



Dear Brothers

Greetings as 2021 unfolds. Centennial Park is a short walk from 16 Roma Avenue and one of my favourite walking places especially in the hot weather where the canopy of aged trees provides a welcome cooling effect. On the Feast of the Holy Family as I walked around the park, I could not help but notice the presence of many families reflecting the ethnicity of Sydney's cosmopolitan society. Families were enjoying the company of each other whether having a picnic, teaching children to ride their Christmas gift bicycles, walking, etc. I reflected on my own family and how my mother had a great devotion to the Holy Family. Relating the Feast to community I could not help but think back to the Holy Family community of Brothers who resided at Oakhill and whose ministry of service touched the lives of many of us.

The various scripture readings offered in the lectionary for the Feast of the Holy Family focussed obviously on family but also on community. In the reading from Colossians for the day the words love, compassion, patience and forgiveness stand out. In his Angelus address for the Feast Pope Francis emphasized the importance in the family of prayer, affection, forgiveness, tenderness, and adherence to the will of God..... sound familiar? As we begin this year in our communities let us reflect on the powerful words from Colossians and Pope Francis.



LASALLIAN:
*You are part
of the miracle*
Our Vision.
Our Passion.
Our Future.

The Institute has asked us to reflect on the theme:

**“ You are Part of the Miracle:
Our Vision, Our Passion, Our Future. ”**

Late last year the staff at La Salle Centre focussed on this theme during their end of year retreat. As part of unpacking the theme one of the power point slides summarised the mission in the District today as follows.



44 Lasallian schools



31,369 students



yourtown in six States of Australia providing fifty services in thirty-six locations.



The figures struck me at the time and reflection on them reminded me that the Lasallian Mission has certainly grown across the District since the pioneering Brothers arrived in Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, and Pakistan. Note that the pioneers were all Brothers and the schools and BoysTown (now **yourtown**) were all established by communities of Brothers at the invitation of Bishops in the various Archdioceses and Dioceses. The Brothers held the leadership of these ministries for many years laying the foundations for a mission which is now shared together and by association with our Lasallian Partners. As Brothers we have every reason to take pride in our achievements and successes of the past. I express my gratitude for what you have contributed and continue to contribute to the mission across the District.

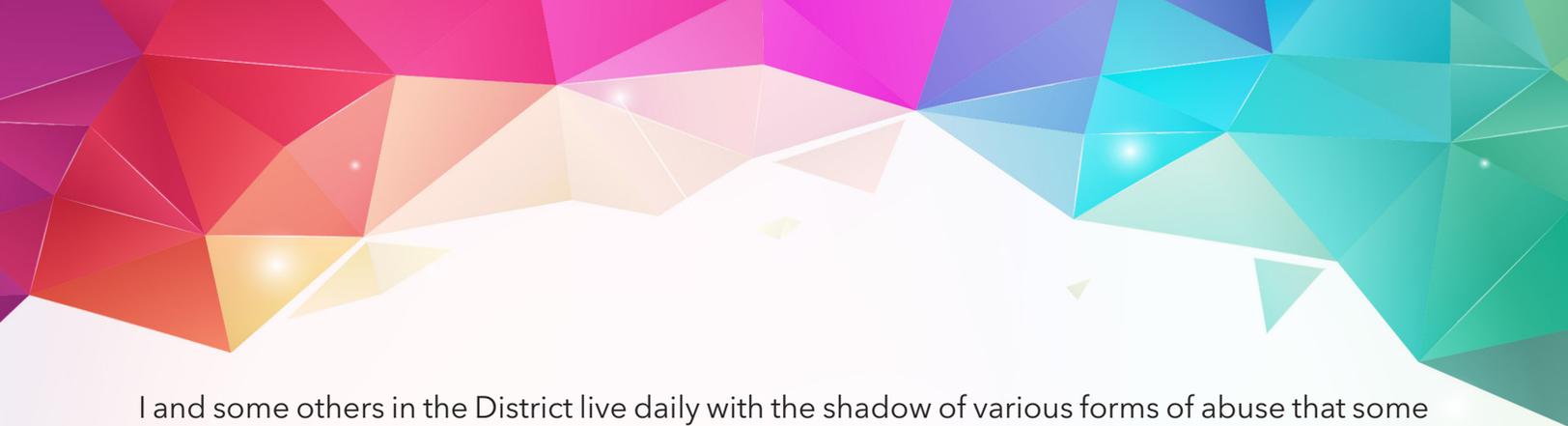


There are several significant events this year which will celebrate foundations established by the Brothers in the District. This year marks 75 years since the Brothers arrived at Bomana in Papua New Guinea, 60 years of BoysTown (now **yourtown**) and La Salle Faisalabad and 30 years of Kids Helpline.

Brothers Quentin O'Halloran, Ray Ryan and Eugene Nguyen Van Ly celebrate 70 years as Brothers. Brothers Michael McCabe, Phillip Elwin and William Harnett celebrate 60 years while Brothers Steve Hogan and Peter Abraham mark 40 years with Brother Shahzad George Gill celebrating 25 years. Congratulations to them.

Yes, we do have much to be thankful for and celebrate as Brothers but acknowledge also that we have a shadow side.

The well-known Franciscan Richard Rohr OFM in his book "The Wisdom Pattern" names one of the concluding chapters "Living with Shadow." He points out that "darkness is always present alongside the light" (P.183) and that "western civilization has failed to learn how to carry the shadow side" (P.183).



I and some others in the District live daily with the shadow of various forms of abuse that some Brothers and lay people have inflicted upon young people and adults at risk entrusted to our care. But let all of us reflect upon the following words from Richard Rohr OFM:

Maybe we avoid shadows because they are of our own powerlessness and poverty. None of us wants to be part of any imperfect group or institution. Perhaps because we did not resolve the question on a personal level, we have no ability to deal with it on a historical level. We keep looking for some perfect pedestal on which to stand, some place where we can be clean, pure, and above it all. (P.185).



Richard Rohr continues to comment that shadows are good and necessary teachers and not to be avoided, denied, fled, or explained away.

We are bombarded daily with news of the effects of COVID-19. However, Brothers, we are reminded constantly by Church, Institute, and civil leaders to be people of hope. We recall the words of St Paul to the Philippians as we begin anew in 2021: “This is the one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13-14).

Yours fraternally,



David Hawke FSC
Visitor.

