

January 2016 Reflection

READING
Luke 4:14-21

Jesus unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

REFLECTION

This year, Brother Superior and his council, invites us to confront the new forms of poverty that affect many marginalized peoples. The reality of poverty no longer just results to or arises from a lack of employment. The poverty we witness today leads as well to a weakening of family ties and relationships in the community; to criminality; to regional conflicts; to social migration; and to human trafficking. In all these, young people are rendered the most vulnerable [Lasallian Reflection 1, 2015-2016]. We can look at the facts and statistics regarding poverty, but there is nothing like an encounter with the poor among us to challenge and transform us in our hearts and in our ways of living. It is from the reality of this encounter that we can be moved in our hearts to courageous in our response.

Jesus, in today's reading, echoing the words of the prophet Isaiah, names those poor in their particular and concrete situations and to each of them, he offers a particular and concrete response. They are not statistics but real persons who can stir feelings in us and who invite from us a response.

As Lasallians, we are being invited to encounter and become as brothers to the poor. Have we as communities discerned together, how we can transcend our borders to encounter the poor among us in their particular and concrete situations? Where in our rhythm as a community, do we find time to be touched by or encounter those who are poor?

RESPONSE

From People's Companion to the Breviary
Compassionate God,
You both comfort us and disturb our complacency through your Spirit. May we recognize the blind, the lame, the hungry and the prisoner in the circumstances of our lives, and understand our call to proclaim the Good News to the poor. AMEN.

The BAMBOO SCHOOL (Thailand)
Lasallian engagement in the Bamboo School, began in August 2008 through Br. Victor Gil FSC, who was then working with the Catholic Commission for Migrants. Located in the Three Pagodas Pass in the border between Myanmar and Thailand. The school today caters to 450 migrant students coming from Myanmar, mostly Burmese, Karen and Mon. Interested Volunteers and Donors may contact the Director at joe_klong@yahoo.com



Lasallian Reach Out 2015

Br. Matthew Bay sent this dispatch from La Salle Centre, Ipoh. La Salle Centre has been running creative formation programs over the years and this is one of their programs. Their activity was featured in the News Straights Times (see the clipping on the next page). Congratulations to the Brothers, Staff, and Volunteers of La Salle Centre!



The Lasallian Reach Out serves as a platform for various volunteers, both Lasallians and non-Lasallians, to help the marginalized communities in Ipoh. Currently, the focus is on underprivileged kids from the Good Shepard Orphanage and the homeless individuals around Ipoh. Up to date, there have been four reach-outs conducted by the reach out team : Reach Out: New Year (2/1/2015), Reach Out: Goodie bags give away (5/6/2015), Reach Out: Ramadhan (4/7/2015) and Reach Out: Nasi Lemak-lah (28/11/2015). The funds to conduct reach outs are obtained from generous contributions from society. However, the team is currently looking at possible ways to ensure the funds are sufficient to support future activities. On the 27 September 2015, Reach out was featured in News Straits Times with the article entitled "Showing, spreading love to the poor".

The initiative gained the attention of the public and was shared by various individuals in the social media. Currently, the reach out team is brainstorming ideas to further improve on the current initiatives and to cater to various needs of the marginalized communities, at the same time providing a suitable platform for youth to care for the last, the lost and the least. (Br. Matthew Bay FSC)

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

NEW SUNDAY TIMES

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NEWS

Showing, spreading love to the poor

LAST, LOST AND LEAST: A group of youth are walking the streets of Ipoh in their quest to reach out to the poor and homeless, writes Raja Khalidatul Asrin

It took two kind-hearted students to start the ball rolling in their quest to help the homeless and their group "Reach Out" has now snowballed into a bigger group. In 2010, R.J. Kevin and Tan Tih Chern, who were Form Six students at St Michael's Institution (SMI) in Ipoh, Perak, decided to do their part by distributing packets of fried mee cooked by their mothers and bottles of mineral water to the homeless people sheltering at a temple near their school. They later widened their quest to other parts of Ipoh Old Town.

"Initially, we were cautious because of the perception that the homeless can be dangerous."

"We felt awkward not knowing whether they would accept our humble gesture, but when we started talking to them, it just clicked," said Kevin.

"Some of the homeless are well versed in English. They don't want to go to a welfare home because they enjoy the freedom."

In 2012, they became organisers for a La Sallian convention, "Take the Lead". That was when it hit them — that they should lead their SMI juniors in helping the poor.

They started distributing food to the poor again, but this time, using their pocket money. They were soon joined by other juniors from the school.

At this point, Kevin and Tan decided to go all out and began to help orphanages as well, staying true to the La Sallian code, "Solidarity with the poor".

Tan said: "The old and homeless people sometimes cry when they see us because we remind them of their children. It is not so much about food. All they needed was companionship. We try our best to spread the love."

Last Chinese New Year, the group received a large donation and used the money to buy slippers for the homeless.

The joy on their faces prompted the group to do more.

A charity event was held at a temple near People's Park in Ipoh, bringing much happiness to the homeless, comprising Malays, Indians



The students with some of the homeless in Ipoh.



and Chinese. "Sometimes, we play the guitar and sing to entertain them. They look so happy to see so many kids surrounding them. It must have brought back sweet memories when their families were intact," says Tan.

The duo is reaching out to friends from other towns while the juniors at SMI take over the task in Ipoh. On one occasion, the group was out handing food to the needy when a man stopped his car and asked

them what they were doing. On hearing their answer, the man took out his wallet and gave the group RM300.

"We also collect clothes to be distributed to the poor. We sell recycled items and give the money to the poor. Some would buy cat food and feed stray cats on weekends."

"We are reaching out to the 'last, lost and least'."

"Love is not just a word. You have to show and spread it," said Kevin and Tan.



The "Reach Out" group getting ready to distribute food and water to the needy.



A student distributing food to a group of people in Ipoh.



"Take the Lead" participants chatting with a homeless man.



Kevin giving a new pair of slippers to a man.

Thailand National Games

The 44th Thailand National Games also known as Nakhonsawan Games was held in Nakhonsawan, Thailand last December 11 to 21, 2015. The Games held in Nakhonsawan Sports Center and other schools. Most of the schools cancelled their classes in order to give accommodations to the players who came from different provinces of Thailand. La Salle Chotiravi Nakhonsawan was one of the schools that were assigned to be part of the grand opening and closing of the national games.

The La Salle Brothers, teachers and Students prepared presentations to welcome the visitors and the players from different provinces in Thailand. The opening program started on the evening of 12th of December 2015. The crowd was amazed and it made the school stand out because of the great performances of the students. During the closing program the La Salle Brothers, teachers together with students participated in the closing parade and were recognized for being a part of the event.

(Br. John Niran Suksankrasin FSC)



PARC and LEAD Meetings



I have been quite busy the past weeks with meetings. The first important meeting was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka for PARC 41. Br. Ricky Laguda FSC, General Councillor for PARC presided over the meeting and in typical Br. Ricky style was quick and efficient. Other Visitors from PARC were in attendance and it was good to reconnect with them. During those days, Br. Alex Diaz, current Postulancy Director of the Philippines visited Colombo with Br. Vince Fernandez, PARC Director of Novices to do an ocular inspection of the site of the PARC Pre-Novitiate.

The next week, January 21 to 24 was a “marathon” meeting for the 19th District Council. We held the meetings at Hotel Benilde, run by the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde. We had special dinners each night; thank you to our sponsors: Brs. Vic, Gus, and Dennis. Br. Larry Schatz, Visitor of the Midwest District was able to join us for dinner on the first night. The first day was spent for the Consultative Teams (in clusters) to meet and surface recommendations to the Council. The second day was devoted to the process of Chaptering 34 LEAD Young Brothers applying for vows (yes you read it correctly, 34)! The third day for the Council meeting itself and the last day was for the Leadership Team meeting in which decisions were made on the best way to implement Council decisions. I wish to thank the Auxiliary Visitors, Councillors, and Country Coordinators for “running this marathon” with me. Special thanks to the De La Salle Philippines Staff who served as the Secretariat: Aimee, Nena, Grace, Keane, Mico, Norman, and Arman.



Announcements

- There are several PARC activities coming up:
 - **PARC Gathering of Youth Ministers** (April 11 – 18, 2016, Dasmariñas, Philippines).
 - **Formators and Vocation Teams Assembly.** (November 9 – 16, 2016, Sri Lanka).
 - **APLEC 2016** (December 4 – 8, 2016, Malacca, Malaysia). The theme is: “Lasallians Working Towards Peace and Justice”. Principals or Heads of Schools are invited (Please contact your Country Coordinators for more information).
- The following publications have been released: *twentyeleven*, Prayer Guide, Acts of the Second District Chapter, and Revised LEAD Statues. Some Brothers may get their copies earlier because their Country Coordinator or Councillor from their Country brought home their copies from the Council meeting. The rest will be mailed to your Country Coordinators soon.
- If there are errors in the prayer guide, please inform the LEAD Administrator here: <http://goo.gl/forms/wynIH1OJNU>
- Reminder to Participants, Organizers, and Resource Persons of the LEAD Directors Workshop: Please register online for Attendance: <http://goo.gl/forms/nyvvK9eW28> and for Flight Details: <http://goo.gl/forms/ZvKAWY0gjf>
- Check out the new and well designed Institute Website: <http://www.lasalle.org/en/>

Health and Wellness

Brothers who have a sweet tooth and who are constantly stressed, this one's for you. There are four signs that diabetes is slowly creeping up on you: 1) frequent bathroom trips at night, 2) dirty looking skin, 3) blurring of vision, 4) weight-loss, and 5) rise in blood pressure. If you are experiencing a combination of these, please see a doctor.

Avoid sweets, avoid stress and please do some form of exercise! Even 30-minutes of walking will do wonders for you.

Read more at: <http://www.menshealth.com/health/diabetes-signs>

Fraternally,

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Petaling Jaya, Malaysia