

LASALLIANS WEST

NOVEMBER 2006

A monthly newsletter

De La Salle Christian Brothers • District of San Francisco



November 21 in Lasallian History: the Heroic Vow

November 1691. It was a bleak moment for the struggling movement that would become the Brothers of the Christian Schools. As Brother Luke Salm, FSC, has written, “The next step was to try to provide for the future of the Society in the face of the crises, opposition, and uncertainty that had been its experience thus far and that seemed likely to continue. For this purpose, De La Salle chose two zealous and courageous men who seemed to be the most committed to their vocation and on whom he thought he could depend. They were Brothers Nicolas Vuyart and Gabriel Drolin. He proposed that the three of them bind themselves by vow to establish the Society, no matter what it might cost them, and even if all the others should abandon it – a not unlikely possibility at the time.” At Vaugirard, near Paris, on November 21, 1691, the three men wrote and signed this vow:

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, prostrate with the most profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty, we consecrate ourselves entirely to you to procure with all our ability and efforts the establishment of the Society of the Christian Schools, in the manner which will seem most agreeable to you and most advantageous to the said Society

And for that purpose, I, John Baptist de La Salle, priest, I, Nicolas Vuyart, and I, Gabriel Drolin, from now on and forever until the last surviving one of us, or until the complete establishment of the said Society, make the vow of association and union to bring about and maintain the said establishment, without being able to withdraw from this obligation, even if only we three remained in the said Society, and if we were obliged to beg for alms and to live on bread alone.

In view of which we promise to do, all together and by common accord, everything we shall think in conscience, and regardless of any human consideration, to be for the greater good of the said Society.

Done on this 21st of November, feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, 1691. In testimony of which we have signed.

It came to be known as “the heroic vow,” a statement that radically committed these founding teachers to the work they were called to do, and it served as the model for the first permanent vows taken by Brothers in 1694. As Superior General Álvaro Rodríguez Echevarría has said, “The fears and the joys of a life in common, as well as the successes and failures in the professional and ministerial life in the Church in service of poor young children, would now be the integral core of De La Salle’s identity and that of his two associates. In this formula of consecration and association, known as the Heroic Vow, to achieve the establishment of the society of the Christian Schools, De La Salle, along with Nicolas Vuyart and Gabriel Drolin, expressed this common will and policy to advance together toward that new world along a road that had not been known before.”

The path of commitment that they laid out is one on which Lasallians continue to travel. On the 300th anniversary of the vow, in 1991, La Salle High School in Milwaukie, Oregon, instituted its annual “Heroic Vow Assembly,” when faculty recommits itself to its mission and the senior class commits to act as elder brothers and sisters to the younger students.



NEWS BRIEFS from the REGION and the INTERNATIONAL MISSION

EUROPEAN DISTRICTS FORM ONE NEW REGION: The Lasallian Region of Europe (Région Europe Lasallienne, or REL) came into official existence on November 1, 2006, concluding a two-year-long process of reflection regarding the need to form one united Region out of the current Lasallian Regions: REBIM, ARLEP, FRANCE, RELEC and ITALY. The establishment of the Region “*expresses the willingness of the units that compose it to cooperate with one another and so benefit by the added vitality that comes from acting together.*” (Rule 127) For complete information, and to view a video of Brother Alvaro, Superior General, announcing the news, visit the international web site at www.lasalle.org.

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION: On October 23 through November 4 some 160 delegates from throughout the world gathered in Rome for this first-ever assembly on Association for the Educational Mission. Copious photos, stimulating documents, deep reflections, and up-to-date reports on the challenges and opportunities facing Lasallians around the globe are on the international web site at www.lasalle.org. Click on “International Assembly 2006.”

THE 44TH GENERAL CHAPTER IS IN PREPARATION: Preparatory documents for the May 2007 General Chapter in Rome are available at the web site of the international Institute, www.lasalle.org. Click on “General Chapter 2007.”

BROTHER MICHAEL SANDERL, FSC, WILL BE A DELEGATE to the 44th General Chapter: Brother Michael Sanderl, FSC, of the District of San Francisco, who is currently working at Saint Mary’s College, has been invited by Brother Alvaro, Superior General, to be a delegate to the canonical meeting in Rome next May. Also attending the General Chapter from our District will be Brother Stanislaus Campbell, FSC (Visitor), Brother Thomas Jones, FSC (Auxiliary Visitor).

ALUMNUS GIVES \$2 MILLION TO LASALLIAN HIGH SCHOOL in BUFFALO: “I got a good dose of study discipline, a good dose of what it means to be a team player. The relationship between the faculty and the students was something I hadn’t experienced before.... This was the source, the defining moment when I matured and turned the corner.” So said John S. Cullen, an alumnus of St. Joseph’s Collegiate Institute in Buffalo, New York, as he made a gift of \$2 million to the Lasallian high school for boys. His donation is directed primarily to the construction of new science labs and classrooms. The school’s web site is www.sjci.com. For the full story, see *The Buffalo News* of November 17 at <http://www.buffalonews.com/editorial/20061117/1034419.asp>

A NEW STUDY on “LASALLIAN SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS: A UNITED STATES PERSPECTIVE”: Newly published in Rome and available in pdf format on the international web site is MEL Bulletin #30 by Brother Frederick C. Mueller, FSC, in which Brother Frederick “presents us with two parallel stories – almost twins – of the evolution of the Institute over the last fifty years and its mirror image as experienced in the United States. It is a story which, as it advances, becomes more audacious, daring, risky, explosive, filled with a future... and as it is the future which is at stake, it is a story which arrives there...” Visit www.lasalle.org and check “Recent Publications”.



Happy Thanksgiving from the President of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favour; and Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a DAY OF PUBLIC THANKSGIVING and PRAYER, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favours of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:"

NOW THEREFORE, I do recommend and assign THURSDAY, the TWENTY-SIXTH DAY of NOVEMBER next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed;-- for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been able to establish Constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted;-- for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge;-- and, in general, for all the great and various favours which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also, that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions;-- to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us); and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

GIVEN under my hand, at the city of New York, the third day of October, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine.

(signed) G. Washington

Source: The Massachusetts Sentinel, Wednesday, October 14, 1789

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