

July 2006

Dear Readers of *E-Horizons*:

This is the fall-winter 2007-2008 issue. A brief note on its contents:

- General Introduction and Table of Contents.
- Excerpts from Jubilee remarks at March 2007 .District Convocation for: Brothers Columban, Timothy Rapa, and Mel Anderson. The other talks were not recorded.
- Excerpts from Brother Superior General's opening inspirational talk at the General Chapter in Rome, 2007. He lists his convictions and hopes. [The excerpt is followed by an instructive list, selected from official documents by the editor, of problems faced by the General Chapter.]
- Excerpts from Pope Benedict's *Talk to Youth* in Brazil, 2007. He develops the themes in the Gospel passage about the young man who asks Christ, "What must I do to attain everlasting life?" And the Pope adds, "My appeal to you today, young people present at this gathering, is this: do not waste your youth. Do not seek to escape from it. Live it intensely. Consecrate it to the high ideals of faith and human solidarity."
- Toast given by Brother Michael Avila at the 2007 Affiliation ceremony for Professor Bob Gardner, long time faculty member at St. Mary's College.
- Excerpts from the funeral eulogy delivered by Brother Mel at the Mass for Sister Clare Wagstaffe, AFSC, long time member of faculty and staff at St. Mary's College. She is the first woman to be buried in the Mont La Salle cemetery.
- Excerpts from District of San Francisco Office of Education Director Gery Short's *Report to the General Chapter* in Rome, 2007, describing the work of the international Commission on Mission (of which he is the chairman). These meetings included a majority of lay Partners in the work of the Brothers.
- Excerpts from *Study Paper* by District of San Francisco Office of Education's Greg Kopra on the Lasallian tradition of Remembering the Holy Presence of God and what this means for all the in Lasallian Schools.

- List of “signs of maturity,” based on *Galatians* 5, 22, expanded in modern terms by the editor, particularly for the elderly.
- Extended theological speculation by Brother Brendan Kneale on how the transcendence of time and space in the next world affects our prayer and other doctrines here.

As usual, there are “fillers” to separate some of the articles.

Recommendations and written contributions for the next issue are solicited.

With prayers and best wishes for all the readers,

Brother Brendan Kneale, editor

E - HORIZONS

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E-HORIZONS is published twice a year at Mont La Salle, under the patronage of the Most Blessed Virgin, for the De La Salle Christian Brothers of the District of San Francisco and their Partners. 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 administrators in other Districts, to many Lasallian Partners, 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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REPORT ON JUBILEE TALKS AT CONVOCATION, MARCH 2007

BROTHER COLUMBAN DERBY—Seventy-fifth Anniversary

[Brother Columban's remarks were not written down for the occasion, but his few words were delivered in his uniquely forceful and emphatic voice, expressing many thanks and recalling one or two outstanding moments in his long career. Some months later he was honored in a special ceremony at Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory. Alumni gathered to honor his years as an alumnus himself and later as a beloved teacher and administrator at Sacred Heart. The school magazine recorded the occasion with photos and an article. Two paragraphs from the article are condensed here. Ed.]

... This leadership position enabled Brother Columban to make big changes. He organized construction projects; these included building a gym, renovating the school, and designing a new Brothers' house.

During his time as an educator, administrator, and as a teacher Brother Columban graced the community with his music....as organist for the Archdiocese, for high school graduations, for episcopal ceremonies, and for the Cathedral. This dedicated service led to several awards from Church and from the City. A City of San Francisco certificate reads, "You have provided a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment to many young people.... You reflect the best of San Francisco values." The president of the alumni association added, speaking of Brother Columban and his co-workers and the "impact on the lives of so many young men and women in the 155-year history of SHCP, its faculty ... touching the hearts of our students every day."

Brother Timothy Rapa, Sixtieth Anniversary. Excerpt

The greatest gift I have ever received was when I was accepted to become a Christian Brother, and to which I am in the process of still becoming.

The second greatest gift I received was when, at eighteen years of age, I entered into the US Army to serve my country which was at war. This was World War II.

The third greatest gift I received is that I am still here to be able to tell you about the first two.

COMMENTS OF BROTHER MEL ANDERSON AT HIS JUBILEE CEREMONY.
Sixtieth Anniversary. Excerpts

In conversing with some students at the College, I detect a growing interest in religious matters and even in religious life. That does give one some hope. After sixty years it would be an understandable hope that the future of our most necessary and efficacious work can continue with vigor, probably not as we experience it at the moment, but, after some thoughtful consideration, perhaps we can develop a creative religious-life experience in the next few years that will prove attractive to young men who seek greater depth and commitment in their lives as Catholic Christians.

In 1961 I endured an eccentric and out-dated Brother Cornelius Luke for sixty days on a spartan Beaver Island retreat in mid-Lake Michigan. Books were my companions and the spirituality that they evoked proved effective the next academic year when I taught religion to the likes of Gary York, Jim Roosevelt and a few others who came to Mont La Salle the following year.

Over the past thirty-eight or so years, I have reverted to occasional bouts of intense asking, a knocking on the door of heaven, for the benefit of collegiate students who needed some kind of spirituality as they came of age in their crucial collegiate years. What I discovered was that God does fulfill his promise of “ask and you shall receive.” What we like to think are miracles, do happen.

So what I am proposing is that each of you can do something, like prayer and fasting, and several in league can do more than something to effect a spirit in an apostolate and in the souls of the few who seek that greater depth and commitment as Catholic Christians. Vocations can happen, but not if we remain indifferent or, alas, give up. Several, working in tandem, could develop a spirituality that when enunciated in some form, will reach God’s ears and those whom God has graced with a call. I am impressed with the Lasallian Communities that are developing on the College campus. We recognize that in the end, it’s up to God to pour forth His loving grace, but imaginative creativity does help.

Perhaps some of you expected a précis of my memoirs describing approximately 35% of my life, namely, as President of Saint Mary’s College. This copy will go to the Archives where it can be retrieved for perusal *ad lib*. Over the next few months I plan to develop a shorter and less detailed popular version for the alumni and any others who may wish to read about some of the continuous controversial interchange that has characterized Saint Mary’s College during an era of growth when the Orators trumped the Philosophers from the outset.

Let us pray for vocations and the guidance of Christ in all that we do in our respective apostolates.

CONCLUDING WORDS OF BROTHER ÁLVARO'S OPENING ADDRESS AT THE 2007 GENERAL CHAPTER IN ROME

....

It Is up to us, then, during this Chapter, to face the reality in which we live as Brothers and to ask ourselves if we embrace our Consecration as Brothers, as mystics and prophets, if we are living or dead members, if the Gospel or the world of business is predominant in us. As a Chapter, we need to discern in the Spirit what the signs are of new life that allow us to be living members; to reject vigorously all that leads to the path of death and to discover the new role that it will be up to us to play as Brothers for the young people we teach and among the laity who ask us to be signs and guarantors of the Lasallian charism in today's world. We need to feel that we are *sent forth* from the burning bush and propelled by the presence of the Risen One to carry on our history of the Love that dwells within us and the passion of Christ for humanity.

....

I will conclude by sharing the certainties that I sense within me at this time of our 44th General Chapter.

- It seems to me that we are living at a time when we are called to be **men of hope**—a hope that is born out of faith, but which has its origin in the enormous ability that our Institute has had to begin again. Jesus Christ is our hope. We should build our future on this cornerstone—a hope that is supported in God's faithful word and in the plan of salvation made visible in Jesus, that hope to which we have been called, as St. Paul tells us... (*Ephesians* 1, 18), which has made God's face visible. ...
- We are called to be **the human face of Jesus** for young people, for the poor, for today's world that tends to impoverish human reality and to reduce it only to the technological dimension. We need to build a society in which we can thrive as human beings. Our world is becoming a cultural desert ...”without prophecy the people become demoralized.” (*Proverbs*, 29, 18.) ... and we are called to be *the human face of the Church, toward the laity who share our charism, helping them—starting from our being Brothers—to live in a Church, the People of God, a Church that is fraternal, humble, compassionate, and in solidarity with them.*
- The Lord has chosen us to be **witnesses and sentinels**, witnesses of the gratuitous love of the Father, of his unconditional pardon, his close presence, his maternal face made manifest in Jesus; witnesses as Brothers who live fraternal life in community, of an alternative model of society founded on Gospel values; witnesses, by our vow of association for the

- educational service of the poor, of the preference which they enjoy in God's Kingdom; lives and our mission. At the same time, we are called to be **sentinels**, with a future vision that will allow us to respond, from our vocation and associated to all those who want to share our charism, to the needs of young people today, through the proclamation of the Gospel and ecumenical or inter-religious dialogue and to react to all that is opposed to God's saving plan.
- Our challenge is to achieve **a vital synthesis**, on the personal and community levels, between Jesus and the Kingdom, the mystical and the prophetic; being witnesses and sentinels to: spirituality and mission, hope and historical commitment, Gospel and reality, young people and the poor; fraternal life in community and shared charism, Christian formation and human education. I am convinced that if we live this synthesis with Gospel creativity and gratuity it will be, no doubt, a link for a Brother's life lived with enchantment and able to raise questions and, why not new followers as well?

[Editor's Note. Here are some of the *problem-areas which the General Chapter considered in May 2007*. They are listed in the Superior General's preliminary report, "Toward the Forty-fourth General Chapter," and in the Mission group's "Report of the International Assembly, 2006." (For this latter document see the article by its Chairman, Gery Short, in this issue of *E-Horizons*.)]

Problems from society: breakdown of traditional family life; immigration; new forms of poverty; diversities of culture, economies, religions; pace of changes, etc.

Problems from our work: retaining identity and the Lasallian charism; breaks with our traditions; training of teachers and providing them economic security; finding sources of funding; solidarity with others; promotion of justice; rights of the child; life-long learning; range of our work, including universities; new styles of administration and leadership; tension with the local Church; tensions between Lasallian theory and practice; how Partners express their commitment and their need, if any, for formal structures.

Problems from the mission: eliminating tuition charges; the pastoral versus the academic; faith formation of our students; pedagogical innovations; the metaphor of shepherd; various teaching models; adult education; coordinating with secular and other agencies; differences between vocation and profession.

Problems of association: clarity about incorporation of lay associates, Partners, and colleagues; developing guidelines; models from other congregations; role of non-Catholics; coordinating boards and councils; development of training and formation programs; role of alumni, spouses, and others; means of communicating locally and internationally.

Problems of the Institute: Vocations; formation and on-going formation programs in some Districts; how best to train formation personnel; their level of theological education; updating the *Rule*; assuring the Christian character of our schools; uneven development and modernization in various parts of the Institute; degree of District autonomy; foot-dragging despite support services; dangers of the business model; difficulties with publications' focus, deadlines, and distribution; endowment fund development; maximizing income from various sources; need for local professional accounting systems; aging of the Brothers and how to place young Brothers among them; selection of District leaders; formation programs for Partners; cooperation with other Religious Institutes, NGO's, and governments.]

Quote from the official report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Rule (Institute Document for the General Chapter) 2006

P. 25: Citing a passage from the Vatican document, *Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Schools*, "The first and fundamental contribution to their educational mission in schools by consecrated persons is the evangelical completeness of their lives."

CHANGE

At the District Chapter, March 2007, one speaker pointed out about change, that there are some changes we can reject or manage, but there are other changes that require us to manage ourselves so as to adapt to them. That is, we accept (perhaps enthusiastically) what we cannot change, and we change (with similar enthusiasm perhaps) what we cannot accept.

FROM POPE BENEDICT'S BRAZILIAN TALK TO YOUTH, MAY 2007

Excerpts

.....

3. Today I would like to reflect on the text we have just heard from Saint Matthew (cf 19:16-22). It speaks of a young man who ran to see Jesus. His impatience merits special attention. In this young man I see all of you young people of Brazil and Latin America. You have "run" here from various regions of this Continent for this meeting of ours. You want to listen to the words of Jesus himself -- spoken through the voice of the Pope.

You have a crucial question -- a question that appears in this Gospel -- to put to him. It is the same question posed by the young man who ran to see Jesus: What good deed must I do, to have eternal life? I would like to take a deeper look at this question with you. It has to do with life. A life which -- in all of you -- is exuberant and beautiful. What are you to do with it? How can you live it to the full?

We see at once that in the very formulation of the question, the "here" and "now" are not enough; to put it another way, we cannot limit our life within the confines of space and time, however much we might try to broaden their horizons. Life transcends them. In other words: we want to live, not die. We have a sense of something telling us that life is eternal and that we must apply ourselves to reach it. In short, it rests in our hands and is dependent, in a certain way, on our own decision.

The question in the Gospel does not regard only the future. It does not regard only a question about what will happen after death. On the contrary, it exists as a task in the present, in the "here" and "now", which must guarantee authenticity and consequently the future. In short, the young man's question raises the issue of life's meaning. It can therefore be formulated in this way: what must I do so that my life has meaning? How must I live so as to reap the full fruits of life? Or again: what must I do so that my life is not wasted?

Jesus alone can give us the answer, because he alone can guarantee us eternal life. He alone, therefore, can show us the meaning of this present life and give it fullness.

.....

4. But before giving his response, Jesus asks about a very important aspect of the young man's enquiry: why do you ask me about what is good? In this question, we find the key. There exists, in the final analysis, an immense panorama of action in which questions of a social, economic and political nature take on particular importance, as long as they draw their inspiration from the Gospel and the social teaching of the Church. This includes building a more just and fraternal society, reconciled and at peace, it includes the commitment to reduce violence, initiatives to promote the fullness of life, the democratic order and the common good and especially initiatives aimed at eliminating certain forms of discrimination existing in Latin American societies: avoiding exclusion, for the sake of mutual enrichment.

Above all, have great respect for the institution of the sacrament of Matrimony. There cannot be true domestic happiness unless, at the same time, there is fidelity between spouses. Marriage is an institution of natural law, which has been raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament; it is a great gift that God has given to mankind: respect it and honor it. At the same time, God calls you to respect one another when you fall in love and become engaged, since conjugal life, reserved by divine ordinance to married couples, will bring happiness and peace only to the extent that you are able to build your future hopes upon chastity, both within and outside marriage. I repeat here to all of you that "eros tends to rise . . . towards the Divine, to lead us beyond ourselves; yet for this very reason it calls for a path of ascent, renunciation, purification and healing" (Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, 5). To put it briefly, it

requires a spirit of sacrifice and renunciation for the sake of a greater good, namely the love of God above all things. Seek to resist forcefully the snares of evil that are found in many contexts, driving you towards

a dissolute and paradoxically empty life, causing you to lose the precious gift of your freedom, and your true happiness. True love "increasingly seeks the happiness of the other, is concerned more and more with the beloved, bestows itself and wants to 'be there for 'the other" (ibid., 7) and therefore will always grow in faithfulness, indissolubility and fruitfulness.

In all these things, count upon the help of Jesus Christ who will make them possible through his grace (cf. Mt 19:26). The life of faith and prayer will lead you along the paths of intimacy with God, helping you to understand the greatness of his plans for every person. "For the sake of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19:12), some are called to a total and definitive self-giving, by consecrating themselves to God in the religious life -- an "exceptional gift of grace", as the Second Vatican Council expressed it (cf. Decree *Perfectae Caritatis*, 12). Consecrated persons, by giving themselves totally to God, prompted by the Holy Spirit, participate in the Church's mission, bearing witness before all people to their hope in the heavenly Kingdom. I therefore bless and invoke divine protection upon all those religious who have dedicated themselves to Christ and to their brothers and sisters within the vineyard of the Lord. Consecrated persons truly deserve the gratitude of the ecclesial community: monks and nuns, contemplative men and women, religious men and women dedicated to apostolic works, members of Secular Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life, hermits and consecrated virgins. "Their existence witnesses to their love for Christ as they walk the path proposed in the Gospel and with deep joy commit themselves to the same style of life which he chose for himself" (Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life, Instruction *Starting Afresh from Christ*, 5). I pray that in this moment of grace and profound communion in Christ, the Holy Spirit will awaken in the hearts of many young people an impassioned love, prompting them to follow and imitate Jesus Christ, chaste, poor and obedient, totally devoted to the glory of the Father and to love for their brothers and sisters.

6. The Gospel assures us that the young man who went to meet Jesus was very rich. We may understand this wealth not only on the material level. Youth itself is a singular treasure. We have to discover it and to value it. Jesus appreciated it so much that he went on to invite the young man to participate in his saving mission. He had great potential and could have accomplished great things.

But the Gospel goes on to say that this young man, having heard the invitation, was saddened. He went away downcast and sad. This episode causes us to reflect farther on the treasure of youth. It is not, in the first place, a question of material wealth, but of life itself, and the values inherent in youth. This wealth is inherited from two sources: life, transmitted from generation to generation, at the ultimate origin of which we find God, full of wisdom and love; and upbringing, which locates us within a culture, to such an extent that we might almost say we are more children of culture and therefore of faith, than of nature. From life springs freedom, which manifests itself, especially in this phase, as responsibility. There comes the great moment of decision, in a twofold choice: firstly, concerning one's state of life, and secondly concerning one's profession. It is about providing an answer to the question: what do I do with my life?

In other words, youth appears as a form of wealth because it leads to the discovery of life as a gift and a task. The young man in the Gospel understood that his youth was itself a treasure. He went to Jesus, the good Teacher, in order to seek some direction. At the moment of the great decision, however, he lacked the courage to wager everything on Jesus Christ. In consequence, he went away sad and downcast. This is what happens whenever our decisions waver and become cowardly and self-seeking. He understood that what he lacked was generosity, and this did not allow him to realize his full potential. He withdrew to his riches, turning them to selfishness.

Jesus regretted the sadness and the cowardice of the young man who had come to seek him out. The Apostles, like all of you here today, filled the vacuum left by that young man who went away sad and downcast. They, and we, are happy, because we know the one in whom we believe (cf. 2 Tim 1: 12). We

know and we bear witness with our lives that he alone has the words of eternal life (cf. Jn 6:68). Therefore, we can exclaim with Saint Paul: Rejoice always in the Lord! (cf. Phil 4:4).

7. My appeal to you today, young people present at this gathering, is this: do not waste your youth. Do not seek to escape from it. Live it intensely. Consecrate it to the high ideals of faith and human solidarity.

You, young people, are not just the future of the Church and of humanity, as if we could somehow run away from the present. On the contrary: you are that young man now; you are that young man in the Church and in humanity today. You are his young face. The Church needs you, as young people, to manifest to the world the face of Jesus Christ, visible in the Christian community. Without this young face, the Church would appear disfigured.

My dear young people, soon I shall inaugurate the Fifth Conference of the Bishops of Latin America. I ask you to follow its deliberations attentively; to participate in its discussions; to receive its fruits. As was the case with earlier Conferences, the present one will also leave a significant mark on the next ten years of evangelization in Latin America and the Caribbean. No one must stay on the sidelines or remain indifferent in the face of this ecclesial initiative, least of all you young people. You are full members of the Church, which represents the face of Jesus Christ for Latin America and the Caribbean.

....

My dear young friends, like the young man in the Gospel who asked Jesus: "What good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" you are all seeking ways to respond generously to God's call. I pray that you may listen to his saving words and that you may become his witnesses for the peoples of today. May God pour out upon all of you his blessings of peace and joy.

My dear young people, Christ is calling you to be saints. He himself is inviting you and wants to walk with you, in order to enliven with his Spirit the steps that Brazil is taking at the beginning of this third millennium of the Christian era. I ask the Senhom Aparecida to guide you with her maternal help and to accompany you throughout your lives.

Praised be our Lord Jesus Christ!

SOME FAMOUS SAYINGS

Abigail Adams: "Education makes a greater difference between man and man than nature has made between man and brute."

Christopher Morley: "Life is like a foreign word—most of us tend to mispronounce it."

Malcolm Muggeridge: "Truly seeking God is really finding Him."

Old Adage: "Whoever looks first at his own failings is less likely to look at those of others."

Brother Michael Avila's Toast at the Christian Brothers' Affiliation Ceremony
 For Professor Bob Gardner, A.F.S.C.
 Saint Mary's College, Moraga, California
 February, 2007

Brother Bob,

Many are the wonderful things that have been said to you and about you this evening, but I wonder if any of these encomiums can equal the unmitigated joy that Brother De Sales Perez, your mentor, must be experiencing at this moment in heaven.

Forty-two years ago, on this campus, he discovered, in you, a pearl of great price which he nurtured and polished into the brilliant and outstanding Brother, teacher and mentor that you are today.

You have been a Brother to us and to our students in countless ways; in all that you are, and in all that you do, loving, polishing and nurturing us all as only those who have a genuine calling to our life are capable of doing.

As Brother De Sales and I often commented in Spanish: "*Roberto es un hermano de corazón*" (Bob is a Brother at heart) and this day, we have publicly claimed and adopted you as our own.

Brother Bob, you have been initiated into our Congregation and you now possess the symbols of our Institute, but we have **no** formation program for you *porque eres hermano de corazón* (because you are already a Brother at heart). But we have one directive:

*Grow old along with us Brother Bob! For the best is yet to be,
 the last of life, for which the first was made.
 Our times are in his hand.*

[*Rabbi Ben Ezra 1864*]

On behalf of all the Brothers, we thank you once again for all that you are and for all that you have done on behalf of our students. And we, along with our father and Founder, Saint John Baptist De LaSalle, welcome you into our ranks as a Brother of the Christian Schools.

EXCERPTS: FUNERAL EULOGY FOR SISTER CLARE WAGSTAFFE AFSC

Brother Mel Anderson

[On Jan. 17, 2007, a Memorial Mass was celebrated in the College Chapel for Sister Clare Wagstaffe, Affiliated Member of the Brothers, who died earlier in the month and is the first woman to be buried at the Mont La Salle cemetery. Ed.]

....

When Sister Clare came to Saint Mary's in 1980, her imagination and radiant personality made us all aware how important the presence of a wise, experienced, compassionate and smiling woman was to the ambient vitality of Saint Mary's.

The signs posted around campus read, "Saint Mary's Alive!" but what they meant was hidden, something to be revealed, a surprise! Her clever wit drew our attention, and at the moment of disclosure, it became a delightful celebration, a religious celebration of vocations to the ministry of the Church, a counter-cultural adventure at a time when such an idea was, to some, a bit quirky. But large groups of students participated and enjoyed hearing the speakers and securing material on listening to God's call.

After receiving her baccalaureate from Stanford, Miss Clare Wagstaffe secured her teaching credential from the University of California in Berkeley. Interested in teaching, she responded to God's invitation and "entered the convent," as we were wont to say in 1942. She was clothed in the habit of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael, an order dedicated to teaching that conducted Dominican College of San Rafael, a distinctive women's college at that time. She assumed the religious name of Sister Mary Joseph.

After teaching several years in a Dominican high school her obvious talents, and they were abundant, were put to the test at the Catholic University of America where she received both her MA in 1949 and then her Doctorate in Philosophy in 1951. Astutely trained she then taught at Dominican College and in 1961 was appointed Dean of Students, a post she filled until 1972.

As Dean she had an opportunity to meet many Saint Mary's men at the dances or "mixers" as they were coyly called, designed to bring men and women from our respective single-sex institutions together. At the conclusion of her assignment as Dean she spent five years at the Catholic Campus Ministry Center at the University of Washington followed by three years as an administrator for the Diocese of Denver. Alumnus Father Patrick La Belle, who worked with Clare in Washington, suggested that Clare come to Saint Mary's as there was an opening in Campus Ministry. She applied and was welcomed into the Saint Mary's community.

From the moment of her arrival on the Saint Mary's campus she was intensely interested in student welfare, and made special efforts to serve the growing female population on the formerly all-male campus. While I would not say that she was an ingrained, single-minded feminist, she did find singing the hymn, *Rise Up O Men of God*, a serious obstacle to a prayerful liturgy.

Clare was also interested in the inclusive language movement for the liturgy, for, she said, God is genderless. When religious were allowed to revert to their baptismal names, Sister Mary

Joseph became Sister Clare, preferring her own female name to that of a man's, even one who was a member of the Holy Family.

After serving a year in Campus Ministry, Clare's background and gifts were tapped to serve in a similar, but wider role as Associate Dean of Students and a few years later as Dean of Student Development. She transformed and invigorated the Career Counseling Center, collaborated in the creation of a highly successful and continuing program then called S. O. S., or Student Orientation Service, conducted by seasoned students to assist new students adjust to collegiate life away from home. She also collaborated on initiating a Parent Orientation program and was the first moderator of the newly founded "Saint Mary's Honor Society" an organization that had faded out of existence during the egalitarianism of the 60's and early '70's. One of her endearing and enduring creations was her plowing new ground in initiating a Parents Association in 1992, much to the delight of parents who then had a central source of information as well as a gracious someone who could expedite action on numerous requests and concerns. Actively engaged in the student recruitment program, she was part of a team with Dean Walter and others that traveled to the homes of alumni in various locations on the West Coast, to greet and speak to prospective students and students who would enter with honors. There was no doubt that parents felt secure in sending students to Saint Mary's because of Sister Clare. Father La Belle symbolizes Clare in her telling smile, "She said everything that a student needed to hear and demonstrated everything that a student needed to see with that wide, loving, energetic and beautiful smile." To be fully immersed in the spirit of Saint Mary's College, Clare attended the three year summer program on the life, writings and spirit of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, founder of the Christian Brothers.

"It is no mystery to me that Clare was called to religious life," former student Karin McClelland remarks, "What man would have known what to do with such a woman. She was strong, vibrant, well educated, creative and independent!" And she further reflects, "I remember her warmth more than anything, but I have always known she could hold her own in any setting—even the world of higher education."

Attorney Janine Ogando observes, "Though all students respected her, to me she was much more than a dorm mother or professor; she was a wonderful friend."

Sister Clare was indeed, an inspiring teacher and a talker. Ron Turner recalls driving from San Diego after one of the recruitment sessions with Sister Clare as his passenger. She began talking at the outset, and continued to talk for hours. Ron asked if she were tired and wanted to take a nap, but she declined and continued the conversation. That was when Ron realized what students meant when they called Clare, "Sister have-a-chat," a moniker Clare found particularly amusing.

Clare taught the Philosophy of Psychology to both graduate and undergraduate students, and seminars in the Great Books for the older adult programs. Her acute mind and gracious demeanor was the formula for success as attested by older and younger students alike.

....

The greatest party, Clare personally stated to me, was when she was officially affiliated with the Christian Brothers and her name was inscribed as an Affiliated Member at the Brothers

Generalate in Rome.. The Affiliation, its ceremony and celebration, she said, “was the “greatest thing that ever happened to me.”

“Saint Mary’s is my life,” Clare would say, “I have nothing and know no other community that has given me so much.”

....

At last an indomitable Sister Clare had to retire. Letters of gratitude for her life and work came to her from students, faculty, administrators, Brothers and others. It was not too long before cancer drained her vitality and she became bedridden in an assisted care facility in Redwood City. Those who visited her from time to time could see life ebbing away. But her positive spirit, gracious smile and evident joy stayed with her to the end.

We bid a lingering *au revoir*, ‘till we meet again, in the heavenly mansion prepared for those who have loved and served God with their whole mind and heart and soul. May the angels carry her vibrant spirit to the destiny she has sought all of her life. May you, Sister Clare Wagstaffe, of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and Affiliated member of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, (AFSC), live fully in the love and wonder of God. And though this encomium has not canonized you, you can still pray for us as we pray for you.

POPE IN APRIL, 2007, SPEAKING TO UNIVERSITY PEOPLE IN ROME

“Universities, societies and humanity need questions and also answers,” the Holy Father affirmed. “In places where they no longer ask questions, particularly those regarding essential issues that go beyond specializations, they also no longer receive answers.”

"Only if we ask questions, and are radical with our questions, radical as theology has to be, going beyond specializations, only then can we find answers to these fundamental questions that affect all of us," Benedict XVI said. "Before everything else, we have to ask questions.

"But, in the case of theology, in addition to the courage to ask questions, it is also necessary to have the humility to listen to answers which the Christian faith gives us: the humility to perceive in these answers their reasonable character and to make them in this way, accessible to our times and to ourselves.

"In this way, not just the university is built up, but also, humanity itself is helped to live."

**EXCERPTS FROM GERY SHORT'S REPORT TO THE GENERAL CHAPTER,
May 2007, CONCERNING THE EARLIER GENERAL MISSION ASSEMBLY**

The Assembly took place over two weeks: October 23 – November 4, 2006.

158 delegates participated:

- 62 Brothers (39%)**
- 92 Partners(58%)**
- 36 lay women (23%)**
- 56 lay men (35%)**
- 4 Sisters (3%)**

The delegates represented 50 different countries and 42 different mother tongues. We experienced the richness of the international dimension of the Institute. For example, in my intercultural group over the first few days, I met with delegates from Porto Alegre, Spain, Ecuador, Peru, Medellin, Chile, Guatemala, a Young Lasallian from Italy, and the Sister Superior of the Guadalapanas from Mexico.

The purpose of the International Assembly was designed by the preparatory committee, members of the Association and Mission Commissions, and approved by the Superior General and General Council Specifically the purpose of the Assembly:

- To describe and reflect upon the history and present reality of our Lasallian Association for Mission in the world today in order to develop a vision, recommended directions, areas of emphasis and actions for the future.**

The Process, also approved by the Superior General and Council, included eleven Regional or Partial Assemblies and an Assembly of Young Lasallians: each of these Assemblies generated a report which was presented to the Assembly delegates and involved thousands of Lasallian educators.

The International Assembly itself was designed around four Phases

- Orientation and Welcome**
- Sharing our Experiences**
- Discernment**

- **Action Phase, and Post Assembly: Published Report and an opportunity for Website Interchange, which has been underutilized.**

From the evaluations and comments by the delegates, the IA was truly a time of prayer, association and a deepening of their commitment to the Lasallian Mission. Some comments:

“I see the presence of God in the words and gestures of each of the persons gathered here.

“I read the guidance of God in this event. Little by little God has led us ‘gently’.”

“This assembly has been a profound and powerful experience of international association. I am inspired and energized by what I have witnessed”

“This has been one of the most amazing experiences of my life as a Lasallian... My concept of family has taken on a new meaning”

“The Assembly has been the summit of Association”

“I feel invited to be faithful and in solidarity to continue to build the kingdom of God”

“I leave encouraged to continue working with the poor...”

“The spirit of God has led us in the deepening of our educational commitment to the poor”

“May a new people be created in the name of Saint John Baptist de La Salle?”

.....

Challenges

How do we move from structures that have been dependent and depended on the Brothers to structures that reflect the reality of a shared mission with lay colleagues?

How do we invent new structures rather than simply adapt old structures? Invent the “new wineskin”, “constructing a new house rather than repairing the old”?

How do we create new structures that incorporate and respect the commitment and investment of lay colleagues?

How do we create a new structure to carry on and enhance the Lasallian mission in sectors of the world where the Brothers are less and less available?

How do we address the canonical issues that might surface in creating new structures?

....

How do we take the next step with Mission Councils, District, Regional and International Assemblies, the International Standing Committee for Mission to allow them greater responsibility, voice and vote for mission?

How can we clarify the relationship of Mission Council, District Council and the Visitor?

The assembly introduced “intermediate structures” as a new descriptor of regional matters. The issue: How do we strengthen Regional Structures? Should regional structures and regional superior have authority?

Responsibility for the mission is shared by Brothers and lay Partners; this is leading to mixed communities whose forms are still to be defined.

....

Tensions

Adapting traditional Brothers structures and inventing new ones;

Hierarchical structures and more community life structures that are more horizontal;

Being attentive to canonical issues and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide our vision;

Relating geographically and relating virtually via the internet; organizing by geography and organizing by “webs of significance”

Outcomes

The purpose of the proposed actions around structures is to assure the best service to the mission and the best development of association throughout the Lasallian family.

....

The Assembly proposed that the 44th GC call for the next International Assembly and the appointment of an International Council as the next evolutionary step of the two commissions, Mission and Association from the 43rd General Chapter. The new Council’s agenda would include reevaluating existing structures and investigating juridical and canonical issues relating to emerging new structures and offer recommendations.

1. Collaboration and Communication.

Enhance the global sharing of human and financial resources and knowledge: from volunteers, fund raising, grant writing to education training and networking

***Remembering the Holy Presence of God:
Reflections on the Foundation of Lasallian Education***
Excerpts from Study Paper prepared by
Greg Kopra, Office of Education, De La Salle Institute

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. The remembrance of the presence of God has been at the foundation of the Lasallian educational mission from the very beginning of the Institute. ... The remembrance of the presence of God provides a unique lens through which Lasallian educators approach their vocation of teaching. It also provides a unique outcome for Lasallian education in general and religious education in particular. In the end, we want our students to leave our schools capable of approaching the world and their participation in it from a graced perspective – knowing that God is present in every encounter, calling them to *be* God’s presence in their relationships with others, especially recognizing God’s presence and invitation in those most in need in our world. The purpose of this paper is to explore this foundational element – the spiritual underpinning, if you will – of the Lasallian Educational Mission. ...

Wherever I go I will find you, my God;

There is no place

That is not honored by your presence.

JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

I. The Beginnings of Lasallian Education: the Faith Journey of Saint La Salle.

... Over a period of several years, a series of seemingly haphazard events drew De La Salle into a life direction that he admits he had not at all anticipated at the time of his ordination. As he reflected prayerfully on these events, he came to see a pattern – a purpose – an agenda of sorts – that he recognized as God’s gentle yet persistent presence. This awareness only came to him in retrospect – as he was able to look back over many years of experience. ... As he says in the *Memoir of the Beginnings*, “.... God, who guides all things with wisdom and serenity, whose way it is not to force the inclinations of persons, willed to commit me entirely to the development of the schools. God did this in an imperceptible way and over a long period of time, so that one commitment led to another in a way that I did not foresee in the beginning.”

In particular, he realized in faith that God had been making Himself known to De La Salle increasingly in the faces and the needs of young boys from poor and working-class families. The will of God, De La Salle came to see over time, was to provide an education for these boys that would both prepare them for gainful employment in the community and prepare them to lead mature Christian lives of dignity and faithful service.

Blain, Jean-Baptiste. *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle, Founder of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*. Ed. Luke Salm, FSC. Trans. Richard Arnandez, FSC. Landover, MD: Christian Brothers Publications, 2000. 80.

De La Salle's spirituality is an apostolic spirituality – a spirituality that finds God present *in* the world, not *removed from* the world. It is a spirituality that draws us to faithful involvement in the world. It is a spirituality that characterizes God as wise and gentle, determined and persistent. God is not one to “force the inclinations of persons,” but one who is determined to be heard and responded to. It is a spirituality that is inclusive of all, recognizing that God wants all to be saved. It is a spirituality, finally, that is made manifest in community. De La Salle did not found a *teacher*; rather, he founded a *community of teachers* – a community called to be God's presence for the young people entrusted to their care through their example and through their teaching. Through his meditations, letters, and other writings, De La Salle speaks often to the early Brothers – and over the centuries to us today – of the call to remember the holy presence of God and to let this remembrance affect how they – and we – deal with people. For example, in his *Meditation* for the feast of Epiphany, he exhorts the Brothers: “Recognize Jesus beneath the poor rags of the children whom you have to instruct. Adore him in them.” In a letter to a young Brother, De La Salle reminds him that “the remembrance of God's presence will be a great advantage in helping you and in inspiring you to do all your actions well.” In the *Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*, students are taught to treat each other respectfully and thoughtfully because God is present in the encounter, not merely in response to some cultural expectation: “Children should do these things out of respect for God in whose presence they are. When teaching children and training them to observe the practices of decorum that refer to their neighbor, teachers should urge them to show others those signs of consideration, honor, and respect appropriate to members of Jesus Christ and living temples of God, enlivened by the Holy Spirit.” Throughout the school day, students and teachers stopped periodically to recall God's presence. *Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. Powerful words, indeed – powerful words that lead to powerful actions.*

II. Remembrance of God's Presence Today: Implications for Religious Education.

A. The Threefold Purpose of Catholic Education. In *To Teach as Jesus Did: A Pastoral Message on Catholic Education*, the American bishops comment that “the educational mission of the Church is an integrated ministry embracing three interlocking dimensions: the message revealed by God (didache) which the Church proclaims; fellowship in the life of the Holy Spirit (koinonia); service to the Christian community and the entire human community.”

Regarding Catholic schools and their role in addressing this mission, they say: “Of the educational programs available to the Catholic community, Catholic schools afford the fullest and best opportunity to realize the threefold purpose of Christian education among children and young people.... A school has a greater claim on the time and loyalty of the student and his

family.... It provides a more favorable pedagogical and psychological environment for teaching Christian faith.”

The threefold purpose of Christian education – message, fellowship, and service – provides three doorways through which the students entrusted to our care can encounter the holy presence of God – and all three doorways are equally important. Religious and doctrinal knowledge is highly valued and taken very seriously in Lasallian schools. If young people do not receive a strong, challenging academic education in the faith, where else will they receive it? However, this knowledge is not knowledge for its own sake; rather, it is knowledge that only makes sense when integrated into the fabric of one’s life. Thus, religious education in Lasallian schools takes the knowledge and seeks to assist students putting it into action in their lives, especially in the way they treat one another (thus strengthening the community) and how they reach out in service to those most in need in the broader community.

***B. The Holy Presence of God Who Calls.* The God we remember is the God who has brought us all together and who is present within and among us at all times. The Holy Presence lends toward the development of a welcoming, inclusive community of faith where all are welcome, all are loved as children of God, and all work together to strengthen the community. The Holy Presence calls us, as it called De La Salle, the first Brothers, and the first students, to be especially sensitive to those most in need within the community and in the broader community.**

De La Salle expresses this beautifully in his second *Meditation for the Time of Retreat*, when he describes the terrible situation of poor and working class families whose children are essentially left to wander in the streets without any reliable guidance or supervision. He doesn’t paint the bleak picture and then simply ask the Brothers to pray for these families. Rather, he tells his Brothers that “God has had the goodness to remedy so great a misfortune” by providing these youth with teachers who are with them all day long, teaching them reading, writing, and their religion. He goes on in the meditation to encourage the Brothers to thank God for calling them to so important a ministry. It is important to note here that the call comes not only to classroom teachers, but to all who are members of the educational community – administrators, support staff, parents – and students! Let *us* remember that *we* are in the holy presence of God. In fact, the example set by how the community of educators loves and supports one another often has a more powerful and lasting impact on the students than the example of any individual teacher, staff, or administrator.

C. The Holy Presence of God Reveals the Full Understanding of the Human Person. By imbuing our students with a regular, active awareness of the holy presence of God in all of life, we offer them a deeper understanding of the human person. As the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education notes in *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, “The religious dimension makes a true understanding of the human person possible. A human being has a dignity and a greatness exceeding that of all other creatures; a work of God that has been elevated to the super-natural order as a child of God, and therefore having both a divine origin and an eternal destiny which transcends this physical universe.”

With such an emphasis on recognizing God’s presence every day in every person – especially as manifested by the example of the teachers, staff, and administrators in the school – young people begin to treat one another differently, more reverently. Moreover, they begin to see themselves differently. We work hard to help students embrace the reality that they are created in the image and likeness of God, imbued with incredible dignity and potential. This is the Holy Presence!

D. The Holy Presence of God Who is Loving and Abiding. *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* continues: The educational value of Christian anthropology is obvious. Here is where students discover the true value of the human person: loved by God, with a mission upon earth and a destiny that is immortal. As a result, they learn the virtues of self-respect and self-love, and of love for others – a love that is universal. In addition, each student will develop a willingness to embrace life, and also his or her own unique vocation, as a fulfillment of God’s will.

I am reminded of De La Salle’s experience of the presence of God in his own life, of God’s way with him – a way that is gentle yet persistent, patient yet unrelenting, working little by little, step by step, one commitment leading to another. As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, as persons called to *be* the Presence of God for those entrusted to our care, we are called to work in the same way – patiently and persistently, honoring where a young person is in her/his life journey while at the same time stretching her/him to more fully realize her/his potential. The holy presence of God is not a sledgehammer – rather, it is more like the “tiny whispering sound” that the prophet Elijah encounters on Mount Horeb (*1 Kings 19:8-13*). The holy presence of God is more like Jesus as described in the Book of Revelation: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me.” (*Revelation 3: 20*). De La Salle was so open to

responding to God's call to service, even though the call was pulling him in unexpected directions, because he trusted, as Jesus did, that God would not abandon him; on the contrary, the God who calls is also the God who sustains and supports. As De La Salle notes in his first *Meditation for the Time of Retreat*, God does not truly desire something without assisting persons in the accomplishment of God's desire:

“God wills not only that all come to the knowledge of truth, but also that all be saved. He cannot truly desire this without providing the means for it and, therefore, without giving children the teachers who will assist them in the fulfillment of his plan. This, says Saint Paul, is the field that God cultivates, the building that he is raising, and you are the ones whom he has chosen to help in this work by announcing to these children the Gospel of his Son and the truths that are contained in it.”

Lasallian educators pass on this trust in God's goodness and abiding presence to the students entrusted to their care through their example as well as through their lessons. And the outcome of this lesson well-learned is a willingness on the part of young people to take risks for the sake of loving and serving others, knowing that the God who calls them to this love and service is the same God who is with them every step of the journey.

E. The Holy Presence of God Who Transcends Denominations.

What about the students in our schools who are not Catholic? As noted above, remembrance of the presence of God informs our actions. Recall again De La Salle's experience of God who “is not one to force the inclinations of persons”?

One manifestation of this throughout Lasallian history is the manner in which we work with persons who are not Catholic: we work in a way that “proposes” the faith but does not “impose” it. Our example – the way we live our lives in the educational service of the young, especially of those most in need – is in fact a powerful “proposition.” The religious studies courses we teach are powerful propositions of our Catholic faith. But, respecting the many and varied ways in which God is manifest in the world, we do *not impose* our particular religion on the young. This is entirely consistent with Church teaching, as articulated in *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*:

“Not all students in Catholic schools are members of the Catholic Church; not all are Christians. There are, in fact, countries in which the vast majority of students are not Catholics – a reality which the [Second Vatican] Council called attention to. The religious freedom and the personal conscience of individual students must be respected, and this freedom is explicitly recognized by the Church. On the other hand, a Catholic school cannot

relinquish its own freedom to proclaim the Gospel and to offer a formation based on the values to be found in a Christian education; this is its right and duty. To proclaim or to offer is not to impose, however; the latter suggests a moral violence which is strictly forbidden, both by the Gospel and by Church law.” *The National Directory of Catechesis* reinforces this way of being the Holy Presence for those who are not Catholic, particularly in the Church’s efforts to provide a human and Christian education to those who are economically poor but who are not necessarily Catholic: “In many dioceses throughout the United States, Catholic schools have been beacons of hope for those who are poor in the goods of this world.... Many of these children and their families are not Catholic, but the Church is determined to serve the human and social needs of the poor and to provide them a distinctively Catholic education, which includes a thorough and faithful catechesis. Many of these Catholic schools are genuine centers of evangelization that effectively proclaim the Gospel to those who have never heard it before as well as to those who have heard it but have not been moved by it to transform their lives.”

Concluding Thoughts

Let us remember. . . We repeat these words often throughout our days in Lasallian ministries. Why so often? Because we tend to forget. In the midst of our daily responsibilities, joys, sorrows, successes, and struggles, we tend to forget the One who has called us to this ministry. When we forget, our ministry loses an important element. When we forget, our ministry becomes mere human labor. When we forget, it becomes all about us and what we can do to effect change. When we forget, things become more daunting and less possible.

However, when we remember that we are in the holy presence of God, we are empowered by the God who calls us, who urges us, who doesn’t call us to impossible tasks. When we remember, our work takes on dignity and potential. When we remember, we reach out in courage and faith to cooperate

in God’s work of salvation. As Jesus told his disciples after his encounter with the rich young man, when they questioned the possibility of anyone being saved, “for mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God, all things are possible.” (*Mark 10: 27*)

*Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only those who see take off their shoes....*

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh* (1857), Book VII, line 820

MATURITY IN CHRISTIANS, ESPECIALLY THE ELDERLY

Editor

As we mature, we should develop moral perfections like those which St. Paul lists in *Galatians*, Chapter 5, 22 :

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...." (*Jerusalem Bible*, translation)

"Mais le fruit de l'Esprit est charité, joie, paix, longanimité, serviabilité, bonté, confiance dans les autres, douceur, maîtrise de soi, ..." (*Jerusalem Bible*, original.)

En cambio, el fruto del Espíritu es amor, alegría, paz, paciencia, amabilidad, bondad, fidelidad, humildad y dominio propio. (*Nuevo Versión Internacional*)

"But the harvest of the spirit is love, joy, peace, good temper, kindness, generosity, fidelity, gentleness, self-control...." (*Revised Moffat Translation.*)

"In contrast, the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patient endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness, charity...." (*New American Translation.*)

St. Paul's laconic description of "the fruit" (signs of maturity) is a hardly to be taken as exhaustive, especially as measured against the long list of vices mentioned in the preceding two verses. His list of moral virtues provides desirable, though not necessary and sufficient, conditions for spiritual maturity. Here, in random order and with the elderly in mind, are some contemporary and overlapping examples of *the fruit of the Spirit*:

MORAL

Keeping one's worries under control

Avoiding the "grumpy old man" syndrome

Keeping "in the loop," avoiding isolationism

Keeping a sense of humor, adaptability, accommodation to one's own disabilities and limitations—and to those of others

Having a healthy attitude toward sickness, death and dying

Allowing, when necessary, some decisions to be made for one

Being gracious about one's dependency without becoming "dependent"

Surrendering, when necessary, one's autonomy, comfort, and mobility

Preparing to accept with good grace the indignities and discomforts of aging

Keeping a relaxed patience, going with the flow, rolling with the punches

Recognizing diversity of needs among friends: their need for noise or for quiet

Lowering one's expectations and raising one's hopes

Acting one's age, at least approximately

Putting one's need for "human respect" in proper perspective, e.g., boasting only moderately

Not "sweating the small stuff"—and distinguishing it from the "big stuff."

Contributing time and effort to one's community

Not often repeating one's favorite anecdotes however instructive they may be

Being reluctant to claim entitlements

Retaining one's apostolic spirit, e.g., working with alumni or other volunteer groups

Accepting good-naturedly the claims made on one's time and effort

Recognizing the ridiculousness of one's personal vanities

Retaining a sense of humor

Reducing one's nosiness and also one's noisiness

Patience with self and others

Knowing when to quit without being a "quitter"

RELIGIOUS

Developing one's faith, hope and love—and the spirit of the evangelical counsels—humility and purity and obedience and spirit of poverty

[For consecrated persons, recalling one's promise to keep the *Rule*—i.e., developing a spirit of regularity]—and for all the baptized, keeping the commitments made by one's baptismal vows

Examining one's conscience prayerfully

Keeping a spirit of charity expressed in helpfulness; setting good example

Having a real faith in prayers of petition

Having faith too in "the prayer of suffering"

Making efforts at interior prayer

Spending time on true contrition, not on vain regrets.

Cultivating the virtue of perseverance

Appreciation for the doctrine of merit

Valuing the doctrine of indulgences

Preparing for the "four last things"

Devotion to Mass and other Sacraments, e.g., the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Spirit of thankfulness, that is, a Eucharistic spirit

Moreover, mature Christians (like everybody else) can benefit, in addition, from such accompanying conditions as physical and mental health, social acceptance, and psychological balance. These additional background conditions make our producing "the fruit of the spirit" more probable since "grace builds on nature."

DESIRABLE CONDITIONS FACILITATING THE ABOVE:

Financial and physical security
 Assurance of reasonable health and health care
 Social acceptance by one's peers
 Availability of geriatric advice if needed
 Acceptance of various stages of ill health: preventative, therapeutic, palliative
 Pacing oneself
 Control and elimination of addictions
 Remembering the rules of etiquette
 Good grooming
 Indoor and outdoor hobbies, preferably useful ones, for example: computer usage, letter writing, etc.

HOLY SPIRIT

From a Papal *Angelus* address in November 2006:

"The Spirit of the Father and of the Son, becomes the soul of our soul, the most secret part of our being, from which rises incessantly to God a movement of prayer, of which we cannot even specify the terms."

He urged those present at the *Angelus*, "To be ever more sensitive, more attentive to the Spirit's presence in us, to transform it into prayer, to experience this presence and to learn in this way to pray, to speak with the Father as children in the Holy Spirit."

PRAYER

In an address to university students, October 2006, Pope Benedict XVI counseled them to make the following prayer:
 "Lord, teach us to pray and also to think, to write, and to speak. For these faculties are intimately connected among themselves."

TRANSCENDING TIME AND SPACE IN PRAYER AND THE AFTERLIFE

Brother Brendan Kneale

Introduction

When, in a Gospel parable, Dives pleads with Lazarus across the great chasm which separates their two worlds, their interchange seems to take place without any problems involving time-lapse or any concerns about the distance separating them. Similarly, when we pray to the saints, we address them as present, without worrying about any spatial separation between us (or any time-delay). When Christ ascended into heaven, a movement described in the Gospel as a visible distance, He would seem to have become remote, yet in our prayers we address Him as near. The following paragraphs raise, in this regard, some considerations about paradoxes concerning prayer and Purgatory, their independence from time and space and their transcendence.

It seems clear that the limited matrix of time and space in which we currently struggle (see *Ecclesiastes* chapter 3) can be contrasted with the free domain of the spirit, that is, God's realm of disembodied souls and of angels. Prayer, mysteriously, links two domains—that of our confined space-time continuum with that of the unconfined eternal and infinite. Prayer thereby expands our experience. Archbishop Anthony Bloom is quoted as having called attention to our possibilities:

*Without [prayer], life is devoid of something essential. It becomes uninteresting and shallow. It will have only two dimensions, space and time. Our horizons will not extend beyond our immediate surroundings. We will think of the people around us as ordinary, separated from the awesome and everlasting destinies that are theirs.*¹

And again, A. Schememann: *Liturgy by its nature belongs to the world outside of time.*²

These two authorities on Eastern Catholicism may well have in mind the importance of icons within their tradition. Icons, it will be recalled, often juxtapose figures from different time-frames, and they almost always take liberties with spatial perspectives. Their intent seems to be to transcend time and space, and thereby bring the viewer into the domain of the spirit. Moreover, icons prefer themes like the Mother and Child, Transfiguration, and others that recall the irruption of the spiritual world into the physical world. We can regard them as sacramentals.

Time, Space, and Purgatory

Both Aristotle and Einstein tie time and space to matter. In their view, wherever physical bodies are, there are also time and space. Since Christ's and Mary's *bodies* are in heaven, it would be challenging to try to investigate what this link between the physical and the temporal means for heaven and likewise for hell, since there may be matter there too. Some theologians³ argue that the fire in hell is physical.² In what sense, then, are time and space involved in those places? Moreover, because St. Paul speaks, paradoxically, of "spiritual bodies," and because Christ's body after His resurrection seemed to transcend many spatial and temporal limitations, it would be very difficult to unravel all the various implications in terms of mixed physical and spiritual considerations.

However, if we consider Purgatory, where there are no physical bodies and presumably no matter, we can investigate, with some hope of insight, the transcendent nature of the spiritual world..

Purgatory

Spirits free of matter step outside of time as well as space. . From such a point of view, then, after our death there would be (properly speaking) no experience of *physical time* between the moment of dying and the much later time of our rising when we resume our bodies. We can talk in the same way of space-extensions: Purgatory would seem to occupy no physical space (as well as requiring no lapse of what we call time.)

What do such observations say about Purgatory? There have been several theological wrangles about the location of Purgatory, and by inference there should be wrangles about time-lapses there too. In

particular, can the needs of justice (and, according to Dante, the need for our re-education) be met *instantaneously* (from this world's point of view)? Admittedly, it is hard for us time-bound persons to transcend our limitation and think about the timeless. We are saying that Purgatory may not be located in either time or space—*pace* Dante's "Purgatorio." He, as is appropriate for a poet, metaphorically places his "inferno" inside the earth and his "purgatorio" on its far side. Dante's account also assumes time lapses. Of course, poetic license allows such concessions to time and space, but does theology? John Henry Newman did not seem to think so. His drama-poem, *The Dream of Gerontius*, presents a different picture. In it he has an angel speak about the nature of time and space, and describes the situation in the following terms to Gerontius, who is a newly disembodied soul on the verge of entering Purgatory. The key passage for our purposes is this:

The less and greater in the flow of time,
By sun and moon, primeval ordinances
By stars which rise and set harmoniously
By the recurring seasons, and the swing,
This way and that, of the suspended rod
Precise and punctual, men divide the hours,
Equal, continuous, for their common use.
Not so with us in the immaterial world;
But intervals in their succession
Are measured by the living thought alone,
And grow or wane with its intensity.
And time is not a common property;
But what is long is short, and swift is slow,
And near is distant, as received and grasp'd
By this mind and by that, and every one
Is standard of his own chronology.
And memory lacks its- natural resting-points
Of years, and centuries, and periods.

As far as angels and disembodied souls are concerned, Newman asserts here that space (as well as time) is modified when he notes, "The near is distant." Both are radically different in the next life. For this world, modern science says, time and space have their beginning at the start of cosmic creation (the Big Bang), so that "before" that event there were no time and no space. Angels and souls, in themselves, are "outside" our imagined spatial and temporal range; they belong ontologically to another order of being (and they intervene for us only by miracle presumably.) The conclusion for our purposes is this: to speak of lapsed time in Purgatory, or to think of it as extended space, is almost certainly to speak only figuratively.

P. Benoit O.P., when he wrote in *Revue Biblique* in 1949 about the Ascension of Our Lord, expressed similar views: "[The new world that Christ ascended to] is much more real than the present world ...;

however, it is vain to seek 'where' it is, just as it is wrong to imagine it as 'far away.' ,,,, It is not outside our world but transcends it, and we have access to it by way of faith and the sacraments....."

Recall the ghost at the start of *Hamlet*: it appears *hic et ubique*; it cannot be pinned down spatially.

In Catholic teaching note also that the sequential order of time is sometimes ignored. In our doctrine of the Immaculate Conception we learn that Mary is redeemed prior in *time* to the Redemption-event. Similarly, St. Paul writes that the tribes of Israel wandering in the desert with Moses early in history "drank of the rock that followed them, that is, Christ."

Implication for Indulgences

Suppose we pray, say for a month, for someone who has died and whose soul has gone to Purgatory. This soul went to a realm beyond our time and so is "already" (a time-dependent word) finished with his or her purgation. Are our correspondingly "late" prayers being wasted? No, we can think of God outside of time in eternity acting in the light of all the petitionary prayers of humanity which we see as distributed across time and space,-and, because He promises to hear our prayers, He adjusts temporal and spatial events accordingly. In commanding us to "ask and you shall receive," God is inviting us to participate in divine plans formulated "prior" to (and "outside" of) the dawn of creation. Although our prayers are spread out through a span of time and space, we know that God transcends that whole span. Eulogists at funerals are sometime criticized for speaking of the newly dead as already in Heaven, but there is a sense in which that criticism is harsh, since from God's viewpoint the saved are finished with their Purgatory in the timelessness of the next life. When we pray, we are entering the realm beyond space and outside time.

Christ was surely speaking metaphorically and in human terms about "days" when He told the Good Thief at the Crucifixion, "This day you will be with Me in Paradise."

Perhaps these words about "days" and Purgatory help answer the popular query about the days mentioned in connection with indulgences. One helpful way to look at this question is by way of narrative. Imagine a public sinner in the early Church being given, after repentance, a standard penance of praying publicly outside his parish church building for ten days. The local bishop comes by, takes pity, and releases the sinner from five of the ten days. Such a scenario could well have been the origin of the practice of granting "days" of indulgence. Observe that the imagined story states that the sinner has already received absolution and is sorry for his sins and that the "days" are not metaphorical: they are *calendar days*, but not "days in Purgatory." There are no days there. Note also that the sinner is doing a good work, in this case praying and setting good example; thus, the granting of the indulgence is not totally gratuitous or arbitrary. Moreover, the indulgence is not a release from guilt or responsibility—an assigned penance and an absolution in Christ took care of that by the sacrament of confession. The bishop's indulgence was a later release from some, never-adequate, punishment that has been required by justice. It did not remove guilt or responsibility; it reduced the penal sentence assigned.

Praying Transcends Time

The great mystics in various religious traditions seemed to have an insight into the kind of transcendence here considered. Contemplation is sometimes defined in terms of vision, "an unmediated and serene vision of reality otherwise incommunicable and transcendent." Some contemplatives' love of God allows them to "see outside" the confines of time and space into the eternal and infinite (or perhaps "inside" where God is "closer to us than we are to ourselves.") Such a mystical grace is generally only fleeting. Those of us who have not had the experience can at least make sense of the phenomenon: we can imagine a soul allowed to step momentarily "outside" of space-time. Normally, this would be in church or chapel, whose sacramental nature makes them portals to the non-material and supra-temporal world. Or, it might be while we pray the remarkable *Psalms 139*.

There are experienced people in the spiritual life who see in our Doxology, i.e., in the *Gloria*, a kind of summit of prayer. This prayer implicitly *transcends time* by invoking the glory of God "as it *was* in the beginning, *is* now, and ever *shall be*."

We can understand how the *Letter to Hebrews* urges us to "draw near" to God. This metaphor tells us to enter really and fully into the strange realm of prayer, that is, to enter a domain of transcendence. It is a domain which traditional icons, for example, try to exhibit for us and invite us to enter.

1. P. 3 *Light from the East*, by Michael Evdokimov, Paulist Press, 2004.
2. *Ibid.* P. 81, A. Schememann, quoted from his "Historical Aspects of Christian Worship."
3. See Thomas Aquinas' argument, traceable to Gregory the Great, in the *Summa 111, Q. 97 Art. 5.*

St. Thomas on Providence and Predestination (passages from two questions treated in *De Veritate* and published by Regnery in 1952 as a Gateway Paperback translation edited by Fr. Mulligan SJ) He quotes St. Thomas:: "God knows all particular beings perfectly..... All individual things, even as individuals, fall under God's providence." On page 28 of the *Introduction*, "Throughout the entire section on providence and predestination St. Thomas insists on the timelessness of God's eternity. God exists in an eternal now, standing outside of time just as He stands outside of space.'

Inclinamus res videre non secuti sunt sed secuti sumus.
 "We tend to see things not as they are but as we are."