

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the monthly issue of your District Magazine. Since the days of Brother Damian I have received and enjoyed it. Please note my new address below. I have moved to Australia indefinitely. I am now in the community at De La Salle College in Malvern, Victoria and working at the [Lasallian Education Services Office](#) with Trish Carroll and Brother Gerard Rummery.

It was with a certain sadness that I read the eulogy on Brother John Southworth. John and I met on one of my trips to England and then had the good fortune to be in CIL together in 1987. It was an exciting time. The RULE was approved by the Vatican during our stay and we had the benefit of several of the luminaries of the previous chapter who came to explain things to us and to enlist us as the institute moved more and more into Shared Mission and an honest recognition that God was doing something new in our ranks in calling more lay people to the Lasallian Star.

John was a good companion in the months of CIL. His questions were always quiet but significant. We teased him a lot about his aversion for the Italian custom of having saints in various stages of decomposition exposed in their churches. John could not understand that and wondered why there was not a respectful cloth covering the stages of decomposition.

John was a good man and I am glad to have shared some of his brotherhood time with him. I am sure that a lot of those decomposing saints met him at the gates of heaven and welcomed him as their brother.

[Jeff Calligan](#)

Brother Jeffrey L. Calligan, FSC
Lasallian Education Services
1318 High Street
Malvern, VIC 3144
Australia

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Dear Brother Editor,

It is reported that in a casual conversation some time back, a bishop, referring to the shortage of priests, said to a Brother Director: "I would ordain all you brothers tomorrow, but I am not sure that your provincial would be too pleased".

Although it is a fact that Saint de La Salle insisted on the lay status of his Brothers, movements at several General Chapters have advocated the introduction of the priesthood into our ranks. Each time, however, the proposal has been voted out. A recent Chapter did concede that no obstacle would be put in the way of a Brother's leaving our Order to become a priest, and many accepted that permission, left the Order accordingly, and did become

priests.

It was of course shortage of priests which moved the bishop to make the comments in my first paragraph. Now as this sacerdotal shortage is widespread, four Dutch Dominicans recently published a booklet, arguing that the Church in the future will have to allow inspired members of the community to celebrate the Eucharist. One of the four, [Andre Lascaris](#), wrote in the Tablet of 22 September 2007 an article on the booklet and its aftermath, and explained that pressure from the bishops had moved the Dutch Dominican Provincial to cancel a conference on it scheduled for later.

Lascaris's article was followed up by letters to the editor of the Tablet. On 29 September, a correspondent wrote: "It is intolerable that the Eucharist should be allowed to wither away for lack of celibate male priests". The solution would be in the final three words of the last sentence. In the same issue a priest on the contrary argued that from earliest times the idea of lay leadership at the Eucharist was not considered possible. Another priest wrote that lay presidents of the Eucharist would partly solve current difficulties. A doctor of theology wondered what all the fuss was about, and pointed out that the Dutch Dominicans state clearly that the elected leader is to be presented to the bishop for the laying on of hands, which is nothing other than ordination. In a letter of 6th October a priest "for over 50 years" wrote that, if we followed some arguments in previous letters, a priest being representative of Christ at the Eucharist, should not receive Holy Communion at all, but in fact, at the moments of Communion the priest is only one of the people of God. The correspondence continued in the Tablet of 13 October. One person, living in a rural area abroad, writes that she had begun presiding at Eucharistic services, but had recently been asked to stop, leaving people without a Sunday celebration. In the same issue a priest states that it is difficult to see how the Dutch Dominicans' proposal is in accordance with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council or indeed with the Catholic faith in the sacraments. A correspondent who had written earlier on this topic declared that he had not proposed anything, but had merely pointed out that what he had tried to summarise was to be found in Vatican II documents: *Lumen Gentium No 21* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis No 2*. The correspondence on this matter seems to have come to an end with a letter of 27 October saying that the worries of people over the shortage of priests will not be calmed unless the hierarchy makes the issue an urgent one in Rome.

Supposing that some of the suggestions made above became reality, would it change the De La Salles' ruling on exclusion of the priesthood?

[James Connolly](#)

18 November 2007