



News

from the General Council

Brothers of the Christian Schools

June 2016

From May 23rd to June 24th 2016, the General Council met for its 6th Plenary Session since the 45th General Chapter. In the week prior to the start of the plenary session, a number of the Councilors were involved in Rome in the animation of commissions for which they have responsibility.

Br. Rafa Matas, as General Councilor for Vocations and the Lasallian Family, animated the first meeting of the recently created *Ad Hoc* Commission for Lasallian vocations to which Br. Superior had nominated a Brother or lay person from each Region, a Guadalupana Sister, a representative of Signum Fidei, and the Institute's Secretaries for Formation. This first meeting (from May 16th to 20th) was dedicated to exploring Regional realities with regard to vocation promotion and to determining an action plan for the next few years. Mr Chris Swain, the Regional representative from RELAN, was appointed as coordinator of the Commission.

At the same time, the Council of Association for the Lasallian Educational Mission (CIAMEL), held its second meeting in Rome. This meeting was greatly enriched by the presence of the two newly appointees by Br. Superior, namely Ms. Rose Dala Nanema, a Lasallian from Burkina Faso, and Ms. Colette Allix, from the Lasallian District of France. The Council discussions were certainly improved by their perspective. They also increased to three the number of women present at the Council.



There were also other additions to the Council with the presence of the recently appointed co-secretaries for Association and Mission, namely Br. Nestor Anaya, from Antilles-South Mexico, and Mr Keane Palatino, from LEAD. In the light of the important role that the Secretariat for Association and Mission is called to play in the implementation of the decisions of the 45th General Chapter, the Council was very appreciative of the efforts made by the General Council to make these appointments. This Council meeting focused on the 6 priority tasks adopted in the



Brothers Gustavo Ramirez, Rafa Matas, Néstor Anaya and Mr. Keane Palatino

previous meeting and later approved by the Brother Superior General and his Council. Two of these tasks, namely the Declaration of Lasallian Pedagogy for the 21st Century and the Guide of Formation for those who carry out the Lasallian mission, required extensive dialogue with the Formation Secretariat and with the Co-ordinator of Lasallian Research and Resources.

Br. Superior and the Council joined the Central Community for the celebration of the feast of the Holy Trinity and the renewal of Vows after which the beautiful new Chapel of the Trinity was blessed. This is located in the newly renovated basement area of the Generalate and will serve as the Winter Chapel for the Central Community. Appropriately, the centerpiece of the Chapel is a beautiful icon of the Blessed Trinity.



The Chapel of the Trinity was also used as the chapel for the Session of Brother Visitors that was held in the Generalate from May 29th to June 8th. 27 of the more experienced Visitors in the Institute responded to Br. Superior's direct invitation to join him and his Council in reflecting on the present situation of the Institute, the implementation of the propositions of the 45th General, and future directions for the Institute. In his opening address to the Brother Visitors, Br. Superior invited them, after the example of our Founder and the early Brothers, to see the session as an invitation to some of the "principal Brothers" of the Institute to support him in collaborative discernment as to the way forward at this challenging time in the history of the Institute particularly in view of the inter-capitular session scheduled for 2018.

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The session was designed as a participative, interactive exchange in which a number of the Visitors were invited to present and facilitate on key issues such as the challenges facing ageing and aged Districts, the implications of Institute restructuring, apostolic leadership of communities and the Lasallian educational mission, and the orientations of the 45th General Chapter, particularly with regard to creation of international communities. Other presentations focused on the changing nature of vocation promotion, the accompaniment of Visitors, and the state of the Institute's finances. There was also an inter-congregational dimension to the session - first with the contribution of the Marist Superior General, Br. Emili Turú who facilitated a morning on leadership based on the Marist experience of restructuring, and then through a fraternal social and dinner with the Superior and General Council of the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers, along with a group of their Provincials who were following their own formation session in Rome.



Following the session with the Brother Visitors, Br. Superior and the General Council took a few days for quiet personal prayer, reflection and fraternal sharing at the Retreat Centre of Nostra Signora al Monte Calvario in Fuggi, in the hills to the south-east of Rome.

One of the purposes of these Plenary Sessions is to keep Br. Superior and the General Council in touch with the developments and activities of the various Institute Secretariats. Consequently, a full morning was devoted to a meeting with the Secretariats to review Regional activities related to each Secretariat and to a wide-ranging discussion on developing closer and more effective collaboration between the General Council and the Secretariats and between the Secretariats themselves.

There were also follow-up meetings with the Formation Secretariat to review projected CIL and other formation programs and with the Communication Service to discuss the Institute's Communication Plan. The General Council also met with the Br. Ambrose Payne, the Institute Bursar, to discuss his financial report and recommendations following the recent meeting of the International Economic Council.



General Council and the International Economic Council

Finally, the General Council was delighted to have the opportunity to join the Central Community in celebrating Br. Superior's birthday on the roof of the Generalate and to take part in the Central Community's four-day "gita" to Florence. We were also pleased to have the opportunity through fraternal socials or dinners to express our

Generally, Br. Superior and the members of the General Council remain in the Generalate throughout these Plenary Sessions but, inevitably, there are unavoidable commitments that have to be honored. So, for example, during this Plenary, Br. Superior attended the May gathering of the Union of Superior Generals for which he serves as a member of its Executive Committee. Similarly, Br. Gustavo's responsibilities for Lasallian Universities and as the Institute's liaison with BICE meant that he had commitments in Mexico and in Paris during this Plenary.

thanks and appreciation to the members of the various international groups, councils and commissions that had scheduled meetings in Rome during this Plenary. These included Lasallian researchers, the *Ad Hoc* Vocation Commission, CIAMEL, the International Economic Council and the IALU (Lasallian Universities) Formation session.

The Plenary Session finished with a roof-top celebratory social and dinner to thank and to say farewell to three members of the community - Brs. Jesús Martin, José Ricardo and Vincent Pelletier – who will return to their Districts during the summer after years of effective and generous service to the Institute.

