

((Important to get this out before the Holy Bowl))

September 23, 2005

To the Friends of the Brothers:

Greetings from Oak Park. There's a lot going on. Here are some of the highlights.  
(((Needs a much stronger intro that catches them ... and inspires them to read on.)))

***First home football game ever at the Oak Park campus***

Christian Brothers High School has a storied athletic tradition. But for fifty years, we've had to play our home games away from home. This past winter, someone asked, "Why don't we play home games at home?" The answer, because we've always done it that way wasn't good enough. That was it. The wheels were in motion to try something new. Thanks to the generosity of some alumni, the willingness of our parents, and the tireless work of our facilities crew and athletic department staff, six months later, the Falcons emerged from their own locker room to the roar of 1,000+ fans. The football flew through the brand new goal posts seven times. The again brand new scoreboard lit up a final score of 49 - 24, Falcons win.

***The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina ... generous students***

The day after the hurricane devastated the gulf coast, Christian Brothers High School put in a call to the Christian Brothers headquarters in Maryland. Our offer ... any displaced student from a Christian Brothers high school (there are two high schools in New Orleans) who wishes to attend Christian Brothers Sacramento is welcome to do so. Tuition will not be an issue. And if we need to find a home for his/her family and help mom and dad find work, we pledge to do our best. The staff person on the other end of the line was stunned. He'd pass the word along. There had been discussion of schools in Texas and the Midwest contemplating such an offer ... but none from as far as California. As it turns out, lots of other schools extended the offer. We all read about it in the news. But we did it because it was the right thing to do. And when people told us we should call the news and have our good words celebrated, we declined. It just seemed awkward to seek credit for doing the right thing.

About a week after the hurricane, the morning news featured a Catholic girls school in Pennsylvania. Their gimmick was to blast annoying polka music through the PA system until \$3,000 was raised for the Red Cross. Meanwhile, here in Sacramento, our students created a prayer chain and passed around a hat. No out of uniform days, no bake sales, no gimmicks. Almsgiving. Philanthropy. One group of seniors had the idea of inviting parents to participate. These seniors stood in front of the school with fish nets collecting money from parents. Again, no recognition or reward. Our school community raised \$8,400 in a week.

Some people say we should boast more. We will. But charity has to come from the heart. We're a Catholic school. Our faith tells us that charity is our baptismal calling.

Education tells us that we should teach lessons that count. I think our students are learning the right lessons.

#### ***A new Catholic high school in Sacramento***

By now you may have heard that St. Peter's and All Hallows grade schools had merged to create John Paul II School on the former All Hallows site. You may also have heard that the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, and the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) were joining force to open a new Catholic high school on the vacated St. Peter's site. Well, the rumors are true. Plans are underway to open a Cristo Rey model high school in Sacramento. The Cristo Rey model high school is a Catholic, college prep school. Its students, all of whom are required to be poor, work one day a week in order to help pay tuition. The Christian Brothers' district (provincial headquarters in Napa) are familiar with this model, having opened similar schools in Portland and Tucson in the past five years. Some people question the need for this school, since Christian Brothers High School has been providing an excellent Catholic education the poor of Sacramento for generations. But we see it as we think St. John Baptist de La Salle would want us to see it ... as a welcome partner in the marketplace. De La Salle was an innovator who was focused on his mission. And so too are we. (((This is very tricky language. Need to run it by quite a few people (Robert Jordan, Br. George Van Grieken FSC, Ray Burnell, etc. before we put it out there!!!)))

#### ***Board of Trustees plans for the future***

The Christian Brothers High School Board of Trustees is comprised of eleven volunteers who are committed to our Catholic, Lasallian mission. They are chosen by the Christian Brothers (our legal and moral owners) to represent the Brothers and ensure that the charism of St. John Baptist de La Salle is carried out in worthy fashion. Earlier this week, over eighty people gathered at the invitation of the CBHS Board of Trustees to participate in a visioning workshop. The participants were faculty/administration, current/past/prospective parents, alumni spanning 78 years, current students, representatives from our broader Lasallian, Catholic, educational, and secular communities. The response to the invitation was beyond anyone's expectation. What a sign of love for CB! The evening was electric. The group got 'outside the box' to envision what a Catholic, Lasallian education could look like in the year 2015! The Board will use the information gathered to create a vision and pass that vision along to the administration and me. Then it will be our responsibility to put the plans in place to make that vision reality.

(((Need a couple of good student stories ... poor kids doing great things.)))

#### ***Giving back, giving from the heart ... generous friends***

Over the past couple of months, I have received three separate phone calls from two alumni and a past parent who wish to make a gift to the school. The first call came from an alumnus from the 1960's. He and his wife were putting together their estate plan and decided to include Christian Brothers as beneficiary. In his words, "I received a great education at Christian Brothers and I want to provide that type of education to someone else." Although this estate gift will not be materialized for probably 25 years, this couple

is pleased to know that their remaining assets will be used to establish a scholarship for a deserving student in perpetuity. The second phone call came from an alumnus of the 1940's. His son, a 1967 alumnus, had passed away unexpectedly. The father, now in his 80's inherited an estate worth over \$400,000. "I don't need it. I want Christian Brothers to have the money. Education is so important today. Use the money however you best see fit to help kids." The third call was from a man in his 50's. He lost his son and wife in a car accident. His son was fifteen when he died ... beginning his sophomore year at Christian Brothers. "My wife and I did not come from families that could afford tuition. We attended Catholic high school thanks to the generosity of others. Christian Brothers exceeded all of our highest expectations. At our time of tragedy we were so toughed by the outpouring of support from CB.

### ***Kids are happy***

At back to school night, I asked parents how the first couple of weeks had been going for their daughters and sons. "She came home and said "I Love School Mom." He's doing more homework than he'd ever imagined ... and he's not complaining." "In meeting his teachers, I wish I could go back to high school."

### ***We need your help***

Over the course of the next couple of years, our advancement office is going to work hard to increase the level of alumni participation in providing ongoing, unrestricted support on an annual basis. Did you know that it costs us \$50,000 to print and mail (not to mention staff time to create it!) two editions of Connection annually to 12,000 people? But did you know that we receive fewer than 5% of our alumni make an unrestricted gift to CBHS annually? We hope you'll give generously when you receive our fundraising literature in the mail.

And if you are in a life situation where you can make a significant gift to our scholarship, facilities, or other needs, I would be happy to meet with you at your convenience. I am confident that our needs and your charitable priorities can connect to provide an exciting way for you to – as de La Salle was fond of saying – *to touch the hearts and souls of our students.*

Christian Brothers High School is a special community. Thank you for whatever role you might play in building and sustaining this Catholic, Lasallian ministry in Sacramento. If you would like to discuss how we can continue to make Christian Brothers an excellent place for young women and men to grow, please call me. I am always anxious to talk with anyone who is willing to help.

A month ago, the first day of school and all the start-of-the-year activities that goes with that. Two weeks ago, 1,400 people for the Wine Tasting Extravaganza. Last week, a home football game. Tonight, the Mondavi Center to see and hear our choir. Tomorrow, the Holy Bowl. How blessed I am to be at Christian Brothers. How blessed we all are to be a part of something so special.

Live Jesus in our Hearts...

God bless,

Lorcan P. Barnes  
President

P.S. Open House is Sun. 10/9 from 1:00 – 4:00. Bring your 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade kids. Tell the neighbors. Alumni, come on back and check out what your alma mater has become.