

Journal

La Salle

ANZPPNG

“Think highly of your work”

- Meditations for the Feast of Saint Matthew



‘Would I have liked Jesus?’ and ‘What wouldn’t Jesus do?’ are two interestingly titled articles which have come across my desk in recent weeks.

In the first piece, Columban Fr Noel Connolly noted that the more he read the Gospels, the more he suspected that he would not have liked to meet Jesus... especially before breakfast. “Jesus was not always agreeable and accommodating but frequently challenging”. Noel noted that those he most frequently challenged were the religious leaders of the day, as well as the powerful and the affluent. Often, they were one and the same group- perhaps, today, too.

Jesus’s table companions, however, were more typically an assemblage of tax collectors, prostitutes, fishermen, and other sods and bods. He didn’t endear himself to the rich and powerful by his ‘unrestricted table fellowship’, and the Pharisees remained unimpressed by an uneducated Nazarene and his disparate band of followers who were less concerned with church laws, but rather were out on the highways and byways.

Pope Francis has unrelentingly echoed that approach: “I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security”.

In the second article, Peter Wehner, a senior fellow at the US Ethics and Public Policy Center, writing in the New York Times, notes the popularity of Presidential candidate Donald Trump among

many American Christians. Trump’s character, Wehner writes, is hostile to many of the qualities which Christians should value: “... integrity, compassion and reasoned conviction, wisdom and prudence, trustworthiness, a commitment to the moral good”. Hard to conceive that such a tub-thumper is able “... to incite ugly passions, stoke resentments and divisions, and create fear of those who are not like ‘us’- Mexicans, Muslims and Syrian refugees”. Australia, too, has its share of Trumpists, although not usually as brazenly offensive as the Republican candidate. Strength equals good seems to be his simple equation, so he easily compliments Vladimir Putin and admires the Chinese Government’s squelching of Tiananmen Square.

However, Jesus’s example starkly contrasts- everyone possesses inherent dignity and worth. In a modern context, this applies irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, wealth,

position, or title. As Matthew reminds, all are deserving of such respect: “Truly, I say to you, that whenever you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me”.

In his September 24, 2015 address to the US Congress, Pope Francis noted:

“We, the people of this continent, are not fearful of foreigners, because most of us were once foreigners. I say this to you as the son of immigrants, knowing that so many of you are also descended from immigrants... we must not be taken aback by [refugee] numbers, but rather [see] their faces, [listen] to their stories... To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal”.

The call for mercy is a daily challenge for us all to meet.

Merv McCormack

Executive Director,
Lasallian Mission Council

New Zealand to host International Lasallian Women’s Symposium

The District of Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea (ANZPPNG) invites Lasallian women from across the Pacific-Asia Region (PARC) and beyond to gather in New Zealand from 16-19 July 2017 for an historic event-a global Lasallian Women’s Symposium

The theme for the symposium is “Lasallian women as change makers”, recognising the distinct role and identity of women in the Lasallian mission, especially as catalysts for change.

Talented graphic designers from the Lasallian welfare agency yourtown have developed a new logo for the event, which includes a Lasallian star and a koro swirl marking New Zealand as the venue for the symposium.

It will build upon the success of similar forums across the Lasallian family, including the 2012 Lasallian Women’s Symposium held in Thailand.

This brought together Lasallian women from across the Pacific Asia (PARC) region, including from Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The Lasallian Region of North America (RELAN) also held a highly successful Women’s Symposium in 2013 and the Region of Latin America (RELAL) is hosting a similar event in Mexico in May next year.

Women currently make up around 54 percent of Lasallian Partners globally and yet they are under-represented in international

leadership roles across the Lasallian family.

The critical role women play in the Lasallian mission was celebrated in the Institute Circular 461, published in 2010, which emphasises the importance of a more intuitive, relational and community-centered approach to our work as Lasallians in the years ahead.

“Lasallian women have a pivotal role to play in ensuring the global Lasallian mission is vibrant and sustainable over coming decades”, explained the chair of the Steering Committee planning the Lasallian Women’s Symposium, Ms Trish Carroll who also coordinated the 2012 Symposium in Thailand.

“The New Zealand symposium will help to empower Lasallian women from around the world, giving them a unique networking opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences, enriching the Lasallian family as a whole”, she added.

The symposium sessions will be conducted in English and translation facilities will not be available.

Through a focus on small group and interactive sessions, the symposium will provide Lasallian women with a unique forum for mutual growth and support.

“It will therefore be a highly rewarding, professional development experience for Lasallian women with long term benefits flowing on to their schools and other workplaces”, Ms Carroll explained.

“The Symposium is inclusive, invitational and welcome to all Lasallian women, as we come together, learning from each others insights and experiences and helping to enrich our ministry across many diverse settings across the modern world”.

Further details on the conference venue in New Zealand will be announced over coming months.



La Salle Bankstown's Great Book Swap for PNG

Students at La Salle Catholic College Bankstown have been flocking to the school library during their lunch hour to support a book swap campaign aimed at helping a fellow Lasallian school in Port Moresby.

La Salle College launched a "Reading Opens Doors" campaign to help purchase books and literacy resources for students at La Salle Technical College in Hohola.

The Port Moresby coeducational school has a strong focus on providing vocational education and training programs to students from disadvantaged backgrounds in PNG.

La Salle College's Literacy Coordinator Mr Andrew Sortwell set up tables stacked with books in the learning centre which Bankstown students donated and which could also be purchased by fellow students for a gold coin donation.

All the money raised went towards the Hohola school and it comes after La Salle College ran a similar campaign last year to strengthen literacy resources at Luurnpa Catholic School in the Indigenous community of Balgo Hills in Western Australia.

"It's certainly made the students more aware of how fortunate we are

here to have access to a plethora of books which other Lasallian schools in our own country and in countries such as PNG do not enjoy in the same way", Mr Sortwell explained.

"We also have a high proportion of students from a non English speaking background and the book swap campaign is one of a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening our literacy programs at La Salle College".

Recently published NAPLAN results have highlighted the outstanding progress La Salle College Bankstown has made in this area with the school recording results well above the state average in Year 9 writing and spelling this year.

"We've certainly made a conscious effort to shift attitudes towards reading, to make it a fun and engaging activity for our students and we know from the research that if we encourage students to read more, that then has a clear flow-on effect to their writing skills as well", Mr Sortwell said.



St James College Immersion in Balgo Hills

Senior students from St James College East Bentleigh have experienced daily life as volunteers in a remote Indigenous community in Western Australia through a rewarding immersion trip to the Kimberley region.

Eight Year Ten students and four staff members from the Melbourne all boys school volunteered for several days at Luurnpa Catholic School in Balgo Hills, helping in the classrooms and with bush excursions and sports carnivals.

"The students gained so much from listening to the Elders from the local community sharing their stories, joining them on an excursion hunting for frogs and swimming in Lake Gregory", explained one of the staff members on the trip, the Lasallian Facilitator at St James College, Mr Martin Callanan.

"On the second last night of the trip, we shared a communal dinner with members of the Balgo community during which

the boys expressed their thanks after receiving such a warm welcome".

The Lasallians have had a strong, historic connection to Balgo Hills which stretches back to 1984 when the De La Salle Brothers helped establish the Luurnpa Catholic School.

The Lasallians have worked closely with Indigenous Elders to provide primary and secondary education to generations of students in the remote community.

The Brothers also established the Kutungka Trade Training Centre in Balgo, providing strong pathways to employment through vocational education programs targeted at the needs of the local community.

The Lasallian connection to the school continues today through the work of a group of Share the Mission volunteers who are all graduates of Lasallian schools in Sydney and Auckland.

Senior students from a number of Lasallian schools around Australia also undertake immersion visits to Balgo Hills each year.

Around Malvern with Joan Ferguson



From visiting sick students with communion in hospital, preparing them for the sacraments of baptism or confirmation or leading a Staff Spirituality Day, Mrs Ferguson has touched many hearts and minds with the genuine pastoral approach she takes to her ministry.

A graduate of the Catholic Theological College in Melbourne from the 1970s, Mrs Ferguson has long had a strong interest in religious education.

But it was through the encouragement of former De La Salle Malvern Principal Br Bill Firman, that she took up the role of Chaplain in 2008.

"Br Bill was looking for someone who could play a key role in the faith development of the students and act in a pastoral role, preparing students for sacramental programs and raising awareness

around what it means to be a Catholic in the Lasallian tradition", Mrs Ferguson explained.

"We have a large number of new students who join the college in Year 7 and in Year 11 who want to become Catholics but don't know how to go about it and as Chaplain, I have been able to lead sacramental programs to meet their needs".

Her pastoral care extends to staff members, leading regular spirituality days and prayer services for them as well.

Mrs Ferguson's commitment to the Lasallian charism was nurtured through Australian-based formation programs in the 1980s and 1990s where she met a number of De La Salle Brothers she still counts as mentors and friends.

"Br Gerard Rummery certainly had a strong influence on my Lasallian formation, as did Br

Bill Mann from St Mary's University in Minnesota who would come over to lead programs at the old Lasallian retreat centre in Narooma on the New South Wales south coast", she explained.

"What attracted me to the Lasallian charism was the commitment the Founder led to take a genuine interest in the students under our care, knowing them all by name and rather than being authoritarian, to instead act like a big Brother or big Sister to our students".

"As Lasallians, we have such a rich legacy to promote to others in the Church who may not be aware that St John Baptist de La Salle was the Patron Saint of all teachers, not simply those of us working in Lasallian schools".

"De La Salle emphasised the importance of being genuinely concerned about the welfare of our students, because ultimately a teacher can not touch the heart of a student unless they are genuinely committed to their work".

New Zealand Lasallians Gathering in Hamilton

New Zealand Lasallians have gathered in the North Island city of Hamilton for an Annual Gathering where they have shared valuable insights and discussed future plans aimed at strengthening their ties with fellow Lasallians around the world.

Brother Visitor David Hawke was a special guest at the Annual Gathering which brought together 50 current and retired teachers, Principals, Young Lasallians and members of the De La Salle Brothers' community from Auckland.

One of the highlights of the one day conference was a series of reflections from the three Lasallian Principals in New Zealand who spoke about how undertaking the Buttimer Institute of Lasallian Studies program in the United States has directly shaped their work in schools.

Through the leadership and strong encouragement of the recently retired Executive Director of the New Zealand Catholic Education Office, Br Sir Patrick Lynch, all three Principals have graduated from the three year program and they all believe it has fundamentally enhanced their day to day work as leaders in Lasallian education.

Delegates at the Hamilton gathering benefited from a series of professional workshops led by three recent participants in the Buttimer program- Mr Kane Raukura from De La Salle College Mangere, Mrs Marie Hepi from John Paul College Rotorua and Mrs Anna Mace from Francis Douglas Memorial College in New Plymouth.

The Annual Gathering was also an opportunity for New Zealand

Lasallians to reflect upon their achievements over the past year and discuss some of their future aspirations.

The Chair of the Gathering, Mr Kane Raukura emphasised the importance of promoting professional development opportunities for New Zealand teachers in Papua New Guinea under the District Twinning program.

Computer Science and Mathematics teacher at Francis Douglas Memorial College, Mr Peter Smith and Health Education teacher at De La Salle College Mangere, Mr Joseph Keane will be taking digital resources and other teaching materials with them to assist fellow teachers at La Salle Technical College in Hohola, Papua New Guinea this month.



Committed Lasallian: Anna Mace

have a responsibility to be a living witness to your faith- you can in essence be a role model", Mrs Mace explained.

The committed New Zealand teacher only took up her current role at Francis Douglas Memorial College in 2014, but in that short space of time, she has immersed herself deeply in the Lasallian charism, undertaking two years of the three year Buttimer formation program in the United States.

The two week residential program is held annually at St Mary's College in California in late June and early July and is aimed at deepening ones' knowledge of St John Baptist de la Salle, while engaging in community with the De La Salle Brothers and Lasallian partners.

The program is run over three stages, allowing Lasallians to deepen their understanding of the Charism over a three year period.

Mrs Mace believes the Buttimer program has fundamentally enhanced her role as a Lasallian formator because it draws closely upon the lived experiences of generations of Lasallian educators along with the foundational

writings of the Founder, St John Baptist de la Salle.

The New Plymouth teacher has now taken her Buttimer studies to a higher level, having recently embarked upon a Master of Arts in Lasallian Leadership through St Mary's University in Minnesota.

"One of my research projects through the Buttimer program has been looking specifically at Lasallian spirituality in schools and how it is intrinsically linked with the core values of service and community", Mrs Mace explained.

"Teaching at an all-boys school, I see students who find it difficult to express their spirituality through acts of worship, such as going to Mass, but can express it more through projects aimed at supporting a fellow Lasallian school in Papua New Guinea or Pakistan".

"Looking forward, as Lasallian formators, I believe one of our core challenges is to reach out beyond simply teachers engaged in religious education and to foster a sense of cohesiveness whereby all staff across Lasallian schools can be role models and witnesses to what we believe", she added.



Honouring Veteran Lasallians

The Lasallian Gathering in Hamilton has helped unite not only current teachers, but in a number of cases, teachers who have retired from professional work, but who have never lost their commitment to the charism.

This is particularly true for Lasallian Benefactor Mr Sam Bahuguna who retired in 2004 after teaching Science and Mathematics at De La Salle College Mangere for 26 years.

"I was inspired by the work of our long-time Principal, Br Sir Pat Lynch who always knew the name of every student at the school", he explained.

"I have so many fond memories from teaching at the college and they have always warmly invited me back to functions such as this one".

Alongside Mr Bahuguna was another committed Lasallian, Mr Peter Costello who is now in his 40th year of teaching Religious Education at Francis Douglas Memorial College in New Plymouth.

"My connection to the De La Salle Brothers stretches back to my childhood when I attended the first primary school the Brothers ran in Blenheim on the South Island", he explained.

"My mother used to bake pavlovas for the pioneering Brothers who had come over from Australia to start the school", he said with a chuckle.

"There is so much beauty in the Lasallian charism, particularly in its commitment to local and international service projects and formation programs like Buttimer that provide that sense of succession, helping us to keep that spirit of faith and community alive".

As Director of Religious Studies at Francis Douglas Memorial College in New Plymouth, Mrs Anna Mace is well known for the great zeal and enthusiasm she directs into promoting the faith development of her students.

Her commitment to religious education stretches back 22 years and was initially nurtured as an infants teacher and subject coordinator at the nearby St Joseph's primary school.

"I have always taken the view that it doesn't matter if you're teaching five year olds or 18 year olds, theology is important and as a committed teacher of religious education in a Catholic school, you

Lasallian Alumni: Emeritus Professor Robert Antonia



An Internationally respected researcher in the field of mechanical engineering, Emeritus Professor Robert Antonia believes his love of maths and science was first nurtured during his years as a student at De La Salle College Ashfield.

As a graduate of the class of 1959, Professor Antonia spent the final two years of his secondary schooling at the all boys college in Sydney's inner west after migrating to Australia with his parents from France.

Born in Egypt, his family fled the country during the Suez Crisis and settled initially in the southern French town of Bayonne where a young Robert had his first taste of a Lasallian schooling at the Saint Bernard Middle School.

Upon arriving in Sydney in 1958, his French father was keen on Robert continuing his Lasallian education and quickly enrolled him at De La Salle Ashfield.

“There was a great spirit of camaraderie at the college and I still remember one of the De La Salle Brothers who taught me back then, Br Mark Murphy, who really encouraged me to take on advanced maths and physics and to aim for high marks in the subjects”, Professor Antonia explained from his current home in Newcastle.

“It was back then and still is a very multicultural school and I remember two classmates who were brothers from Germany who helped teach me English, while I helped teach them French and I have still kept in contact with them decades later”.

Among the 100 top cited authors in engineering in the world, Robert Antonia has had a remarkable academic career and has been credited with influencing international research in the field of turbulent flows.

In 2007, the Australian Academy of Science honoured him with an award for his contributions to turbulence research and now aged in his 70s, he continues to conduct research and supervise graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

Robert Antonia's distinguished academic career has included postdoctoral work at the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London, a period as senior lecturer at the University of Sydney and being promoted to the position of Professor at the University of Newcastle at the young age of 33.

He spent 24 years on the teaching faculty in Newcastle, serving as Department Head on several occasions and forging strong ties with researchers in France, Italy and Japan.

The Emeritus Professor encourages budding engineers in Lasallian schools to focus on doing well in maths and physics to give them a head start when they reach university.

“Good maths skills are important to have in a career in engineering and all good engineers are also good scientists”, Robert Antonia explained.

“Maths is essentially a tool that allows you to better tackle engineering problems and if you foster your skills in that area, you can go on to have a more successful career”.

Lasallian Alumni: Adam Didyk

Year 7 students from St Michael's College in Adelaide may have got a pleasant surprise as they sat glued to their TV screens watching all the action at the recent Olympic Games in Rio De Janeiro.

They would probably have spotted their teacher, Mr Adam Didyk on the sideline as team distance coach for the Australian Athletics team.

Mr Didyk has nurtured the careers of a number of talented Olympians including Jess Trengrove and Madeline Hills (nee: Heiner) (pictured below) and looks after Australian athletes in the steeplechase, long and middle distance events.

Himself a graduate of St Michael's from the class of 1998, Mr Didyk attributes both his love of sport and his career path into teaching to his schooling at the Adelaide college.

“I had some great mentors during my years at the school, especially my P-E teacher Michael Fry and my Years 5 and 6 teacher, Kym Clark and both men are still teaching alongside me at the primary campus”, Mr Didyk said.

“Kym Clark encouraged us all as primary students to stay really fit and healthy and he inspired me to take up running, starting with my first City to Bay Fun Run in Adelaide as a youngster”, he added.

Mr Didyk said his experiences as a student at St Michael's College were so positive that he wanted to contribute back in later life as a teacher at his old school.



He embarked upon a Bachelor of Education degree through the University of South Australia and also spent a year at the University of Memphis in the U-S where he combined studies in education and sports psychology with athletics training.

“I also took up studies in religious education in my degree because I really wanted to return to St Michael's College as a teacher and knew how integral that was to the curriculum of the school”, Mr Didyk said.

As a professional coach, Adam Didyk has helped guide and mentor the nation's top athletes and he believes these skills have also served him well in the primary classroom.

“When I see talented young athletes in primary school, I always encourage them not to specialise in one sport at too young an age, but to nurture their abilities across a range of areas”, he explained.

“We're also blessed with a great tradition in Lasallian education where as teachers, we are always conscious of the importance of putting faith in our students, challenging them to be the best they can be and stepping into that role of big brother and big sister to them, nurturing those entrusted to our care”.



Committed Lasallian: Maree Cullen



For a remarkable quarter of a century, Mrs Maree Cullen has helped shape the faith journey of generations of students through her work in the Religious Education Faculty at De La Salle College Cronulla.

Over recent years in her role as subject coordinator, Mrs Cullen

has gained great satisfaction from seeing some of the students she has taught through the HSC Studies in Religion course go on to top the state in that subject.

Mrs Cullen believes the senior secondary school's success is closely tied to the legacy left by the De La Salle Brothers with some of the Brothers from the Cronulla community playing an ongoing role in pastoral care at the school.

"The De La Salle Brothers have such a gentle presence about them, they are very supportive of the work we do and they have contributed so much to the school and our spirituality", Mrs Cullen explained.

One of the Brothers from the Cronulla community, Br Gary Wilson offers pastoral support to

the students at the college and two of the Cronulla Brothers have taught or held the Principal's position in the past at the school and are still contributing to the life of the school- Brothers Celestine Gavin and Maurice Salmon.

Mrs Cullen has shown innovative leadership as Religious Education Coordinator, pioneering a Lasallian leadership program with strong links to the college's two feeder schools- De La Salle College at Caringbah and Our Lady of Mercy College at Burraneer.

Mrs Cullen also pioneered a popular volunteer catechist program nine years ago which has since been adopted by a number of other Catholic schools across Sydney.

Under the program, De La Salle College Cronulla students volunteer as catechists across six Years 1 and 2 classes at the nearby

Cronulla Public School as part of their studies in religious education.

"It ties in closely with the Lasallian ethos of being like a big brother and big sister to the junior students and it has been of great help to the local Catholic parish as well", Mrs Cullen explained.

The committed teacher said one of the most rewarding aspects of her job has been seeing alumni from the school go on to contribute as Lasallian Youth Ministers and Share the Mission volunteers well after they have graduated from the college.

"I believe that tradition has been established here too because the De La Salle Brothers have placed so much trust in us to promote the Lasallian values and to nurture the charism and they have been so supportive at every step of the way", Mrs Cullen added.

Lasallian Mission Services joins in Youth Ministry Roundtable



Members of the Lasallian Mission Services team say they have benefited greatly from networking with fellow youth ministry professionals from across the country at a new roundtable forum which was hosted by the Australian Catholic University.

Assistant Director of Formation (Young Lasallians), Amanda Proulx and Youth Ministry Coordinator Philippe Dulawan were among 30 youth ministry professionals at the Roundtable on Youth Ministry in Catholic

Schools held on 19 September at ACU's North Sydney campus.

The one day forum brought together youth ministry representatives from ten Catholic dioceses across New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia as well as from Marist School Ministries, the National Catholic Education Commission and the Australian Catholic Youth Council.

"It was a fantastic opportunity to hear about the different styles of youth ministry and all the great

programs that exist around Australia", Amanda explained.

"We were also able to look at ways of working more closely together to not only promote youth ministry, but also plan some exciting national youth events in 2017 and 2018".

Sydney will host the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in December 2017 which will also act as a catalyst for the Australian Catholic Youth Council's Year of Youth in 2018.

This special event will celebrate ten years since Australia hosted World Youth Day in 2008.

"It was great being able to meet young people at the forum who are directly involved in planning these key events and looking at ways of promoting the involvement of Young Lasallians as much as we can too", Amanda added.

"We hope the youth ministry roundtable can become an annual event and if that's the case, that it can be expanded to cover youth ministry professionals from other parts of Australia as well".

2017 promises to be a particularly busy year with Young Lasallians from across the Pacific-Asia region and beyond expected to gather for the Lasallian Youth Gathering to be hosted by De La Salle College Ashfield from 10-14 July 2017.

yourtown helps develop new relationships app for young people

yourtown has teamed up with researchers from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre in Brisbane to develop a new app aimed at helping young people cope with the psychological stress caused by relationship break-ups.

Breakup Shakeup was released earlier this year based on extensive consultation with hundreds of teenagers and young adults around Australia.

"Through the contacts we receive through Kids Helpline, we find that the breakdown of romantic relationships is frequently linked to

mental health problems amongst adolescents and in some sad cases, self harm and suicide" explained Head of Strategy and Research at yourtown, Mr John Dalgleish.

"This app helps young people cope with the stress caused by break-ups by suggesting fun activities they can plan with their friends and family members to combat feelings of isolation and promote social interaction", he added.

The app includes an inbuilt calendar function to help teenagers and young adults plan their activities and uses emojis to signal how each activity impacted upon their mood at that time.

It also includes a wide range of suggested activities from going to a concert or camping, doing karaoke or going to the movies.

"We know from our research that around 50 percent of Australian teenagers have dated by the time they're 15 years of age and so there is definitely a very strong demand for an app such as this one", Mr Dalgleish said.

"We know too from our work with Kids Helpline that many young people feel far more comfortable seeking counselling online rather than face to face and this app is a great self help tool which can then direct them to our

other services if they need more assistance".

Based on the strong success yourtown has already had with the Breakup Shakeup app, plans are now underway to develop a far broader app library through the Kids Helpline website which will expand the self-help options available for young people.



Young Lasallian Alumni answering the call to religious life



Two young graduates from La Salle Catholic College Bankstown who are currently training to be priests say the seeds of their vocation were initially sown through the strong social justice and service programs promoted at the Sydney school.

Ben Saliba and Luke Le are among 40 young men undergoing training to be priests in the Archdiocese of Sydney at the Good Shepherd Seminary in Homebush.

Another La Salle Catholic College graduate, Brendan Bourizk has applied to join the Postulancy

program of the Order of Capuchin Friars Minor as he continues discerning his vocation to the priesthood.

Each seminarian has a unique story to share around what led them to religious life and in many cases abandon a professional career to devote their lives to the Church.

For first year seminarian, Ben Saliba that decision came at the age of 32 after spending ten years in the workforce, while for 24 year old Luke Le he felt called to become a priest during his senior years at La Salle Catholic College.

"In my case, it was actually my younger brother Daniel who gave me a tap on the shoulder about five or six years ago and encouraged me to reflect more on my faith journey", explained Ben Saliba.

"I then became more involved in our parish youth group at St Felix Church at Bankstown and through that we started some outreach projects to help disadvantaged communities in the Philippines".

Ben helped establish a youth organisation in his parish, the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary which started regular immersion

programs in the Philippines city of Naga, caring for the homeless, abandoned children and people with mental illness.

Ben's first visit to Naga in 2013 came shortly after the devastating Typhoon Haiyan which let over 6000 people dead and over half a million others homeless.

"I saw young men there in the Philippines aged 17 or 18 giving their lives to God, working with abandoned children and adults with disabilities and I came away inspired by their profound love for humanity and their capacity to see Jesus in every person they ministered to", Ben explained.

"That definitely strengthened my discernment".

Fellow seminarian Luke Le is now in his 6th year of training and is close to being ordained as a diocesan priest.

A graduate of the class of 2008, he believes his years at La Salle Catholic College played a pivotal role in shaping his decision to pursue a religious vocation.

"The school placed a strong emphasis upon connecting social justice work with Christian life and in my senior years I became quite involved in social justice activities and fundraising at the school", Luke said.

Luke initially began training to be a primary school teacher for two years and it was through his active involvement in his parish youth group that he soon realised he was indeed called to religious life.

"I spent a lot of time alone in prayer and talking to my parish priest because a priestly life can be quite counter-cultural and being able to turn to a spiritual director, especially in those early stages of discernment is really important", he added.

"In my early months in the seminary, I had to adjust to a new life here, away from the daily distractions I had when I was in the workforce", explained Ben Saliba.

Part of that adjustment has included a "technology fast" with seminarians giving up email and mobile phone communication throughout the week, to help them focus more on their daily prayer life.

For young men aged in their 20s and 30s who have grown up in the digital era, that can be a real challenge to start with.

"This first year in the seminary has really affirmed my vocation in ways that would never have been possible had I continued discerning in the workforce", Ben said.

"It's really helped me to focus on my training here, well away from all the distractions that young adults have in their daily lives".

Expanded Share the Mission programs in 2017

Are you ready for a life-changing year as a volunteer, serving the needs of young people in western Sydney looking for employment through offering them tutoring in literacy and numeracy?

Or perhaps you're prepared to step in as a sporting coach or a homework club tutor in disadvantaged communities in New Zealand or Papua New Guinea?

Are you prepared to test yourself outside 'your comfort zone', allowing you to experience a different culture and community to your own?

Now in its 13th year, the Share the Mission program gives volunteers the opportunity to spend a year working with often marginalised youth in Lasallian schools and other workplaces.

The program has been expanded in 2017 to cover new schools in Port

Moresby and Rotorua as well as volunteer work with the Lasallian welfare charity, yourtown.

As a yourtown volunteer, you will have a unique opportunity to advocate for the needs of disadvantaged young people in Campbelltown in south-western Sydney, playing a pivotal role in literacy and numeracy tutoring and Indigenous Youth Engagement and Transition Programs.

yourtown volunteers will also benefit from access to Practice Supervision with experienced and qualified Psychologists and ongoing training relevant to their needs and interests.

John Paul College Rotorua is also offering Share the Mission placements for the first time in 2017 with volunteers having a unique opportunity to contribute to its strong social justice service programs.

This includes the popular Full Fill Van Project and Sunset Breakfast program, offering food packs to the needy and a Homework Centre catering specifically for Maori and Pasifika students.

An exciting new opportunity has also opened up for Share the Mission volunteers in two schools in Port Moresby in 2017.

De La Salle Secondary School Bomana and La Salle Technical College Hohola both cater for disadvantaged students in the PNG capital and urgently need volunteers to assist in areas such as literacy tutoring, a homework centre and through sporting programs.

The new programs will complement the current Share the Mission projects which will be offered again in 2017 in the Indigenous community of Balgo Hills in Western Australia, at De La Salle College Mangere in Auckland and La Salle College Middle Swan in Perth.

The Share the Mission program has proven to be particularly popular with young adults who have left school and are looking for a rewarding 'gap-year' experience where they can share their talents with those in greatest need.

It is a unique opportunity to experience first hand the core Lasallian values of faith, service and community as you live alongside fellow volunteers, sharing meals, prayers and decision-making.

All participants in Share the Mission undergo a week-long orientation program before they are sent on their year-long placement and also receive ongoing support from a mentor throughout the program.

There are also short-term programs available, allowing volunteers to help at schools and orphanages in Indonesia, Cambodia and Papua New Guinea.

If you would like to find out more about these 2017 programs, please contact the Director of Lasallian Volunteers, Br Tony Cummins- email: anthonicummins@delasalle.org.au

Share the Mission
One year for you. A lifetime for others.



Strong response to Lasallian resources campaign for PNG

Schools across Sydney and Melbourne have been actively donating textbooks, furniture, stationery and other resources to help our fellow Lasallians in Papua New Guinea.

In a clear display of Lasallian spirit, the school communities at De La Salle College Malvern and St Bede's College Mentone have helped load shipping containers full of school desks and laptop computers from their colleges bound for Port Moresby.

Lasallian Foundation volunteer Michael Brosnan joined with a group of De La Salle Brothers based in Bomana to unload the

containers to distribute to PNG schools and teachers colleges.

Meanwhile in Sydney, public and Catholic schools have responded generously with large donations of classroom furniture, books and stationery bound for PNG early next year.

It follows a highly successful campaign last year in which 11 Sydney schools made generous donations which have since been distributed to those in greatest need in Papua New Guinea.

De La Salle College Revesby Principal Mr Tim Logue has kindly set aside storage space at his school for this year's campaign

and De La Salle College Caringbah and All Saints College Liverpool have already donated classrooms-worth of furniture.

We are also grateful to Killara High School, Kuringgai Creative Arts High School, Our Lady of Mercy College Burraneer and Casimir College Marrickville for donating secondary textbooks and other teaching resources.

Primary schools across Sydney have also responded generously to the campaign with large donations received from Villa Maria Catholic Primary School in Hunters Hill, St Michael's Primary School

in Daceyville, St John Vianney Primary School in Greenacre and Marion Catholic Primary School in Horsley Park.

Lasallian youth ministers also coordinated a school-based campaign, calling on students from the eight Lasallian schools in Sydney to donate new and packaged school supplies and stationery to be sent to PNG.

These generous donations will greatly enhance the teaching and learning experience for Lasallian students and teachers in our closest neighbour.

Honouring top Lasallian scholars in Pakistan

The Catholic Bishop of Faisalabad in Pakistan, Most Reverend Joseph Arshad has personally presented awards to top scholars from La Salle High School who excelled in their recent examinations.

The Minister of Human Rights in Punjab Province, Mr Khalil Tahir Sandhu and the District Coordination Officer in Faisalabad, Mr Salman Ghani were also among the guests

of honour at a special awards ceremony at the school.

Among the students honoured at the ceremony was Shehram Tabssam who achieved the highest mark of any student in Faisalabad in the annual Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education examinations.

Another award winner, Year 9 student Anosh John scored a remarkable 496 out of 505

possible marks in his annual examinations.

The outstanding results from these scholars is not only a great personal credit to them, but also a reflection of the outstanding work done by the teachers at La Salle High School.

Under the leadership of Principal and Auxiliary Visitor, Br Shahzad Gill, the school has strengthened its reputation for academic excellence, greatly expanding opportunities for its graduates to pursue tertiary education courses in Pakistan.



Around Kensington

Q&A with Br Paschal Hagerty

Born to farming parents from Orange in central western New South Wales, Br Paschal Hagerty has some remarkable stories to share from over 65 years as a De La Salle Brother across Australia and New Zealand.

From coaching premiership-winning school rugby league teams in the 1960s through to supporting homeless families at the San Miguel centre in Sydney in more recent times, Br Paschal has touched generations of hearts and minds through his ministry.

Now aged in his 80s, he has never lost his profound faith and infectious sense of humour, despite battling the crippling illness, Motor Neurone Disease for a number of years.

From a TV room in the St Joseph's Nursing Home in Kensington in Sydney alongside his long-time friend and fellow Brother, Pat McCarthy, Br Paschal reflects back on what initially led him towards his religious vocation.

"I went to De La Salle College in Dubbo as it was then known and I had a magnificent teacher in primary school, Br Pius Bardon who was an absolute gentleman", Br Paschal explained.

"And while I first entered the novitiate at the age of 13, I struggled with making a final commitment to religious life, probably until I was aged around 30".

"I almost walked away from a vocation then, but my older brother

encouraged me to continue on and I also found my answer through prayer", he added.

Br Paschal began his years as a De La Salle Brother in the familiar settings of Orange and Bathurst before moving to Sydney in the mid 1960s.

Some of his fondest memories from the classroom were in the three years he spent at De La Salle College Ashfield from 1964-1967.

"I used to take the detention class and it was through that work that I came to a deeper appreciation of what it meant to be like a big brother to the students", he explained.

"I'd clear all the bins around the school alongside the boys as we did all the rotten work together and the students responded really well to that sort of encouragement".

"I also had the great pleasure of coaching an amazing rugby league team at Ashfield that had never been beaten in 15 years!"

As the school celebrates its centenary this year, De La Salle College Ashfield Principal Mr Stephen Kennaugh has shared some of Br Paschal's reflections with the Year 12 graduating class.

Br Paschal went on to make a difference in the lives of countless students at Oakhill College in Sydney and Francis Douglas Memorial College in New Plymouth in New Zealand.

He spent a remarkable 13 years teaching at De La Salle College Malvern in the 1970s and 1980s and nine years at what was then known as Benilde College at Bankstown in the 1990s.

It was around this time that Br Paschal began working at the San Miguel home near Richmond.

The yourtown home has provided accommodation and support to generations of homeless families, including many women with children who have fled abusive partners.

Br Paschal went on to work for nine years at San Miguel, offering comfort and support to countless disadvantaged families.

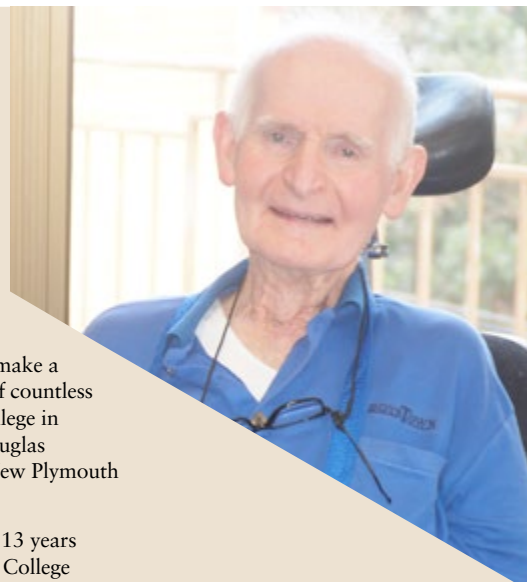
"I remember so vividly all these young children running up the driveway of the home to greet me with a big hug because they saw me as a grandfather figure when they had often had no father figure in their lives", Br Paschal explained.

"I soon realised that education extends well beyond the classroom

and in many ways we were simply going back to the foundational work of St John Baptist de la Salle when he supported street children in Rheims".

As he reflects back on over six decades spent dedicated to serving the needs of the disadvantaged, Br Paschal concedes he could not have performed so much good work if he had not been blessed with a strong faith.

"Ultimately, it's about putting trust in our Lord and I am very fortunate to have been blessed with a resilient faith which has seen me through many personal challenges along the way".



In next month's issue:

ISSUE

14

Journal
La Salle ANZPPNG

- Honouring a new Lasallian Saint
- New Zealand teachers bound for PNG
- Lasallian Alumni- Marko Panzic and Gary Burrows
- Committed Lasallian- Martin Callanan

To contribute to the newsletter, please contact, Michael Kenny
LMC Communications Officer
michaelkenny@delasalle.org.au

DE LA SALLE BROTHERS PROVINCIAL OFFICE

P O Box 3485, Bankstown Square, NSW
2200, Australia
E: admin@delasalle.org.au
T: +61 2 9795 6400

UPCOMING EVENTS

Australia

2016

Lasallian Heritage Program, Brisbane
23-25 October

Lasallian End of Year Mass, Bankstown
24 November

2017

Lasallian Student Leader Seminar, Collaroy NSW
16-20 January

Lasallian Leaders Gathering, Wollongong NSW
26-28 February

Lasallian Youth Gathering, De La Salle Ashfield
10-14 July

New Zealand

2017

Lasallian Heritage program- Rotorua
27 April

Shared Brothers/ Partners Retreat- Auckland
9 July

Lasallian Womens Symposium- Auckland
16-18 July

Pakistan

2016

Workshop for Prefects in Pakistan (Faisalabad and Multan)
2 October

Canonical Visit of Br Visitor David Hawke
3-10 October

Papua New Guinea

2016

What makes a Lasallian Leader?- formation program
29 October