

## A Mission for the Youth

**BROTHER LAURENT BOUILLET,  
DELEGATE TO THE PASTORAL  
OF VOCATIONS, IN FRANCE,  
informs us of his convictions and his  
multiple occupations.**

*More than one year has passed since your nomination as the responsible person for the Vocation Pastoral of the French Province. How have you welcomed this nomination?*



I welcomed this nomination as an important responsibility but it was mostly the confidence placed in me that was most touching. It was also a challenge in as much as in our country it does not seem evident.

The risk is in giving oneself too much pressure. It is an important mission and I am responsible for it but I am not alone. All the brothers are involved. It is up to me to motivate the «troops». Alone I shall achieve nothing, with God and the others all is changed.

*The Superiors have given you a year of formation to prepare for this work. In what did this formation consist? What are the major points of this formation that you recall?*

I followed one year of formation at the FFR ("Formation pour les Formateurs Religieux"). This formation is destined for religious who are destined to be the guides of the young postulants, novices and the temporary professed. The formation is centered on the religious life and the spiritual accompaniment. It blends together the theory, the concrete, the application, the reading....

The richness of the formation: 15 religious from 11 different congregations from 8 different countries, (Asia, Africa, Europe). Excellent openings to enrich reflection and exchanges.

The strong points: It is not a theoretical formation. It is, all together, a humane, spiritual and theological formation, a well-balanced ensemble. It is a formation that allows one to better know oneself and to better know the others.

*What are the activities and engagements of a person responsible for the Vocation Pastoral? To what and to whom does he consecrate his time?*

It is difficult to answer this question in a few lines. The project of the vocation pastoral of the Province gives the details of what is done what is being organized, or what is being considered for implementation.

My mission can be summarized *in three major topics:*

**A promotion role:** Promote and reflect on the proposals made to the young and the manner of making them succeed.

*(Some concrete examples:)*

- Make some publicity through publications, the Internet; present our life at meetings, through organizations (DVD of Brother Robert Léaustic).
- Contribute to the vocational culture linked to the pastoral of the young through propositions such as the 'pélé' service at Lourdes, humanitarian projects, the movement «faith and prayer», and all that supports formation and education.

**An awareness role:** sensitize the brothers and lay persons.



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*(Some concrete examples:)*

- Animation of the march for vocations, the production of prayer booklets for vocations, make proposals such as individual files and follow-ups.
- Proposals of animation for community meetings and interventions during recollections.

**An accompaniment role:** Accompany the youth in relationship with us.

*(Some concrete examples:)*

- The realization of a house of studies linked with us (Linked with a community situated close by.)
- Accompaniment with youths who request accompaniment.

*I imagine that you are not alone and that you work in groups. Who are your collaborators? What have you done together? What are your projects for 2008?*

A vocation-commission composed of 4 brothers and 2 lay persons is in place to allow us to work in teams, to sustain each other, to think of projects and to realize them. A close link also exists with the pastoral animation team of the network of which I am a member.

All the ongoing projects are part of the project of the vocation pastoral of the Province. Regardless we have decided to accentuate our efforts on certain proposals, in part for the youths of 17 years and over by adapting the present proposals so as to allow the youths to go further in depth, allowing them to live a spiritual experience. Some are requesting it, it is up to us to adapt.

Working on our manner of communicating appears to be important as well. A number of projects are going in this direction. The first is to offer short extracts of the film «*Brother Bob or the passion of being a brother*». An Internet page would permit us to complete that which already exists on the site. In the same direction, the realization of a booklet presenting the Mennaisian Brother today is being studied.

*Can we measure the impact on the youth of all the actions that you undertake? Are there any youths today that «aspire» to a religious vocation, sacerdotal or missionary? How are they helped? Are there some that are attracted to the vocation of the Brother of Christian Instruction?*

We cannot measure the short-term impact of the actions that we undertake with the youths. This is the difficulty. This in effect takes time but it permits one to be humble in this type of work. We sow and others will reap later...

Are there youths? Yes, there are youths, in small numbers it is true, but there are some who question themselves concerning the priesthood, the religious life, monastic or apostolic. There is not a crowd, but they are there and they question themselves, search and grope. It is up to us to assist them.

Attending spiritual weekends, being animators during meetings, living a missionary sojourn are all events where these youths can discover a bit more who we are, by living with us. This enables them to make a further step...this requires time.



*Lourdes: an occasion for the young to care for the sick*

Many need to do with us before living with us!

*The Vocation Pastoral is part of a more global pastoral of youths and the Church. How do you fit in regarding what is lived in these domains?*

We cannot work alone in our corner; it would be an illusion. I come from a weekend of national formation (January 2008) for the members of the SDV (diocesan vocation service) of which I am part. It was a rich moment of sharing and exchanges. It is important to unite our forces, not to work alone. It allows us to share ideas and to sustain each other. Making proposals together is also showing that we are making Church.

My situation regarding what is alive at this level: a real collaboration. We win in all ways when we work together.

*You participated in the session of the FICs responsible for vocations at Castegandolfo last August. Can you highlight for us two or three important conclusions for you and your work?*

What I recall is the richness of the sharing, this permits an opening on other realities.

We have recently realized the vocation pastoral project of the province. This allowed me to see that we are on the right track. It is comforting to see that we are, a priori, not on a false track. This allowed me to be assured of certain decisions and orientations that we took.

Conclusion: we must risk to interpolate, to call the youth. We were not doing enough of this. We must be more visible.

*What is the future of the Congregation in France? - In the world?*

I have no idea. The future does not belong to us. There are needs, and our vocation is always relevant. It is up to us to continue to pray but also to interpolate, to call. It is up to us to be witnesses.

Do as if all depends on us, do all as if it depends on God.

As Jean-Marie de La Mennais, have a total confidence in Providence but do all that is possible on our side and God will do the rest.

*Br Laurent Bouillet*



*A group of a dozen youths of 17 to 22 years of age at the end of a two day meeting (10-11 March 2007) at Quimperlé (Finistère). Brother Laurent Bouillet and an Ursuline Sister directed this discernment meeting.*