

History of the **LASALLIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT**

An adaptation by ICYL of an essay written by Brother Lorenzo González Kipper that will continue to grow and that gives some broad brush strokes about the wide-ranging Lasallian Youth Movement which was born in the 1960s and which has continued to develop and strengthen in succeeding years.



The propositions on Mission (Propositions 3 and 4) of the 40th General Chapter (1976) were the reason that some Brothers in the Institute had the idea of offering to young people some new ways of "getting to know themselves and to become socially at ease" (Proposition 3), "to promote their creativity, their critical spirit and responsibility and to create among themselves a community atmosphere conducive to the proclamation of the Gospel (Proposition 3) and to make them aware of institutional injustice" (Proposition 4). Likewise, the General Chapter invited Brothers "to share Lasallian spirituality" (Proposition 6). This is how, for example, Brother Manuel Olivé, who was in charge of the Signum Fidei Fraternity, extended this idea to young people and how he became interested in the formation of Young Lasallians. Around 1980 Brother Olivé formed small youth groups in France and in Belgium. Simultaneously, in the countries of Latin America, particularly in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, in Central America and Mexico, former "Associations" (Association of the Child Jesus, the Marian Association) and Youth Catholic Action groups became Lasallian Youth Groups (Lasallian Youth Movement, Lasallian Youth, Pastoral Ministry Youth Groups), and Youth Meetings began to be organized.

In 1980 in Saltillo, for example, the two Districts of Mexico gathered together their newly founded youth groups around the theme "Faith, Fraternity, and Service." That same year in Passy Buzenval, France, there was held an international meeting of former students. In addition to adults, many young people, especially Mexicans and Lebanese, participated. At the same time, Brother François Kerdoncuf gathered more than 1,200 Young Lasallians and others in Parmenie and in Beaucroissant, France.

Since 1980 groups and meetings have multiplied in Europe, led especially by Brother Manuel Olivé. In 1985 Brother André Jacq and Nicolas Capelle organized a second international meeting in Parmenie where, over a five-day period, around 600 young people from France, Belgium, England, Italy, Spain, and Canada gathered. Two years later the Canadian and French Brothers, coordinated by Brother Louis-Paul Lavallée organized an international Lasallian Youth Meeting. This was done in two stages, the first one in three cities, Ottawa, Montreal, and Trois Rivières, and then all together in Québec (Saint Foi, 1987). Young people from France, Belgium, Guadalupe, Mexico, the United States, and Canada participated. Also present was Brother John Johnston, Superior General, who participated along with the young people.

In Europe, the youth movement continued to strengthen. Brother Jean Paul Aleth organized, along with Spanish, Belgian, and French Brothers and young people, a meeting of former students in Toulouse, France (1989).

In Europe the Lasallian Commissions were set up: CLEE (on

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education), CLEP (on pastoral ministry), and CLEM (on mission). Brother Nicolas Capelle and Brother Aleth, through these commissions, encouraged the organization of international youth meetings every two or three years on the European level: in Ipswich, (England), Parmenie in 1992, Rheims (France), Worth Abbey (England), in 1999 and in Czestochowa, (Poland), in 2003.

In parallel with these groups, there have been organized in France (SEMIL), in Spain (PROYDE), and in Italy youth groups that make summer commitments to missionary apostolic opportunities.

In Latin America the years from 1980 to 1992 were years of intense activity as regards youth groups and vocation groups. Persons in Districts were appointed to take charge of youth pastoral ministry and vocation ministry and commissions were set up to assist in this work. Many gatherings of young people were held at the District, National, Sub-regional, and Regional levels. Young Lasallians came to Mexico (Tultenange, State of Mexico, 1983) from Central America, the Antilles, and from the two Districts of Mexico. In 1985, Young Lasallians from Latin America and the Caribbean gathered at Fusagasugá, Colombia, for the Continental Organization of Young Lasallians where there was an invigorating meeting involving the sharing of youth apostolates, faith, and other activities. Two years later the youth groups from the two Mexican Districts participated in the International Encounter of Quebec '87. These were very strongly-knit groups in terms of spirituality and missionary outreach. During the event in Quebec a world-wide Encounter was planned, to be held in Mexico in 1992. The disconcerting order from Rome, that world encounters would not be permitted "because of excessive financial expense" was sad, but it did not discourage the organizers. Taking into account the directions from the Generalate, explicit approval was sought from the Conference of Visitors of RELAL, USA/Toronto, French-speaking Canada, and PARC to invite young people from those Regions. Some 850 young people attended and they came from Central America, the United States, Canada, the Philippines (led by Brother Victor Franco), and Mexico.

The Intercontinental Encounter lasted for ten days: for three days, the young people went to four cities (Guadalajara, Saltillo, Gómez Palacio, and Chihuahua), for another three days, they went on missions to small, marginalized villages, there was one day of rest, and then for the final three days there was general meeting in Monterrey, Nuevo León. As a result of this encounter youth groups sprang up and those in existence already were further strengthened, especially in the United States and in Canada. The Philippines and other countries in the PARC Region already had a history of youth gatherings that had continued over the years. Since 1989 PARC has held International Encounters, known as APLYC (Asia Pacific Lasallian Youth Congress), every two or three years. Young Lasallians from different countries discuss a specific topic at each encounter.

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1989 in Mandaluyong, Philippines. "Live the Vision: Walk in Harmony, Serve with Joy."
1991 in Mandaluyong, Philippines. "One Dream, Many Dreamers."
1993 in Ipoh, Malaysia. "Share in the Pain, Share in the Dream."
1996 in Ipoh, Malaysia. "Walk the Talk."
1999 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. "Dreaming the Impossible: The Challenge for the Third Millennium."
2001 in Sydney, Australia. "Enter to Learn. Leave to Serve."
2004 in Hong Kong, China. "Together in Faith – Full Service."

Youth pastoral ministry continued to develop during the decade of the 1990s and this gave origin to the concept of the Lasallian Volunteer. In North Mexico, Brother Lorenzo González Kipper, who had been the sponsor of the Youth Movement after Brother Enrique Vargas and together with Brother Pedro Córdova, began the Missionary Volunteer Movement in El Salto, Durango. New communities with volunteers sprang up in North Mexico, including the Casa Hogar in Saltillo, Tijuana. South Mexico likewise brought about the Ayahualulco Volunteer Program. The District of Ecuador launched a vocational volunteer program, which was well-received. In the United States a broad network of volunteer programs was established, ensuring the participants a solid formation and offering them multiple apostolic centers, especially the network of San Miguel Schools. Volunteer movements grew in Asia (Philippines, Australia) and in Europe (Spain, France, Italy) and Lasallian Volunteers were invited to educational works in Africa (Mozambique, Equatorial Guinea...)

In 1997, Young Lasallians gathered at World Youth Day in Paris to share in the experience with Lasallians from all over the world. In the year 2000, around two-thousand young Lasallians gathered at the Generalate for an international meeting during World Youth Day with the Pope. In July 2002 young people from Quebec, Canada, organized the first International Symposium. From the Symposium came the need to organize the International Council of Young Lasallians, which is now one of the advisory councils to the Superior General and the General Council.

The Second International Symposium of Young Lasallians was held in July 2006 at the Generalate in Rome. It was coordinated by a team of Young Lasallians from the Regions of Italy and ARLEP and attended by one hundred fifty delegates representing all of the Regions of the Lasallian world. During the Symposium, the delegates shared experiences and developed the theme "Mission Possible: a Shared Dream."