

**“The gathering far exceeded my expectations . . . the entire experience gave me a sense of hope and unity. People with whom I spoke felt called, challenged, and affirmed.”**

Campos, FSC, Coordinator of the Office of Ministry and Lay Formation for the Diocese of Santiago, Cuba; Father Kenan Osborne, OFM, Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at the Franciscan School of Theology and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California; Father Jose Arong, OMI, former President of Notre Dame University in the Philippines; and from Brother David Brennan, FSC, Visitor of the District of San Francisco.

The audience visited other countries by way of videos produced by photographer and editor, Scott Gibbs of Quadrant Productions. Scott recently returned from a seven-country tour of the apostolic works supported by the District of San Francisco. Reflecting on his experience as videographer, he remarked, “When you look at the faces of the people in these videos, remember that these are your faces and that this work is your work. I can say this because in each place I visited, whether in the United States or in another country, I saw a certain sameness. And that ‘sameness’ changes lives. In fact, being part of this work has changed my life.”

These verbal and visual messages of affirmation of the Lasallian Mission complemented and informed the small group sessions where participants identified strategies and ways of implementing the goals of the Action Plan. According to one person, “The gathering far exceeded

my expectations. The videos were very powerful, and the entire experience gave me a sense of hope and unity. People with whom I spoke felt called, challenged, and affirmed.”

Indeed, Brother Miguel told the 600 Lasallian Partners, “We are crossing a threshold. We are seeing the end of one era and the beginning of something new.” Brother Miguel described himself as a “living witness to the changing context in the San Francisco District.” He cited as an example of the “end of one era” the first workshop he gave in the District 25 years ago, which only Christian Brothers attended. Looking into the audience before him, he noted that most of the participants were not Christian Brothers, reflecting the current worldwide statistics that 7,000 Brothers work with 66,000 colleagues in 87 countries. “This changing body finds itself at a threshold – a threshold that calls on faith to move into the unknown and the courage to be transformed.”

The “something new” that is emerging is not limited to the declining numbers of Brothers and increasing numbers of their Partners. It also includes an ecumenical spirit which welcomes people of other faith communities, as stated in the Context for Action, Section 1.2: “Those of us who do not share the Christian faith but who support many of the principles underlying the Lasallian mission of

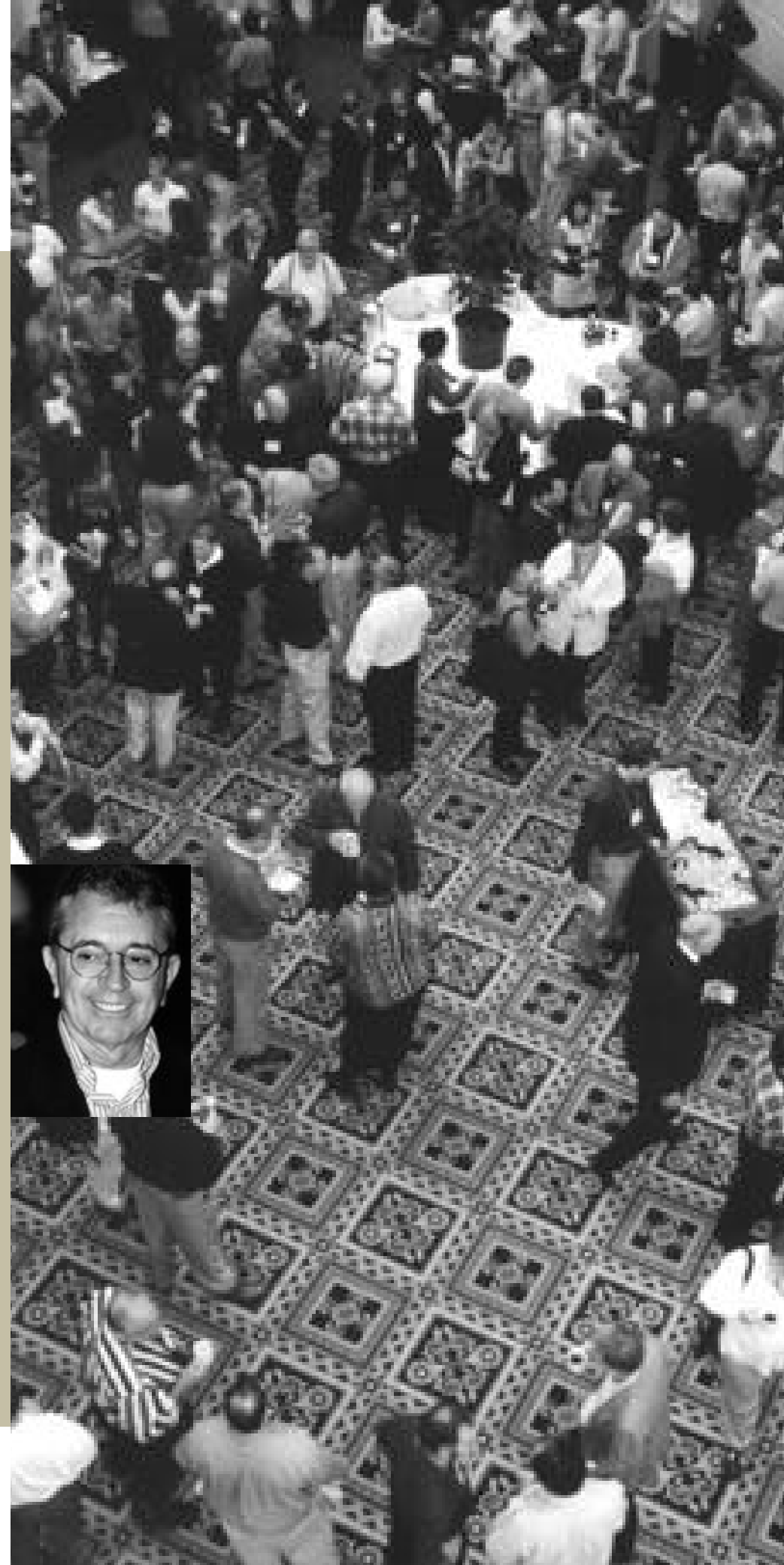
human and Christian education, recognize the essential role of faith in the lives of the Brothers and our Christian Partners. We share with them our own inspiration coming from our particular religious beliefs or humanistic values.”

### **Entering the Threshold: Convocation Faces**

High school student Jason Doyle lives with Brother Tim Mayworm, FSC, at Journey House in Pasadena, California. Journey House opened its doors 15 years ago as a place where young men who are wards of the court can live in a safe and stable community, enabling them to succeed in school.



Many of the students at Journey House are former gang members once involved in drugs and crime. At the Convocation, Jason shared part of his story: “I arrived at Journey House one year ago after being in and out of foster homes and institutional group homes. Before I came here, I didn’t have any plans. Now, I’m beginning to



*As the weekend progressed, Lasallian Partners gathered in small groups to assess and add to the District’s Action Plan. Brother David Brennan, FSC, Visitor, challenged the audience on four levels: to take risks so that the District can provide a true human and Christian education to those trapped in poverty; to reach out gracefully with open minds and hearts toward new ideas and solutions; to respond in faith to God’s call in the events of our time; and to view this Convocation as a true moment of grace for making a difference in the lives of those entrusted to our care.*