

# The Mission of the Brothers

[Brother Michael Curran](#)

The mission of our District has always been the same as that of the Institute, 'to give a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor, according to the ministry which the Church has entrusted to it.' This is still our mission, however, how we as a group of Brothers carry out this mission has changed, simply because of our age; we are a District in 'old age'. There is nothing wrong with old age, it is a fact of life; acknowledging our age is important, so that we can work from our strengths and not our weaknesses or illusions.

Before we look at our strengths, let us look at the reality of our situation. There are 67 Brothers in our District and from November

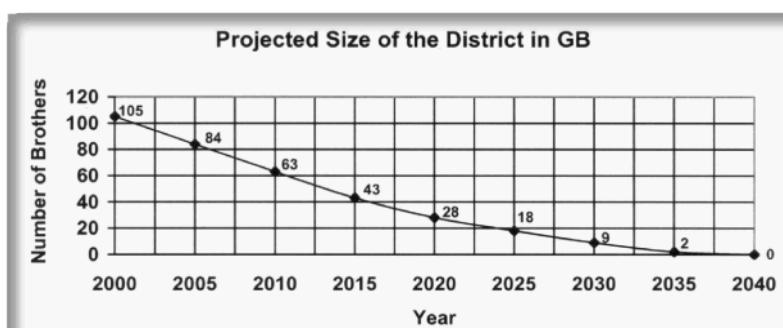
2009 all of us will be 50 or over. Of the 67, 64 joined us before 1978, which means that of those who were recruited in the last 30 years, only three remain. Another aspect of our present reality is our limited finances which sponsor our mission.

It is very difficult to predict what the future reality will be for us, however the above graph may be of some help. It is drawn up from figures sourced in 2000 by Brother Anthony Brunning and it has shown it self to be consistent with our reality over the last eight years. It predicts that in just twelve years time our District will consist of twenty-eight Brothers, all of whom will be over sixty years old.

So where are our strengths? At one time we would have said 'our schools', but we no longer have 'Brothers' schools', for they now belong to the wider Lasallian Schools Network and together with other groups, such as St. Cassian's Centre, LAMB, LD-WP and the Brothers, form the bedrock of the Lasallian Family. For us Brothers, our major strength is our Lasallian heritage, i.e. our Lasallian knowledge, understanding and spirituality. We have lived it, breathed it, sweated tears and had moments of great joy; it is very much part of us and is our *raison d'être*. Another strength is the variety of good communication structures which we have

developed, enabling us to work outside the classroom with diverse groups at different levels, e.g. LACE, our two websites, the Lasallian Magazine, Lasallian Assemblies, Headteacher Conferences, Lasallian Youth and the evolving Lasallian Formation Services; all of them helping us to reach out to young people, our prime objective, and to those who are educating them.

Many years ago, an American Brother told me that he once took some students to a Lasallian Youth Gathering in Canada. On the way back the students were discussing amongst themselves the experiences they had over the last few days and were surprised how the young people whom they met



knew so much about De La Salle. Eventually they turned to the Brother and said, 'Brother, do you know anything about De La Salle?' He replied, 'Of course I do.' 'Then,' they said, 'why did you not tell us about him?' I feel uneasy when I tell this story, because I have not always been willing to share my knowledge of De La Salle.

As Brothers it is our responsibility to pass onto the next generation the Lasallian heritage that was passed onto us. The question you might ask is, 'Where is the next generation?' In the spirit of faith we must look towards those whom God has sent to us, those who are seeking to know more about all things Lasallian, i.e. members of our Lasallian Family. The passing on of our Lasallian heritage is not an option for us, it is our duty and very much part of our mission.

Therefore, the focus for our District mission in the coming years must be in communicating our Lasallian knowledge, understanding and spirituality to those who want to be part of our mission and who wish to call themselves 'Lasallian'. This is where our time, our money and personnel will need to be focused in the coming years in order for the spirit of De La Salle to continue to blossom and flourish in Great Britain.