

DISTRICT OF SAN FRANCISCO NEW ORLEANS

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Lasallian District of San Francisco New Orleans Officially Commences Operations

Napa, California, July 1, 2014 – The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools has announced the inauguration of the District of San Francisco New Orleans in the Lasallian Region of North America. The new District officially began operations at midnight on July 1, 2014.

The District of San Francisco New Orleans (SFNO) was created by combining the former Districts of San Francisco, founded in 1868, and New Orleans-Santa Fe, founded in 1921. Over a period of several years, both Districts' Brothers and Leadership Teams engaged in consultations and gatherings to plan and prepare for the new District, including approving its constitutive statutes and electing its first Provincial, Brother Donald Johanson, FSC, who then appointed its Leadership Team. On July 1, the now former District of San Francisco and District of New Orleans-Santa Fe discontinued their formal operations and transferred them to the new District.

In a message issued for the occasion of the inauguration, Brother Johanson said, "The Institute of the Lasallian Brothers of the Christian Schools has seen many changes since its founding in 1680. The July 1, 2014 joining of two large Districts in the United States is one more event in our long history that tries to meet the educational needs of young people, especially the poor; needs that are brought to us as we respond to the 'signs of the times.' I am confident, as St. John Baptist de La Salle was those many years ago, that this work is God's work and that it is especially important today. It will continue because we do this work with so many committed partners in our mission of education."

The District's composition will include 134 De La Salle Brothers, over 1,300 Lasallian Partners, and over 12,000 students in 20 primary, secondary, and post-secondary educational ministries located in the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, and Washington, and in Tijuana, Mexico.

Commenting from Christian Brothers Conference in Washington, D.C., General Councilor from the Lasallian Region of North America (RELAN) and former New Orleans-Santa Fe Provincial Brother Timothy Coldwell, FSC wrote, "Very few of us want to unsettle our lives and routines, even if we know that the world changes and the needs of the young change as well. Our new District is a faith and zeal response to the changing needs of the world God so loves."

“To use a World Cup analogy, the goalposts have moved and we are moving with them! San Francisco New Orleans represents a re-direction of our energy and passion, all for the sake of the Lasallian charism. As we point ourselves in new directions, we graciously thank our living and loving God for our new companions and confidently ask Him to accompany us.”

The District’s Provincialate and main administrative offices will be located at Mont La Salle in Napa, California. A second Provincialate office will be located in Covington, Louisiana. The Districts Leadership Team is composed of Brother Johanson; Auxiliary Provincial Brother James Joost; Office of Education-Mont La Salle Director Gery Short; Office of Education-Covington Director Charles Legendre, AFSC; Formation for Mission Director Greg Kopra; Board Formation Director Janet Ruggiero; Chief Financial Officer Pamela Gleeson; and Communications Director Bob Carrejo.

The Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Brother Robert Schieler, FSC, issued a statement from Rome, saying, “It is a pleasure on behalf of the Institute to welcome its newest District, the District of San Francisco New Orleans. Combining two rich and storied histories, I am confident this new District will create its own contributions to the coming of God’s reign on behalf of the poor and the young entrusted to its care. My confidence is based on the many outstanding Partners and Brothers from both legacy Districts, women and men steeped in the knowledge of St. La Salle and his spiritual and educational vision and who are committed to the Lasallian mission already accomplishing so much good.”

“The combining of two Districts is and should be so much more than a simple merger. Establishing a new District releases new energy. It is an opportunity to creatively imagine new ministries and programs that ensure a vital presence in the world of Christian education and a Gospel response to the needs of the poor and the young today. My sincere thanks to Brothers Donald and Timothy, and their respective leadership teams for shepherding this process to its successful conclusion. One journey has ended, another begins.”

In the weeks and months ahead, the work of establishing the District of San Francisco New Orleans will continue with the meetings of the District Leadership Team and other District Leadership groups, the creation of a new District website and other communications media, and planning for 2014-2015 District programs and events.

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The District of San Francisco New Orleans is part of the Lasallian Region of North America of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The Institute is a Catholic religious order of laymen whose mission is to provide spiritual and human education to the young, especially the poor. Founded by St. John Baptist de La Salle in 17th century France, today approximately 5,000 Brothers and 80,000 Partners serve nearly 900,000 students in about 1,000 educational ministries located in 80 countries. For more information, go to www.delasalle.org.