



04-B-20

LASALLIAN INITIATIVES IN THE PHILIPPINES (1)

One of the realities which makes the Philippines unique among her Asian neighbors is the fact that she is the only Catholic nation in Asia. As of 1983:

Total Population	51,500,000	
Catholics	43,100,000	(83.8%)
Priests	4,954	
Brothers	475	
Sisters	7,074	

Sixty-six percent of the total population is 25 years old or younger, and 13.5 million are actually in school. Only a small portion is enrolled in diocesan or parochial schools, or in schools run by religious. The 1983 Catholic Directory published the following enrolment figures for Catholic schools:

<i>School/Level</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>	<i>Total</i>
Diocesan	164,692	412,363		577,055
Religious	163,157	186,464	320,552	<u>670,173</u>
				1,247,228

In a country where education is highly valued by the people as a means for economic improvement and social mobility, and which the local Church considers essential in her role of forming the minds and consciences of her members, the Brothers are constantly challenged to respond to these urgent educational needs. In 1911 nine Brothers: 5 French, 3 Irish, and 1 American, started classes for 125 Filipino students in Manila. In 1984 there are 46 Brothers: 30 Filipinos and 16 non-Filipinos, conducting classes on various levels in seven Lasallian institutions:

<i>Level</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number of Students	6,731	5,753	10,529	23,013

There are presently 838 lay teachers and administrators in the different schools owned and operated by the Brothers.

On May 15, 1984 the District opened a new community in a leprosarium in Tala, a small town just north of Manila. Three Brothers are teaching in a private school which is supported by a private foundation set up to provide a free education for the lepers and their children. The Brothers continue to be asked to open new foundations or to take over others. They face the same problems which confronted Canon Roland, the canon of Rheims who eventually became St. La Salle's spiritual adviser and providentially encouraged him to involve himself in education. Canon Blain's description of the dilemma facing Canon Roland and De La Salle is just as valid today: "He had to find teachers, both men and women, capable of instructing the young well and of bringing them up in piety through example as well as through their words. The problem was where to find such teachers, where to discover disinterested, zealous and pious persons fit to carry out a task of this nature. To expect them to come down from heaven already prepared and ready to undertake this task successfully would have been to take pious illusions for realities."

Undoubtedly one solution continues to be that of fostering vocations to the Brothers' life. Our Brothers continue to exert their efforts in this. The District presently has 6 novices and 17 young men in various stages of pre-novitiate formation. Since the majority of our lay teachers are women, and a number have expressed interest in joining a Lasallian Sisters' congregation, we have also invited the Lasallian Sisters of Our Lady of Guadalupe to start a community in the Philippines. Two Sisters auspiciously arrived in Manila on May 15, 1984. They will also be able to respond to the vocational interests of many of our female students and alumnae.

RENEWAL WITHIN OUR INSTITUTIONS

Recent initiatives have focused on renewing our apostolic efforts both within our institutions and beyond them. This report highlights the former, especially that of sharing the Founder's spirituality and faith-perspective with those with whom we already share responsibilities in the education field. The District is confronted with the reality that Philippine education will continue to be a cooperative mission with our lay faculty and administrators, our students and their parents, our alumni and other members of the local Church and community. In light of this we have sought to bring about greater involvement and understanding of the other members of the school community regarding their vocation as "ministers of God, co-workers with Christ, ministers of the Church" in the work of Christian education.

The situation the District is responding to, is similar to that experienced by Brothers in many other districts. The 1981 Intercapitular Meeting of Brothers Visitors observed this trend and among the major recommendations they presented were: to make our work more pastoral; to be more open to the lay teachers working among us with the goal of their greater integration within the framework of our common mission and responsibility; becoming more truly "brothers"; and deepening our Lasallian roots. We have been fortunate in implementing these tasks because of the predominance of Catholics in our country, and especially, the presence in our midst of many sincere, dedicated and committed teachers.

On the concrete level we have taken the following initiatives.

PARTICIPATIVE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTITUTIONAL MISSION STATEMENTS

The different groups: faculty, students, Brothers, alumni, administrators, parents, etc., are given the opportunity to participate in the formulation and implementation of the "mission statement" of the school or institution. In essence this statement embodies the general and specific goals or objectives of the educational community vis-a-vis the needs of the students, the local community, the country, the Church etc. Very often the process is long, but the involvement of these persons serves as an important learning experience for the participants. It entails the sharing of perspectives regarding the goals of education, not only in terms of personal and national criteria, but also in reference to the vision of the Church and St. La Salle.

REORGANIZATION OF INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

While retaining legal control of the institutions, steps are being taken to allow more "voices" to be heard regarding the formulation and carrying out of policies and directions of our existing institutions. Each school has formed a board of trustees with a membership that is not limited to the Brothers. The larger community is represented by members chosen from among alumni, parents, the clergy, educators and professionals in the local community. Lay administrators are appointed to positions formerly occupied by Brothers. Their participation in these policy-formulating and direction-setting bodies allows for the development of the mutual commitment and interaction which gives life to the school, the Brothers' community and the local community.

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