

For Those Who Journey

Mark Condron

Br Vincent Kingston writes: "Many Lasallians might remember Mark Condron as very much a part of "Lasallian Resource", the musical group that Brother Damian Lundy gathered together in the '70s when he was producing the 'Songs of the Spirit' books. Sadly, Mark died on 27th November 2007, aged 47, having battled with cancer for two and a half years. Mark was the much-loved inspirational headteacher of St. Benedict's Catholic High School, Whitehaven. So great was his love for the school and its students that he continued, whenever possible, to involve himself in the school right up to two weeks before his death. More than 600 people attended his funeral.

"Someone kindly sent me a copy of 'For Those Who Journey' which Mark originally wrote for sixth-form Leavers' Masses. The text expresses many of the profound insights and principles that inspired his approach to young people, and it was chosen by his wife Liz as a most appropriate reading at Mark's Requiem. It gets to the heart of what Education is about, and is thus very Lasallian!

"Mark was a very popular student at De La Salle Sixth Form College at Salford in the late 70s-early 80s."

For those who Journey

As we part, I am sure of one thing.
Life is a process of becoming the fullest self
as God created us.

Irenaeus, who professed that
"The glory of God is man fully alive,"
may have had this in mind.
For it is within us all to rise above the limitations
of one's own perceived inadequacy
to a height of excellence.

As your teachers, it is our mission to create
those environments where you can recognise
your own giftedness.

And then hold you as we search for ways
of moving together
to make this giftedness a reality.

We say move together
because the Kingdom is only in process
and to have perfection is not within the nature of you or
me.

Recognition of giftedness takes many forms
and is not achieved without the paradoxical balance
between

the joy of the goal and the pain of the road

Fundamental to this is our relationship
which tries to be trusting, dynamic and reflective.
Trusting because no child can learn anything of real

import
without the child's internal "Yes" to what is being offered.
And what is being offered ultimately is not a greater
degree of knowledge

or
a higher ability of understanding.

What we share is a deepening of that relationship which
produces in us
profound feeling of self worth
in the light of the other.

Trust does not know fear or authority.
You will not say "Yes" to that of which you are
frightened.

Compulsion never really allows people to think freely.

Likewise, authority is never gained through position
but is felt at its deepest in the mutual recognition
of the value of that being offered and the fragility
of the travellers.

And what a journey!
To free oneself of any limit, especially self-doubt
and to gaze upon self without boundary
is truly an Emmaus experience.

For there in our hands is the secret of life's potential
but sadly so much of our educational endeavour
prevents us from recognising it.

The journey is always motivated by hunger,
not for things to know, but knowledge,
and experience of oneself as gifted.

The journey too is pained.
To rid self doubt and criticism,
to rid thoughts of authority and power, is only the
beginning.

But ultimately, the journey is pained
because we incline to reflect on failure
which will not allow us to dream about potential.

I suppose the journey to the brink of one's own
giftedness

and there to gaze on the pearl of great price,
is not encouraged by the powers that be
because people with this vision are empowered
to change the way we think,
to break the images of convention.

They cannot be handled,
but be brave, for the journey you are on
is the journey to the Kingdom.

If you are journeying with us,
we thank you for all you have taught us.
And if space and time now separate us
may your God, the sower of the secrets of your inner self,
go with you.

Mark Condron