



## 4. Our Future: Where is the Spirit leading us in this new millennium?

### Discerning in community

*“You have not only a glorious history  
to remember and to recount,  
but also a great history still to be accomplished!  
Look to the future,  
where the Spirit is sending you  
in order to do even greater things.” (VC 110)*

The second part of our document, *“Being Brothers Today,” “Our Present,”* was done based on the interaction of many Brothers who wanted to share stories by means of which they told us what they understand by the term *Being Brothers Today*. Obviously, the stories about the origins continue in the stories of today. We hope that this narrative reflection, of the present and of the origins, will awaken new interventions on the part of Brothers of all ages who would want to share their journeys, what they most value in them, the icons that encourage them in their inner lives.

In the third part we tried to consider some of the most significant icons of the foundational journey based on the roots of that first form of association for mission. In that way, we tried

to approach what Metz calls “dangerous memories.” Memories that not only recall a past, but in a certain way, already contain the future. Incalculable visits to the past that burst in on the center of our history, shaking our unquestioned convictions, inviting us to open ourselves to new horizons.

Keeping in mind those memories and those icons of the past and of the present, we want, in this fourth part, to invite all the Brothers to share again. This is the most interactive part of the document in that it will not be complete until the Brothers participating in the May 2006 CIL session have had the opportunity to enrich it and, above all, until, in Districts and Delegations, during annual retreats, on days of recollection, we Brothers can reflect together about the *places* where the Spirit is leading us.

We understand, therefore, that the present text is incomplete and only intends to begin a process of reflection that will bring about new reflections. Therefore, rather than presenting our own conclusions as a team, we decided to suggest a communal discernment process. This process could include the following steps:

## For an exercise of community discernment

### 1. Naming our experience

*In this first step we attempt to name our experience as a starting point for the discernment process. This experience includes our life in community as well as our experience as a district.*

- What are the social, economic, political changes in our continent that have had the greatest impact on our life as Brothers?
- Keeping in mind the five continental voices, what life experiences as Brothers more clearly demonstrate our strengths and our weaknesses or problems?

- As we take a closer look into our community life, which of those strengths are also ours? Which strengths characterize our communities that are not mentioned in the continental voices?
- Which weaknesses and problems mentioned in the continental voices are our also present in our communities?
- Name other weaknesses and problems of our community that are not mentioned in the continental voices.

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## 2. Reflecting on our experience

We now take a closer look at our experience, critically analyzing the context in which it is lived, the events that have generated it, and the consequences for us.

- What are the historical events, changes in the world and in the church that have led us develop and to live out these strengths and these weaknesses, as described in the continental voices?
- At the community level, which factors have determined or conditioned us to live the way we live, with these strengths and weaknesses?
- In what way has our life style been influenced by the society we live in?

## 3. Shedding some light on our experience

At this stage of the discernment process we remember our “dangerous memories” so that the gospel and the Lasallian experience interfaces with our own, critiquing, affirming and giving directions to our next steps.

- What Lasallian icons are being highlighted in voices from five continents?
- What are the biblical and Lasallian icons of our communities?
- As we compare our icons with their icons, what do we find most shocking, what seems to shed a new light, in what ways do they affect our life as communities?
- Which are the promises and challenges underscored by today’s gospel and Lasallian icons?
- In naming those promises and challenges, what is most important and what is secondary to our life as Brothers?
- In which moments, either community or District events, do we believe that we have witnessed the presence of the Spirit leading us toward new horizons?

## 4. Considering alternative futures

After critically reinterpreting our reality in light of scripture and our common dangerous Lasallian memory, we open ourselves up toward a new horizon.

- In light of these challenges and promises, what are some of the alternative ways to live out our identity as Brothers today, especially in response to the urgent educational needs of the poor?
- If we had to write our future history as Brothers, how would we write the next chapter of our narrative?



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- What type of consecrated life, community, and association for the educational service of the poor do we wish to develop and aim for in the future?
- What type of association with our lay partners for the educational service of the poor do we want to aim for in the future?
- Which is the “sign” that we want to become in our life as Brothers?

## 5. Choosing a horizon

Having considered alternative futures that have emerged in our experiences in light of scripture, we now compare those alternatives with our current way of living and we choose the life we want to live as Brothers today.

- What are the new challenges and promises that best reenergize our hope as Brothers?
- What narrative is closest to the heart of Saint John Baptist de La Salle?
- What is the narrative or story that would best enable us to live the gospel and to proclaim it more authentically to the poor?
- What type of communities will best enable us to live more fraternally and more apostolically?
- What type of association for the educational service of the poor will allow us to be more bold, courageous, and radical?
- What type of consecrated life and spiritual practices will allow us to become an authentic witness?

## 6. Deciding our action plans

Having reflected on our experience in the light of our common dangerous memories and having intuited our future horizon, we now seek practical ways to move toward that horizon.

- What means and strategies do we need in order to “enflesh” the alternative that we have chosen?
- What risks are we willing to take, personally and as a community?
- With whom do we want to create this history? With whom are we willing to walk toward this horizon?
- How do we create and provide opportunities for real conversion on a community and District level to happen?
- What personal and communal changes do we have to make in order to succeed in our community and District projects, especially for the poor?