

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 and elsewhere.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Excerpts from <i>Pastoral Letter</i> for 2005 <i>Brother Álvaro, Superior General</i> | 1 |
| 2. Jubilee Talk for Brother De Sales Benning <i>Brother Lawrence Haley</i> | 3 |
| 5. Jubilee Talk by <i>Brother Dominic Berardelli</i> | 5 |
| 6. Jubilee Talk for Brother Alexius Dougherty <i>Brother Ronald Roggenback</i> | 7 |
| 7. Jubilee Talk by <i>Brother R. Philip Thez</i> | 9 |
| 8. Jubilee Talk by <i>Brother Bernard LoCoco</i> | 11 |
| 9. Gleanings from Brother Alexius' One-Liners | 15 |
| 10. Peace and Human Rights: Role of a University <i>Brother Vincent Malham</i> | 21 |
| 11. Two Mathematics Notes for Secondary Students <i>Brother Brendan Kneale</i> | 27 |
| 12. Sharing the Mission <i>Brother John O'Neill</i> | 28 |
| 13. Excerpts from Lecture on True and False Conscience <i>Cardinal George Pell</i> | 34 |
| 14. Notes from Guadalajara Talk on Vocations <i>Brother Claude Reinhardt, Counselor</i> | 37 |
| 15. The Prayer of the Church <i>Brother L. Raphael</i> | 37 |
| 16. Lasallian Spirituality in an Evolutionary Context | 41 |
| 17. Notes from Convocation Speaker, <i>Brother Thomas Johnson</i> | 46 |

Excerpts from the worldwide Pastoral Letter: “Associated with the God of the Kingdom and the Kingdom of God —Ministers and Servants of the Word.”

Superior General, Brother Álvaro Rodriquez

P. 14. Commenting on the 2004 Inter-Regional Vocation Meeting in Guadalajara, “The reports showed the interest on the part of young people for service and their thirst for spirituality; that if all of them do not feel called to be Brothers, it is a fact that many want to live the Lasallian charism in other ways. Today we should talk about Lasallian vocations in the plural.”

P. 15. At another meeting, this time in Spain, the Pastoral Letter notes that the Brothers discussed personal and Community prayer. “They spoke about the difficulties they found in a world where productivity and competitiveness predominate and where what is urgent oftentimes leaves no room for what is most important.”

P. 16. Visiting a Community for retired Brothers in England, Brother Álvaro wrote: “I experienced God’s presence in our older Brothers, reflected in their serenity, their deep spiritual life and in the quality of their interpersonal relationships.”

P. 23. “The secret of a fulfilled life is to carry forward a program of love and service, not as a requirement imposed from outside but as a driving force that emerges from within.”

P. 26. We should witness to the truth “that the same longing we have for God, God has for us and that this is the revolutionary news that can quench our thirst as creatures who come from nothing but aspire to the infinite.”

P. 41. “...[W]e should understand the insistence on *gratuity* as a way to see to it that the poor could go to school. *The Brothers everywhere will teach school gratuitously, and this is essential for their Institute* [Meditation 1.5]. Gratuity has not only a financial connotation. It also has a spiritual dimension because ministry of the Brothers constitutes a gratuitous gift from God which, in turn, should translate into a gratuitous and disinterested commitment making the unconditional love of God visible to children and young people.”

P. 44. “Christian education ... is understood integrally as a type of education that is human, personal and which plays a critical role that makes possible the creation of a new society—an education that is participatory and fraternal—an education that makes students take charge of not only their own development but also the development of their own community....”

P. 45. “This faith is capable of responding to the ultimate questions of existence; but also it is a faith rooted in history, and it translates into demands for social and structural transformation. This faith is not only ‘profession’ but also a lifestyle marked by Gospel criteria.”

P. 47. “Lasallian incarnational spirituality connects body and soul, the profane and the sacred, school and catechesis, human development and evangelization.”

P. 52. Quoting *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, “The Good News proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word. ... There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are not proclaimed.”

P. 53. “More than thirty years ago the *Declaration* proposed to us a series of elements concerning the primacy of our catechetical mission which it would be good not to forget.” [Brother Álvaro then cites *Rule #15*].

P. 54. “The explicit proclamation of the Good News is done in religion class, within the school schedule and by means of pastoral ministry activities outside the school schedule. The explicit proclamation of the Good News is also done, in not a few cases, through the efforts of our lay colleagues.”

AGING IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

“I suggest that John the Baptist, who said, ‘He must increase and I must decrease,’ would be a fine model. ... He sensed that his basic work was completed and his role in God’s plan has been fulfilled. He accepted all this”

“Can we be like the soldier who lost a leg in defense of his country and who affirmed that he did not *lose* a leg but that he *gave* it? Can we joyfully give up the things that are taken from us? ... ‘God takes my health, and my prayer says yes; God takes my energies, and my prayer says yes; God take away my meaningful work, and my prayer says yes.’ ‘The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away; blessed by the Name of the Lord.’ ”

“In the book of Revelation we are given a vision of twenty-four elders who surround the throne of God in heaven and who worship. They throw their crowns down in front of God’s throne and shout, ‘Our Lord and God, You are worthy to receive glory, and honor and power.’ ”

“We need to resist the conviction that it is always better to give than to receive. What is needed here is a realization that for the aging it is better to receive than to give. When we are open to receive, we give other people the opportunity to be kind, to be patient, to be generous.....”

“Christians believe that apostolic fruitfulness is greatest when they are most united to Jesus poor and crucified. Such is the condition of the aging religious. ...”

Article in *Review for Religious* Father Michael. Moga

JUBILEE TALK FOR BROTHER DE SALES BENNING, FSC

Brother Lawrence Haley, FSC

As I have lived with Brother De Sales three different times—twice in Los Angeles and once in Fresno—I was asked to say a few words about him. I'd like to say a couple of things about his health and then focus on four things

Brothers, De Sales wanted to be here today; but because his physician recommended against flying, he could not make it. Since his surgery last month, I can report that he's bounced back very well. De Sales' doctor has removed the surgical staples, he's all but abandoned his walker, and he bounds up and down the stairs unescorted. Though he still tires easily, he's bored and almost ready to return to work. It will be a week or two before he does, however.

Lives in the present

One of the gifts De Sales gives to those around him is his focus on the present. As I get older, I find myself telling (and re-telling) old stories. De Sales seems to love what he does, in the present day. His stories are often focused on the recent past: something silly a student said or did, some clever Spanish turn of phrase he just discovered, or some shopping misadventure. I asked him a bit about his tour of duty. He stressed that the present time—his time with us, in Southern California, is the time that was the most important to him.

Professional – hard-working and creative

One would think that, after over forty years in the classroom, De Sales would have nothing more to experience. Though I suspect he has, in fact, seen just about everything under the sun, he still has the gift of finding delight in the ups and downs of high school freshmen and juniors. A few years ago, De Sales got another Masters degree in Linguistics.

Recently, he got a new computer to replace the antique he had been using for the past eight years. With the built-in CD, he has taken to transcribing lyrics of popular Spanish language songs, to make his classes for interesting and fun.

De Sales is a teacher and a counselor who has a love of his craft and of his students. Shortly before his emergency surgery, with all of his severe physical problems (which, by the way, the surgery largely cured), De Sales had no intention of slowing down. Even with his left side almost incapacitated, he corrected a couple of sets of papers, with the intention of showing up to class the following Monday. It was only when Bill Carriere said to him that there was no way he'd go to school, did De Sales give up on handing *those* papers back on time.

Sense of humor

When I told De Sales I was asked to say some words about him today, his one directive to me was, "Say something harmless."

When he did the books for the Cathedral High School Community in the early 80's, the chart of accounts—those line items—was of little importance to him. He would charge items to the "miscellaneous" account, as often as not.

Good Community Man

I have always found De Sales to be generous. When he was Community Director, he would often fill in for the Community cook. More recently, after his surgery, he was seen in the kitchen putting away dishes. His presence at Community activities and his gentle sense of humor enriches our house.

Like most Brothers, we are fond of “talking shop” at the dinner table. Another thing I admire about De Sales is his patience in listening to our “Cathedral-centric” conversation. Having once taught at Cathedral, he has an understanding of, and appreciation for, the students we serve. We are proud of his contribution to La Salle High School, both as a teacher, a counselor, and as the only Brother assigned to that school.

Conclusion

Fifty years—fourteen with the Brothers of the Poor of Saint Francis and thirty-six with our Institute—is a long time. We are fortunate to have the example of De Sales among us. His presence, his spirit of faith, his creative zeal, his wit and humor, and his generosity have enriched our lives, the lives of our colleagues, and the lives of those students he taught and counseled. We pray for his speedy recovery, and we are thankful for the ways in which God reaches out to us through our Brother De Sales.

The journal for the National Religious Vocation Conference is called HORIZON. Its winter 2005 (Vol. #2) contains excerpts from conference speakers:

The crisis in religious vocations is partly rooted in the loss of the sense that it matters much what you do;

We have lost the sense of having a shared future. We have lost our dreams of a better humanity. The utopias are gone.

Our odd way of life is a sort of sign of the open-ended story of the human vocation. It subverts any facile understanding of where we might be headed. It is a lived question mark for everyone who thinks that they have the plot worked out.

Fortitude is required, since any vocation means being called to leave the center of the stage, to give up being the still point at the middle of the universe and to join humanity. One has to dare to let go of the branch of selfhood and drop off.

On page 38 the claim is made that the 4,392 priests and deacons accused of abuse represented 4.3 percent of those in service of the Church. [Note that one of the twelve Apostles was a betrayer—and that is 8.5 percent. Ed.] The article goes on to observe that bringing a lot of this information to light makes it easier to determine causes and cures for a situation that might otherwise have remained in the dark.

JUBILEE TALK

Brother Dominic Berardelli

“I have no greater cause for thanksgiving than to hear that my children are walking in grace.” These words from St. John are the words on the card of my final profession of vows, done in Manila on April second, 1963. I have tried to make them significant and meaningful words in my life and work.

The “Call” began in Pittsburgh, PA, on January 6th, 1938,—when the doctors told my mother that I had only a few days to live. Being an Italian woman, she refused to listen to them, took me home from the hospital, and nursed me back to health from a severe case of pneumonia. She told me (much later and on her death bed) that she had made a promise to God...”Let me have him for a few years and I will give him back to you for your service.” He seems to have agreed to that deal! However, not knowing about this “handshake”, I never felt the pressure to enter priesthood or religious life. But often I thought of the priesthood until the first day I walked into Central Catholic High School in Pittsburgh and met the Brothers. In that moment, there was no doubt in my mind that someday I would be “one of them”. I entered at Ammendale immediately after graduation, along with my good friend and classmate De Sales Benning, and during my Scholasticate in lovely Elkins Park, was inspired by a Brother Gratian of Mary who came from the Philippines and gave us a talk on his work there. I ended up in that part of the world after only one year of teaching in Arlington Virginia. From there, after eleven years, on to Pasadena “on loan” from the Baltimore District. After Mom died, when the Baltimore District asked me to return, Brother Bertram, Visitor at the time, gave me a round trip ticket and said, “Go back, say your goodbyes, and get back here and settle down”. (Some people still feel Bertram was not of sound mind when he made that decision!!). Brother Raphael Willeke formally welcomed me into the District. From Pasadena I moved on to the Diocese of Orange as its first Superintendent, then into District Administration with Norman Cook, and from there to the Casa Generalizia in Rome in the Mission Office called SECOLI. That happened this way...On a fast one-day visit to the District via Mexico, Brother Superior General José Pablo asked to see me (the Admin Team was in LA for a week of meetings to “make” the assignments...remember those days??) and, after reviewing the difficult situation of the Brothers in Thailand and Burma, he said to me, “And so you will be the one”...I asked “The one what?” And that was the beginning of an entire new era in my life in Asia/Pacific as a Delegate for Thailand, Burma, and India, which eventually landed me full time in Rome. If I can pick and choose highlight times in my life, this was, perhaps, my most enjoyable and memorable one since I had both Italy and Europe and Southeast Asia as my “playground”.

Through my work in SECOLI, I was able to serve Brothers in needy and challenging situations. On several occasions, in Burma and Sri Lanka, my life was literally on the line with those Brothers working in areas of civil war and governmental dictatorship. I grew to admire our Brothers of Burma in their struggle for survival

and spiritual renewal, individually and as a sector, and my love for and devotion to them will never tarnish.

In those years I learned much, and the cultures I experienced by living and working in multi-cultural communities made my life fuller and richer.

One real highlight of my life was the conferring of an honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from the Universidad La Salle in Obregon, Mexico, for my work in the Pacific Asia Region and in SECOLI.

For the greatest part of my life, God's call to me has been clear, gentle, and enriching for me. More recently, however, His call was more difficult and challenging. I guess He thought He had been a bit too easy on me and put a few bumps in the way to test me.

The result was an extremely painful time for me, a dark night of the soul if you will, and seriously challenged me in my vocation. But, eventually, several wonderful things developed from this nightmarish episode. First and foremost, I was strengthened by the strong support of my family, good and true friends among the Brothers and others, and I slowly began to walk through this darkness and anguish back into the light.

The second blessing I received from this ordeal was my eventual move to a wonderful school and remarkable Community at De La Salle North Catholic in the Great Pacific Northwest—an enriching and loving Community of Brothers, colleagues and students.

So, my thanks, above all, to my parents and family, to so many Brothers who have been supportive of me in good times and in bad, to my many dear friends, and to all my students past and present. They have all brought me to this night by their support and love.

In closing, I want to extend a word of special thanks to the Brothers of this District, past and present, who welcomed me with open arms into this District. In the words of St. Paul for the feast of the Epiphany, “even the Gentiles are called to be co-heirs, members of the same body, and co-partners in the promise...”

Your generous acceptance of me and my talents has been extraordinary and has enriched my life immensely. I hope I have been able to add a small and modest piece of history to this remarkable family of the San Francisco District.

The words of I Timothy 1: verses 12 – 17, are mine today: “The grace of our Lord has been abundant, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.”... I thank God for His magnanimity to me these past 50 years as a Brother and I look forward to my next 50 years and take this opportunity to invite all of you to my next jubilee celebration! Many thanks Brothers and friends!

JUBILEE TALK FOR BROTHER ALEXIUS DOUGHERTY

Brother Ronald Roggenback

Brother Ultan Alexius Dougherty, a very unique and special Brother and person in our District. Most important for this afternoon, however, we have time to thank him for his 60 years of being together and by association with us in service to our students. His primary gift to us during these three score years has been through a life of prayer, contemplation and service to the retired and ill Brothers of the Holy Family Community. One of his unique aspects is his assignments list: it is the shortest one in the Curriculum Vitae book. Except for a six month assignment to Saint Mary's College and the Scholasticate following his first vows, his only assignment has been to the Holy Family Community. During a time when we have been considering our consecration as our first apostolate we have here a unique example of a Brother who has had this as his primary apostolate.

Brother Alexius was born in St. Louis, MO, as Arthur Joseph Dougherty to James and Geraldine Dougherty. Because his father was in the navy he traveled extensively, especially along the West Coast and China. This caused many interruptions in his education. His last high school was the Juniorate from which he entered the Novitiate in 1945 and received the habit and began his life as a Brother on his 22nd birthday on August 14, 1945.

According to the story I heard multiple times: it was Brother Alfred Brousseau, when he was Visitor, who agreed with Alexius that he would not teach but he would dedicate his life to praying for the educational apostolates of the District, a task he has faithfully fulfilled.

Anyone who has lived with Br. Alexius or spent time with him knows of his wicked but subtle sense of humor, his love of double entendres and his quick wit. He loves to play with words. When he wrote the *Newsletter* for the Holy Family Community it was always filled with word-play and witty comments regarding the lives of the members. I used to look forward to reading, or hearing read, his contributions to the history of the District. Since he loves to follow the Giants' baseball games and the 49ers' football games his humor is frequently heard in this context. He also often calls a strategy or play before the team's coach does. Brother Richard Orona opines that more often than not the coach should have listened to Alexius.

I suspect that Alexius is the only Brother in the District that has never received a stipend since the institution of that practice. He still approaches the Director for whatever money he needs for personal care such as haircuts, peanut butter or other personal needs. However, another side of Alexius is that he has taught himself to read spiritual books in French, which I often see him doing in the chapel; and he has published a full-length book of reflections on the *Book of Revelations*.

He is faithful to the care of his birds. He collects the aluminum cans and cashes them in; using the money to buy bird seed for the wild birds he feeds twice a day. It is said that some of the birds are not wild around him when people are not obviously around. Some of the myths surrounding St. Francis appear to have reality in the present.

Of course for years his wonderful gardens have been legendary in their production. He is almost always working in his garden from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Monday through Saturday growing vegetables for our tables, for the Carmelite Friars, for some of the staff at the Mont and some poor families in Napa. In his own way he has created a special apostolate that reaches out to others and inspires them to assist him, especially a couple, the Fohr family, who live across Redwood from us. His labors in the garden encompass the entire year. Even in the winter chill he is preparing it for the winter plantings and then for the major spring plantings that will carry through the summer and autumn.

This Brother of ours whom we are honoring this evening is not “simple” in any sense of that word except in its spiritual sense. We honor a very alive 81 year old man who demonstrates a zest for life, a physical strength that is probably beyond many of us, a man of intense prayer, a person of great wit and a person with a far better-than-average intelligence. It is an honor for me to present Brother Ultan Alexius Dougherty to you this afternoon to honor him on his 60th anniversary as a De La Salle Brother.

NEW POPE AND RELATIVISM

In a column for the *Catholic San Francisco* Michael Novak wrote about the Pope’s view on relativism. He notes that the temptation of society in the 19th century was to scientific rationalism, whereas the modern temptation is to post-modern relativism, which says that we make choices but we don’t know any values for sure, and so we must be tolerant of all viewpoints. But if everything is relative, even tolerance is a subjective choice, not an objective mandatory value. Ironically, what post-moderns call ‘tolerance’ is actually intolerant of any view contrary to its own. What the new Pope wants is not a dogmatic absolutism in rejection of tolerance. Rather he wants an optimistic effort to seek truths and values, not a lazy lapse into total skepticism. We should seek the truth in all things, to follow the evidence and not to give up. We seek God in whom is the way the truth and the life. It is to be expected that our pluralistic world will produce diverse views, but relativity is not the same as relativism.

BROTHER PHILIP THEZ'S JUBILEE TALK

Brother, Sisters, Affiliated Members, and Lasallian Partners:

St. Paul begins most of his letters with gratitude to God for all that has happened. In *Colossians* (3:15-17) he states, “And let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, to which indeed we were called in the one body. And be thankful ... And whatever we do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

I come before you today in gratitude to God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—for the fifty years as Brother of the Christian Schools and our Lasallian way of life. My life has been guided by the Most Holy Trinity on this journey—with its up and down parts, backwards, smooth, rough and forward again. Such surprises—but with deep love and gratitude for all the paths I have followed. I would never change these directions, for these have helped make me who I am. I share with you this afternoon *only* the foundation of this *on-gong* journey, just the beginnings.

I am grateful for the men and women who opened to me new life and helped sustain this life upon which I built this on-going journey. I was guided by my mother, Helen Marie and my dad, Jean-Marie Thez, in a French culture in San Francisco along with my grandparents and relatives—all who have gone to meet the Lord face to face. I grew up in a heritage dedicated to St. Joseph and Our Lady of Lourdes, the Immaculate Conception. My family and my culture were paths that have given me strength during my on-going journey, *and* to them I am most lovingly grateful. It has been renewed whenever I visited my relatives—great aunts and uncles and numerous cousins in Lourdes. Also, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondolet opened to me the beginnings of a gift of vocation to religious life, and to them I am grateful.

The family moved to Walnut Creek, and I went to Mt. Diablo High School. It was there that two of my teachers convinced me to go to St. Mary's College. They (both non-Catholics) used to attend Brother Black Leo's lectures and were very impressed with the Brothers.

The example of my teachers, the Brothers, convinced me to enter the Institute on February 3, 1954. They were Brothers Sixtus Robert, Dennis Goodman, Sabas Dominic, Buzz Dominic, and Cassian Frye. It was Brother S. Edward who gave the green light for entering, and Brother Thomas Levi was my robing sponsor. It was from their examples that I wished to serve God and students.

Of course the journey continued with guidance, love, encouragement, and support for all my fifty years. I would not have known how I would have walked the paths placed before me by God without Brother U. Pius (Paul Figueroa), my Director of Novices, Brother Raphael Willeke, my Director of Scholastics, and Brother Columban—and Jim Murray (known as Vincent Kilian) James Ash, and Michael Saggau. I am so grateful to those who have gone to meet God—Pius and Kilian—and to you—Raphael, Columban, James and Michael—for your love and friendship.

To these I should add my robing group, the Group of the Immaculate Heart—Robert Christopher, Thomas Gerard, Vincent, William Paul, Timothy Neil, and Robert Zachary. We received our robe on the vigil of the Assumption, August 14, 1955. I would like to acknowledge three Brothers who would have celebrated their jubilees this year. They received the robe in January 1955, the late Brother Robert Lee, Andrew Steele, and David Gomez. I am grateful for their lives.

In addition, I would like to recognize Brother T. Edwin, my first Community Director and Principal, who was my sponsor at final vows.

There are many others whom I will recognize at another celebration, men who have become my friends on the journey and with whom I lived and served in the education of youth—in Fresno, San Francisco, Napa, and other places.

My journey continues to be one of service to Brothers and to youth.

And I wish to end by recalling an event that, in the past fifty years, made a real impression on me. Brother U. Alfred Brousseau, former Visitor, did not wish to have a celebration of his golden jubilee. He was known for his support of the Camps, and on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Camp La Salle (which he had arranged for the District to lease) a group of us convinced him to say a few words at the celebration. But we also sneaked in a jubilee party. He did speak briefly, and I will ever remember his words because they reflect my feelings: “I have always loved the Brothers and the Brothers have loved me in return.”

Thank you very much, Brothers.

The Classic text: “Imitation of Christ.”

V. Messori asked Cardinal Ratzinger in 1984 whether there is a place in spirituality for A Kempis’ *The Imitation of Christ*. The reply: “It is a question evidently to two quite different spiritualities. The *Imitation* is a text which reflects the grand medieval monastic tradition.... Among the most urgent objectives of the modern Catholic there arises precisely the recovering of all the positive elements of a spirituality like that, one aware of the qualitative detachment between the spirit of faith and the spirit of the world.” ... We tend to have “an insufficient comprehension of spiritual interiority.”... There is a place for “*fuga saeculi* (flight from the world) which is at the center of classic spirituality. . . One does not fly from the world in order to abandon it but to re-create in certain places of spirituality a new possibility of Christian and therefore human life. ... viable oases of hope for the salvation of all.”

Taken from interviews with Cardinal Ratzinger, “Entretien sur la Foi,” by Vittorio Messori. Fayard, 1985

JUBILEE TALK

Bernard LoCoco, FSC

Brother Michael (Meister) thank you for your kind introduction.

Introductory Story

My cousin is an avid duck hunter and for years he wanted a retriever with great bloodlines. Not long ago he obtained such a dog and on the first day of duck season he invited his hunting friend to join him hunting.

Shortly after sunrise my cousin shot his first duck and immediately the dog left the blind, walked on water and retrieved the fallen duck. Naturally the sight of his dog walking on water shocked my cousin. During the next couple of hours this was repeated twice. My cousin signaled his friend at a nearby blind to join him since the friend had not shot a duck. Shortly after joining my cousin in his blind, the friend shot his first duck and again the dog retrieved the duck by walking on water. My cousin asked his friend, "What did you see?" – the friend replied, "Your dog cannot swim."

When it was first suggested that I celebrate My Golden Jubilee, I was hesitant. For some reason I was reluctant to have the spotlight shine on me. I shared this with my spiritual director, and she saw things differently, just like my cousin's friend. My spiritual director reminded me that the celebration was an opportunity to give thanks and praise God. Taking her advice, I come before you filled with gratitude.

Most recent retreat

Last May I made my annual retreat at a hermitage at the Desert House of Prayer. My reflections focused on the fifty years of my life as a Christian Brother. During this retreat I reviewed my life as a Brother and spent time, a day each, on the following themes:

- Vocation as a mystery
- The many people encountered (2 days)
- The ministries and other opportunities
- The challenges, crosses, losses
- The surprises

After reflecting on these themes for six days, I took time to give thanks – express gratitude for all that has been and specifically give thanks for:

- God's Providential Care

- God's Generosity
- God's Fidelity

My heart is filled with gratitude for the ABUNDANCE of God's love.

There are many, many people who were remembered during my retreat, but today I would like to recognize in a special way one of the most important people – my dear Mother – whom I affectionately call “Mama LoCoco.”

Mama LoCoco, along with my father, not only gave me the gift of life but she taught me how to live; she shared her wisdom. Allow me to share but two of her guiding principles and true stories how she lived these.

A Pearl of Wisdom Number 1

When vacationing in Florida, it was our custom to take Mama LoCoco shopping to the grocery store. Until Mom was in her mid-80's she worked in the family grocery business and loved to visit other stores to see the produce, check prices and visit with the shoppers.

Because Mom (in her 90's) found walking a bit difficult we would use a wheelchair for her. I would push Mom and my sister would fill the grocery cart. This particular day all wheelchairs were being used but a motorized cart was available. My sister suggested we put Mom in the motorized cart and that I walk beside her guiding the cart. Although Mom had never driven, she soon had a sense of how to operate the cart. After a few moments my sister was calling me to one side aisle, so I encouraged Mom to just go straight and I would meet her at the end of the aisle. As my sister and I were deliberating a choice, I noticed Mama LoCoco, heading for a very large display of cookies. She appeared to be looking elsewhere, unaware of the imminent collision. Trying to avoid the catastrophe, I shouted in a loud voice “Mom stop.” Fortunately she did stop inches from the cookies.

With everyone now looking, I ran to Mom's side and scolded her, “Mom, you have to pay attention to what you are doing.”

Mom looked at me with a smile and pointing to an elderly gentleman Mama LoCoco said, “Whenever I see a good looking gentleman I forget what I'm doing.”

The gentleman and his wife both smiled broadly, and there was laughter and joy among the observers.

I share this story because it illustrates Mom's quick wit but also one of her favorite “pearls of wisdom” and one that guided her life. It was in fact her philosophy of life – ***“If I can make someone smile, it makes me happy.”***

Just think how different our life, our world would be if more of us lived by this wisdom – to help others smile.

A Pearl of Wisdom Number 2

Again with my sister, Mom and I were in Florida for a vacation. My responsibility during these holidays was to write post cards to family and friends. We had purchased the some thirty cards, and I was writing these while my sister prepared lunch and Mama LoCoco said her rosary.

When I was writing the cards I asked my sister if we should send a card to a friend of mom's, Mrs. X. My sister responded by saying, "Mrs. X vacations, travels often and never has sent Mom a note or card. Let's omit her this year" and I did.

When I finished the 30 or more cards I reported those to whom cards were being sent and Mom, at 92, noticed that I had omitted Mrs. X. Mom asked "What about Mrs. X?" My sister again responded, "Mom, Mrs. X travels frequently and never sends you a card, why bother?"

Almost immediately Mama LoCoco responded, **"Why should her behavior determine what I do?"**

My mother with but eight years of formal education knew in her heart the key message of the Gospel. Mama LoCoco in her wisdom realized that we should act with kindness and compassion and not be dependent on the behavior of another.

"Why should I let another's behavior determine what I do?" This maxim of wisdom may sound simple, but for me it is a challenge to me in my daily life.

I believe that within each of us, in our hearts, we know the right course of action, but often we are motivated by other factors. So often my behavior is determined by how others treat me, or what will help me look good, be successful or is the path of least resistance. When I act from this perspective I contribute to the oppression, deception, selfishness, poverty, violence, the intolerance so prevalent in our society.

On the other hand, when I act with charity, patience, generosity and justice I contribute to a society of greater equality, a world where all are treated with dignity, where fidelity is value, resources shared – I help plant the seeds of peace.

A few years ago there was a best seller with the title “All I Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.” As I give thanks for my 50 years as a Christian Brother, I recognize that much of what I needed to learn for my life, I learned from Mama LoCoco.

To all who touched my life during these 50 years I say thank you. I am proud to be a Christian Brother.

Traits of Lasallian Education

A new book reviewed in the Institute’s newsletter, *INTERCOM* 123 (Jan.-Mar. 2004, page 15) outlines a thesis on the history of catechesis in the Institute. The reviewer picks out phrases from the text. These phrases seem to touch upon many of the main themes of Lasallian education. [The book was written by Brother José Maria Perez Navarro.] Examples:

“Attentive to the human and spiritual needs of children and young people.”

“The Christian school is the privileged but not the exclusive element of Lasallian activity.”

“Within the school human and Christian education are integrated.”

“The work of the Brother and the Lasallian Christian educator is a true ministry,”

“To exercise the ministry competently, good formation is necessary.”

“The constant presence of a Christian community with the Lasallian school.”

“The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools at the service of the Church.”

“Reciprocal influences of the Church and Institute in catechesis.”

GLEANINGS: BROTHER ALEXIUS' ONE-LINERS

[For more than fifty years Brother Alexius Dougherty has been composing one-liners and sayings, some of them glosses on familiar aphorisms. A few of these are listed here from his compilation of several hundred. It might be that some of the samples given here could become topics for student essays and for reflection at retreat time. A publication with the complete collection is expected to be available in the near future. Ed.]

Life always has a big **if** in the middle of it.

Life is a pilgrimage between a why and a because.

Life is like a man's sitting on a powder keg and swatting mosquitoes.

The childhood years are the most precarious. The adolescent years are the most risky. After that anything can happen.

I am a firm believer in reincarnation: in my former life I was a teenager.

Life: in one year and out the other.

Old folks settle into two types: earthy and crusty.

In creating the universe God made a spectacle of Himself.

God created us, but we have to grow our own hair.

Heaven and earth may pass away, but immortality is here to stay.

A man parts his hair until his hair parts him.

Time on your hands is better on your knees.

Post the past; host the present; toast the future.

Poor memory: finding a dead-end street while strolling down memory lane.

A mob is a crowd looking for a fight; a crowd is a mob fighting for a good look.

He misses much who misses little.

Worldliness comes in two stages: the sacred becomes secular and then the secular becomes sacred.

If we had no folly to look back upon, chances are we would have no wisdom to look forward to.

Any loquacious man can slay his thousands with the jawbone of an ass.

Try not to tax others with your free speech.

If flattery fools you, fools will flatter you.

He flatters himself who thinks he can flatter the great.

It's hard to accept a man's praise without accepting his pedestal.

The difference between praise and blame is about five minutes.

Time is on the side of obscurity.

Epitaph: the benefit of a doubt.

He goes to heaven who lets honors fly.

If good sense were more fashionable, fashions would be more sensible.

Snobbery: a class act.

Not every social climber is on the up and up.

The guttersnipe should curb his ways.

He who lets his whiskers grow loses face.

Tact is foresight, that is, presence of mind and afterthought all rolled into one.

Finicky people give more pains than they take.

Being fastidious is not so much being solicitous about many things as it is being solicitous about one thing too many.

A square meal fits nicely into a round hole.

Obesity: making the torso more so.

Drink off and on, not on and on.

For modern poets rhyme does not pay.

Sanity might be described as how lightly we take out illusions.

The wife of Pontius Pilate has given us an example of women's intuition at it best.

There are two requirements of a successful wit: first, to be well liked, and second, to stay well liked.

Charity covers a multitude of puns.

There are times to laugh and times to cry—and times to do both.

Sometimes even a chicken's best laid plans don't hatch out.

Pun: something funny beyond words.

To be little is childlike; to belittle is childish.

A smile is an intellectual breakthrough.

A baby can put his foot in his mouth privately; in adulthood he can do it only in public.

The more we get keyed up, the harder to unlock ourselves.

May the greatest of your worries be the least of your worries.

We are what eats us if we worry too much.

Hypochondriac: An over-groan baby.

Epitaph: Here lies a successful hypochondriac—he had everything.

Impatience, like pride, is more swallowed than conquered.

It's not easy to catch a grumpy man off guard.

Every silver lining has a cloud.

Pessimist: a philosopher of sorts out of sorts.

Pessimist: one who puts a great future behind him.

No one is perfect, nary a one. The leopard's got spots; so's the sun.

It's hard to find fault with a person who doesn't.

If you haven't got something good to say about another person, say it anyway.

It's a lot harder to find a good critic than to hide from a poor one.

An old grouch is one whose complaints have come home to roost.

As middle age digs into old age it throws the dirt on top of the teenagers.

Most of the problems we have with our neighbor come from something we said—or from something he ate.

Contempt feeds on things that should be beneath contempt.

Cross words have always puzzled me.

Cynic: One who values your laughter but laughs at your values.

Never underestimate the goodness of others—it will increase your own.

Men may judge well what they know, but too often don't know well what they judge.

The Beatitudes indeed are all the attitude we need.

The devil bides his time until you start wasting your time.

Laxity: Taking ought for naught.

If you pray only in times of need, the time is now.

Being careless is not half as bad as caring less.

Boredom is an unoccupational hazard of life.

Long stories told by a bore always have a pleasant ending.

A lazy man generally feels obliged to take advantage of his reputation.

The bigger the city the smaller the neighborhood.

Children today may speak of their forefathers but are more likely to speak of their four fathers.

Family life began drifting apart at the invention of the wheel.

Marriage is the union of a god and a goddess asked to share the same pedestal.

An excuse can be both a lie and a truth: The way we tell it, it may be a lie; the way it tells on us, it may be a truth.

Hell should be a wonderful place for finger-pointing.

Many a naughty child is likened to an obscure uncle.

“Conscience warns us as a friend before it punishes us as a judge.”

A wicked man’s misgivings keep him spiritually viable.

A good conscience is a guide; a bad conscience is a glide.

There is little margin for error between shame and shamelessness.

Remorse is tardy reflection.

Faith moves mountains; penance is more a spot remover.

In holy penance we have the uproot of all evil.

The confessional is God’s collection agency.

St. Matthias won the Church’s first lottery.

A first-time mother doesn’t just change her first diaper—the first diaper changes her.

Once a fool begins to feel foolish, there is hope.

Humility is at once both manifest truth and hidden paradox. To know our nothingness is truth; to know our greatness is paradox.

Humility keeps a man honest; honesty keeps him humble.

Patience and humility lean on each other for moral support.

Lord, grant me more humility—whether I need it or not.

God may not have chosen St. Joseph because he was perfectly humble; His choice of St. Joseph may have made him perfectly humble.

Self-knowledge gives wisdom her credentials.

What a secular humanist doesn’t know is what it means to be fully human.

Honesty is to humility what fear is to wisdom.

Integrity is our best declaration of independence.

Con artist: a super duper.

Merchants are allowed just enough deceit to make an honest living.

There are times when we can hardly believe our ears and times when our ears can hardly believe us.

Austerity chills charity unless first warmed by it.

What a pleasant surprise that St. Simon the Zealot is the Apostle least heard from.

Patience is the calm before, during, and after the storm

God would not test us if He detested us.

Before you air your views, view your airs.

A saint is one who is just as stubborn as God is persistent.

Stability puts change in its place.

There are two types of beginners in the spiritual life: neophytes and the rest of us.

We should pray both at the spur of the moment and the moment of the spur.

Many early Christians lost their head by keeping their Head.

DIVERSITY

Cardinal Ratzinger pointed out [in a 1984 interview with V. Messori] that, among truly human beings, real equality requires diversity. That is to say, if we recognize that our human nature is defined in part by its freedom, then equal human beings will be different from each other, and we have to recognize such diversity. Human beings do not lose their humanness by being different from each other; they express it by choosing to be different from each other. This certainly applies to the equality between men and women.

On the other hand, socialization or conformity is a real good. We express our freedom by using it, not just to be different, but also to cooperate with other human beings, that is, to be enough like them to attain the advantages of social cooperation and fulfillment—for others as well as for ourselves. .

PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS: ROLE OF A UNIVERSITY

Brother Vincent Malham, FSC

[On February 16, 2005, Saint Mary's College, Moraga, held a convocation in order to bestow on Brother Vincent an honorary doctorate following his years of service as President of Bethlehem University. For the occasion he delivered the following address. Ed.]

Your Excellency, Bishop Cummins, Brother Ronald, President,
Distinguished Trustees and Regents, Faculty, Staff, Alumni, Students, Guests,

I am humbled to receive this honor from St. Mary's College and thank the Board of Trustees most sincerely for its gracious endorsement. Because of the privileged relationship Bethlehem University has enjoyed with St. Mary's from its beginnings, an honorary doctorate from this distinguished institution is of especial significance. Through the years St. Mary's has been unusually generous to Bethlehem University, sharing some of its most gifted educators in the persons of Brothers Eric Vogel, Gus Rossi, Timothy Ford, John O'Neill (Academic Vice President), Donald Mansir, Ronald Gallagher (Vice Chancellor), Raphael Patton, Kenneth Cardwell, Myron Collins, Dr. Jacob Lester. Still very much alive in the hearts of our university family, these educators are gratefully remembered for their invaluable contributions to the development of our fledgling institution. In addition, other persons from St. Mary's have come to Bethlehem rendering valuable service in both academic and non-academic areas (Brothers Jerome West and Richard Lemberg, Claire Sheridan, Dr. Thomas Brown, Nushi Safinya). Still others have supported us financially. Therefore, it is in a spirit of fraternal gratitude that I represent another Lasallian institution here today and share with you a little about its faculty, staff and students and their courageous struggle for justice and human rights. And with your indulgence, it is in the name of these unsung heroes that I proudly accept this recognition.

I should like to direct my presentation as follows:

(1) A brief introduction to Bethlehem University and its role in promoting peace and human rights; (2) Some challenges the institution continues to face in the midst of the present political situation; (3) A few concluding reflections.

1. *Bethlehem University.* During the historic visit of Pope John Paul II to the Holy Land in March 2000 the Holy Father spoke of "*the extremely valuable work of Bethlehem University.*" More recently, at the conclusion of a Conference in the Holy Land in January, Bishops from North America and Europe stated that they would use every opportunity to share with their own communities and governments what they had heard and seen in parishes, and "*in Bethlehem's wonderful university - whose story is followed with great interest in many countries...*" (from Statement issued in Jerusalem, Thursday 13 January 2005)

Yes, the story of this University is one of remarkable perseverance: the development of an institution from modest beginnings in 1973 of some 100 students to a vibrant university today serving 2100 students in five faculties, and an Institute of Hotel Management and Tourism. The University also serves several hundred non-traditional students – housewives, businessmen, ex-detainees, children – who follow a variety of courses and programs in our Institute for Community Partnership. Christian and Muslim students come together to study on our campus from diversified backgrounds: from the cities, from villages and refugee camps, males and females; the very poor, most not able to pay an annual tuition of \$1,000. Over 8,000 graduates have received diplomas in our 31-year history. We have been closed 12 times, the longest closure occurring from 1987-1990 during the first Intifada. Especially difficult were the first three years of the present Intifada, which began in Fall 2000, in particular the repeated military occupation of Bethlehem, the attacks when every building on campus was damaged and the long periods of curfew. Fortunately, this present academic year has been more normal thus far, and as a result, we were able to complete the first semester before Christmas for the first time in many years.

We are inspired and strengthened by the courage and commitment of faculty, staff and students, and by the generous support of individuals and groups the world over, without whose assistance higher education would not be possible for most young students of the area. In fact, the situation makes our work more valuable for our students and for our 500 employees who have regular employment in an area where unemployment stands at c. 40-50%. And in light of continued Christian emigration, many look on the University as a beacon of hope for a diminishing Christian population in the Holy Land.

2. *Peace and Human Rights at Bethlehem University.* Our University is proud to be a part of peacemaking from its inception in 1973 as an agent of peace through its educational ministry to the youth of Palestine. Our very name recalls the Prince of Peace and the requirements of discipleship to "*always aim at those things that bring peace and that help strengthen one another*" (Romans 14:19). Certainly, providing the young people of Palestine with a quality education, giving them the opportunity of self-discovery through learning, and the tools for creative life-building through knowledge, strengthens them intellectually, morally and spiritually. And it strengthens us all to be peacemakers of the world. When interviewed last October by an American Catholic journalist, a 2004 graduate emphasized that only educated people who can dialogue with the world can change the world. She added that despite tremendous difficulties in getting to the University each day, she and fellow students were persistent because, "*we know that education is the only way to a future of peace.*"

(NCR, Oct. 28, 2004)

2.1. It is our firm belief that peace is brought about by people meeting people, people talking with people, discussing differences, agreeing to disagree, learning to live and work together, not in uniformity but in unity. Since its inception, our

University has fostered excellent relations between Christian and Muslim students and staff on campus. The administration, faculty, staff and students together have created a culture of acceptance and inclusion and have incorporated these concepts as part of the University's value system. We are proud that our student body includes an annual average enrollment of c. 68% young women in a country where women are still considered second class citizens in many regions. We are a Catholic/Christian institution administered by the De La Salle Christian Brothers, open to all Palestinians, where all students are treated equally, with respect and dignity and without discrimination. In addition, we try to promote a culture of peace and human rights through activities such as Student Senate elections, required courses in Humanities, a satellite program with Mediterranean universities and joint research studies with Israeli professors.

2. *Challenges.* With this introduction as background, permit me to reflect briefly on some challenges our University faces given the current political situation.

2.1. *As an institution of higher learning we are being tested in many ways.* Just to maintain the University in operation is one of the major challenges. To “maintain in operation” means trying to conduct classes when many faculty, staff and students must take circuitous routes, walk by foot for considerable distances and oftentimes be subjected to humiliation at checkpoints to reach the University—even when there are no curfews or closures. And to worry about whether entry into Bethlehem will be possible once the separation wall, which is moving irrevocably closer, is completed. Maintaining the University in operation is trying to find enough money in a destroyed economy to pay salaries; it is also making daily administrative decisions, which require constant adaptation to unforeseen and uncontrollable circumstances. But on a deeper level, to maintain the University in operation tests the very values and principles for which the University stands.

2.2. *Times of crisis and suffering also reveal the limits as well as the vocation of institutions.* Universities are not political parties or instruments of them. We cannot pretend to respond to all demands of the cries for justice. Sometimes we are humbled before our own inadequacy to respond more concretely to all the needs of the suffering society we are a part of. But this can lead us to recognize more deeply who we are, and what our limitations are. No one else can do what we do: the formation of youth for their part in the construction of society, by their academic and professional excellence and street smarts, i.e., way of mediating their abilities to the society such as it is, and such as it aspires to become. And how vitally important this is at this strategic moment in our country.

2.3 *We witness to our principles on human rights, justice, and peace, and to our specifically Christian beliefs and convictions and hopes* by means of our attitudes toward staff and students, and also towards ourselves, and sister institutions engaged in higher education. We must especially be careful and courageous in relating to the local and regional communities. Here is where the functioning of the cultural-social structure plays such important roles at times. For in a Muslim-Christian neighborhood there are certainly some complementary notions of rights and justice,

but there are also profound differences. That some of our Muslim brothers and sisters have their own quite different beliefs about the suicide bombings or the concept of martyrdom also affects deeply the area where the principles and beliefs of a Christian institution are enunciated and carried out through policy and planning. The inter-religious dimensions cannot be covered over with smooth talk, when it comes to the crunch of conflicting religious and ethical views on violence, rights, duties, vengeance and justice. A really Christian university in a largely Muslim cultural context such as ours is in a very challenging and sensitive position when it comes to articulating, facing, and resolving such justice-related issues when they arise in stressful times. It is our role to work toward deeper consensus with non-Christians and Christians on the issues implied in the underlying principles of the University.

2.4. *Education or leading out:* where do we come from, where are we going, whom do we walk with? We at Bethlehem University walk with Palestinians, from years of occupation to liberation and taking of national sovereignty, its rights and responsibilities. We are not only educating, in very stressful and violent times, but we are being educated. We have something to teach, and we have something to learn. To learn the truth, and to take the consequences of finding it. To learn what is good, and to take responsibility for sharing it. We are educating and learning for mutual trust, despite so many reasons and experiences of distrust, disloyalty and betrayal. And we are learning from one another on that road.

2.5. *The basic issues remain.* Jerusalem, the secure borders, the settlements, the suicide bombings, the targeted killings and destruction of homes, the refugees, the U. N. resolutions, the Wall. And then there are the graves. Much more numerous than the seats in Congress. One month ago on January 16, Nadim Matar, a December graduate of the University with a critical heart condition needed to be rushed to Hadasseh Hospital in Jerusalem. His family applied for a permit at 10:30 that morning for him to go to Jerusalem. The family informed the authorities that Nadim had been in Hadasseh just two days before, that his health condition was very critical and that authorities at Hadasseh insisted that he be brought to the Hospital immediately. At around 1:00 pm the family was told that the permit was not granted. Many parties intervened, including members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. Later in the afternoon at around 4:30 Israeli authorities allowed Nadim to be transferred in a Palestinian ambulance to the checkpoint in nearby Beit Jala, where he was moved to an Israeli ambulance to be taken to Hadasseh. Shortly before reaching the hospital Nadim died. It was just three days earlier, that his father had come to the University to get his Nadim's diploma, a BA Degree in Business Administration.

The dead remain with us, and keep chewing up generation after generation, widening and deepening the divides, at times dehumanizing human beings. But still, we will keep trying to lead beyond that, with our eyes and ears open, with every intention of reaching that just, compassionate peace, that is real politics, in negotiation, agreement, respect. We will educate no one to be satisfied with that level of himself

where he no longer sees in his enemies and his friends, a brother. A brother or sister with whom he may deeply disagree or by whom he was humiliated or harmed—yet heroic as it may be—a person he is called to forgive.

I am touched by the following description of Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, who, with his mother, witnessed a procession of 20,000 German prisoners after World War II.

“The pavement swarmed with onlookers, cordoned off by soldiers and police. The crowd was mostly women—Russian women with hands roughened by hard work, lips untouched by lipstick, and with thin hunched soldiers which had borne half of the burden of war. Every one of them must have had a father or a husband, a brother or a son killed by the Germans. They gazed with hatred in the direction from which the column was to appear.

“At last we saw it. The generals marched at the head, massive chins stuck out, lips folded disdainfully, their whole demeanor meant to show superiority over their plebian victors. ‘They smell of perfume, the bastards,’ someone in the crowd said with hatred. The women were clenching their fists. The soldiers and policemen had all they could do to hold them back.

“All at once something happened to them. They saw German soldiers, thin, unshaven, wearing dirty, blood-stained bandages, hobbling on crutches or leaning on the shoulders of their comrades; the soldiers walked with their heads down. The street became dead silent –the only sound was the shuffling of boots and the thumping of crutches.

“Then I saw an elderly woman in broken-down boots push herself forward and touch a policeman’s shoulder, saying, ‘Let me through.’

*“There must have been something about her that made him step aside. She went up to the column, took from inside her coat something wrapped in a colored handkerchief and unfolded it. It was a crust of black bread. She pushed it awkwardly into the pocket of a soldier, so exhausted that he was tottering on his feet. And now from every side women were running toward the soldiers, pushing into their hands bread, cigarettes, whatever they had. The soldiers were no longer enemies. They were people.” (Yevgeny Yevtushenko, *A Precocious Autobiography*, 1963, as reported by Pax Christi USA).*

3.1 Concluding reflections. In the Homily of Pope John Paul II on the 38th World Day of Peace on this January 1st, the Holy Father says: *“Overcoming evil with weapons of love ...educating in forgiveness...becomes the way in which each person can contribute to the peace of all.”* Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah at Christmas Midnight Mass this year at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, entreats Israelis and Palestinians to conquer the evil of violence...and give birth to a new society of brothers and sisters in which no one controls the other, no one causes insecurity for the other, no one takes liberty from the other. He concludes his message with these

inspiring and challenging words: *“Brothers and Sisters, we pray for peace and justice in the hearts of all, Israelis and Palestinians. We have prayed and fasted. The Churches of the world have also prayed and fasted with us. We have asked them to become aware of their responsibility to promote in this land, where every Christian has his roots, a reconciliation based on justice and equality. We believe that God is good and that someday his goodness will conquer the evil of war, hate, fear and injustice now prevalent in this land. ...We pray that all walls will come down, those surrounding Bethlehem and the other Palestinian cities, as well as those of hate in the hearts of people. We pray for the birth of a new human order in our land and in the world and that God’s peace might reign upon us all.”*

I conclude these reflections with this excerpt from my Christmas message this year: *“...Let all who search for signs of a new dawn of promise and peace come to Bethlehem where Jesus, our Eternal Promise and Peace, was born. Come, look into the eyes of our students and let your hearts be touched by the goodness, courage and commitment of their vibrant young lives. Here, thanks to your friendship and support, I am confident you will find tangible signs of hope for the future and the vision of a land where someday justice and peace will flourish.”* (Br. Vincent Malham, Christmas card, 2004).

With all our hearts we yearn for this day.

R.L. Wilken on “GRAMMAR AND CULTURE”

Saint Isadore [early doctor of the Church] recognized that grammar, “the science of expressing oneself correctly,” is crucial not only for reading, writing, and speaking, but also for thinking and understanding. Grammar is knowledge of the way language works and of the rules that govern the relation of words and concepts. Without grammar there can be no transmission of the text of the Scriptures and no understanding of its content; hence, no grammar, no Christian culture.

Culture lives by language, and the sentiments, thoughts, and feelings of a Christian culture are formed and carried by the language of the Scriptures. ...

The recitation of the psalms day after day, week after week, transforms the words of the psalmists from texts to be interpreted into words we use to praise, beseech, confess, thank, and adore God—as well as words by which we know ourselves before God, “O Lord, Thou has searched me and known me! . . . Even before a word is on my tongue, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.”

If there is a distinctly Christian language, we must be wary of translation. We cannot hand on to the next generation what the words signify if we do not hold fast to the words. Jerusalem cannot become Paris or Moscow or New York without losing its rootedness in the biblical narrative. Certain words must be used as they have been received in Christian speech, e.g.. “Father,” “Son,” “Holy Spirit,” “Lord” (as in “Lord. have mercy”), “glory” as used in the Gospel of John for Christ’s passion, “sin” (“against thee only have I sinned”), “emptied” (as in “emptied himself taking the form of a servant”) . “resurrection” (as in “raised from the dead”) ... It will not do to erase the term “self” and put in its place “his senses,” as the current Catholic lectionary has it; not to reword, out of ignorance and ideology, the first verse in Psalm 1, turning “blessed is the man” into “blessed are those who”—thereby excluding the ancient Christological reading of the psalm.

TWO MATHEMATICAL NOTES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

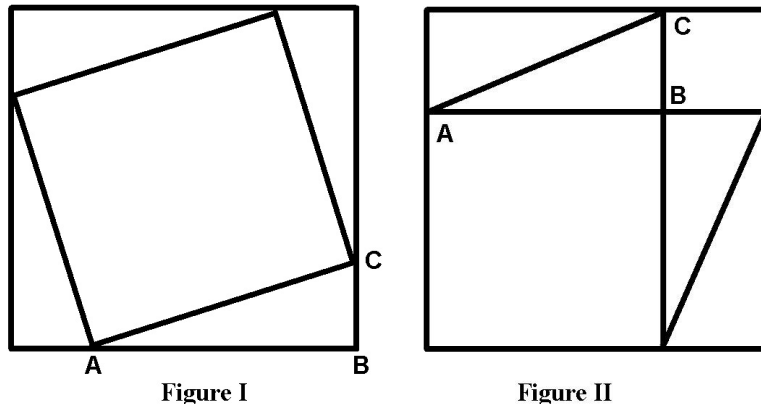
Brother Brendan Kneale

1. Some time ago I attended a meeting of math teachers from our high schools and was amused to find that they are still struggling to convince freshmen that “*minus times minus is plus.*” Perhaps it would be useful to present here a version of a classical demonstration (using the properties of zero, etc.) as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 (-a)(-b) &= (-a)(-b) + 0 \\
 &= (-a)(-b) + (-b + b) \\
 &= (-a)(-b) + (+a)(-b + b) \\
 &= (-a)(-b) + (+a)[(-b) + (+b)] \\
 &= (-a)(-b) + (+a)(-b) + (+a)(+b) \\
 &= [(-b)(-a) + (-b)(+a)] + (+a)(+b) \\
 &= (-b)[(-a) + (+a)] + (+a)(+b) \\
 &= (-b) 0 + (+a)(+b) \\
 &= (+a)(+b).
 \end{aligned}$$

Q.E.D.

2. Many Euclidean-type non-algebraic proofs of the *Pythagorean Theorem* are well known. I think the simplest demonstration is the following:



Given a right triangle of any size, show that the area of a square erected on the hypotenuse of the triangle is equal to the sum of the areas of the squares erected on the two shorter sides.

- a) Choose an arbitrary right triangle ABC and make three congruent images of it. Then assemble the four triangles in a large square as shown in Figure I. It is evident that the square on the hypotenuse AC is exhibited inside the large square.
- b) For Figure II reassemble the four right triangles inside the same size large square as shown. This time the squares on the two shorter sides are in evidence at the upper right and lower left corners of the Figure (a figure inspired by Euclid’s Proposition II, 4)
- c) Since “equals subtracted from equals leave equals,” the Theorem is true; that is, subtracting four right triangles from Figure I leaves the square on the hypotenuse, while subtracting the same four right triangles from Figure II leaves the other two squares; therefore, these remaining areas of the two Figures are equal. QED.

SHARING THE MISSION
An Oracle for the St. Mary's College Learning Community

Brother John O'Neill

[Brother John gave the Professor of the Year address at Saint Mary's College in April, 2005, and delivered it in his imitable style. The following is an edited version which omits the opening passages of the talk—those words were devoted to an initial Lasallian prayer and to an introduction of several people in the audience, including nine of the previous awardees and several colleagues, relatives, students and friends. The address itself is a report on the research project expected of all awardees. A copy of the complete text of the talk is available from Brother John and from the District Archives. Ed.]

BACKGROUND TO MY PROJECT

Initiated by then Academic Vice-President William Hynes in 1992, the Professor of the Year Award has a simple purpose, as described in this single sentence:

“To recognize distinguished achievement in teaching and/or scholarship by a faculty member.”

At the end-of-the-year faculty banquet last May, when it was announced that I had been chosen as the Professor of the Year 2004, what flashed across my consciousness was the scene from Plato's Apology when Socrates' friend Chaerephon returned from the temple of Apollo in Delphi with the oracle: “There is no one wiser than Socrates.”

What I heard last May, like an oracle for me, was “There is no professor more deserving of recognition for distinguished achievement than Brother John.” Like Socrates, my first thought was, “There must be some mistake. I am being presented with a riddle to be solved—because I am fully aware that I am not the most deserving.” I could name ten more deserving faculty members without taking a second breath--and that would be just from the School of Science.

Like Socrates, who said “[B]ut surely this cannot be false, because the gods must not lie,” I said (to myself) something similar: “There must be some truth to this, because surely the Rank and Tenure Committee, the Council of Deans, the Provost and the President of Saint Mary's College must not lie.” And so my task, was to untangle this oracle of mine—to find the truth, the meaning behind this award.

In our classic text, Socrates—determined to learn the truth of his oracle yet fully aware that the meaning of any oracle was seldom the obvious one—set out to discover the truth by questioning those with a reputation for wisdom. (The result of his inquiry, you will remember, was that Socrates had to conclude that the oracle was true—in the sense that he was wiser than those who professed to know more than they really did—because he was certain, as he said, “that whatever I do not know, I do not pretend that I know . . . in this I am wiser.”)

Now, it was at this point, that my path separated from that of my Athenian mentor. Although, like him, I, too, conducted inquiries . . .yet, after interviewing all 13 of the previous Professors of the Year . . . what I discovered was that they, like me, freely acknowledged that—as I told Prof. David Gentry-Akin who submitted my name for this award—that while it is a very great honor to be nominated for the distinction of “Professor of the Year,” it is an even greater embarrassment to be chosen for it! No hubris encountered in these interviews! [*Note: in the opening words of his address Brother John had earlier listed his thirteen predecessors: Professors Marguerite Boyd, Ronald Isetti, Mary Doyle Springer, Daniel Cawthon, Carl Guarneri, Carole Swain, Joseph Lanigan, Katherine Roper, Martin Rokeach, Edward Biglin, Gerald Brunetti, Theodora Carlile, and Stephen Woolpert.*]

So, still unclear as to why I had been singled out, but very clear that a Professor of the Year speech would be expected of me on April 14th, 2005, I started preparing by going to the academic office to look through the files of the previous honorees . . . hoping thereby to gain some notion of what might be appropriate for me to contribute on the occasion of this address.

It was when I realized that not all Professor-of-the-Year Addresses were on file and that even the list of names of the honorees was not complete. It was then that I determined that my first step would be to find all the names and Professor of the Year addresses. This first step ultimately led to the project which has occupied much of my time for the past six months and is the one on which I am reporting this afternoon.

With the help of Anne Perce, Sally Jamison, Judy Selland, Linda Wobbe and Bob Gorsch, I have collected all of the Professor of the Year addresses . There were only eleven formally given addresses (not 13) since the very first time the award was given, in 1992, there was no expectation of an address, so Prof. Candy Boyd had neither the opportunity nor the obligation to deliver such. As you will soon find out, she has more than contributed to the legacy of the Professors of the Year by her marvelous insights during my interviews. But I am getting a little ahead of myself.

And then, in 1999, when Prof. Martin Rokeach, from the Performing Arts Department, was honored as Professor of the Year, he chose a unique and

extremely creative alternative format for his address. After some brief opening remarks on his topic “What a Composer Hopes an Audience Will Hear,” Marty devoted the rest of his time to treating those in attendance to the experience of three of his original small ensemble compositions. . . performed right here in this Claeys Lounge by the members of the outstanding trio, “Strata” .

That I am personally indebted to Marty for creating this alternative will shortly be evident because my own Professor of the Year address will also be of two parts: this present explanation of what I am calling “Sharing the Mission” . . . and then a twenty-two minute DVD with the same title. Both parts also have the sub-title of my address: “An Oracle for the Saint Mary’s College Learning Community.” More about that in a moment.

Having acquired all eleven professor of the year addresses, I set about reading them, as if preparing for a seminar—writing in the margins, highlighting some words, asking questions . . . I began to realize what a treasure this wisdom literature represented—and the sad likelihood that, even though now on file, none of these brilliant addresses would ever be delivered again nor, possibly, even discussed again . . . unless I did something about it.

PUBLISHING THE PROFESSOR OF THE YEAR ADDRESSES

That was when I determined to publish each of the eleven addresses—to which would be added a more recently written Afterword from each professor, reflecting back on the topic in his/her address given some years before. All of these materials would be uniformly formatted, with line numbering for use in future faculty seminars and/or orientation seminars for new faculty and staff, and, quite possibly, for students, alumni/alumnae, and even parents.

In the course of discussing this project with Carole Swain, Dean of Mission and Faculty Development and Lisa Douglass, Director of Community and Government Relations, the thought emerged that a valuable companion piece to the text of these addresses would be a short film featuring the professors actually speaking on their own text or related topics, thus enhancing the seminar that would follow. And that is what happened.

INTERVIEWING THE PROFESSORS

In January, the thirteen previously honored Professors of the Year came, from near and far, from faculty offices, retirement or sabbaticals to sit for an interview in the Zocchi Lounge, with me asking the questions and with Scott Gibbs filming and recording it all.

Those of you who have attended any of the convocations, assemblies or orientation sessions, where film was used to illustrate the mission and the apostolates of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, will have seen the work of Scott Gibbs. He is a marvelously talented film maker and, like so many who have spent time living with and working with the Brothers in different parts of the world, has come to think like a Brother. I hope Scott can make a film director's comment at the end of our viewing the DVD. He has been busy on another assignment this week but said he would try to be here.

WHAT TO DO WITH THE FILM?

When the interviewing of all 13 professors was completed, there were cartridges containing about seven hours of digital film—from which, it was thought, only the highlights would actually appear on the silver screen. What surprised even Scott was the extraordinary richness of the spontaneous responses of the professors to questions, as well as the extremely practical wisdom revealed in their words. It was initially envisioned that one 15 – 20 minute DVD would be made to feature the professors ideas on what was the most important role of the professor at Saint Mary's College. What actually emerged was more than material enough to make six DVD's, centered around the message proclaimed by the banners lining the entrance to Saint Mary's College: "Welcome To The Premier Catholic, Liberal Arts, Lasallian Learning Community." That is, the six seminar topics chosen are Catholic, Liberal Arts, Lasallian, The Student, The Professor and Sharing The Mission.

A seventh DVD was made for viewing today. It is an overview of the entire project with excerpts from each of the DVD's to be used for the seminars on the six topics.

As study guides for each of these DVD's a booklet has been prepared. On the cover is a substantial excerpt from one of the professor of the year addresses that was especially suited to the specific topic. Inside the booklet can be found the exact words spoken by the professors in the film as well as enough of the larger quotation to provide a context for the excerpt. Since some statements that appear on the screen are in fact pieces of various statements made during the course of the interview, there is not always a smooth transition between one and the other. But Scott is a consummate professional so you will not be unduly distracted by flaws in my editing.

Just for today a 7th film and a 7th booklet were made. The video runs 22 minutes and is entitled "Sharing the Mission". Like the other booklets this one contains the exact words of the professors, so it is, in fact, a script for the film. It is a sampler and is not intended for use in a seminar but is rather intended to give you a good idea of each of the six parts. Copies are available afterwards for those interested in having one.

Since these booklets are records of conversations in an oral interview, do not bring your normal expectations for standard written English to the viewing of this film. Please keep in mind that these are conversations, not compositions. The recording of an oral interview contains um's, er's and uh's; sentences are sometimes left unfinished, or the speaker takes off in a different direction from the one started on. Yet, oral interviews reveal, in my opinion, the deepest convictions of the truly thoughtful person. So don't bring out your red pencils; there are no typos, but there are all kinds of fragments and dangling participles and incomplete-dynamic expressions.

MY ORACLE MADE CLEAR

Now, last of all, there is the question of the sub title for this address: "Sharing the Mission: An Oracle For The Saint Mary's College Learning Community." As I think I have clearly demonstrated, my oracle has been disentangled. I was meant to be so honored in order that what I am calling the wisdom literature of the Professor of the Year Addresses will remain alive and formative for Saint Mary's College faculty and staff and students and alumni/alumnae through these DVD's and the booklets and the seminars they will be used for. My work is completed. My oracle has been disentangled.

Your oracle is of a different nature. Yours is still unresolved. What I am saying now may be more for members of the Saint Mary's College family, i.e., faculty / staff / students /alums, but it may have applications and implications for all. So what is your oracle?

Consider this: if the number of Brothers is decreasing . . . and the number of Brothers' works is increasing . . . and if you are becoming ever more aware of the endangerment of the former and the incredible opportunity for good in the latter . . . what is your role in it all? The Brothers have no trouble at all using the word vocation. We believe that we have been called to live in this community, to engage in this apostolate and to work with those sent us by Divine Providence. but you . . . what are you doing here?

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ORACLE

To learn the answer to your oracle, I suspect that even if you asked the 13 professors who write so brilliantly in their addresses and speak so brilliantly in the film you are about to view, even they could well be at a loss for words to explain completely how they came to think and act as they now do. And, I wouldn't be surprised if they made use of the word vocation in their attempts at answering your questions.

I don't think you can wait for a voice from heaven, but you may well hear many enlightened and enlightening voices if you accept some of the invitations for you to participate in the faculty and staff development activities

coming out of Carole Swain's office. A last clue: listen carefully to Professor Martin Rokeach's musical score for this film especially the ending.

Thank you for coming this afternoon. Work on disentangling your oracle . . . on discovering your vocation. God bless you all.

CARDINAL FRANCIS GEORGE

At a 2003 dinner address for the Institute of Religious Life on "How the New Evangelization Depends on the Faith-Culture Dialogue," the Cardinal noted:

The intent of the Second Vatican Council was not to change the Church, as some thought, but that the Church was to change the world.

The new evangelization spoken of by Pope John Paul II involves not only persons but whole societies and cultures, "so that the Gospel of Christ will take root in their lives and in their societies and will transform them, so that this world will be a little bit more like the kingdom of God," said His Eminence.

The Cardinal added that today there is a "massive defection" not just from moral living, but also from the faith itself. "Culture is a human product; faith is a divine gift." He also said, "If there is too great a gap between the culture and the faith, people are going to have to die for the faith."

To evangelize the culture, we must make the culture more "Gospel friendly." We must take whatever is good from the culture, and use these virtues. "I always talk about Christ--the risen Christ--as totally free.... Freedom is a big American virtue."

Finally, the Cardinal saluted "consecrated persons who by vows have extended their baptismal consecration to the very roots of what we are called to be, who have given up everything for the love of Jesus Christ." He added that they have given up good values, such as marriage and prosperity, which are enshrined in every culture. "But they [those values] are not the ultimate goods. In the end, all we have is the love of Jesus Christ."

EXCERPTS FROM: “Newman and the Drama of True and False Conscience”

Cardinal George Pell

[The original address was delivered at a University of Chicago conference on True and False Conscience, in the fall of 2004. Ed.]

Cardinal John Newman's view of conscience is far from that usually held by those who speak of "primacy of conscience" today. . . .

People who claim primacy of conscience rarely see the problems this raises in the moral life. Furthermore, this view causes a range of problems for the practice of the faith and for the Catholic sense of belonging. Newman's view of conscience has a more transcendent importance: Conscience is the normal means by which most people know of the existence of God. ...

People from across the theological spectrum would agree with Newman that conscience is "a connecting principle between the creature and his Creator" ("Grammar of Assent," Chapter 5). But while some see conscience as God's invitation to embrace his law as free subjects, others see it as a radical call to personal freedom. For many people today, conscience suggests freedom to judge God's law by our own personal resources and the right to reject the notion or reformulate this law as we think best.

I imagine that to non-Christians this must seem rather odd: If moral and religious teachings bind only to the extent that one's individual mind and will enthuse about them, then pretty clearly the teachings do not bind at all. What "binds" is simply the autonomous self, with all the limitations that our selves are prey to. And to say "I am bound by me" is hardly to make a meaningful moral utterance. Rather, it is to reject the need for morality and creed and to claim that I should be allowed to live as I choose within the constraints imposed by family, friends and society.

Of course, this theory is often dressed up with the claim that conscience is a special faculty that speaks to us, rather like an oracle. The theory may also be elevated to the status of a doctrine -- the "primacy of conscience."

But annunciating grand titles does not change moral reality. Conscience is simply the mind thinking practically, thinking morally; the mind thinks well when we understand moral principles and apply them in clear and reasonable ways; the mind thinks badly when we ignore or reinvent moral principles, or apply them in ambiguous and unreasonable ways.

"Good conscience" simply means good grasp and good application of moral truths—it is the truth that is primary, it is the truth that is grasped and applied by the practical mind, or, if you prefer, by the conscience. . . .

Newman carefully distinguishes himself from those who equate conscience with integrity, sincerity or preference. In the famous passage of the "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk" (Part 5),

which the Catechism (#1778) part-quotes, he writes: "Conscience is not a long-sighted selfishness, nor a desire to be consistent with oneself; but it is a messenger from Him, Who, both in nature and grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by His representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ."

When we receive messages, we listen to them. We do not make them up and reword them to reflect what we wish had been said. If we disagree with the Church's message so seriously that we cannot follow its terms, then we cannot reinvent it to make it easier or more palatable.

Rather, we enter into a period of prayer, study and inquiry to try to understand the message and to understand why we find ourselves opposed to it. And we should realize that if the matter that puzzles us is one of a binding Church teaching or a central moral teaching, then prayer and study of this may be a lifetime's work.

A Catholic conscience cannot accept a settled position against the Church, at least on a central moral teaching. Any difficulties with Church teaching should be not the end of the matter but the beginning of a process of conversion, education and quite possibly repentance. Where a Catholic disagrees with the Church on some serious matter, the response should not be "that's that; I can't follow the Church here"; instead we should kneel and pray that God will lead our weak steps and enlighten our fragile minds, as Newman recommends in Sermon 17 -- "The Testimony of Conscience."

Of course, Newman's view of conscience is profoundly counterintuitive to modern ears. For Newman, conscience is objective, hard work, a challenge to self, a call to conversion, a sign of humility; and this sits uncomfortably for those who see freedom as the right to reject what is unpalatable. Many will say: "You can interpret conscience this way if you want to—I'll even defend your right to do so! But my own view is very different."

The only answer to this is to explain and to defend the existence of moral truth. In theory, this should not be too difficult. After all, everyone agrees that there is a basic truth of the matter in cases of social justice, children's protection, the immorality of torture, lying and cheating in public life, and so on.

But the twist is that many people who accept moral truths in some area of life reject moral truth especially in areas such as sexual morality, and perhaps also in life issues such as abortion and euthanasia. Moral truth is a great ally when it is on your side; but when it grates against your own convenience it can be tempting to treat it as an anachronism. But either there are or there are not moral truths, and if there are, these will have something to say about unpopular matters as well as more fashionable causes. ...

The Pope argues that in their consciences human persons encounter moral truth, freely embrace it, and personally commit themselves to its enactment. This account (see *Veritatis Splendor*, 54-64) builds upon Newman's theory of conscience as man's free adoption of God's law. Conscience is neither apprehending an alien law nor devising our own laws: rather, conscience is freely accepting the objective moral law as the basis of all our choices. Thus

forming and following a Christian conscience is a dignifying and liberating experience; it means not resentfully following God's law but freely embracing it as our life's ideal. ...

This specifically Catholic view rejects the mistaken primacy of conscience doctrine and clearly asserts the primacy of truth. The Pope writes: "In any event, it is always from the truth that the dignity of conscience derives. In the case of the correct conscience, it is a question of the objective truth received by man; in the case of the erroneous conscience, it is a question of what man, mistakenly, subjectively considers to be true. It is never acceptable to confuse a 'subjective' error about moral good with the 'objective' truth rationally proposed to man in virtue of his end, or to make the moral value of an act performed with a true and correct conscience equivalent to the moral value of an act performed by following the judgment of an erroneous conscience" ("Veritatis Splendor," 63).

Newman and John Paul II, from their very different traditions of Anglo and Continental philosophy, reach the same conclusion: Conscience is the free grasp of objective law. Some would pay lip service to the great work of Newman, saying, "Yes, I accept the moral truth—I just reject the particular set of moral truths that the Church proposes."

This approach to morality has been tried many times before. The endorsement of law as "form" which then allows us to reject any determinate "content" and to construct our own content is common to various subjectivists, intuitionists and Kantians. It is found too in the still-influential writings of Lawrence Kohlberg.

Anyone in a real life situation that requires moral strength, honesty, and accuracy would surely be repelled by the advice that "morality has nothing to say about the details of your choice; it's all up to you." This is purely abandonment of people when they most need and expect guidance. ...

The point is that no one—at least, no Christian—believes conscience simply asserts the first thing that comes into our heads. Conscience looks for real answers to our questions; and where can it look except to the truth? But then the value of conscience surely lies not in conscience itself but in the objective truth to which conscience looks for answers. It is the truth that is primary, and it is from the truth that conscience takes its value... Conscience only matters because truth matters to us passionately.

So, conscientious thinking matters to Christians because objective truth is so important to us. Why would we take conscientious belief seriously at all unless we believed it represented access to objective truth? After all, the bare fact that it is my private belief is of no moral significance whatsoever. It matters because objective truth matters. ...

A debased notion of conscience, a barely concealed enthusiasm for autonomy disguised as an appeal to the primacy of conscience, weakens our sense of obligation, damages our purity of heart, and makes it harder and harder to see God.

NOTES FROM COUNSELOR BROTHER CLAUDE REINHARDT'S TALK AT THE INTER-REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON VOCATION

[*Newsletter, LASALLIAN REFLECTIONS, Dec. 2004, published the talk that General Councilor, Brother Claude, gave to the Inter-Regional Vocation gathering in Guadalajara earlier that year. His title: "Vocations are born from the needs of the Young: Our Lasallian Tradition." Ed.*]

St. La Salle founded a community "which had [the following] qualities:

- prayer and contemplation, *and also* social and professional commitment
- identity and visibility of the community, *and also* closeness to the people
- mobility and availability for service, *and also* a community where one truly shared like Brothers
- a true service of society *and also* a true mission of the Church."

Brother Claude lists, and elaborates on, "several elements that could nowadays attract young people into a community, into the Institute:"

"Being able to perceive a light in the marketplace of ideologies, ideas, religions, ways of living. ..."

"Understanding love in a different way"

"Encountering and living a true brotherhood"

"Living a devoted commitment"

Brother Claude goes on to add some *countercultural* appeals of the consecrated life:

- ❖ brotherhood, as against individualism;
- ❖ attention to others, as against disregard for others;
- ❖ peace, as against war and social tensions;
- ❖ a wider love than that of marriage;
- ❖ a Rule of life for consecrated persons, where others have lost their bearings;
- ❖ accompaniment, where others live in loneliness or solitude;
- ❖ concentration on the spirit, where others have no time for meditation and prayer.

Brother Claude notes about our mission: "Ours is well defined: it is education, especially of the poor. But there is also the refusal to create social ghetto schools for the poor—these schools also welcomed other children. ..." The Brother is someone who "reminds us that God loves each one of us gratuitously."

In his treatment of "association" with lay teachers, he said, "Very few places can be compared to this particular one where we are able to share so intensely a common mission, which is lived in complementary vocations of other baptized people.... The blessing we have is that, in associating more closely in educational service, we send each other signals that this profession is also ministry, that this profession is a vocation."

He adds, "The Brothers, first disciples in the mission, are happy to share it widely today with numerous lay persons. They thank God that they are heirs of a charism that is

widespread... The role of the Brother today and tomorrow is to be seen in terms of linking up, collaboration, sharing, presence and interaction.” He recalls Brother John Johnston’s saying, “We are a community that generates other communities.”

Brother Claude quotes the following: “We exercise a kind of *communitarian deaconate of education*.” We know how to work in the field of education “in spite of its institutionalized bureaucracy...”

“Within the large Lasallian education Community, in harmony with the other educators and sharing with our Lay Associates the most everyday tasks as well as high-level responsibilities, the Brother is irreplaceable, and we will continue to call young people to share our life.”

**“Mother Teresa would, upon being introduced to people, give them what appeared to be a business card....On the card was written,
‘The fruit of silence is prayer; the fruit of prayer is faith; the fruit of faith is love; the fruit of love is service; the fruit of service is peace.’ “
Fr. R. J. Neuhaus.**

The Prayer of the Church

Brother L. Raphael

After a long stretch of litanies, consecrations and collects, forty years ago the Brothers adopted the divine office as the prayer of the communities. Although the earlier community exercises were explicitly non-clerical, the office was adopted as our prayer not because it was *clerical* but rather it was the prayer of the church in general and of the monasteries in particular.

A number of explanations and explorations were attempted to bring the Brothers to deal with the new prayers; although psalms and antiphons, as well as the “little office” were commonplace, the more formal style was a novelty. Today, after all of these forty years, we have still to put some problems to rest.

Recitation in community prayer remains a source of irritation. The psalms, poorly understood in any case, have been abused in many cases. The causes may be poked into with perhaps some hope of improvement. First, the office as a publicly recited prayer is *announced* to some extent. Proclamation is fundamental—someone leads and announces. Unfortunately, the *proclaiming* carries over into the chanting of the psalms. The result is that the office becomes a “dramatic reading”. This demands the lines scan, the meaning must be clear and the individual voice must be at the front—*each* voice! The sense of the language must be highlighted; pauses and emphases become crucial. The disruption is apparent. Why? Because sense, pauses and emphases are peculiar to each participant—they are not shared.

The office is meant to be chanted (that is, sung). Chant, unlike dramatic reading, submerges each participant in the common effort. Music brings the voices together, not to make sense, but to make fine sound—and prayer. Pauses and breaths are built into the chant, and each Brother must submit to that discipline. Dropping the music and leaving only the “reading” eliminates the discipline and leaves eccentric expression. Rather than hearing the Brothers at his elbow, each one exerts himself to deliver his own version of the words. It is a triumph of individualism and one-up-manship. On the other hand, the one praying must listen, almost subconsciously, and fit into the community, adjusting volume and speed so as to allow an effortless flow, a predictable and comfortable recitation.

Be sure there is room for interpretation and indeed for floridity. The antiphons and the readings lend themselves to drama, because they are recited by one Brother. With chant, the antiphons are fairly ornate and may be sung with a nearly operatic flair. And antiphons are repeated after intonation by the leader. Thus, while keeping things orderly, the one in charge is encouraged to bring a change, a bit of an awakening to the generally placid rendering of the psalms. In the same way, collects and readings are left to the discretion of the leader, and not recited in common. [In addition, there

are always the choices left to the leader in laying out the office. The suggestions in the directives only recommend that the *patience of the faithful* not be tried!]

The breaking of the lines in a psalm ought to remind the one reciting of the old discipline of the chant: breaks occur to keep things tidy and to eliminate odd observances. [Naturally, in a poorly edited text, there are mindless breaks caused by thoughtlessness—and *Christian Prayer* has quite a few.] The recitation of the psalms is a liturgy, a ritual holding no surprises. The imposition of eccentric practices and dramatic interpretations should be resisted.

The office is a *pretext*, freeing the mind by means of a repetitive action to allow prayer a place in the mind (and, needless to say, in the body). The rosary, on a lower level, is the same sort of exercise: repetition freeing the mind and body for prayer. No one thinks that rattling off dozens of *Aves* is by itself a “prayer”. There is no harm in saying all of those fine words, but there is no great virtue either. Rather, the rosary is a pretext for applying one’s mind to prayer, capitalizing on the freedom provided by repetitive formulae. In the same way, no one should feel it necessary to incorporate the literal meaning of the psalms into one’s prayer life. Smiting Amorites and slaying Moab ought not become part of a spirituality. Even more, the chauvinism of ancient Israel and the psalmists regarding Jerusalem and the Holy Land should not tie us into modern politics in any way.

Of course, there are wonderful phrases and notions found throughout the psalms and readings, but they are like plums in the pudding, to be cherished and enjoyed. The pudding remains, whether or no the plums are there. It may be said that the literal meaning of the words of the psalms are the very least important part of the office. The words are those of the inspired psalmist and the mere *saying* of these words will work wonders, regardless of any meaning layered on top of them.

Instead, the office must be seen as a daily effort, spread widely over the Church and her people, to share prayer. The words and the actions are shared throughout the world, at the same time of day, and with the same intention. The Church assembles to enact a ritual, to repeat actions. It is this shared activity, both on the universal level (the angels, the saints and the faithful) and on the local level (*these* Brothers in *this* chapel at *this* time), that makes the office the “prayer of the Church”.

“A truth sought exerts more influence than a truth taught.”

Lasallian Spirituality in Evolutionary Context [Revised]

Brother Brendan Kneale

[This revision modifies a previous version published in *E-Horizons* five years ago and seems called for in light of continuing interest in “spirituality.” Ed.]

It is possible to live immersed in complete materialism. Some people claim that they can find a meaningful life by concentrating on money and property, or on pleasure and self-indulgence, or on power and manipulation—on purely material things. But for most people, these material values are not enough and, in fact, can well be hindrances. Serious and reflective persons realize that those who say they have no transcendent or otherworldly aspirations are probably deceiving themselves. They have an unsatiated inner fire behind their material appetites. St. Augustine’s classical formulation of our deep (perhaps unconscious) longings was: “Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they rest in Thee.” For a meaningful life we require spiritual values. That is to say, Epicurus, for one, was wrong.

Thoughtful people generally try to formulate a “spirituality,” as distinct from what we might call their “materiality.” St. Paul goes so far as to say, “It is death to limit oneself to what is unspiritual; life and peace can come only with concern for the spiritual.” (*Romans*, 8:6) In fact, St. Paul, in *I Corinthians* 3:10ff, devotes considerable space to the importance of spirituality taken in this sense. But, this sense is not what one book reviewer said of the *The Da Vinci Code*, “[I]n the Elvis mode, what a lot of Americans mean by spirituality is simply an immense openness to occult superstitions of all kinds.” In other words, the reviewer reminded us that spirituality is not mere spiritualism, which, with its talk of ghosts and fairies, seems to be a kind of primitive animism.

In order to address the evolving nature of Lasallian Spirituality, it is helpful to proceed in two steps. First, try to be clear about what the *genus* “spirituality” is; and, second, try, in particular, to outline the origins and evolution of the *species* called “Lasallian spirituality.” This effort should aid in our reading of #17C in the Brothers’ *RULE*, which affirms that “*Brothers offer to those who desire it, a more intensified sharing of Lasallian spirituality.*” Some people want to know what the genus, *spirituality*, is and what the species *Lasallian* has evolved into.

I. What is “spirituality” in general? Can we define it?

We can compare the effort to define “spirituality” with attempts to define “culture,” which is another generic term that eludes easy definition. Some anthropologists agree that “culture is a relatively stable and well-demarcated set of traditional religious, social and aesthetic values and practices.” Similarly, we will say that a *spirituality is a relatively stable and more or less coherent array of convictions derived from one’s non-material values*. Such convictions may stem from one’s religion and theology, and/or from one’s philosophy, aesthetics and psychology, and/or simply from one’s social inheritance (and is thus it is a major component of many cultures.) Under such a very broad definition even completely secular persons can build a kind of spirituality—“a new age spirituality” for example—provided they hold to some coherent set of non-material values that govern many of their choices. (Examples of such values are: faith, hope, love, wisdom, knowledge, justice, temperance, fortitude, spirit of poverty, spirit of chastity, spirit of obedience, the Beatitudes, artistic and other freedoms, etc.) The definition may seem cold, uninviting, and far removed from St. Paul’s

“Spirit of Christ,” but like the definition of “culture” it may entail our very lively and dynamic involvement. If one’s values are firmly held and one’s convictions are strongly felt, then one’s spirituality is alive and vibrant and, indeed, may be intense. In the case of Christian spirituality it should also be very *Personal*.

The abstract definition keeps spirituality distinct from *religion* or *theology* or *mysticism* or mere *spiritualism*. For example, “religion” adds the notion of ritual to its creed; and “theology” is an analysis of objective truths rather than simply of subjective convictions; “mysticism” is a form of prayer; and “spiritualism” is generally a form of superstition or gullibility. Of course, there are strong links in most spiritualities with religion and theology and prayer-life—though we are told that Confucianism is a spirituality unconnected to a formal religion. Mostly, however, an objective religious *faith* is what shapes one’s personal spirituality. Finally, we might also note that we sometimes use the term “the spiritual life” in place of “spirituality.”

St. La Salle speaks of “seeing all things with the eyes of faith.” Notice, therefore, that a full spirituality like his extends to *all things* including the physical. The tangible is much affected by the intangible. Indeed, no serious spirituality can remain at the abstract or analytical level.

II. What then is “Lasallian Spirituality” ?

To proceed from genus to species, we now consider the origin and evolution of the species we call “Lasallian spirituality.” Originally it emerged as a variant of seventeenth century French Catholic spirituality, which in turn was immersed in a long genetic history of its own. St. John Baptist de la Salle was born in 1651 when French spirituality (and theology) were under some major stress and had to cope with internal and external influences, for example, from Quietism, Jansenism, Gallicanism, and the growing competition of Calvinism. These movements aroused strong feelings. Moreover, there were also important Cartesian pressures. In addition, within French spirituality there were internal variations of emphasis, such as those of the influential Benedictine, Franciscan, Jesuit, Vincentian, and, most important for our purpose, Sulpician masters.

Some authors say that the weaknesses of the French spirituality of the time were: (1) a strong Cartesian dualism (body vs. soul, nature vs. grace) and a penchant for rules and methods; and (2) an almost Calvinist emphasis on the power of original sin (thus, the need for seriously mortifying the body and mind); and (3) an individualistic piety that seemed to concentrate on internal holiness and to sideline social service. On the other hand, strengths of that French spirituality were its emphasis on reverential piety, its distance from secularity, its awareness of Original Sin and the need for self-discipline, its personal seriousness about religion in general, its immersion in Catholic culture. Just before St. La Salle’s time, St. Vincent de Paul started a drive to make French Catholics realize that these characteristics entailed real concern for and involvement with the poor and marginalized.

St. La Salle formed an eclectic but coherent amalgam from elements of French schools of spirituality. These elements he found in his training with the Sulpicians and in his later experiences, his spiritual directors and study. He ultimately shaped for himself and his followers the initial core of what we today call Lasallian spirituality. It emphasized personal faith extending beyond the official doctrines of the Church to everyday Providential actions and to whatever is entailed in the Incarnational nature of Christian life. It was also characterized by zeal for Catholic education (taking “zeal” to mean a devoted outgoing energy) directed to young Christians, as well as by a large measure

of Pauline and other New Testament theology, by loyalty to Rome, and by the importance of interior prayer, the indwelling of Jesus as the presence of God, self-discipline, Marian devotion, mutual community support and effort, etc. It rejected the puritanism of the Jansenists, and the passivity of the Quietists, and the proud provincialism of the Gallicans. Unlike some other spiritualities, on the other hand, it had no concerted aspiration to exalted mystical states. It was not individualistic since it *stressed the importance of community and association*—and it evinced a corresponding appetite for good management (with a Cartesian predilection for rules and methods) and for practical organization of its apostolic work. It seems clear that it was its Incarnational basis that led to La Salle’s non-elitist zeal in his mission (he made arrangements that all his elementary schools be open to all comers and be tuition-free, what he called “gratuitous”). Also, it led as well to the conviction that the Brothers should make “no distinction” in practice between the value of their work in the schools and their devotional life in the chapel or the requirements of Community. This latter insistence may be taken as evidence for the internal coherence of his spirituality. That is to say, the Incarnation entails a “hypostatic union” of the divine and human, the sacred and the secular. St. La Salle saw his disciples as teachers of secular matters *as well as* of sacred matters, and as devoted both to chapel *and* to classroom. [Other forms of consecrated life might emphasize the exclusively ascetic or apostolic or contemplative and mystical, rather than the Incarnational nature of their spiritualities.] Thus for La Salle the word “salvation” was equivocal in a sense—there is a salvation for individuals within their social environment as well as a salvation in heaven. Since grace builds on nature, these two “salvations” are mutually supportive.

By way of an aside, we might note that a by-product of each spirituality within the various forms of the Consecrated Life there is a distinctive institutional *charism* inspiring its apostolate. By “charism” is meant the special *apostolic* grace or mission-thrust of the organization. The two notions of spirituality and charism are not to be confused though, of course, they support each other.

Two genetic mutations

We find that the evolution of the spiritual heritage from La Salle’s time till recent years has involved some “variations” due to environmental impact and *two important mutations*.

The first mutation occurred when shortly after La Salle’s death the Church required, as a condition for his Institute’s canonical approval, the full set of the classic three vows, thereby giving central importance to chastity, poverty, and obedience—making sure that Lasallian spirituality would be *directly* opposed, by way of the three vows, to the three major forces of “materiality.” The subsequent growth and success of the Institute seem to have validated this mutation imposed by the Church; the change made it “fit to survive” and to flourish. But, at the same time (in the early eighteenth century) the traditions of the Church continued to sanction an internal “monastic” emphasis, for example, on silence, refectory reading, and restricted contact with “the world. These kinds of monastic emphasis (by the twenty-first century) no longer prevail in a Lasallian spirituality— because the latter underwent a *second mutation*.

It was really not until the twentieth century that there were many environmental forces to effect genetic variations, perhaps inevitable as the Institute spread into different cultures. For the century after La Salle his own disciples remained mostly inside France, where a highly centralized ethos issued from their headquarters. Religiously conservative French sensibilities dominated the spirituality until well into recent times. Institute headquarters in 1936 were shifted, by Papal fiat, to

Rome, but at the same time the Institute continued to internationalize, thereby diversifying its cultural and religious contacts.

Starting in the 1950's serious historical research projects had been undertaken by our Institute so that students of Lasallian spirituality could uncover, not only its story, but also its strengths and weaknesses. In his own lifetime La Salle overcame some of the initial weaknesses (for instance, by mitigating the Brothers' corporal mortifications) and he emphasized some of the strengths of French spirituality— as against Jansenism, he had advocated a frequent reception of Holy Communion; as against Gallicanism, he had emphasized loyalty to Rome; and, as against Quietism, he had recognized the importance of apostolic action and good works.

The picture just given probably describes many religious orders (several of which had adopted the approved Rule of La Salle.) Providentially Vatican II in the 1960's attended to problem-areas that had arisen historically, and it brought us all back to our roots, and, indeed, by treating all Religious like adults—perhaps for the first time in history—pushed us forward into the modern world and called us to greater maturity. Along with the Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits and others, including monastic orders, we have strengthened and refocused our own spiritualities. Officially, “the Institute is in the hands of the Brothers,” and no longer, as earlier, “in the hands of the Brother Directors.” This first sign of a second mutation brings a more democratic flavor to the life of the Brothers.

The Second Mutation

Today, we have profited by the insights of researchers and by a development of doctrine. We now have a renewed spirituality characterized, as it always has been, by faith and zeal, and by interior and liturgical prayer, the “practice” of the presence of God, and by association. But, *what is new* centers on, for example, a re-emphasis on our special vows of “stability” and “association.” These latter now include a shared association with co-workers, renewed efforts to allocate resources to poor schools, richer liturgical connections, lifelong formation of the Brothers *and* partners, cultural adaptations, etc. The recognition that we are not “loners” has been expanded. There is nothing surprising in most of these developments, but there is a notable shift in some priorities and in previous monastic practices. (Some people refer to this evolution as a “refounding” of the Institute though, perhaps, an organic or evolutionary metaphor might be better.)

All present-day characteristics of our spirituality, newly ordered of course, have to be put, by definition, into some organic unity if we are to have a genuine overall “spirituality.” Some traits that we did not find in the earlier Institute are now, for example, an insistence on extended and inclusive continuing formation, and on radical concern for the marginalized, and on official association with co-workers. Also, there is a *de-emphasis* on institutional uniformity, on idealized asceticism, on community piety, on Cartesian certitudes, on the value of humiliations or of blind obedience or of rigid poverty. Moreover, there is less fear of “contact with the world” or with the forming of secular friendships (which a genuinely monastic spirituality might not approve.)

Question: How do we now achieve organic unity within our contemporary array of positive spiritual components in order to form a mature Lasallian spirituality?

For the Brothers, the answer is found, first, in continuing the overall “Incarnationalism” which that spirituality expresses. Implications of the doctrine of the Incarnation provide an organizing principle. As Brother Álvaro, Superior General, recently wrote: “Lasallian Incarnational spirituality connects body and soul, the profane and the sacred, school and catechesis, human development and evangelization.”

Secondly and more concretely, we find the spirituality of the Brothers as an official form of Consecrated Life, embedded in the overall nature of that form of life within the Church, namely, to be, like each member of a religious order, a “living memory of the obedient, chaste, and poor Christ, as also the prayerful and mission-minded Christ.” Thus a general *organization* of our spirituality is conferred by the three vows and other canonical requirements of the Church.

And thirdly, we find our spirituality, in more detail, spelled out in our Church-approved *Rule* and in our *Declaration*. (For our Partners and Associates who are not Brothers, these latter two documents are helpful, though they have to be adapted, of course, to the Partners’ own primary vocations.) One can find on the Institute website (www.lasalle2.org) copies of *The Declaration* and the modern *Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, along with an article by Brother Gerard Rummery which pinpoints the basic and original characteristics of “Lasallian Spirituality.” He concludes his detailed account by offering a summary of his main points under the titles:

- “1. The spirit of community
2. The spirit of faith
3. The spirit of zeal
4. A 'practical' spirituality’ ” To these Brother Gerard adds:

“5. As a natural expression and development in a practical way to the three ‘spirits’ already mentioned above, Lasallian spirituality is grounded in some very down-to-earth actions. Throughout his Meditations, especially in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, De La Salle reminds his teachers of the dignity of their calling by some very clear directions about what he calls their **ministry**. Here are some of the many examples:

- **You are called by God to your work**
- **You are co-workers with God**
- **You work for the poor**
- **Through the movement of the Holy Spirit....”**

Let us hope that our Lasallian spirituality, *as recently and providentially evolved*, will continue to produce saints and continue to inspire marvelous works for the Gospel.

The religious state....perpetually represents in the Church that form of life which the Son of God chose when He came into the world in order to fulfill the will of the Father.

Vatican II document: *Lumen Gentium*, 44c.

DISTRICT CONVOCATION NOTES

Brother Thomas Johnson, Regional Coordinator, was the invited speaker at the District Convocation, March 2005. He stressed the distinction between a “functional definition” and other kinds. When someone asks a typical Brother what he is, he tends (like most Americans) to describe himself in terms of his work and function rather than in more essentialist terms. The unfortunate effect of the functional definition is that a retired Brother, who may see himself as “useless,” may feel a loss of identity and so see himself as no longer really a Brother. However, what we *are* is not really explained by what we *do*. Unless our “job description” also includes our consecrated state, the functional definition is itself faulty. Identity is more than function.

Just as function does not yield our whole identity, neither does camaraderie in Community, and not even chapel exercises, nor a recognized public corporate success. There is danger that we might put our faith in the wrong place; that is to say, there is danger of various idolatries or of “magical” thinking. The important thing is to know *who* I am (which is partly defined by who *we* are. And note that association is another word for group identity.)

Of course, no definition may capture the mystery of what a Brother is. Brother Thomas quoted Parker Palmer, who said about his own calling—“something I cannot *not* be, for reasons that I do not fully understand and that may not be understood by others.” The Brothers are more than the sum of their parts—a qualitative change (perhaps indefinable) takes place by membership: the center of our universe moves from self to the association.

Another *favorite quote* used by Brother Thomas (from a Jim Wallis) : “Hope is believing in spite of the evidence, and watching the evidence change.”

Still *another observation*: the time from Vatican II has been about forty years. Can we compare those forty years to the Israelites’ wanderings in the desert?

THE COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY

In the *New York Review of Books* for March 24, 2005, one reviewer lumped together several books on college education and concluded, “College is still a main protector of the waning possibility of contemplation in American life, and an American college is only true to itself when it opens its doors to everyone with a capacity to pursue and embrace the precious chance to think and reflect before life engulfs them.”

Students who procrastinate have more to contend with than just bad grades. They are also likely to have unhealthy patterns of sleep, diet and exercise according to a study presented at the August annual meeting of the American Psychological Association

Procrastination is closely linked, the study found, to “avoidant coping styles”---the tendency to neglect, rather than confront, problems that cause anxiety. The study of 374 undergraduates was conducted by a doctoral candidate in psychology at Carleton University in Ottawa and by an assistant professor of psychology there, Fuschia Sirois and Timothy Pynchl.

Such avoidant styles translate not only into late term papers but also to higher rates of smoking and drinking and a tendency to postpone seeing doctors for acute health problems. The investigators also found that procrastinators have significantly higher rates of digestive ailments, insomnia, and cold and flu symptoms than do other students.

Their research and similar studies released at the meeting suggest that a frequent, common sense remedy for procrastination---improving time management---is not a realistic solution. “Telling someone who procrastinates to buy a weekly planner is like a telling someone with chronic depression to just cheer up.”

This report is from *The Chronicle Of Higher Education* in September 6, 2002.

MARRIAGE

These are some of the questions answered in this summer 2005 interview with ZENIT by Father Juan Ignacio Bañares Parera, a canon lawyer from the University of Navarre.

Father Bañares has just written a book on "The Conjugal Dimension of the Person: From Anthropology to Law," published by Rialp and the Library of the Institute of Sciences for the Family of the University of Navarre, of which he is a director.

Q: What is the conjugal dimension of a person?

Father Bañares: The human person exists fashioned as a feminine or masculine person. Both are persons, but they are so in a different way.

Despite the popular expression "to find my other half," woman and man are not "halves of anything": because a half is only half of something; because half is identical to the other half; and because half of anything does not interact with the other half: it contributes more of the same.

Instead, this differentiation between a feminine and masculine person, which is established in the very structure of the personal being, comprises the whole person -- in the physical, psychic and spiritual dimension -- and implies a potential of enrichment for each one, which constitutes complementarity.

From whence arises the possibility to communicate, to love, and to give oneself to the other specifically "insofar as man or woman," that is, in what is conjugable.

We might call the character or generic dimension of being woman or man "spousalness," as a dimension that soaks the whole personal structure of the human being, and conjugal dimension the possibility that this complementarity offers to constitute oneself woman or man in a union in nature: the conjugal partnership. United here are the truth of nature, the sovereign strength of freedom and the grandeur of the ends.

Q: According to the book, a person is led naturally to marriage. But there are other options in life, such as yours, the priesthood. Can you explain this?

Father Bañares: I would prefer to say, not that a "person is led naturally to marriage," but that the person is naturally structured to be able to enter marriage: the anthropological assumptions exist in all human persons.

However, although marriage is "possible" for all, it is up to each one to decide freely to exercise this fundamental right of the citizen and faithful.

In turn, the decision to remain single can have many reasons, some very worthy and of great nobility. But I understand that, not only the priesthood, but all apostolic celibacy is neither a form of bachelorhood -- no matter how worthy the latter may be -- nor an initiative of the individual: It is always a gift of God and a response of man.

In this connection, and in keeping with John Paul II's thought, it can be said that in celibacy as a vocation, man or woman gives him/herself totally to God, also according to the structure of his masculinity or her femininity. So, the spousal dimension of the human being can be the basis for making oneself a gift to God through the gift to the other -- and that is to constitute the conjugality, marriage -- or giving oneself directly to God, without the mediation of a creature.

Let's be clear: This does not mean to minimize marriage. On the contrary, it means to underline that marriage is not only an option of two people but the will of God through the other in the personal journey of sanctification and evangelization, and in the contribution to the Church and to civil society.

Q: Who invented marriage?

Father Bañares: Marriage was designed by God's love. It is offered by the reality of nature, it is constituted by the freedom of the man and woman and it is "received and witnessed" by society, as an inherent relationship of justice.