

The Lasallian Educational Mission Council (GB)

Sunday 15 January, 2007

(Notes of the meeting, by Terry Collins)

Present: Sean Sellors (Chair), Conrad Bannon, Terry Collins, Thomas Campbell, Siân Grant, Owen Smith.

Apologies: Clare Tickel, Michael Worthington.

Young Lasallians

In keeping with its brief to meet with the people involved in Lasallian education and to get to know their plans and their needs, the LEM Council invited a group of "Young Lasallians" to join us for the morning session. Those able to attend were: John Caherty, Helen Davis, Lucy Jennings, Barry O'Sullivan, Chris Skerret, Maria Wall, Fran Wright.

A lengthy and animated discussion took place, starting with some enthusiastic feedback from the International Symposium of Young Lasallians by Maria and Fran, who had participated in the gathering in Rome last June as representatives of the Lasallians of GB. They both emphasised the eye-opening effect of experiencing a gathering of Lasallians from all over the world, so varied yet essentially so similar.

The ensuing discussions revolved around two main points.

- First there is the need to ensure a permanent means of immediate contact and communication between young Lasallians in GB through some sort of internet site involving an 'Our Space' feature with a notice board and on-line exchanges. It was felt that the distinction between 'informing' and 'relating' was a crucial one, because young people today live in a world in which they experience community through electronic communication. Steps to set up such an internet space have already been taken by Fran and her brother. They were encouraged to continue and to build in links with the existing Lasallian websites, which are designed to be more of an informational nature. They were assured of the full support of the LEM Council.
- Secondly there is a need to develop Local Lasallian Communities, which would include Lasallians of all ages with various types of involvement in the educational mission. It was pointed out that one of the results of a communicative website would be precisely to encourage the emergence of such local con-

tact groups. The emergence of local communities will depend on the emergence of local individuals to take initiatives and organise things.

- A third point of discussion concerned the need to set up a nucleus 'action group' of young Lasallians to take the lead in moving these ideas forward. However, there was not enough time to pursue this matter to a concrete conclusion. Sean agreed to take things further, in consultation with those who had been present at this meeting.

Lasallian Resource Centre

This was a continuation of the discussion begun at the previous meeting in September 2006. In the meantime, it has been discussed by the Lasallian Formation Group and at the Lasallian Headteachers Conference in January. The head teachers at their meeting in January, made some important observations. First, it is essential to determine who would be running the centre before considering where it would be located. Second, we must be clear about what activities will be organised in the centre. This is the remit of the Lasallian Formation Group. Thirdly, since the setting up of the centre will involve financial investment by the Brothers and some movements of personnel, the decision will have to be made ultimately by the Visitor and the District Council. We are in fact finally getting round to considering the setting up of a Lasallian Formation Centre for Britain. In this, we are a long way behind the other Districts of Europe (in France, Spain, Belgium and Italy), where such CELAS centres have existed for some time, as indeed has one in Malta. It may be the case that we will begin by setting up a resource centre for materials and move on later to develop the centre as a place for courses.

The LEM Council explored these ideas further, and agreed that the appointment of a *supremo* to run the centre was a priority. It was suggested that we need to appoint two people to this work, but that they would work under the umbrella control of the Lasallian Formation Group. Some names were discussed, but it was felt that this is really a matter for the Visitor and District Council. With regard to the location of the centre, the LEM Council recognised that at the moment there are

only two realistic proposals on the table; St Cassian's, Kintbury and Banbury Road, Oxford. The pros and cons of the two places were considered, especially in terms of what would have to be added by way of personnel, accommodation and equipment. Both places have potential but each also has its difficulties. Some members felt that on balance the potential of Kintbury was greater. St Cassian's is a kind of 'spiritual home' of the District. The question is: can it cope with being the physical home for two distinct centres?

In conclusion, the Council did not wish to make any decision that would pre-empt the discussions of the Lasallian Formation Group and those of the forthcoming Lasallian Assembly. It was agreed that the Formation Group be given the mandate to produce specific proposals for the setting up of a Lasallian Formation Centre in GB, and that their proposals would be presented to the Lasallian Assembly at the end of March for its consideration and comment. Owen was asked to take the LEM Council's comments to the Group at its next meeting on February 3rd.

Lasallian Handbook

It was reported that production of the *Lasallian Handbook* was delayed by the indisposition of Brother Benet. In the meantime, Terry would be producing the *Lasallian Schools Directory 2007* in the near future.

International Assembly of the MEL

Conrad reported on the International Assembly on the *Mission Educative Lasallienne*, (MEL), which he attended as our delegate at Brother

Sean's request. This Assembly has received much publicity over the past year and the final report is now publicly available on the Institute website. The report is meant firstly for the attention of the delegates to the General Chapter in May 2007, but it is clearly a key document for all of us. Conrad emphasised that the Assembly was a remarkable occasion which generated a new depth of Lasallian vision among the participants. It was important for its promotion of intercultural relationships, through the many individual testimonies which were listened to and responded to. The presentations all showed a depth of Lasallian spirituality and a high level of commitment to Lasallian education. Conrad highlighted the importance of two presentations in particular: the Welcome Address given by Brother Álvaro, and the paper on 'Lasallian Discernment' delivered by Miguel Campos.

Lasallian Assembly, 30 March – 1 April, 2007

Some attention was given to the programme for the 'Palm Sunday' Assembly due to be held in Kintbury. It was agreed that, besides the inputs on Lasallian education and training, sufficient time be allowed for reflection and sharing of experiences.

The LEM Council has decided that attendance at the Kintbury Lasallian Assembly will be open to all. A general invitation will be issued and widely publicised. Accommodation in Saint Cassian's will be allocated on a first come first served basis. There will be no limit placed on the number of people wishing to attend daytime only as 'commuters'.

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