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LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (9)

6. LET US BUILD OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

«As we go forward, we count on as many as possible of you to come with us. We count especially on the help of the Holy Spirit: we are sure he will not fail us if we listen to his voice, follow his inspiration and read the signs he sends us».
(Letter, p. 41)

1. THE WAY FORWARD IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

In its seventh and final chapter, the Letter to the Lasallian Family offers some **practical suggestions** for "ensuring greater internal unity and vitality". Aware of "the urgency, the scope and importance of this task", the central administration of the Institute once again calls upon Brothers and lay people to involve themselves in the growth and organisation of the Lasallian Family. This is a task that demands the "*pursuit of excellence*."

Here, then are the suggestions for the next few years:

1. Study and reflect deeply on our common Lasallian and spiritual heritage.

This reflection is vitally important. Unless this point is taken seriously, it will be impossible to implement the other suggestions.

2. Express the results of this research in clear and understandable language.

It is important to be able to formulate what we believe in and what it is that can make us devote so much energy to it, in language that is simple, suited to the task in hand and culturally appropriate. Such a statement will be of great help in implementing the next suggestion.

3. Set up a process of discernment in each movement or association.

The effects of reflection are twofold: on the one hand, it makes it possible to define the identity of each group and to judge its greater or lesser conformity to the Lasallian ideal; and on the other, it leads to a better understanding of the apostolic commitment of each group and to a more effective implementation of it.

4. Organise more courses and set up more centres and commissions for Lasallian training.

This is something that is both necessary and urgent. We need Lasallians who are enthusiastic and generous – that goes without saying; but these latter must also be well-trained and up-to-date, so that they can be creative and have a transforming effect in a society that is becoming more and more complex.

5. Increase the number of meetings between the various branches of the Lasallian Family.

Relationships lead to mutual discovery; dialogue, to mutual acceptance; frequentation, to mutual love. Lasallian groups have still a long way to go before they can draw close to one another, get to know one another and work happily together.

2. ACTION AT INSTITUTE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION LEVEL

As a result of decisions made at the 41st General Chapter and by Brother Superior and his Council, **five important measures** have already been taken in order to promote greater understanding and more effective consolidation of the Lasallian Family throughout the Institute.

1. Lasallian Education Mission Secretariat

This has been completely overhauled and organised to be of service to Institute Districts. It has two sections:

- a/ Education and Pastoral care in Schools section to provide help for Lasallian schools;
- b/ Associations and Movements section to deal with Lasallian association groups.

2. International Lasallian Studies Sessions (SIEL)

Two were planned, and the first one was a great success with 41 Brothers taking part. The second one is due to take place from October 1990 to May 1991.

3. Lasallian Studies Department

Following the death of the much missed Brother Maurice Auguste, Brother Michel Sauvage, with his widely acknowledged expertise, was appointed head of Lasallian Studies. With his team of experts he has drawn up an ambitious work programme in this important area of Lasallian research.

4. International Publications

"Lasalliana" has resumed publication and offers new material useful for formation. La Salle Intercom is in the process of renewing itself and extending its range of information.

5. Visits to Districts

Brother Superior and his Council take advantage of visits to Districts to meet various Lasallian groups and convey their message to them.

3. ACTION ON DISTRICT LEVEL

Our Rule tells us that a District is not only an administrative structure but that it expresses "the ordinary communion existing among its communities and Brothers" (R. 124). The Letter sees the District level as being ideal for *concerted action* by Lasallian groups. This is because:

1. At this level, it is easy to bring together all the various groups of the Lasallian Family.
2. It is possible for groups to get to know one another.
3. It is possible for individuals to make personal contacts that last.
4. Plans can be made and a sense of mission experienced. (cf. Letter, p. 32)

From all this it is easy to see that contact between the various Lasallian groups and Brother Visitor and his Council is not only necessary, but is the source and guarantee of fidelity to the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

It is in the sector of the Church constituted by the District that "formation, Lasallian research and the sharing of experience schemes" must be drawn up and followed through. In order that groups may benefit from guidance and support, two measures are a priority:

1. THE TRAINING OF ASSESSORS
2. THE CREATION OF SPECIAL COMMISSIONS

In the light of this, an appeal is made:

1. To **Regional Coordinators** and **Visitors** and to **their Councils** to use the best means available to ensure training, follow-up, and growth for these groups.

In this connection it is important to point out that it is the Institute which "*evaluates the authenticity of (the) Lasallian character*" of various movements and associations (Rule, 146). On a District level, this duty is the responsibility of the Brother Visitor and his Council.

2. To **headmasters** or **governing bodies** of Lasallian schools to ensure that the instructions and guidelines laid down by the District are carried out faithfully.
3. To **Brothers' communities** to play a leading role in this new stage in the life of the Institute.
4. To **Lasallian groups** themselves to define clearly their aims and draw up plans for training and future action.

The Letter concludes by choosing the **42nd General Chapter of 1993** as a target to aim for for the implementation of all the suggested measures. The assessment that will take place then will serve as the springboard for action in years to come.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO HELP STUDY GROUPS

1. Which Lasallian groups in your District are the most energetic? How did they develop? What has brought about this vitality?
2. What efforts should one make, or what measures should one take in order to set up a training course for Brother assessors for Lasallian movements?
3. What possibility is there in your District of creating a commission (of Brothers and lay persons) or a secretariat to deal with everything relating to the Lasallian Family? What alternative solution can you suggest?
4. Do the educational communities of the District have a Lasallian training programme worked out to meet the various categories present in them? How is this programme implemented? How is it assessed?

Brother Hernando Sebá López