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AT THE SERVICE OF INTERDEPENDENCE THE DE LA SALLE FOUNDATION

The interest of the Montreal District in mission countries goes back at least to the year 1927 when the superior of the Dominican Fathers of Canada expressed to His Holiness Pius XI their desire of getting the cooperation of Canadian communities for the diocese of Hakodate, Japan, the administration of which they had just accepted. From this moment appears the first exchanges between the authorities of the district and other groups engaged in missionary activities.

Beginning in 1932, the Montreal District decided to invest men and money in the formation of several men, and in sending them and maintaining them, at first in Japan, then in the Camerouns, in Guadeloupe, and in other countries under the jurisdiction of French or English speaking Districts of Canada.

It would be difficult to come up with statistics concerning the financial contribution made by the Corporation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools of the Montreal District over the past fifty years. The total sum goes into eight digits in Canadian dollars.

In 1974, a field in the missionary apostolate was opened to the French speaking Brothers of the Canadian districts and the FSC Corporation of Montreal assumed the financial responsibility for this field. We are referring to Haiti, a small country in the Antilles. Because at that time, benefactors began getting more interested in the development of this mission, the Procurator and Visitor of that time considered making use of the privileges offered by the Canadian Government and the Government of the Province of Quebec in the development of works of charity.

Notification of the registration of a charitable organization

On January 1, 1978, the sector for Canadian Taxes and Revenues released a NOTIFICATION OF REGISTRATION of a charitable organization which would be called "Lasallian Missions: Haiti, Japan, Island of Tortuga, etc.". The notification carries the following mention:

"In the calculation of their taxable revenue, the donors can claim as reductions the gifts given to charitable organizations or associations starting from the date of effectivity, in conformity with paragraph 110(1) a) of the law of taxation upon revenues to the extent provided by the dispositions of said paragraph, if the gifts are supported by a receipt containing all the required information by part XXXV of the rules on the taxation of income".

A corporation duly recognized by the law on Companies

In 1980, the Montreal District Council decided to go even further by transforming the already existing charitable organization into a corporation duly recognized by the law of companies of the Province of Quebec. This transformation would allow for changing the name of the organization, of forming an administrative council with laymen recognized in their circle as upright and devoted administrators, and of going in search of benefits and rather interesting concessions from the Canadian Agency of International Development (ACDI) and other funding agencies. Here are the reasons given for the founding of this corporation, as they are defined in the official document:

1. To further the development of education in Haiti and in other countries of the Third World;
2. To contribute to the material help of underprivileged people in Haiti and in other Third World countries;
3. Without prejudice to the Law on private education (L.R.Q. 1977 ch. E-9) to enact, encourage, and promote activities regarding the education and instruction of underprivileged persons;
4. To facilitate the introduction and re-integration of deprived people into society;
5. To administer, manage, finance, and subsidize all activities, operations, research, studies, and projects leading to the realization and execution of the objectives of the corporation;
6. To acquire, keep, sell, give, administer, or manage movable or immovable goods to be used for the accomplishment of the objectives of the corporation;
7. To collaborate with any organizations having similar objectives;
8. To initiate fund raising drives in favor of the corporation;
9. The objectives above mentioned do not permit however the corporation to offer to the public plans for singular or periodic contributions whereby contributors or fund raisers are re-imbursed or benefited in any form whatsoever for the money they have donated to the corporation, except as a remuneration to be paid on occasions to certain persons working as officers or administrators.

A corporation: The De La Salle Foundation

On March 15, 1980, the organization "The Lasallian missions: Haiti, Japan, Island of Tortuga, etc." became The De La Salle Foundation, an independent corporation, administered by a council made up of Brothers and Laity. The administrative council names a Director who periodically renders an account of his administration to the council members. At present, the director general is an unsalaried layman.

The Income of the De La Salle Foundation

The De La Salle Foundation derives its income from three principal sources:

1. Personal donations;
2. Grants from the ACDI and other funding agencies;
3. The Corporation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

With the view of presenting an annual budget which testifies to the importance and seriousness of the organization, the Brothers of the Christian Schools Corporation of the Montreal District sends to the foundation the total accounts which have accrued each year for the Haiti mission. The foundation becomes the intermediary between the F.S.C. Corporation and the mission.

An understanding with the F.S.C. Corporation of Montreal

To make the relations between the F.S.C. Corporation and the Foundation Corporation official, an agreement has been approved and signed which specifies the functions in the transactions between the two corporations.

A tacit agreement between the Foundation and the missionaries also exists. When the missionary receives an in hand donation or through the intermediation of the Bulletin of the Foundation, the account is remitted to the Foundation which issues a tax receipt in the name of the donor, endorses the donation in the name of the missionary and sends the sum of money back to the latter who uses it according to the norms set up by the mission council.

A director of communications

To assist the director general, the Corporation has named a director of communications, at present a Brother, who edits an informational bulletin which is sent to benefactors four times a year. The director of communications also maintains relations with those in charge of the missionary apostolate of the dioceses and of the region of Montreal. On occasions, he will give a homily during the Sunday Mass and realize some funds from the special collection which is usually taken up on such an occasion. To do the above, he must receive permission from the local ordinary and from the parish priest.

Sending out goods by container

We should mention that the Foundation also looks after the sending of good of all sorts to the Haiti mission. These shipments contain anything from teaching materials all the way to heavy construction materials. Two Brothers work the year round in receiving and packing, materials, and then twice a year they send such by ship in the special containers made for this purpose. Occasionally, these two Brothers are helped by missionaries who are passing through.

"Trust" funds

Certain benefactors prefer that their gifts be invested only progressively. They therefore choose for their manner of donation loans held in "trust" or wills and testaments.

The Foundation authorities have therefore created a "Trust" fund which at present is approaching the amount of 100,000 Canadian dollars.

These funds, invested in the City Savings Bank of the District of Montreal, is further augmented by the following gifts: a) personal gifts; b) gifts left in wills; c) gifts from "lost funds"; c) others. For tax purposes, an official receipt is issued to the benefactors for the interest received from these placements.

The accomplishments of the De La Salle Foundation

Each year sometime near the month of May, the mission council must draw up, after consultation and according to the order of priority, the list of projects which will figure in the annual budget for the year and which are financed by the donations received by the Foundation.

The list thus drawn up is sent to the director general who sends the necessary amounts for the realization of these projects, as rapidly as the reception of donations will permit. Up until the present, the salaries of our lay teachers in our religious schools have received the top priority. Many other request have been considered but the list is so long that not all can be accommodated. The projects realized are similar to those which missionaries carry out everywhere in the Third World countries.

Conclusion

The accounts over the past three years indicate that the total gifts received annually from donors are about 100,000 Canadian dollars, with some variations, which would then put the total budget recorded in our books as between 500,000 and 1,000,000 Canadian dollars. That means that the material help realized by the F.S.C. of Montreal in Haiti since 1983 is only partly attributable to the De La Salle Foundation.

It is up to the De La Salle Foundation only to lighten the burden which the district would have to assume if it alone had to pay for the realization of all the projects carried out by the missionaries over the past few years.

The De La Salle Foundation has allowed the F.S.C. to receive, not only for the District of Montreal, but equally for the District of Douala, the governmental subsidies which these districts could not have received without the intermediacy of a foundation. Many donations are received only because the Foundation is authorized to issue receipts which are considered as tax credits and are deductible from the amounts due to the State. Finally, many of the donations come in as a result of the publicity transmitted by the trimestrial bulletin published by the Foundation.

For all the reasons enumerated above, it is advantageous, in the Canadian context, to create and preserve the existence of an organization which is certainly profitable materially, but which is equally for the spiritual profit of countries on their way to development.

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