

Spirit OF THE STAR

LASALLIAN YOUTH MINISTRY NEWSLETTER, DISTRICT OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

TEST-DRIVE THE *Brother's* LIFE

The De La Salle Brothers are giving young Australian men (20-35yrs) an incredible opportunity to experience 'Being a Brother' for two weeks in Papua New Guinea. For those interested in "test driving" the Brothers' way of life, the 'Challenge Program' (26 Oct – 9 Nov), takes participants on a journey to Hohola in Port Moresby.

Should you take up this opportunity, you will help provide support to students at the Hohola Youth Development Centre in Port Moresby. You will also gain an understanding of the unity of the Brothers who work together to educate, care for and support youth in need, and in doing so, you'll experience the extraordinary impact the Brothers make on marginalised local youths through education. The program also provides you with the opportunity to experience the spiritual practices of the Brothers followed by a three day retreat at Mainohana to reflect on your adventure.

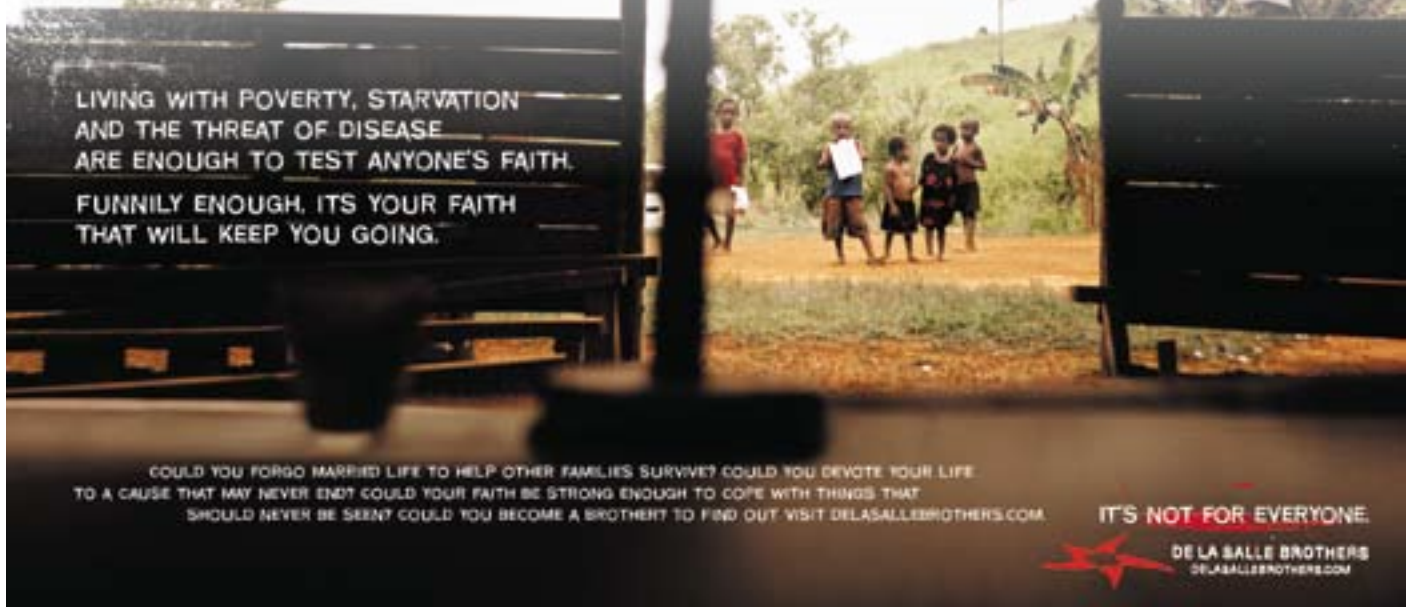
Br Mark McKeon, Director of Vocations for the De La Salle Brothers says, "Becoming a De La Salle Brother isn't the first life choice most men would consider. Although

incredible and extremely fulfilling, the life of a Brother is not for everyone. This 'Challenge Program' opens up the Brotherhood to young men and provides a personal growth experience to help them determine if this life is something they really feel passionate about following."

"Young men with prior career experiences and training are welcome – educators, healthcare workers, tradespeople and graduates", said Br Mark.

The quality of life in remote communities such as those in PNG is limited by access to education, health, employment and recreation services. The 'Challenge Program' not only provides young men with an opportunity to experience the life of a Brother but also an incredible experience of working within isolated communities to make a profound difference to young lives.

Applications close 3rd October. For further information about this Challenge Program and other Challenge Programs visit www.delasallebrothers.com or email markmckeon@delasalle.org.au



"GOD, WILL YOU HAVE A BEER WITH ME?"

A survey on Australian youths' opinion on religion and God by the De La Salle Brothers in the lead up to World Youth Day revealed the questions that young people aged between 16 to 35 would ask God if they were given the opportunity.

A significant number of those who took part in the survey wanted to know the meaning of life and what role God plays in it. Others asked why countries around the world are war torn and thousands of people are starving daily. Surprisingly, only a small percentage wanted to know if they were going to go to heaven, or how their loved ones who have died were doing.



On a lighter note, other respondents asked; will you join me at the pub and have a chat over a couple of beers? Is Schapelle guilty or not? How do you walk on water? And what's next Tuesday's Lotto numbers?

Brother Mark McKeon, Director of Vocations and Youth Ministry for the De La Salle Brother's says, "We were pleased to see that young Australians are not only reflective of the role God plays in their

own life, but are very concerned about the lives and well being of others who are disadvantaged which is very much the focus of our work."

When asked if God or a higher being played an important role in their lives, 28% said yes, stating that God guides them in their decision making. 25% felt that God gave them a sense of protection, and 16% admitted that God was the most important thing in their life.

A further 16% said that there were many other things that were more important to them than God, mostly naming family and friends as their top priority. Others placed more importance on pets, sport and music, health and nutrition.

When asked what the most important way to live out their religious beliefs, a huge 49% said that it was through helping others, whilst 30% said that it meant being kind to others. Only 9% said that the best way to live out religious beliefs was to go to church.

With the phenomenal success of World Youth Day highlighting a religious spirit amongst youth in Australia, research conducted by the De La Salle Brothers has found that 62% of young Australians turn to God through prayer regularly, with many admitting to doing so on a daily basis. 22% of respondents also said that prayer helped them get through tough times when things were going wrong in their life.

WHAT WOULD YOU ASK GOD?

INTRODUCING

Hi, I am DES CALLEJA



and I have been involved for the last 13 years as a volunteer youth worker in my parish at St Patrick's Mentone (Victoria). I attended St. Bede's College as a student from 1990- 1995. I am currently Youth

Coordinator at St. Mary's/ Holy Eucharist - East Malvern/Chadstone. I have been fortunate to participate in a number of World Youth Day'. These were great occasions that have challenged me to live my faith in a new way. At the start of term three I commenced work as a Lasallian Youth Minister at De La Salle College Malvern. I am looking forward to assist in the development of youth programs at Malvern.

My name's GRAHAM BROOKS



and I am a Lasallian Volunteer from England.

I have lived in North London most of my life and was educated at St Ignatius Jesuit College. Whilst I was at school I was involved in youth ministry activities which dealt with Fair Trade, Amnesty International and running retreats. I was also in the first 15 Rugby Union team as well as the National Athletics league. After College I moved to work at St Cassian's Residential Retreat Centre run by the De La Salle Brothers. I was at St Cassian's for a year after which I moved to Bristol to join the L.A.M.B. Community (Lasallian Association for the Mission in Bristol) which involved many aspects of school life. I served as a lay chaplain and counsellor to three secondary schools and one college. During my year I also undertook an Oxford open network course in Christian Youth Ministry and Applied Theology. I am now in Bankstown Sydney.

REFLECTIONS

WYD 08 showcases Australia as a model of ethnic peace

He came alone to Sydney from the island nation of Malta ready to celebrate his faith during World Youth Day. But what he discovered was not only an opportunity to take his faith to the next level by actively celebrating with other Catholics, but that the coming together of so many different ethnic groups could be overcome by one common element - the Catholic faith.

This year, at 25 years old, **JOE GILSON**, a teacher at De La Salle College Malta, embarked on his first journey to Australia to participate in the International Lasallian Youth Gathering and World Youth Day. Australia's established multi-ethnic society came as somewhat of a surprise to Joe and the way in which Australians model positive multiculturalism.

WYD 08 was Joe's first World Youth Day experience. For him, the great message of this incredible event was that "faith is not just yours anymore. You're sharing your faith with brothers and sisters from around the world. It reinforced that we are part of a family, in that it is the people who are the Church, not the buildings, nor the Priests, and the call is 'how are you going to live the faith?'" Joe said.

"In terms of my own faith journey I have been reflecting on what it means to be fully alive. Every day during WYD I noted something, a Gospel passage, prayer, photo, or comment that has contributed to my reflection on life" he said. Joe spent two weeks in Australia, the first in Melbourne where he was able to meet fellow Lasallians and the second in Sydney along with another 125,000 WYD international guests.

For Joe, a highlight was the presentation made by Archbishop Elias Char in Melbourne which really opened his mind to the reality of the situation in Palestine. "I realised how we are all easily misinformed - that there are victims and terrorists on both sides and we need to be aware of stereotypes which can damage peaceful relations", he said. He also spent time with Sister Patrice who is based at Bethlehem University, which is run by the De La Salle Brothers. Meeting her was most inspiring. "She shared stories of the hardships students have in trying to get to University. Some rise at 4.30am to go through checkpoints. Some days soldiers are so slow with managing the lines, people are



Joe Gilson and friends from Palestine

late for work or Uni. Even though they're so keen to learn sometimes they would be so late they just have to return home. It is amazing", he said.

During the upcoming Inter Lasallian days of Peace, Joe says that he would like to focus on peace in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East. "I hope to organise people from Israel and Palestine to speak and a video conference with Sister Patrice for our students in Malta", he said.

"We cannot just sit back and accept social and political affairs if they do not accord with our Christian values. Australia is a wonderful example of multi-cultural groups living together. I really enjoyed seeing this because in Europe there are many who are against the social cohesion of multi-ethnic religions" Joe said.

His experience of Australia has now inspired him to promote ethnic peace in countries closer to home.

My Faith Journey as a Lasallian Volunteer



MARIA WALL, a 23 year old law student from England, just completed six months as a Lasallian volunteer living and

working in the Bankstown community in Sydney. During her time in Australia she traveled to Victoria and Queensland as well as Papua New Guinea and New Zealand to get a complete sense of what the Brothers are doing in the district.

Maria admits that prior to traveling to Australia she had concerns about what her job would be and how she would find living with Brothers. Her concerns were alleviated. Maria said, "it's like living with a family. I really enjoyed partaking in morning and evening prayer with them

and being included in their lives. They went out of their way to make us feel welcome and they had a keen interest in what we were doing. The Brothers we stayed with were young, vibrant and very personable which made the whole experience so enjoyable", she said.

Maria's role involved running retreats for the students but she was also given the opportunity to run retreats in PNG for teachers and in NZ for students. What struck her as incredible was the closeness of the Lasallian network in educating and caring for youth in need. During her time in Australia, Maria was also actively involved in the International Lasallian Youth Gathering which she thoroughly enjoyed. She returned to Sydney for the exhausting and incredibly prayerful World Youth Day. "My job was to help with preparations for Catechesis which was hard work but very rewarding.

It was great being able to lead people and I'm really pleased with how it all unfolded", Maria said. She says nothing could have prepared her for how amazing World Youth Day proved to be. "It was great to see so many people excited by their faith. It was really inspiring. It truly completed this incredible journey to Australia in the best way", she said. "To know you are doing something for others is an amazing feeling. But in doing that, you still need to take time for yourself and to reflect" Maria said, adding that she tries to set aside 30 minutes a day for this purpose. While meeting and interacting with a number of Brothers in Australia, Maria was able to see how faith is the foundation of everything the Brothers do.

"I think it's important to take back what we have learnt and share it with others in England", Maria said. "It has been an amazing spiritual journey and something I'll never forget".

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Tom McIlroy – a true follower of John Baptist de La Salle.

This year marks the end of an era with the parting of Tom McIlroy from the Lasallian Youth Ministry Team after three years of loyal service in Melbourne. His enthusiasm in carrying out the work of the founder is unprecedented; his passion for the Lasallian mission and genuine faith and zeal is nothing short of inspirational.

His fresh approach to retreats, prayer and leadership have engraved his name into youth ministry history in our District. Always looking for a more contemporary way of presenting faith and the Lasallian charism, he's accomplished things that others never could. From Founders Day's to LYG07 to retreats in PNG and the International Lasallian Youth Gathering this year, I have had the pleasure of rocking up at the last minute having done no work towards these extraordinarily successful events, and claiming the same kudos as Tom. Yet kudos was never what he's wanted. Refreshingly, Tom just wants to touch hearts.

If ever you would like to ride the coattails of a brilliant individual with a compassion for the students he works with, and an equally fitting rapport with youth, call Tom.

Who is Dave Collins anyway?

In life, there are a small number of people who if you meet once you know instantly you will never forget. Dave Collins, Youth Minister at St Bede's since 2006, is one of those people. Walking around St Bede's with Dave, you are accosted by any number of students who are drawn to his humour and easy nature. Staff marvel at his great relationships with students, forged while being a true Christian role model. Dave's approach to Youth Ministry has brought about a renewed sense of being Lasallian in both the playground and the staffroom alike. The highlights of Dave's time with Lasallian Youth Ministry include developing the Lasallian Youth Leaders program, countless retreats and class visits, coordinating the 2007 Lasallian Youth Gathering at De La Salle College, overseas work in PNG and India, the International Lasallian Youth Gathering 2008 and his role as Master of Ceremonies for World Youth Day in Sydney. As Dave prepares to leave Lasallian Youth Ministry, he moves on to what is sure to be a brilliant career in the world of TV production. We wish him all the luck in the world. His departure will be a great loss for the Lasallian family.



Tom and Dave have certainly taken up the Gospel challenge and let their light shine in their role as Lasallian Youth Ministers over the past few years. They have been integral to furthering the development of youth ministry in our District and have brought unique gifts to the Lasallian Youth Ministry team. Like all good leaders they shared these gifts with others and as a result youth ministry in our District continues to have a positive future. Their legacy will live on in those who take their place. Thanks for everything Dave and Tom.

CONTACT DETAILS

DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONS & YOUTH MINISTRY

Br Mark McKeon fsc
PO Box 3485
BANKSTOWN SQUARE NSW 2200
markmckeon@delasalle.org.au
Tel: (02) 9795 6412
Mobile: 0412 853 573

LASALLIAN YOUTH MINISTERS

NSW

James Camden
jcamden@oakhill.nsw.edu.au
Mobile: 0421 642 288

Rebecca Barrett
rebecca.barrett@holyspirit.nsw.edu.au
Mobile: 0411 241 853

VICTORIA

Des Calleja
dcalleja@delasalle.melb.catholic.edu.au
Mobile: 0402 953 755

David Collins
djc@stbedes.melb.catholic.edu.au
Office: 03 9583 3325

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Joshua Foulis
josh.foulis@smc.sa.edu.au
Mobile: 0411 550 173

STATE CONTACTS

QUEENSLAND

Adam Bell
lasallequeensland@hotmail.com
Mobile: 0412 103 404

VICTORIA

Craig Almeida
craig_almeida@hotmail.com
Mobile: 0412 980 304

NEW ZEALAND

Andrew Ulugia
andrew@dls.org.nz
Mobile: +64 21 554 531

WEBSITES