally to an exposition of the Catholic Church's understanding of the Christian mission of evangelization, which is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the word "Gospel" translates "evangelion" in the Greek New Testament. "Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to proclaim the Gospel, calling all people to conversion and faith. ' Go out into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature' (Mk 16,15)." [n. 1]
2. The *Doctrinal Note* cites Pope John Paul II's Encyclical Letter "The Mission of the Redeemer" in recalling that "'Every person has the right to hear the Good News [Gospel] of the God who reveals and gives himself in Christ, so that each one can live out in its fullness his or her proper calling.' This right implies the corresponding duty to evangelize." [n. 2]
3. Today there is "a growing confusion" about the Church's missionary mandate. Some think "that any attempt to convince others on religious matters is a limitation of their freedom," suggesting that it is enough to invite people "to act according to their consciences", or to "become more human or more faithful to their own religion", or "to build communities which strive for justice, freedom, peace and solidarity", without aiming at their conversion to Christ and to the Catholic faith.

Others have argued that conversion to Christ should not be promoted because it is possible for people to be saved without explicit faith in Christ or formal incorporation in the Church. Because "of these problems, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has judged it necessary to public the present *Note*."

....

6. The communication of truths so that they might be accepted by others is also in harmony with the natural human desire to have others share in one's own goods, which for Catholics includes the gift of faith in Jesus Christ. Members of the Church naturally desire to share with others the faith that has been freely given to them.

7. Through evangelization, cultures are positively affected by the truth of the Gospel. Likewise, through evangelization, members of the Catholic Church open themselves to receiving the gifts of other traditions and cultures, for "Every encounter with another person or culture is capable of revealing potentialities of the Gospel which hitherto may not have been fully explicit and which will enrich the life of Christians and the Church." [n. 6]

8. Any approach to dialogue such as coercion or improper enticement that fails to respect the dignity and religious freedom of the partners in that dialogue has no place in Christian evangelization.

9. "Since the day of Pentecost ... the Gospel, in the power of the Holy Spirit, is proclaimed to all people so that they might believe and become disciples of Christ and members of his Church." "Conversion" is a "change in thinking and of acting," expressing our new life in Christ; it is an ongoing dimension of Christian life.

....

11. The *Doctrinal Note* cites the Second Vatican Council's "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (*Gaudium et Spes*) to say that respect for religious freedom and its promotion "must not in any way make us indifferent towards truth and goodness. Indeed, love impels the followers of Christ to proclaim to all the truth which saves." [n.10] This mission of love must be accomplished by both proclamation of the word and witness of life. "Above all, the witness of holiness is necessary, if the light of truth is to reach all human beings. If the word is contradicted by behavior, its acceptance will be difficult." On the other hand, citing Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, the Note says that "even the finest witness will prove ineffective in the long run, if it is not explained, justified... and made explicit by a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the Lord Jesus." [n. 11]

13. When Catholic evangelization takes place in a country where other Christians live, Catholics must take care to carry out their mission with "both true respect for the tradition and spiritual riches of such countries as well as a sincere spirit of cooperation." Evangelization proceeds by dialogue, not proselytism. With non-Catholic Christians, Catholics must enter into a respectful dialogue of charity and truth, a dialogue which is not only an exchange of ideals, but also of gifts, in order that the fullness of the means of salvation can be offered to one's partners in dialogue. In this way, they are led to an ever deeper conversion to Christ.

"In this connection, it needs also to be recalled that if a non-Catholic Christian, for reasons of conscience and having been convinced of Catholic truth, asks to enter into the full communion of the Catholic Church, this is to be respected as the work of the Holy Spirit and as an expression of freedom of conscience and of religion. In such a case, it would not be question of proselytism in the negative sense that has been attributed to this term." [n. 12]

Excerpts from Benedict XVI's Address at Heiligenkreuz Abbey

"All People Have a Yearning for God"

APOSTOLIC VISIT TO AUSTRIA, September 2007

On my pilgrimage to the Magna Mater Austriae, I am pleased to visit ... the oldest continuously active Cistercian monastery in the world. I wished to come to this place so rich in history in order to draw attention to the fundamental directive of Saint Benedict, according to whose *Rule* Cistercians also live. Quite simply, Benedict insisted that "nothing be put before the divine Office".(1)

For this reason, in a monastery of Benedictine spirit, the praise of God, which the monks sing as a solemn choral prayer, always has priority. Monks are certainly not the only people who pray; others also pray: children, the young and the old, men and women, the married and the single -- all Christians pray. Or at least, they should!

In the life of monks, however, prayer takes on a particular importance: it is the heart of their calling. Their vocation is to be men of prayer. redeemed it.

At the same time, the *officium* of consecrated persons is also a sacred service to men and women, a testimony offered to them. All people have deep within their hearts, whether they know it or not, a yearning for definitive fulfillment, for supreme happiness, and thus, ultimately, for God. A monastery, in which the community gathers several times a day for the praise of God, testifies to the fact that this primordial human longing does not go unfulfilled: God the Creator has not placed us in a fearful darkness where, groping our way in despair, we seek some ultimate meaning (cf. Acts 17:27); God has not abandoned us in a desert void, bereft of meaning, where in the end only death awaits us. No! God has shone forth in our darkness with his light, with his Son Jesus Christ. In him, God has entered our world in all his "fullness" (cf. Col 1:19); in him all truth, the truth for which we yearn, has its source and summit.(2)

.....

Monks are not the only ones who pray the *officium*; From the monastic tradition the Church has derived the obligation for all religious, and also for priests and deacons, to recite the Breviary. Here too, it is appropriate for men and women religious, priests and deacons -- and naturally Bishops as well -- to come before God in their daily "official" prayer with hymns and psalms, with thanksgiving and pure petition.

Dear brother priests and deacons, dear brothers and sisters in the consecrated life! I realize that discipline is needed, and sometimes great effort as well, in order to recite the

Breviary faithfully; but through this *officium* we also receive many riches: how many times, in doing so, have we seen our weariness and despondency melt away! When God is faithfully praised and worshipped, his blessings are unfailing. In Austria, people rightly say: "Everything depends on God's blessing!".

....

The soul of prayer, ultimately, is the Holy Spirit. Whenever we pray, it is he who "helps us in our weakness, interceding for us with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8:26). Trusting in these words of the Apostle Paul, I assure you, dear brothers and sisters, that prayer will produce in you the same effect which once led to the custom of calling priests and consecrated persons simply "spirituals" (Geistliche). Bishop Sailer of Regensburg once said that priests should be first and foremost spiritual persons. I would like to see a revival of the word "Geistliche". More importantly, though, the content of that word should become a part of our lives: namely, that in following the Lord, we become, by the power of the Spirit, "spiritual" men and women.

Austria (Österreich) is, in an old play on words, truly Klösterreich: a realm of monasteries and a land rich in monasteries. Your ancient abbeys whose origins and traditions date back many centuries are places where "God is put first".

And I ask you, dear members of the faithful: see your abbeys and monasteries for what they are and always wish to be: not mere strongholds of culture and tradition, or even simple business enterprises. Structure, organization and finances are necessary in the Church too, but they are not what are essential

Finally, I have come also to visit the Academy, now the Pontifical Academy, which is 205 years old and which, in its new status, the Abbot has named after the present Successor of Peter. Important though it is that the discipline of theology be part of the *universitas* of knowledge through the presence of Catholic theological faculties in state universities, it is equally important that there should be academic institutions like your own, where there can be a deeper interplay between scientific theology and lived spirituality. God is never simply the "object" of theology; he is always its living "subject" as well. Christian theology, for that matter, is never a purely human discourse about God, but always, and inseparably, the logos and "logic" of God's self-revelation. For this reason scientific rationality and lived devotion are two necessarily complementary and interdependent aspects of study.

The father of the Cistercian Order, Saint Bernard, in his own day fought against the detachment of an objectivizing rationality from the main current of ecclesial spirituality. Our situation today, while different, nonetheless has notable similarities. In its desire to be recognized as a rigorously scientific discipline in the modern sense, theology can lose the life-breath given by faith. But just as a liturgy which no longer looks to God is already in its death throes, so too a theology which no longer draws its life-breath from faith ceases to be theology; it ends up as a array of more or less loosely connected disciplines. But where theology is practiced "on bent knee", as Hans Urs von Balthasar

urged, it will prove fruitful for the Church in Austria and beyond.

This fruitfulness is shown through fostering and forming those who have vocations to the priesthood or the religious life. Today, if such a vocation is to be sustained faithfully over a lifetime, there is a need for a formation capable of integrating faith and reason, heart and mind, life and thought. A life devoted to following Christ calls for an integration of one's entire personality. Neglect of the intellectual dimension can give rise all too easily to a kind of superficial piety nourished mostly by emotions and sentiments, which cannot be sustained over a lifetime. Neglect of the spiritual dimension, in turn, can create a rarified rationalism which, in its coldness and detachment, can never bring about an enthusiastic self-surrender to God. A life devoted to following Christ cannot be built on such one-sided foundations; half-measures leave a person unhappy and, consequently, also spiritually barren. Each vocation to the religious life or to the priesthood is a treasure so precious that those responsible for it should do everything possible to ensure a formation which promotes both *fides et ratio* -- faith and reason, heart and mind.

SENDING OUT THE DISCIPLES

The Gospel uses only one word to say *what* the apostles should preach to the people ("that they repent,") whereas it describes at length *how* they must preach. In this regard, there is an important teaching in the fact that Jesus sent them two by two. ...Jesus sent them two by two -- explained Saint Gregory the Great -- to inculcate charity, because with fewer than two persons there can be no charity. The first testimony to give of Jesus is that of mutual love: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

We must be careful not to misinterpret Jesus' phrase about shaking the dust off their feet when they were not received. In Christ's intention, this was meant to be a testimony "for" them, not against them. It should serve to make them understand that the missionaries had not gone for selfish reasons, to take money or other things from them; more than that, they did not even want to take away their dust. They had gone for their salvation and, rejecting them, deprived themselves of the greatest good of the world.

It is something that must also be stressed today. The Church does not proclaim the Gospel to increase her power or the number of her members. If she acted like this, she would be the first to betray the Gospel. She does so because she wants to share the gift received, because she has received from Christ the mandate: "Freely you received, freely you must give."

Fr. R.J. Neuhaus in FIRST THINGS.

Cardinal Urges Religious to Get Blogging:

Says Internet Youth Forums Need Real Christian Message (Excerpt)

ROME, OCT. 28, 2007 .- Benedict XVI's vicar for the Diocese of Rome expressed his hopes that religious men and women increase their use of information technology, and thus take advantage of what he called a new form of apostolate.

Cardinal Camillo Ruini spoke to the religious at the Pontifical Urbanian University during the diocesan gathering of the Union of Major Superiors of Italy, which represents 1,287 communities and 22,000 religious in Rome.

According to the Roman diocesan weekly RomaSette, Cardinal Ruini said: "A priest from Novara told me that the theme of 'Jesus' is very much discussed by youth in blogs. The focus, though, comes from destructive books that are widespread today, and not from Benedict XVI's book 'Jesus of Nazareth.'

"What will the idea of Christ be in 10 years if these ideas triumph?"

The 76-year-old prelate admitted, "I don't understand the Internet, but especially young religious ought to enter blogs and correct the opinions of the youth, showing them the true Jesus."

"The teaching emergency is central in Benedict XVI's concerns," the cardinal said. "For him, education in the faith coincides with service to society, because to form someone in the faith means to form the human person.

"Simply giving motivations for living defeats nihilism and gives value to the human person, a value that is based on Christ himself, the fact that God became a man."

The cardinal asserted that an educator's testimony and content can matter more than pedagogical techniques.

He called for catechists to be creative in finding occasions for promoting Benedict XVI's book, saying it shows the solidity of faith in the historical Jesus of the Gospels, and bases the identity of the Christian in a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

Cardinal Ruini said that in Catholic schools, "the religious can witness to Christ in all

their lessons, in the sciences, in history and even in Italian literature, in an inseparable union of faith and culture . Your creativity ought to find new techniques for the vocational challenge, which ought to develop in step with society."

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Brother George's blog with its recent updates can be accessed on the Internet at georgevangrieken@blogspot.com]

**NOTE BY BROTHER ALEXIUS DOUGHERTY
ON UNCONDITIONAL VOCATION**

As St. Luke points out in Chapter 9, Christ showed little tolerance for "ifs, ands, or buts" in the responses of three vocational prospects whom He met along the way.

At the first encounter, "A certain man said to him: I will follow you wherever you go." But Christ detected that the enthusiasm was a bit "iffy." He tested him by replying, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head."

Next, he observed a second possible candidate and directly invited him to "follow me," only to be met with a conditional "and:" "Lord, my father has died, and so with your permission I wish to go and bury him." Our Lord wished to impress upon him the otherworldliness of God's calling: "Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury the dead, but go and preach the kingdom of God.'"

Similarly, a conditional "but" marks the third vocational encounter. And another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first take my leave of those who are at my house." Jesus said, "No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Excerpt from

PAPAL TALK TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, Dec. 2007

The second reflection that I wish to propose to you concerns the recent Encyclical on Christian hope entitled, as you know, *Spe Salvi*, "In hope we were saved", words taken from St Paul's Letter to the Romans (8: 24). Ideally, I consign it to you, dear university students of Rome, and through you to the whole university, scholastic, cultural and educational world. Is not the theme of hope particularly suited to young people? In particular I suggest you make the part of the Encyclical that concerns the hope of the modern age an object of your reflection and discussion, even in groups. In the 17th century, Europe experienced an authentic epochal turning point and from then on it has increasingly confirmed a mentality which views human progress alone as the work of science and technology, while faith concerns only the salvation of the soul, a purely individual salvation. The two great idea-powers of modernity, reason and freedom, are as it were separated from God in order to become autonomous and to cooperate in the construction of the "kingdom of man", practically in opposition to the Kingdom of God. From here a materialistic concept spread, nourished by the hope that, by changing the economic and political structures, one could finally bring about a just society where peace, freedom and equality reign. This process, which is not deprived of values and historical motivations, contains, however, a fundamental error: man, in fact, is not only the product of determined economic and social conditions; technical progress does not necessarily coincide with the moral growth of the person; rather, without ethical principles science, technology and politics can be used, as has happened and unfortunately still happens, not for the good but harm of individuals and of humanity.