



Reflections
of **Rudolf Schulze**

MAY 2005

REFLECTIONS
OF
Rudolf Schulze

1953 – 2004



A compilation of letters and articles by
Rudolf Schulze, who served Christian Brothers High
School as Principal with faith, humor, and integrity
from July 1, 2002 – October 23, 2004.

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In a Most Imperceptible Manner: The Grace of Association
by Rudolf Schulze

I have been associated with the Brothers of the Christian Schools for seventeen of my nearly thirty years in Catholic secondary education. I appreciate both the challenges and the graces that accompany such an extraordinary mission to which I and my colleagues in all Lasallian schools have committed our professional lives.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle founded the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in a spirit of faith to address a specific need: the education of poor and disadvantaged youth. According to Brother Luke Salm, FSC, in the year 1680, during the reign of the Sun King, Louis XIV, "De La Salle himself came gradually to realize [that] the contrast between the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the artisans of the poor on the other, was striking." (*The Work Is Yours: The Life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle*, 45) Clearly the "best" or "most professional" teachers in the late 17th century were the schoolmasters and the writing masters—"a powerful guild of professional scribes under the protection of the king and parliament," according to Brother Luke (47). These highly paid men taught the children of the upper class in Latin.

De La Salle chose to educate the children of the poor and working class who came to his door. He taught them in their own language and he taught them the basic skills they needed for life. Brother George Van Grieken, FSC, in his *Touching the Hearts of Students: Characteristics of a Lasallian School*, describes the beginning of the Christian Schools:

De La Salle's genius lay in organizing the schools, training and supervising teachers, and adapting various educational methodologies, thereby elevating the lay ministry of teaching within the church and generally doing well what had up to that time been done poorly. Both the religious convictions which led him to see Christ in the poor and the empathy which drew him into his work for educating the poor provided the foundation upon which his view of the vocation of the Christian teacher was progressively built. (34)

So the first Brothers did not come to work with striking resumes, lists of accomplishments and honors, or dazzling personalities. De La Salle really had no intention of starting schools. He believed, however, in what the new schoolmasters hoped to do for the poor; he supported them financially and he even housed them. But he considered them "below my manservant." He writes:

I had imagined that the guidance I was giving the schools and masters would be only an external guidance which would involve me with nothing more in their regard than providing for their upkeep and taking care that they carried out their employment with care and application...If I had ever believed, in fact, that the concern I had for the schoolmasters out of pure charity would ever have made it a duty for me to live with them, I should have given it up; for, as naturally I set

below my manservant those I was obliged, especially in the beginning, to employ in the schools, the mere thought that I might have to live with them would have been unbearable. I experienced, in fact, a very great distress when I first brought them into my house, and it lasted two years. It was apparently for this reason that God, . . . wishing to encourage me to take full responsibility for the schools, did so in a most imperceptible manner and over a period of time; so that one involvement led me into another, without my having foreseen it in the beginning. (*Cahiers Lasalliens*, section 6, 31)

As God continued to capture his heart through the mission which was unfolding before him, De La Salle was actually forming communities of teachers, (later they called themselves "Brothers"), to respond to the needs he found in Reims, France, in 1680. At some point, De La Salle realized that *community* was the cornerstone of the schools. "As religious vowed to the ministry of Christian education, the first apostolate of the Brothers consists in the witness of their consecrated life." (R 24) Indeed, it was the *association* of the Brothers—one with another—as communities that gave flesh, life, and spirit to the mission. The key to De La Salle's success as an educator, (whose spirituality and pedagogy have endured for more than 300 years and whom the Church has proudly named the *Patron of Teachers*), is that he taught the first Brothers how to be teachers.

He taught them how to "do" the mission by capitalizing on their gifts and talents, weaknesses, and limitations. Moreover, the Brothers' vow of association is for the educational service of the poor—a clarion call to be faithful to the mission God has given to the Institute.

For the Founder, it was their *association* that mattered most. As one Brother translates *association* for us: "It's how we are together that matters." *Association* is a word that is very dear to the Brothers. It means that *faith* and *zeal* find their context and meaning in the exigencies of the everyday lives of the young people who come to their schools. As part of their consecration to God, the Brothers make a vow of association among themselves so as to maintain the schools "together and by association." And so De La Salle, with his first Brothers, as the *Rule* of 1987 reminds us, "associated together to respond to the needs of young people who were poor and far from salvation."

Today, the Brothers use the word *partners* to describe their lay colleagues. The choice of that word is deliberate. In his pastoral letter on January 1, 1988, Superior General Brother John Johnston, FSC, wrote:

Lay people take their place as *full partners*—and we Brothers gladly associate them with us in our mission. We accept that from now on our schools will not be *Brothers' schools*, animated by the Brothers' community with secondary collaboration of lay teachers, parents, students. They will be instead *Lasallian Schools* animated by Lasallian educative communities of faith within which the apostolic activity of the Brothers' community takes place. (R17, *The Destiny of the Institute: Our Responsibility*, 32)

As they face declining numbers in the Institute, the Brothers could easily turn in on themselves or resign themselves to the moment when the last Brother will put the cat out and turn out the lights. Instead, the Brothers have opened their arms to those who are willing to commit themselves to the mission. The Brothers have not given away their responsibility for or ownership of the mission. Far from that, they are active, present, and prophetic. Moreover, they welcome the diversity which the partners bring to the mission.

I am not a Brother. I am not a Brother because God has not called me to be a Brother. Therefore, I do not share the kind of *association* that is characteristic of the consecrated, vowed life of a Brother who lives in community. The "Heroic Vow" (1691) belongs uniquely to the Brothers whose only commitment was "a vow of association and union to procure the establishment of the Society of the Christian Schools." Because my ministry in the Lasallian mission is not my primary life commitment, my *association* is different, and it must be different. This does not mean that I "hold back" or am "reserved" in what I bring to school with me each day. Nor does it affect the faith, zeal, or "wholeheartedness" which I believe characterize my commitment and professional life. Do I take "ownership" for the mission. Of course I do. Do I live the mission? I do so as best I can with God's grace. Am I called? Yes, I am called. All of us—Brothers and Partners—are called to live the mission within the very diverse contexts of our life commitments. More than that, we give ourselves to the mission according to God's call which we have answered with our lives and in which we are sustained by the graces of our baptismal promises.

As Saint Paul writes to the openly factional Christians at Corinth, "But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body." (1 Corinthians 12:18-20)

Brother John Johnston, FSC, in his "Lasallian Association for Mission (1679-2007): A Personal Reflection on an Ongoing Story," struggles with the "varied and even conflicting understandings of *association*, *associations*, *associates*, [and] *associated members*, [such that] I was doubtful that the word *association* was the best word to promote as an expression of our international communion." It is, nevertheless, the word we have. God has called us together for mission. Whom God calls and how God chooses to bring the mission to life through us has everything to do with incarnation: spirit breathing life into flesh, Brothers and Partners becoming the Body of Christ. The graces of our diversity, flexibility, talents, and limitations are the potter's clay. They are uniquely graces which unite us and through which God continually renews the Institute.

We must be mindful and vigilant about *what* we call ourselves and *how* we name one another. We can never allow titles, honors, distinction, or rank to define us. Even the apostles fell into this perfidious self-aggrandizing behavior: "They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, [Jesus] began to ask them, 'What were you arguing about on the way?' But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest." (Mark 9:33-34) These are terrible temptations, insidious and deceptive. They separate and divide us; they can never unite

us. Such trappings will render feckless our best intentions and good works. Because we all work hard, because so many of us have done this for a long time, we may be seduced by a sense of entitlement. We must remind ourselves often that we are the ones who wash the feet of others. (John 13:14) And, "For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away." (Matthew 25:29)

Brother Alvaro Rodriguez Echeverria, FSC, our Superior General, levels the playing field rather poetically. What he addressed to the Brothers is equally applicable to the Partners:

It is important that we Brothers not forget the why of our community association and the why of this new association with lay persons. I like to apply *association* to what St. Exupery says about friendship: "We are not talking about looking at each other but looking together in the same direction." And this direction is none other than the educational and evangelical service of the young who are poor and, based on them, all young people. (*Being Brothers in Community: Our Primary Association*)

Today we continue to pray for vocations knowing that it is God's plan that we must discern, not our plan. Mr. Stan Gilliam, Class of 1941, was recently named Christian Brothers High School's *Ambassador of the Year*. In his remarks, Mr. Gilliam said that he and his classmates "owed everything to the Brothers." Driving home that night I could not get those words out of my mind. How could a four-year period of time as a student at Christian Brothers High School—a hiccup in the life of an octogenarian—have had such a profound impact on this man and his classmates? The answer, I believe, is the mission: *The purpose of this Institute is to provide a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor, according to the ministry which the Church has entrusted to it.* The Brothers had reached out and touched his heart.

All of us—Brothers and Partners—share in the rich and enduring Lasallian heritage that demands nothing less than this: "You carry out a work that requires you to touch hearts." It is that mission which compels our response: *together and by association.*

Rudolf Schulze
Principal
Christian Brothers High School

OPEN HOUSE, 2004

Sunday, October 10, 2004

Good afternoon. My name is Rudy Schulze and I am the principal of Christian Brothers High School.

I want to thank you for taking this opportunity to visit our school. We are delighted that you are here and we are proud to show you our school and talk about who we are. More than that, I am happy that you are taking Catholic education so seriously. You have four wonderful Catholic high schools to choose from in Sacramento. I hope that you will visit them all. You will find that we are all four committed to your children's Catholic education; you will find that our curricular and co-curricular programs are very similar; you will find that we all have what it takes to get your child to college. What you will also find is that all four of us have something special about us—a charism or spirit—which makes our individual school's contribution to the Church's ministry of education distinctive from the others.

In the last month, in preparation for this afternoon, I asked four people what makes us different. Here is what a student, a teacher, a parent, and a graduate had to say.

The **student** said that what makes us distinctive is that just about anybody can come to our school. You will find that *diversity* characterizes us. Our students represent cultural, ethnic, socio-economic, gender, and academic diversity. Our founder, Saint John Baptist de La Salle, opened his first school in his own neighborhood in Reims, France. He opened his doors to the middle-class and poor students of his neighborhood who could not afford the education available to the wealthy. His students' parents were artisans and working class men and women. If you were to see all 1,050 of our students sitting in this gymnasium, you would say that they "look like" the Sacramento community—their neighborhood.

Academic diversity also characterizes our school. We have programs for the brightest students who come to our door. We have thirteen advanced placement courses, ten honors courses, two college courses. We have programs for excellent students, average students, and for students who have struggled in elementary school but whose character and determination show potential and possibility. For about 20-25 students each year, we have the SAGES program—*Students Achieving Great Educational Success*—an eleven-month program that begins in mid-June after eighth-grade.

All of our students are able to move in and out of these programs or levels as they gain confidence, sharpen their abilities, and master skills. None are labeled or marked; all are challenged and encouraged every step of the way. The advanced placement student who begins to slip receives the same gentle nudge as the average student who misses a homework assignment. For our founder, each student is an individual, and few individuals can fit in the same educational "box," if you will. And so we have created programs and schedules to meet the needs of the many students who come to our door seeking a Catholic education. Please know that we will not set up a child for failure if we cannot meet his or her needs through our existing programs.

The **teacher** said that working here is *fulfilling*. We make a difference in the lives of our students—like any teacher anywhere wants to do. Christian Brothers strives to teach the *whole* student—body, mind, heart, and soul. And so we have created a school day of seven periods in which students are able to do many things. There are academic classes, our religious studies program, the visual and performing arts including six instrumental music programs and six choral programs, Technology, Campus Ministry and Service Learning—all of which are integrated throughout the curriculum; there are also many, many activities, sports, service, and student government opportunities after school.

Students at Christian Brothers do not have to choose between music and athletics because music can be a part of a student's day. I am always proud to see a student wearing a varsity jersey and carrying his trumpet on his way into school. Last year, the center on the football team sang in the honors choir, was admitted to Harvard, and was his class' valedictorian at graduation. You can do whatever you want to do here.

The **parent** said that what is distinctive about Christian Brothers is the *feeling* you have when you are around the students, teachers, coaches, moderators, and counselors. Kids are taken care of here. What happens here mirrors what happens in most homes. Students are taught and reminded about how to make good choices and they are held accountable for their choices.

This brings me to a very important topic—our partnership as students, parents, and school. As the primary educators of your children, we understand that you have entrusted your most precious gift to us, their professional educators. We take this responsibility as seriously as you do. The success of our partnership and the test of our responsibility are largely measured in terms of the quality of communication we have between and among us. You will never find us idle in this regard.

The **graduate** said that what is distinctive about us that students are *prepared* when they graduate. This graduate noted that the extra credits required for graduation which others school do not require were a tremendous support. Five

years of English instead of four made the graduate a better and more confident writer and communicator. This graduate appreciated the school's diversity and the fact that the school is co-ed. "Christian Brothers looks like the real world." This graduate also highlighted studies, music, athletics, the senior retreat, the teachers, coaches, and counselors.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle founded the Christian Brothers in 1680. His methodology was unique because the purpose of the schools he founded is a simple one: to provide a human and Christian education for young people, especially the poor. A "human and Christian education" certainly included but went far beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic. He was concerned about the whole person. Beyond their lessons, students learned how to behave in different settings, how to be good citizens, how to associate with all kinds of people, how to participate in competitions and sports activities, how to communicate. They internalized values of respect and service. They didn't receive diplomas at the end of their course of studies—they were themselves their diplomas, living witnesses to what they had learned and experienced.

In 1950, the Church named Saint John Baptist de La Salle the *Patron of Teachers* for the universal Church. One of the major statues in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome celebrates the life of this extraordinary teacher. Of all the religious orders who operate schools, and some 300 years after the first school was founded, the Church found in De La Salle's methodology and his way of conducting schools, something important, distinctive, special, and holy for all time about the Christian Brothers schools. We do everything in our power, every day, to model what the *Patron of Teachers* has given us—the charism and spirit of a Lasallian education which reaches out and touches the hearts of the young people entrusted to our care.

As you consider the options before you in the education of your children, ask lots of questions. We know that the cost of a Catholic high school education is certainly a consideration. Of the four Catholic high schools in Sacramento, we were third in terms of cost this year. We cannot and do not apologize for cost to educate your sons and daughters because we are responsible stewards of the tuition we charge and we know that you get your money's worth. If this is an issue, talk with our financial assistance people today—were able to give out more than \$650,000 in need-based tuition assistance this year. There are scores of teachers, coaches, students, and counselors here today to answer your questions.

Finally, we promise you a place where your children will be loved, instructed, and guided in an environment that is moral, caring, and joyful.

We believe that you want more for your child than a grocery list of honors and advanced placement courses, College Board scores, and college matriculation rates. We've certainly got all of that and we are proud of it. But we believe that

you want your son and your daughter to be in a school where they are loved, instructed, and guided in an environment that is moral, caring, and joyful.

That is our promise to you today.

Educational Mission Statement **Rudolf Schulze**

You, too, can perform miracles...by touching the hearts of children....
Your zeal towards the children you teach would not go very far
and would not have much result or success if it limited itself to words.
To be effective, your teaching must be supported by your example.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle
Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

As the primary educators of their children, parents entrust their most precious gift to us. And as each of our students is uniquely talented and gifted, so to must be the care with which we address their educational needs to ensure that they are assigned to the right place, level, and lesson, thus enabling students of varying abilities to become effective learners. With the student as the only reliable cartographer of his/her educational journey, our policies and practices must be centered on all of our students in order to meet their needs, capitalize on their talents, manage their weaknesses, expand their horizons, and prepare them to take their place as responsible citizens living the Christian life. Parents expect that *excellence* will characterize our every effort. We can offer no less and promise no more.

A Catholic education, then, uniquely addresses the heart and soul of each student by proclaiming the Gospel. Our identity as a Catholic, Lasallian school, however, goes beyond courses of religious instruction and pastoral programs. In fact, our Lasallian heritage compels us to provide a human and Christian education helping students to understand and appreciate their value as persons, their distinctive individuality, and their call to manifest the holy presence of God. We must proclaim the Gospel so that it permeates every aspect of school life: culture, environment, spirit, signs and symbols, relationships, curricular and co-curricular programs, service learning, policies, and regulations.

In very practical terms, a Catholic, Lasallian school is a safe, just, moral, caring, and joyful community—a community committed to diversity, inclusivity, service, and respect. Our student-centered enterprise challenges our students to become active, flexible, inquiring critical thinkers and learners. To this end the education we provide must be practical, measured, and rigorous. At the same time, our commitment to the poor distinguishes us. Our service learning and campus ministry programs, our worship, retreat, and immersion programs, and our daily prayer invite and challenge us to embrace the poor and marginalized.

Those who choose to associate themselves with the Church's ministry of education as it is realized through the mission of the Christian Brothers must be professionally qualified, competent, compassionate, and creative. They must be dedicated to the school's mission and learning expectations, and committed to their own spiritual and professional growth. They must be men and women of faith who are unafraid to witness to the holy presence of God in the midst of which we find our schools, our students, and ourselves.

Frequently ask Almighty God for the grace to be able to touch hearts.
It is the grace of your state. Of what use, indeed, would all your instruction be
if dullness crept over the senses of those whom you instruct...
And if, after you had often taught them the truths of the Holy Gospel,
a veil hung over their hearts.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle
Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

*Commencement Address
Christian Brothers High School
Memorial Auditorium
Sacramento, California
Friday, May 28, 2004*

My dear graduates:

It is a privilege to stand before you this evening and to offer a few words of farewell. This evening and indeed this day have been filled with emotions, words, and memories. You do not need to hear very many more words this evening. I will be as brief as I can, but I have two things I want to share with you. And even though you may not remember these words tonight, you may remember them someday. For you tonight: a question I want you to ask yourself often and a prayer you've said every day you spent with us.

The question is one that we ask all the time—a question that oftentimes exposes our surprise, doubt, insecurity, hope, fear, or reserve about what has been proposed to us. The question is this: *Is it possible?* Human history is filled men and women who have asked and answered that question. If you have ever watched a six-month-old child propped up on hands and knees and staring intently at a bright blue ball a foot and a half a way from him, you wonder: “Is it possible that he can figure out how to crawl in order to get to the bright blue ball?” *Is it possible?* It is, and eventually he does figure it out.

I was nearly eight years old in 1961 when on May 25th of that year, President Kennedy presented the Congress with an impossible dream. He said: “I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to earth.” The whole world wondered: *Is it possible?* To this day I can remember my father tell us about this at the dinner table: that President Kennedy wanted to put a man on the Moon. Not only was it possible, but just look at what we have done in the last forty-three years ago. And don't forget that the computer that runs your car is more sophisticated than the Apollo computers that brought those astronauts to the moon and back.

In 1954, no one ever dreamed that a human being could break a four-minute mile. Is it possible that a man could run that fast? On May 6, 1954, Roger Bannister broke the four-minute barrier, running a mile in 3 minutes 59.4 seconds. When he was asked to explain that first four-minute mile—and the art of record breaking for that matter—he answered: “It is the ability to take more out of yourself than you've got.”

More recently, we asked the “Is it possible?” question when a successful and promising quarterback left his team and the comfort of his possessions and princely salary and, without fanfare or much ado, joined the army to serve his country. Pat Tillman of the San Diego Chargers did just that.

What lies before you is this same question: Is it possible? Let me frame it differently. Is it possible that you will someday find someone who loves you as much as you love them? Is it possible that your relationships and marriages will defy present-day statistics? Is it possible that you will someday find a cause, a vocation, or a mission that so captures your heart and talents that you are compelled to give your life's work to that dream? Is it possible that you will be proud of who you become because you have

demanded of and exacted from yourself the will, drive, talent, and hard work to become your own person?

And now to the prayer. For four years, and for many times during the day during those four years, you have said a little prayer which has become second-nature to you by now: "*Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.*" Take that little prayer with you. Say it often or even occasionally to yourself. As life, and choices, and changes swirl about you, it is a phrase that can center you and bring life into focus.

Wherever you go, whenever you pray this prayer, remember that "we" are with you and that you are not alone. No matter where you are, no matter what you are doing, you are always, always in the holy presence of God. You cannot escape the holy presence of God. You might be able to deny it, ignore it, forget about it, or even abandon it for a time. But you are now, and will always be, in the holy presence of God.

Let that prayer center you and bring you focus and comfort and peace when you need it. And if you need a little nudge or a little kick in the pants, I hope the prayer will give you that, too.

We for our part pledge you our love. I don't think many principals stand up in front of a graduating class and pledge the community's love. But I do so tonight as I did standing before last year's graduating class. It is what makes us so different from most every other high school. We—your parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins; we, your teachers and counselors and coaches; we, for our part, pledge you our love. Because love transcends time and space. You will remember what Saint Paul wrote to that rather rebellious group of Christians in Corinth: love is patient and kind, neither pompous nor inflated; and it is not rude, self-seeking, or quick-tempered. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:4ff.) In short, love is the holy presence of God.

When you stop and remember that you are in the holy presence of God, know that we are there with you. Know that Matt and Sharmelia are there with you; that Mr. Limberger and Ms. Clarke are there with you. And through all the changes yet to be in your young lives, about the only thing you will ever be sure of, the only thing you can ever really count on is the holy presence of God. "In the end there are three things that last: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

*Saint John Baptist de La Salle...Pray for us.
Live, Jesus, in our hearts...Forever.*

Rudolf Schulze
Principal
Christian Brothers High School

*Commencement Address
Christian Brothers High School
Memorial Auditorium
Sacramento, California
Friday, May 23, 2003*

My dear graduates:

It is a privilege to stand before you this evening and to offer a few words of farewell. This evening and indeed this day have been filled with emotions, words, and memories. You do not need to hear very many more words this evening. I will be as brief as I can, but I have two things I want to share with you and which you may not remember tonight, but may remember someday.

The first is about *change*. You are familiar with change, my friends. The world around you is filled with change. Life changes, circumstances change, families change, schools change. Our choices create change; the choices of others also create change in our lives. Even with the kind of stability and routine you have experienced at Christian Brothers, you have experienced change. You have had several principals and deans, and of course different teachers, counselors, moderators, and coaches in the course of your four years with us. Apart from school, your own lives are filled with change—some changes are of a deeply personal nature; others are completely out of your control; still other changes have no explanation, rhyme, or reason. They just happened.

Most of you are now adults. At eighteen, there are even more changes: you can now vote, buy lottery tickets, serve your country in the armed forces, and even die for your country. You are children no longer. Saint Paul writes, "When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things." (1 Corinthians 13:11)

In the end, change means that you must adapt. Change calls on every fiber of your being, intellect, imagination, and heart to adapt. You really cannot fight change. But you can make choices.

When you were five years old, your parents knew everything. You may not hold that same opinion right now. But in about ten years or so, your parents will know everything again.

Your parents have given you two important gifts: roots and wings. They have given you the very tools you need to adapt to change. Your family's traditions and rituals are invaluable tools which you will adapt to your own lives and families. One of the most important tools they have given you is an education. We at Christian Brothers High School are proud to have been a part of that gift to you. In the next few months or years perhaps, they will give you wings. They will push you out of the nest—ever so gently, we hope—but nevertheless, you must leave the nest to test your wings—to be *what* you want to be, to be *where* you need to be, and to be *who* you want to be.

When you leave the nest, what will you have to hold onto?

And so to my second point. For four years, and for many times during the day during those four years, you have said a little prayer which has become second-nature to you by now: "*Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.*" Take that little prayer with you. Say it often or even occasionally to yourself. It's part of your roots, it's

part of your wings. As life, and choices, and changes swirl about you, it is a phrase that can center you and bring life into focus. "Let US remember that WE are in the holy presence of God." I don't want you to change the pronouns to "Let ME remember that I am in the holy presence of God." Use "us" and "we." Remember that the "us" and "we" are all of us here tonight.

Wherever you go, whenever you pray this prayer, remember that "we" are with you and that you are not alone as Father Wanser exhorted us this morning, and that you are always, always in the holy presence of God. No matter where you are, no matter what you are doing, no matter how far away you are from your roots, no matter where your wings have taken you—you are always, always in the holy presence of God. You cannot escape the holy presence of God; really, you can't even ignore the holy presence of God. You might be able to deny it, forget about it, or even abandon it for a time. But you are now, and will always be, in the holy presence of God.

Let that prayer center you and bring you focus and comfort and peace when you need it. And if you need a little nudge or a little kick in the pants, I hope the prayer will give you that, too.

We for our part pledge you our love. I don't think many principals stand up in front of a graduating class and pledge the community's love. But I do so tonight. It is what makes us so different from most every other high school. We—your parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins; we, your teachers and counselors and coaches; we, for our part, pledge you our love. Because love transcends time and space. Love is all the things Saint Paul wrote to that rather rebellious group of Christians in Corinth: love is patient and kind, neither pompous nor inflated; and it is not rude, self-seeking, or quick-tempered. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:4ff.) In short, love is the holy presence of God.

When you stop and remember that you are in the holy presence of God, know that we are there with you. We are there with you because we are part of your roots and wings. And through all the changes yet to be in your young lives, about the only thing you will ever be sure of, the only thing you can ever really count on is the holy presence of God, and that we are with you whenever you remember that you are in the holy presence of God. "In the end there are three things that last: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

*Saint John Baptist de La Salle...Pray for us.
Live, Jesus, in our hearts...Forever.*

Rudolf Schulze
Principal
Christian Brothers High School



CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

HIGH SCHOOL
COLLEGE PREPARATORY

January 6, 2004
The Feast of the Epiphany

Dear Parents:

Our Lasallian Family at Christian Brothers has been profoundly shaken again by an awful tragedy: the death of a second of our seniors in the month of December. The impact of these tragedies on our student body, especially the seniors, and on our faculty and staff is enormous. The deaths of Sharmelia Jeffries and Matthew Prentice have stunned us all. We are left wondering and amazed: Why are these students dead? Where is God's hand in all of this?

My own heart struggles to comprehend how this could be. These students had their whole lives ahead of them—futures bright with promise and hope. Words like *leadership*, *friendship*, and *loyalty* certainly characterize them. Sharmelia served in Campus Ministry as a retreat leader and Matt was a decorated Eagle Scout. Both were active in the life of their school, both worked on the school newspaper, and both had their eyes set on college.

My feelings resonate with Martha's anguished cry to Jesus: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." (John 11:21) I have heard many students ask: "Why did it have to happen this way? Why did they have to die?" Our faith teaches us that Sharmelia and Matt now rest in God's loving embrace. They are fine. They have and enjoy what we hope to have and enjoy: eternal life. Their baptismal promises have been fulfilled. Although their journeys were shorter than our journeys and their paths took them in different directions, they no longer see life's meaning "dimly as in a mirror," (1 Corinthians 13:12). No, they now see God face to face. They have joined the communion of saints and are with "those who have died and have gone before us marked with the sign of faith." (Eucharistic Prayer I) These are hard concepts to grasp at any age. My faith tells me with every fiber of my being that this is true.


I have thought a great deal about you and your families in these last weeks. I am especially mindful of what you as parents experience as you watch your children deal with death and grapple with their own adolescent sense of immortality. I want you to know that our entire community, in the midst of our own personal struggles with these deaths, is deeply committed to your children as they face their classmates' deaths and their own mortality. We have available to your sons and daughters a number of professionals and our own counselors who are trained to assist them. Our web site has

excellent grief resources for you as parents. I promise you that our teachers and counselors will continue to walk with your children especially when the immediate impact of these tragedies fades and their deeper feelings, thoughts, anxieties, or fears emerge. We will continue as a faith-filled community to remember that we are in the holy presence of God—for God's holy presence is really the only place that any of this can begin to make sense.

When I gathered members of my administrative team after we heard the news of Matt's death, we prayed the Lord's Prayer together. I was struck by the words: "Give us this day our daily bread." I have begged God in most of my waking moments this past week to give us what we need to accept these tragedies, to show us what we need to learn from the lives of these young, bright, and energetic kids, and to help us assist you and your sons and daughters as they face the stark reality of death in those so close to them.

If you need us, you know where to find us.

Sincerely,


Rudolf Schulze
Principal

Death, be not proud, though some have callèd thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones and souls' delivery.
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die.

Sonnet 10
John Donne
(1572-1631)



CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

HIGH SCHOOL
COLLEGE PREPARATORY

Can You Hear Me Now?

By
Rudolf Schulze
Principal

I've been hearing a lot of voices lately. I'm deep in my 40's and I suppose this is to be expected. My listening, however, doesn't always agree with what I am hearing. In the past I have usually driven to and from school with the radio off. Since I've moved to Sacramento, the radio's been on for some reason. I get a kick out of the outrageous "Armstrong and Getty Show" for the 15-20 minutes it takes me to get to work. In the afternoon I usually catch Michael Savage. At odd times during the day, on the way to a meeting, for example, I'll listen to Dr. Laura. I pride myself on rarely agreeing with any of these people. But I need the counterpoint, if you know what I mean. It helps my listening.

A very large part of my job at Christian Brothers is listening. I often described my former role as an assistant principal as "clearing up after the elephants." Now that I am a principal, I prefer to think of myself as a "listener" rather than as an "elephant."

This summer, I began my principalship by meeting with every teacher. I asked them to reflect on a number of questions, among them: *Why do you stay at Christian Brothers? What is best about Christian Brothers? What areas or programs in the school need the principal's attention?* These were very enlightening moments for me. So, what did I learn?

WHY DO YOU STAY AT CHRISTIAN BROTHERS HIGH SCHOOL?

Overwhelmingly, the teachers came to Christian Brothers because they needed a job. They stay because they found a mission. They describe the mission as having everything to do with a human and Christian environment and a shared vision. The context for the mission is students and the school's holistic approach to education. Remarkably, our student body looks like the "real world." Our teachers like the fact that we have room here for all kinds of kids – from the most advanced and capable "scholar" to the "SAGES" student who needs a little extra attention to the many students who find themselves in the midst of a demanding seven-period college preparatory curriculum. The faculty community describes itself as genuinely caring, big-hearted, dedicated, and supportive. I have found this and more in my short time here.

WHAT IS BEST ABOUT CHRISTIAN BROTHERS HIGH SCHOOL?

The community, students, teachers, school, brothers, and the academic life and student life. Our teachers didn't leave out very much! They commented on a sense of collegiality and camaraderie and find here a loving, nurturing, fun, honest, and compassionate environment for teachers and students. One faculty member said: "I see the face of God in my students." Another, "The students like being here." The environment challenges our teachers to work hard: "I want to do a better job," said a younger teacher. "These are some of the best teachers I've ever worked with," said another teacher with experience in several Lasallian schools. A veteran teacher said, "I am able to learn from veteran teachers!" The faculty is proud to be associated with the Brothers' long and storied commitment to the students of Sacramento: "Their commitment to the poor is our task, too." As for the academic life and student life of our school, teachers praised our academic diversity, the SAGES Program, the Scholars Program, the counselors, moderators, and coaches. Pointing to our academic diversity, a teacher stated: "Another way to look at our *tracking* is to see us as an academic powerhouse! They are not 'levels,' they are kids!" In true partisanship spirit, there was someone in every single department who said their department was what was *best* about Christian Brothers.

WHAT AREAS OR PROGRAMS IN THE SCHOOL NEED THE PRINCIPAL'S ATTENTION?

You can imagine the kind of laundry list I was given for areas that need my attention. I suspect that most of the list can be summarized in a few words: listen, communicate, develop relationships, express gratitude, and support teachers. Is that not what all of us want and expect in our working environments?

I have visited each of our classrooms on several occasions during the first quarter. I have visited a lot of classes in my career as a supervisor, department chair, and even as part of an accrediting team. I watch the kids mostly during those lessons. Professor Lynn M. Hoffman in a recent edition of *Education Week* writes: "What are adolescents seeking to accomplish in high school? My research tells me that they are primarily engaged in the work of growing up. They value experiences that encourage and support their efforts to be involved, to get along with everyone, and to develop independence." When I visit classes now, I leave with two questions to answer: "What did we learn today?" and "How did we learn it?" That's all part of my listening.

Which brings me to some prickly questions for all of us about *listening*: Are we *listening* to our kids or are we just "hearing" what they have to say? Do we love them enough to listen to them – their thoughts, hopes, fears, and desires? Do we love them enough to risk offering counterpoints to what they have to say? Do we love them enough to set reasonable expectations, limits, and consequences? Do we love them enough to talk frankly about drugs, alcohol, sexuality, and sexual activity? Do we love them enough to insist by our word, deed, and example that we are their parents and teachers? Do we love them enough to say "no" to them?

Take a look at their music. Take a look at the media. Take a look at their relationships. Look at how they dress, speak, and act. Somebody's got their attention.



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

November 2004

Dear Parents:

I am often complimented on how well-mannered and polite our students are, how comfortable they are with adults and guests, and how well they carry themselves. I am convinced that the credit belongs to you as parents. However, we also see them in the many other lights and shadows of their days.

In 1703, the Founder, Saint John Baptist de La Salle, published a wonderful little book entitled *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility* in which he describes Christian decorum as "that wise and well-regulated conduct which governs what we do and say. It arises from sentiments of modesty, respect, union, and charity toward our neighbor. It leads us to give due regard to proper times and places, and to the persons with whom we have to deal." (4)

We do not live in the France of Louis XIV and so some of the Founder's admonitions and directives are not only inappropriate for today's manners and customs, but are actually quite amusing. I have chosen ten of them for your edification and enjoyment. I want you to see how *practical* a man he was, how he read the signs of his times and prepared his students for the real world of seventeenth-century France, and how he looked beyond textbooks and lessons to help students live a human and Christian life. Remember that in 1950 Pope Pius XII proudly named Saint John Baptist de La Salle the *Patron of Teachers*—an extraordinary distinction and witness for the universal Church.

When seated, do not sprawl out in a slovenly way nor lean too noticeably against the back of your chair. (10)

It is not appropriate to wear a feather behind your ear or to put flowers in your ear or to have pierced ears with earrings. This is most inappropriate for a man, for it is a sign of slavery, which is not at all becoming. (12)

Do not, however, stare fixedly at anyone, especially persons of the opposite sex or persons of higher rank. And if it is proper to look at anyone, do this in a natural manner, gently and decently, so that no one can recognize in your glances any ill-regulated passion or affection. (20)

After spitting into your handkerchief, fold it immediately, without looking at it, and replace it in your pocket. It is extremely rude to spit out of a window, or into the fire,...or even against a wall, or in any place where the spittle can be stepped on. (30)

It is altogether against politeness to lean on your elbows while listening to someone talk. It is even more impolite to do so at table, and to adopt this posture while praying would be a gross lack of respect for God. (32)

When in company it is most uncouth to let gas escape your body, whether from the upper or lower part, even if this done without noise. And it is shameful and disgusting to do so in such a way that you can be heard by others. (37)

Still, it is not always advisable to adopt all the newest fashions right away. Some of them are capricious and bizarre, just as there are some which are reasonable and conformable to decorum....You should also change your shirt frequently, at least every week, and see to it that it is always white. (50-51)

When you are being served sliced portions of meat, it is rude to stretch out your plate hurriedly so as to be one of the first served. This is a sign and consequence of extreme greediness. (65)

With regard to [dances], suffice it to say that these are gatherings where behavior is neither Christian nor refined. They take place at night, for it seems that people want to hide from themselves the unbecoming things that take place and prefer to engage in them under cover of darkness so as to feel freer to do what is wrong. (94)

If any young persons have been left at your house, it is not proper to send them home alone, especially after nightfall; and if it is some distance to their homes, you should take them home yourself or entrust them to some reliable person for this purpose. (107)

The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility by John Baptist de La Salle, translated by Richard Arandez, FSC and edited by Gregory Wright, FSC in 1990, is available for \$15. Log onto <http://db.cbconf.org/cbc/index.html>. I think the students would enjoy the book and it would make a great stocking stuffer!

For us in 2004, a few practical matters. We do not allow students to wear hats inside of buildings. We teach them to have a firm handshake and to make eye contact when they are speaking to individuals or to a group. Our "dressy dress days" are themselves lessons in how to dress for special occasions. Recently, I have been embarrassed about this generation's notion of appropriate dress for a funeral: shorts, athletic shoes, and young women whose outfits wouldn't pass our dance dress code much less our "dressy dress" code. I wondered how they got out of the house.

A good friend of mine worked in the Capitol for many years. He regularly interviewed students for internships and adults for other government positions. In going through hundreds of résumés each year, one spelling error was enough to bounce the résumé to the circular file. "The word *typo* is your problem, not the government's problem." If the candidate was interviewed, *how*

they dressed and *how* they conducted themselves were important. A wrinkled shirt or slacks, a too-short skirt, and a five o'clock shadow were death knells.

Preparing students for "life" was a foundational element of the Founder's mission to provide students with a "human and Christian education." He wrote another book entitled *The Conduct of Schools*—a kind of recipe book for school administrators—which discusses daily life in the schools, establishing and maintaining order in the schools, and the training of new teachers. How students conducted themselves, the life lessons they were taught about manners and civility,

and their preparation as good and productive citizens of society were of paramount importance because these were means to an end: the salvation of their souls through a good, healthy, and productive Christian life. That's all that really matters to us here: the salvation of their souls.

Sincerely,



Rudolf Schulze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

October 2004

Dear Parents:

In 0.06 seconds, the search engine on my computer produced 266,000 results for the entry: *integrity cheating*. I guess I'm not the only one thinking about this. One of the articles I found—"Why Integrity Matters"—is well worth reading (<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/integ1.htm>). This brief article discusses the consequences of dishonesty—the erosion of one's self-worth, personal relationships, community, and trust.

I believe that there are two underlying reasons why students choose to cheat: sloth and unrealistic parental expectations. Either they are just plain lazy or we adults are setting them up for a fall. On the one hand, students often choose not to do the work for a variety of reasons and indulge their indolent, sluggish, and lazy (slothful) tendencies. In effect, they choose not to learn and to take the "easy way out." On the other hand, parents can unwittingly place unrealistic expectations upon their children whose abilities and talents could not possibly meet the demand.

Somewhere along the line the designation "college prep" became an "outcome" rather than the "process" of education. The "outcome" was further measured by a rather select list of colleges and universities regardless of ability, talent, and sometimes even desire. We have forgotten that "college prep" means that the school attests to the fact that a student who successfully completes its curriculum is *prepared* for a number of higher education opportunities. It does not guarantee anything more or less.

I have known far too many students who played a sport they never enjoyed playing because doing so "promised" them a scholarship; and others who declared a major simply because it "promised" financial security. I wonder if we give students enough time and opportunities to discover their talents and strengths, or do we simply chart the course for them and demand nothing less than what we probably know they are incapable of giving. Have we set our kids up for a fall?

We have lost the true meaning of "average." For me "average" means that I have done my very best no matter what the grade is. In some areas, most of us are "average." In others, we run the gamut from "pitiful" to "exceptional." For example, I am "pitiful" at basketball and "average" at

math. And yet, many students perceive that "average" is completely unacceptable to their parents and peers and therefore feel compelled to find ways (cheating) to make "average" look "exceptional." Sometimes cheating in the classroom or on the playing fields or with one's body is "the easy way out" (sloth), and sometimes cheating is "the only way out" (of unrealistic expectations).

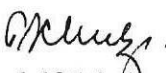
At what cost? If we do not choose a course of action that is based on doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do, we will have surrendered to the lowest form of moral development: "I won't cheat because I will get caught!"

I invite you to sit down one night and ask your children if they cheat. Talk about all kinds of cheating: academic, personal, relational, and physical. When, how, why? If the "why" is the result of their indolence, then ground them for life. If the "why" is connected to your expectations, (realistic or not), then you have an opening for honest dialogue about who they are and how they hope to shape their lives. Catch all the pronouns there: who *they* are and how *they* hope to shape *their* lives. You also have a chance to speak about integrity and to ask them to be young men and women of their word. If they choose to perform at a level beneath their "very best," they must suffer the consequences.

I remember Stephen Blankley who worked as hard as I've ever seen a kid work on a major paper. He was not a naturally gifted writer; the skills and techniques had to be learned and practiced and integrated into his writing style over and over again. The day I returned the papers, I was walking by the pay phones at recess, (It was a long time ago.), and overheard Stephen say excitedly: "Mom, I got an A-." (Pause for Mom.) *I know* I worked hard." That was about 25 years ago. Stephen still teaches me lessons about integrity, plagiarism, cheating, and doing my very best.

If you find out anything about cheating that we should know, call us.

Sincerely,


Rudolf Schulze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

May/June 2004

Dear Parents:

There is an old Cherokee saying: "Listen to the whispers and you won't have to hear the screams." Teenagers do not whisper very often. In fact, most of them wear their hearts on their sleeves. For those of us teachers who have been around the block, teenagers are fairly transparent about their thoughts and feelings no matter how stoic their exterior. They are "bookmarks" with the uncanny knack for knowing exactly where they left off the last time they poured their hearts out to us. Time and time again I have found that just about every student can find a teacher they trust and in whom they can confide, and who can "read" them. As I greet your sons and daughters each day, observe them in their classroom environments, or simply see them in hallways between classes or at break and lunch, there are *few* whispers. Their faces, however, as well as their greetings, smiles, frowns, wrinkles, and dimples tell it all: the stronger the fire is within them, the greater is their desire.

We are privileged at Christian Brothers to play a part in forming tomorrow's leaders. I am not talking about leadership that is attached to a title or position, appointed or elected. I am talking about the kind of leadership that is the product of conscious growth and change—the kind of leadership that will serve them well in any walk of life and in all of their relationships. For it is their response to growth and change that determines who they are as men and women.

Leadership's currency is principles, not perceptions. As teenagers, their lives are filled with the perceptions of others and people telling them that perception is *all* there is. We educators fight against that tide with the fortitude of salmon swimming upstream. We present your daughters and sons with challenges, great and small—expectations, goals and objectives, benchmarks, and desired outcomes. We do so in classrooms, on the playing fields, in the theatre, music rooms, and art studios. Sometimes we scream: Who told you that outfit was either attractive or appropriate? Who told you that cacophony was music?

We present our most thoughtful and important challenges, however, in whispers. Remember Merlin's admonition to the young Wart (who will pull the sword from the stone and become King Arthur): "Just because you are able to do

something doesn't mean you ought to do it." It bears repeating: *Just because you are able to do something doesn't mean you ought to do it.* Our teenagers rise to the challenges we present them. It is precisely for this reason that I am so proud of our juniors and seniors. On top of everything that has happened to them this year, they came face to face with the challenge of our Catholic schools' no-limo policy. They honored our request whether they agreed with it or not. In the end, they showed their peers throughout this city that the limos were one extravagance they did not need. They respected the fact that the social justice principle I introduced more than a year ago was more important than the perception of others. And so many of them have told me so.


I am confident that we are teaching them that effective, genuine leadership is about truth, action, honor, moving forward, admitting mistakes, and never quitting. Moreover, leadership is about influencing others—teaching people to see, teaching people to confront evil (especially public, structured evil), and teaching people how to move from hatred and division to reconciliation and community. I am reminded of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's fox who teaches the Little Prince: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye."

Ultimately, for us Christians, leadership is about service. Jesus' whisper: *Wash one another's feet.* (John 13:1-17)

Now it's summertime—traditionally a time set apart from our little red school house here on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard so that your children may return to the farms. For those who will not be laboring in the fields, make sure that there is plenty of time for them to do a little reading. I don't really care what they read, just as long as they're reading *something*. Reading can affirm and challenge them, broaden their horizons, engage their imaginations, and strengthen their vocabulary.

Have a wonderful summer! It's show time on August 18th!

Sincerely,


Rudolf Schulte
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

April 2004

Dear Parents:

The Founder told us that the purpose of the schools was "...to provide a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor..." Our own Brother George Van Grieken, FSC, in his dissertation, *Touching the Hearts of Students: Characteristics of Lasallian Schools*, writes: "De La Salle's favorite image for the activity of teaching is the winning and the touching of hearts. 'You carry out a work that requires you to touch hearts.' Such an image captures the essentially interior nature of teaching....The salvation of souls is a matter of touching hearts, of leading children to live in a Christian manner through winning their hearts." (96-97) For De La Salle, "saving souls" is the primary reason for our existence as a Catholic, Lasallian school, and thus gives great weight to the emphasis we place on our religious studies curriculum as distinctive and characteristic of our ministry.

It is the expectation of the Brothers that the religious studies curriculum in their secondary schools include a course of studies that addresses the key cognitive and affective content in the following eight areas: *Scripture* (both Hebrew and Christian), *Prayer and Spirituality*, *Liturgy* (including Sacraments), *Catholic Doctrine*, *Morality*, *Catholic Social Teaching* (especially justice and peace education), *Christian Vocations*, and the *Church and Religions Other than Christianity*. We might call these the "pillars" upon which we build our religious studies curriculum.

Our Religious Studies Department has identified some nineteen outcome statements for its curriculum. These outcomes issue from the Brothers' "pillars" and address the religious studies standards set by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) in its *Framework for K-12 Religious Education*. These outcomes also include assessment markers to measure our progress. The syllabus for each course clearly indicates when and how each outcome is integrated into the teaching and learning processes. It is a thorough and comprehensive approach and I am delighted with what our department has produced. I am also very proud of our dedicated and faith-filled Religious Studies faculty.

After the freshman introductory course, the sophomores study the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. The junior curriculum addresses morality and Church history. The six senior curriculum electives are: Comparative Religions, Social Justice, Christian Lifestyles, Liturgy, Mass, and Prayer, Catholic Social Teaching, and the Mystery of Suffering and Death. Throughout the curriculum, we are faithful to our Lasallian heritage such that students are introduced to our tradition and are invited to grow within it. As part of our tradition, a commitment to service of others, especially the poor and marginalized, is emphasized.

Let me be a little more specific by way of illustration. You will find in each course the broad strokes or "pillars" described above. Specifically, the outcomes are enumerative. For example, the

Hebrew and Christian Scriptures "pillar" is the sole focus of our sophomore curriculum. Presented in outcome language, it reads: "(A graduate of Christian Brothers High School will be able to) Read, interpret, and apply Scripture to his/her life." This outcome is assessed through the reading and recollection of biblical stories; the use of historical and critical methods of interpretation; the ability to locate specific information in the Bible; the use of Scripture for prayer and liturgy; and the ability to transfer ideas from Scripture to daily life.


The Morality "pillar" is expressed in outcome language as: "(A graduate of Christian Brothers High School will be able to) Make moral decisions consistent with Church teaching." This outcome is assessed through the student's ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes; the examination and explanation of the Church's social teachings; the use of a variety of decision-making strategies; the application of relevant knowledge of Church teachings to concrete situations; and the ability to assist the community in forming values and making choices. The course has four units: *Morality* (epistemology [How we know things]; what is a human being; conscience and its formation; and relationships); *Relationships with Oneself* (narcissism; altruism; natural law; moral and political authority; self-esteem; honesty; freedom; suffering); *Relationships with Others* (justice; love and loving; community and society); and *The Christian Claim and Morality* (How to live as Jesus did).

It is important to note that while the Scripture and Morality "pillars" are courses in and of themselves, they do not appear once and for all and then disappear. They and all of the "pillars" and "outcomes" are woven into the fabric of every religious studies course.

All of this talk about the religious studies curriculum is important because it distinguishes us from non-Catholic schools. However, "teaching religion" for De La Salle is something that every teacher in the school *does*. Brother George reminds us that "De La Salle minces no words in telling Lasallian educators how their personal spiritual growth and their conscientious practice of their ministry have ultimate consequences":

Your duty requires you to teach (the students) religion. If they do not know it because you do not know it well yourself, or because you are careless in teaching it to them, you are false prophets. You are responsible for making God known to them,... (85-86)

The Risen Christ's blessings upon you and your families!

Sincerely,

Rudolf Schütze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

March 2004

Dear Parents:

I have been associated with the Brothers of the Christian Schools for seventeen of my nearly thirty years in Catholic secondary education. I appreciate both the challenges and the graces that accompany such an extraordinary mission to which I and my colleagues in all Lasallian schools have committed our professional lives.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle founded the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in a spirit of faith to address a specific need: the education of poor and disadvantaged youth. According to Brother Luke Salm, FSC, in the year 1680, during the reign of the Sun King, Louis XIV, "De La Salle himself came gradually to realize [that] the contrast between the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the artisans and the poor on the other, was striking." (*The Work Is Yours*, page 45) Clearly the "best" or "most professional" teachers in the late 17th century were the "writing masters." These highly paid men taught the children of the upper class in Latin. So the first Brothers did not come to work with striking resumes, lists of accomplishments and honors, or dazzling personalities. De La Salle really had no intention of starting schools. He believed in what the new schoolmasters hoped to do for the poor; he supported them financially and he even housed them. But he considered them "below my manservant." He writes:

I had imagined that the guidance I was giving the schools and masters would be only an external guidance which would involve me with nothing more in their regard than providing for their upkeep and taking care that they carried out their employment with care and application...If I had ever believed, in fact, that the concern I had for the schoolmasters out of pure charity would ever have made it a duty for me to live with them, I should have given it up; for, as naturally I set below my manservant those I was obliged, especially in the beginning, to employ in the schools, the mere thought that I might have to live with them would have been unbearable. I experienced, in fact, a very great distress when I first brought them into my house, and it lasted two years. It was apparently for this reason that God,...wishing to encourage me to take full responsibility for the schools, did so in a most imperceptible manner and over a period of time; so that one involvement led me into another, without my having foreseen it in the beginning. (*Cahiers Lasalliens*, section 6, 31)

As God continued to capture his heart through the mission which was unfolding before him, De La Salle was actually forming communities of teachers, (later they called themselves "Brothers"), to respond to the needs he found in Reims, France.


At some point, De La Salle realized that *community* was the cornerstone of the schools. Indeed, it was the *association* of the Brothers—one with another—as communities that gave life and spirit to the mission. The key to De La Salle's success as an educator, (whose spirituality and pedagogy have endured for more than 300 years and whom the Church has named the *Patron of Teachers*), is that he taught the first Brothers how to be teachers. He taught them how to "do" the mission by capitalizing on their gifts and talents, weaknesses, and limitations.

For the Founder, it was their *association* that mattered most. As one Brother translates *association* for us: "It's how we are together that matters." *Association* is a word that is very dear to the Brothers. It means that *faith* and *zeal* find their context and meaning in the exigencies of the everyday lives of the young people who come to their schools. As part of their consecration to God, the Brothers make a vow of association among themselves so as to maintain the schools "together and by association." And so De La Salle, with his first Brothers, as the *Rule* of 1987 reminds us, were "associated together to respond to the needs of young people who were poor and far from salvation."

Today, the Brothers use the word *partners* to describe their lay colleagues. The choice of that word is deliberate. As they face declining numbers in the Institute, the Brothers could easily turn in on themselves or resign themselves to the moment when the last Brother will put the cat out and turn out the lights. Instead, the Brothers have opened their arms to those who are willing to commit themselves to the mission. The Brothers have not given away their responsibility for or ownership of the mission. Far from that, they are active, present, and prophetic. In fact, they welcome the diversity which the partners bring to the mission.

Today we continue to pray for vocations knowing that it is God's plan that we must discern. Mr. Stan Gilliam, Class of 1941, was recently named Christian Brothers High School's *Ambassador of the Year*. In his speech that evening he said that he and his classmates "owed everything to the Brothers." Driving home that night I was struck by the power of that line. How could a four-year period of time as a student at Christian Brothers High School—a hiccup in the life of an octogenarian—have had such a profound impact on this man and his classmates? The answer, I believe is the mission of the Brothers: "The purpose of this Institute is to provide a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor, according to the ministry which the Church has entrusted to it." The Brothers had reached out and touched his heart.

Sincerely,


Rudolf Schulte
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

February 2004

Dear Students (Parents: Feel free to read along!):

I bet you never got a Valentine's Day card from your principal before.

There really was a Saint Valentine! Hard to believe, I know. Actually, he was a priest who lived in Rome during the third century while the infamous Emperor Claudius ruled Rome with a very heavy hand. Because Claudius wanted a large army and because he thought that marriage kept men away from the army, he established a law forbidding young men to marry. Now Valentine believed in the value and power of love, and so he continued marrying young couples in secret. Eventually Claudius found out about Valentine, arrested him, and sentenced him to death. While he was in prison, many young people would come to visit him; they often brought flowers and notes. Valentine himself wrote a note of gratitude to one young visitor and signed it, "Love from your Valentine." He wrote it on the day he died, February 14, 269 AD.

In third grade (circa 1961) we created "mailboxes" for our desks on Valentine's Day, decorating brown lunch bags in what I remember was an all-day event. I recall that we absolutely had to have a valentine for every kid in the class, boys and girls alike. I also remember feeling anxious and excited about receiving one particular valentine. Like Charlie Brown's "cute little red-haired girl," I was smitten by Cynthia Faktor. I waited all day for a valentine from Cynthia Faktor. None ever arrived.

Fast forward to high school (circa 1967-1971). You all remember (or you will someday remember) your "first love." You understand the experience of Cupid's arrow. You know what it is like to think about another person for hours and hours or to stay up all night thinking about that person and still feel refreshed in the morning because you are aren't tired at all. The hours of infatuation have actually energized you. You can't wait to see that person and you would do anything for that person. First love. First infatuation. You may also have had the experience of breaking up with your first, second, or even third "love." There is very little that an adult can say to you about the experience that will make sense except that we've all been through it and probably more than once. It happens and it usually hurts a lot.

What I want to say to you is that I hope you have these experiences. I hope that you have several of them. Each experience of "first love" teaches us about more about ourselves and more about relationships. If we take our relationships seriously, then they will help us to find that person whom we will love for the rest of our lives. Relationships allow us to understand better our gifts, talents, weaknesses, and limitations as we often see them reflected in or complemented by the person we are seeing or dating. The more we explore relationships, the more we come to see that God intended us to *use* things and to *love* people. Eventually we come face to face with the sad fact

that our culture teaches the opposite.

Some respond to losing "first loves" by protecting themselves and surrounding themselves with "things" to mask or anesthetize the pain that comes from being hurt or rejected. Oftentimes people turn to alcohol, drugs, and casual sex. These alternate responses convince us that we never want to be hurt again. And so we avoid relationships or seek only "casual" relationships in which we *use* people. We might also choose to hide behind some masks.

In his book, *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* author John Powell describes a young man's response to the title's question: "I am afraid to tell you who I am, because if I tell you who I am, you may not like who I am, and it's all I've got." He goes on to list a number of masks people wear to inure (SAT word!) themselves from having to reveal or share themselves with others.

Do you recognize any of your friends or even yourself behind one of these masks which Powell catalogs: *the Body Beautiful, the Bigot, the Braggart, the Clown, the Crank, the Cynic, the Dominator, the Doper, the Dreamer, the Drinker, the Flirt, the Gossip, the Intellect, the Loner, the Martyr, the Messiah, the Procrastinator, or the Worrier.*

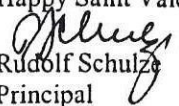
You certainly see all of these characters at school and at parties. These are people who *use* people, and they prop themselves up by hiding behind a mask. You can't enter into a relationship with someone who is hiding behind a mask. For whatever reason, these people find it easier to avoid relationships than to work at building a relationship. Instead of being a part of the mainland, they are content to be a small island in the midst of a great archipelago. As Simon and Garfunkel sang:

*I touch no one and no one touches me,
I am a rock, I am an island.
And a rock feels no pain
And an island never cries.*

Relationships demand that we take off our masks and stop playing games with drugs, alcohol, and casual sex in order to initiate or sustain them. Relationships require healthy, whole persons who risk being hurt once in a while but who are strong enough to keep searching for the person who will fulfill them, complement them, and make them happy. Relationships are hard work.

You are just at the very beginning of this journey into adulthood! Take it seriously. You don't need the masks to "look good." You already "look good" because God created you.

Happy Saint Valentine's Day!


Rudolf Schulze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

December 2003/January 2004

Dear Parents:

One of my favorite Christmas stories is Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. The Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Future take Ebenezer Scrooge on a journey he would not have otherwise chosen for himself. It is the ghosts' intention that Scrooge find himself—or at least be confronted with or haunted by himself—through visits to his past, present, and future. Dickens describes the miserly, cynical Scrooge: "The cold within him froze his old features....He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas." *Bah-humbug*. "If I could work my will," Scrooge declares, "every idiot who goes about with *Merry Christmas* on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart."

The Ghost of Christmas Past admonishes him: "I told you these were shadows of things that have been. They are what they are, do not blame me!" "Remove me!" Scrooge exclaimed. "I cannot bear it!"

The second phantom, the Ghost of Christmas Present, reveals a festive and humble Christmas dinner in the Cratchit home. Here Scrooge, "overcome with penitence and grief," realizes his insensitivity when faced with the love which the Cratchits have for one another. "God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all." Scrooge regrets mightily having said that Bob Cratchit should have had a smaller family.

The third visit from the Ghost of Christmas Future foreshadows Scrooge's death. He "read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, *Ebenezer Scrooge*." He cries, "Spirit! Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope?...Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life!"

What I like best about Dickens' detestable Scrooge is that as mean, skeptical, and hard as he is on himself and all around him, he *changes*. His ghostly encounters provide him with glimpses of his ruthless and heartless self from which he learns to love and care again. It is a story with a happy ending as most Christmas stories should. But the "happy ending," author John Gardner tells us, is tempered by the warning from Marley's Ghost that Scrooge (and all

of us!) "had best improve our capacity for human sympathy—or else! We must love one another or die unloved."

I said that what I liked best about the story is that Scrooge changes. A child born in "mean estate where ox and ass are feeding" in the town of Bethlehem shows us how to change, too. He shows us by becoming just like us in everything but sin. The *good news* here is that there is not a feeling, thought, body sensation, or common human experience that we endure which Jesus himself did not endure. He made the best and right choices; he taught us how to do the same. And he left us the Holy Spirit to provide grace, support, and the gifts of Confirmation for every moment of our lives.

Teenagers often find little meaning and great difficulty identifying with the Christmas nativity scenes in our homes and churches. What exactly are we celebrating? Why are we celebrating a Christmas Past? What does Jesus' birth 2000 years ago have to do with me today?

Our nativity scenes can serve as reminders of our Christmases Past: those years of innocence and wonder—those *shadows of things that have been*—which have given way to our Christmases Present filled with experiences (happy and sad) and realizations (disappointing and fulfilling). Our nativity sets also herald our Christmases Future: that Jesus is born in us again and that faith is never fully-grown or mature. With the Christ Child in the manger we can rediscover and reclaim what is best in us. We can ask for the grace to make good choices and to respond wholeheartedly to injustices and sinful situations which present themselves to us. We can, with the aging Ebenezer Scrooge, "change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life!"

*I will honor Christmas in my heart,
and try to keep it all the year.
I will live in the Past, the Present, and Future.
The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me.
I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.*
Ebenezer Scrooge

Merry Christmas!

Rudolf Schulze
Rudolf Schulze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

November 2003

Dear Parents:

In this "Thanksgiving" month, I want to look back, much the same way that Alfred Lord Tennyson did in his poem "Ulysses" (1842).

I recently turned 50. To maintain some sort of control over the occasion, I did what a friend of mine in the same situation did last year to mark the occasion: I threw my own birthday party. In fact, among my close friends, I borrowed his line: "If you don't get an invitation, it wasn't a mistake." I wanted a fairly simple party in my own home. An afternoon affair. No speeches, no roasts. "No presents, please."

You can imagine the kinds of cards I received. "Turning 50 is like a walk in the park...alone...at midnight...in the fog...with weird noises in the distance." The 50th Birthday Fairy says: "I will grant you one wish...I said a wish, not a miracle!" The Dwarves at 50: "Touchy, Baldy, Squinty, Gassy, Chubby, Cranky, and Drafty." (Imagine that card's visual depiction!)

That "walk in the park" captures some of my moments. The "weird noises in the distance" are usually sophomores, however. I do wish for miracles a lot. And some of my present experience resonates with the names of Snow White's dwarves.

Turning 50. If Socrates is right that the unexamined life isn't worth living, then half a century's experience demands scrutiny. We all come from "somewhere," and how we arrived "here" from that "somewhere" is sometimes dumb luck, chance, fate, choices good and bad, simply God's grace, or all of the above. What follows is my "thanksgiving reflection"—an exercise of grateful remembering. I hope that my reflection will spark a similar conversation in your own homes about those people, events, traditions, and experiences that have formed you and your children. We are only fooling ourselves if we think that the past does not affect the future and so I hope you will help your children always remember where they came from. For Tennyson's Ulysses (Odysseus) life is a journey (both real and metaphoric):

*I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone;...*

I am part of all that I have met. It was a much different world in 1953. Pius XII was pope. Eisenhower was president. My parents bought their first and only home for \$15,000 in San Francisco, the monthly mortgage equaling 75% of my father's monthly salary. I remember that milk bottles and fresh produce were delivered every couple of days. Butchers gave kids cold hot dogs. By the time I understood what an "allowance" was, my

parents were unfamiliar with the word. One of my earliest memories is the sheer terror and fright I experienced on the first day of kindergarten when I saw a nun (who was probably Jesus' grandmother) in full habit for the first time. (Some of you will surely remember those remarkable Mercy Sisters who taught us to read, write, and pray.) We ate dinner together as a family. We had Sunday dinners at my Sicilian grandparents' home. We opened our presents on Christmas Eve. Santa came on Christmas morning. And to this day, all four of us kids still find a filled stocking on Christmas morning. In the living room, my parents danced to Frank Sinatra records on the "hi-fi" on Saturday nights.

John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Pope John XXIII, the Beatles, Neil Armstrong—they were all heroes.

My parents sacrificed greatly to give us a wonderful education in Catholic schools (K-12). As for college, "You kids are on your own," my father said. Fair enough. I continued at Loyola Marymount University where I actually was able to work on campus for \$1.65 an hour and paid the whole bill—tuition, books, room, and board--\$3,000. Kids can't very well do that today.

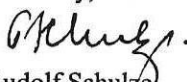
I know that my parents could examine their past and come up with stories and memories that begin when they were born at the dawn of the depression. Their parents could do the same, beginning at the turn of the (last) century. *That which we are, we are.*

I regret very little and am thankful for everything. We do not give thanks or say "Thank You" enough. I know that I don't. In this month of thanksgiving I will encourage our students to be thankful. First, for the life they have received—life that is the fruit of your love for one another and God's blessing upon your commitment to one another. Second, for all of the gifts, talents, opportunities, and experiences they have received—most of which you have provided for them. Third, for the life before them—*For always roaming with a hungry heart*—that they may know themselves fully and be who they want to be: *To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.*

Through Christ our Lord you give us all these gifts,
you fill them with life and goodness,
you bless them and make them holy.
(The conclusion of Eucharistic Prayer I)

Happy Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,


Rudolf Schulze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

September 2003

Dear Parents:

Welcome back!

A few weeks ago I said to our attendance secretary, Ms. Janis Hoffart, "I miss the kids. But the place sure runs like a top without them." We had a good laugh. We both knew that the place is pretty meaningless without them.

As we begin to settle into the school year, a certain "routine" emerges. It is a familiar routine: students arriving in the morning for a full day of classes, homerooms, and activity periods. They look forward to lunch. (We all do! Today our menu included *penne rigate* pasta and a choice of three sauces, a tomato and feta cheese salad, fresh fruit, freshly baked garlic bread, and french fries. We shall suspend judgment about the propriety of french fries accompanying the pasta because french fries sell!) The after-school routine includes tryouts for fall sports, auditions for *Little Shop of Horrors*, club meetings, Student Council, new friends, old friends. The freshmen are lost. The sophomores do not know they are lost. The juniors have been here a while and aren't going anywhere. And the seniors are facing a future filled with promise and uncertainty.

Summer was too short; summer was too long. New clothes. By the way, horizontal stripes on slightly oversized polo-style shirts are "in" for the boys this year. Big time! (The "sag" is a lot better, thank God!) Some of the girls are courting disaster (or another trip to Mervyn's) with the "tucking" issue. Some kids had a great summer; some kids didn't. Why do we keep getting older and they stay the same age?

As I begin my second year as principal, I breathe a little easier. I have seen the "show" once now. I have been in school since 1958 when I met Sister Mary Anselm, my kindergarten teacher. Since then I have been in school every year as a student, teacher, or administrator. It feels right. All of the schools I attended differ greatly in emphasis, tradition, and heritage, but not in character. All have been Catholic schools. I could have learned math, English, history, and language at any Catholic school as your children could in any one of the four wonderful Catholic high schools in Sacramento. But each school has a character or *charism*. Ours is simply this: to provide a human and Christian education for young people, especially the poor, according to the mission entrusted to

us by the Church. Our founder, Saint John Baptist de La Salle would go on to talk about how important it was for his teachers to reach out and touch hearts. Our alumni tell us that the relationships they formed with teachers, coaches, counselors, moderators, and friends—touching hearts—is what made all the difference.

I know that you have choices in Sacramento about the "character" or *charism* of the Catholic education you provide for your children. That is why I asked you and your children to sign *Partnership Statements* this year attesting to the fact that you read the *2003-2004 Parent/Student Handbook* and support the mission, philosophy, rules, regulations, and procedures contained therein. This was not just another form which is why I placed so much emphasis on it. It is, in fact, a living document that codifies our *partnership* with you and your children.

Thank you for sharing them with us each day. The school is now filled with their laughter and energy, their good days and bad days, their hopes, dreams, talents, limitations, gifts, and weaknesses. Just what the Church had in mind when it gave its blessing to the kind of Catholic school the Founder envisioned.

Sincerely,

Rudolf Schulze
Principal





Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

May/June 2003

Dear Parents:

In this final letter of the school year, I want to share some of the many blessings we received this year...First of all, **Corey Valine**, a freshman in our *SAGES Program*, was honored at our *Academic Awards Convocation* on April 14th with one of the school's highest awards: the *Signum Fidei Award*. Our seniors are filling their college portfolios with acceptance letters from Dartmouth, Harvard, all of the campuses of the University of California, Boston University, Northeastern, Tulane, Notre Dame, Harvey Mudd, Santa Clara, Loyola (Chicago), Loyola Marymount, USC, USD, USF, and many others.

A new club on campus, *World of Difference*, recently participated in an intensive training program to help all of us understand and appreciate the many levels of diversity within our community. These students now form the leadership team which will begin an education program for the faculty and student body in the fall and may well extend to presentations in the elementary schools.

Freshman **Anthony Guidry** found \$300 in cash earmarked for tuition near one of the soda machines and turned it into the Main Office.

For the first time in our school's history, we had nearly 500 applications for admission. We have a full "waiting list" of students seeking admission to all academic programs.

Our students continue to be actively involved in service projects which are close to our hearts at Oak Ridge Elementary School, St. HOPE Academy, Wellspring, and Streetsweep. Our Service-Learning Coordinator, **Mrs. Leah Newton**, is helping to move us toward a *service-learning model* wherein curriculum, service, and reflection are intimately connected to and spring from the teacher's lesson plan and course outcomes rather than from an arbitrary "service requirement."

Our Guidance Services Department provided a number of evening events for parents in search of college information and financial assistance. Scott Johnson's presentation to the student body on drugs and alcohol—"It Can Never Happen to Me"—was very

well received. So much of our counselors' work is unseen as they help our students negotiate their way through adolescence. Thanks to **Mrs. Mary Hesser** and her wonderful team!

In Campus Ministry our beautiful liturgies, 9/11 Prayer Service, retreats, and immersion experiences have been exceptional opportunities for our students to grow in faith and self-knowledge. I am particularly grateful to **Ms. Susannah Ruffu** and the students in her Liturgy, Mass, and Prayer classes for their outstanding leadership and participation.

In Student Activities we began the year with the traditional "Lock-In" hosted by the seniors, members of the class councils, and the ASB. I was quite impressed with how our students welcomed the new Falcons! This year's rallies, dances, lunchtime activities, and the QSP Magazine Drive have been well organized and enjoyable experiences. **Mr. Rolf Schumann**, the Director of Student Activities, will be stepping down after six years of leadership. His assistant, **Mrs. Rose Ann Holmes**, has been appointed to take his place. Many suspect that Mr. Schumann will find a place in the SMAT wing with a piece of chalk in one hand and a math book in the other! (Oops! We don't use chalk anymore!)

Brother Roch is the "Pied Piper" of media services here at Christian Brothers and he has done a wonderful job creating and building our television studio and programming services—KBFT. His students have done a great job this year and it is a delight to watch their "morning show" during homeroom...News, sports, the school calendar, fashion, weather, and special features are the order of the day. *C'est magnifique!*

Our instrumental and choral music programs continue to thrive under the gentle batons of **Mr. Tom Herb** and **Mr. Ron Slabbinck**, respectively. In fact, our classes are growing so quickly that we may have to add staff in the very near future to accommodate students in the visual and performing arts. **Mr. Kevin Haag** has been appointed as the first Director of Visual and Performing Arts, a new position about which I wrote in February.

Our new Athletic Director, **Mr. Rob Cooper**, and his associate, **Mrs. Jill Bennett**, have worked tirelessly this year to coordinate and support our many athletic teams. We have enjoyed successes at all levels—successes measured in achievement, personal accomplishment, team spirit, and school unity. There are many changes and new opportunities for our student-athletes in the works for the new school year, including some new coaches and programs. As the "owner" of the team(s), I am very proud of our student-athletes. I am particularly grateful for the enthusiasm and dedication of our coaches. A special word of congratulations to our long-time soccer coach, **Mr. Vince Juarez**, who was named *Sierra Valley Conference Coach of the Year*. His hard work, dedication, and commitment to our students and his fellow coaches are what high school athletics are all about in a Lasallian school.

We have an exceptional group of new teachers this year and I am delighted to be associated with them. As they finish their "rookie year" I congratulate **Elizabeth Coyner, Lorie Frias, Leah Newton, Sean O'Brien, George Petrissans, Ron Slabbinck, Lincoln Snyder, and Julie Tucker**.

Finally, some farewells... After twenty-two years of service as a teacher and coach, **Mr. Mike Costello** will be retiring. Beloved, long-time counselor, **Mr. John Higgins**, will also retire this spring after twenty years at Christian Brothers. **Mr. Tom Rutten**, Dean of Students (2001-2003) and Principal (1997-2001), will be moving to Sacramento High School as principal of the *School of Public Service* under the charter awarded to Mr. Kevin Johnson of St. HOPE Academy. **Mr. Fred Quontamatteo** and **Ms. Marcia Clarke** will have new, part-time assignments next year as they ease into their own retirements after lifetimes of service to Catholic education. **Ms. Britt Wiseman** and **Ms. Shannon Blecha** will also be leaving us, with our gratitude, for new challenges and opportunities.

I make Saint Paul's words to the Christians at Philippi my own: "I thank my God when I think of you. And every time I pray for you, I pray with joy." (Phil. 1:3-4) May the summer be a time of rest, relaxation, a little bit of work, and plenty of time for reading beyond the required summer reading! We're back "live" on August 20th!

Sincerely,


Rudolf Schulze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

April 2003

Dear Parents:

I want to thank you for the overwhelming response to my last letter in this august publication about the Upper-Division Ball. I have had hundreds of letters, cards, e-mails, telephone calls, voicemail messages, and informal contacts with parents and students at many school events. I have been surprised to receive responses from all over the country as the letter has been shared by others with friends, colleagues, teachers, administrators, and Brothers. Interestingly enough, I've had only two dissenting voices: a letter and a conversation.

As I have said to many people, I and my Principal's Advisory Council have not made any decisions nor do I intend to make any decisions until this new conversation runs a fair course. I had the chance to speak with the junior class on March 20th—clearly the letter rattled a few cages! (That's a good thing.) Imagine the surprise on the faces of the moneychangers when Jesus walked into the Temple one bright sunny afternoon! (Matthew 21:12ff.) Please help me to convince the most outraged among your sons and daughters that this isn't about "control." ("You can't tell us how to spend our money.") It's about the Gospel—who we are and how our actions demonstrate who we say we are.

I am touched by the great number of students who have sought me out in support of this conversation. I received a letter from a number of juniors after the class meeting telling me how much they appreciated the opportunity to voice their opinions. Teachers tell me that classroom discussions are "animated." Two vignettes perhaps capture it: "Yes, he's right and I agree with him, but I still want to party after the dance." And, "We're seniors. We're entitled."

In early June, the principals, deans, and activities directors of the four local Catholic high schools will meet to discuss our experiences of the proms and balls this year. The conversation continues...

I want to share with you that I have hired a *Wellness and Prevention Counselor* for our Guidance Services Department. Mr. Kent Morrison, a licensed and certified chemical dependency counselor, will join us in August. He holds a bachelor's degree in sociology, a master's degree in addiction counseling, and is presently a senior counselor with the Hazelden Organization in Minnesota.


Mr. Morrison will teach psychology and will be responsible for our school's drug and alcohol education and prevention program. He comes with impeccable credentials and references, including that of Mr. David Gust of New Directions, whose services we now use for education, prevention, and referral.

Times have changed, my friends. When I was in high school we had one counselor for 1,200 boys and he spent most of his time with the seniors. Mr. Morrison joins a great team of five personal, academic, and college counselors and will facilitate the curriculum piece of our drug and alcohol education and prevention program for students, provide in-service presentations for teachers, and information for parents. He will also be the on-site referral counselor for students who have drug and alcohol issues and counseling needs, or who require a referral to outside professional programs. I call attention to his title again: *Wellness and Prevention Counselor*.

Happy Easter! I am looking forward to watching my nearly-two-year-old nephew on Easter morning when he spies his first Easter basket and "connects the dots" that the eggs he finds hidden throughout the house should go into the basket. That kind of child-like wonder and awe center me and focus my energies, however briefly, on what's really important. It also reminds me that Jesus died for all of us—for those who are defending our country, for those who believe and those who do not, for the boys and girls who walk these halls each and every day, for the teachers who prepare lessons and correct papers, for counselors, coaches, moderators, and secretaries, for parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and for Nicholas and his Easter basket.

No one was more surprised at the resurrection than Jesus. The Father raised the dead son so that we might have life. So that we might be bread broken for one another, passed around and shared. So that we might be wine poured out in loving service. "Whenever you do this, remember me." Because of the Resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Jesus is with us always. Live, Jesus, in our hearts. Forever.

Sincerely,


Rudolf Schälze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

March 2003

Dear Parents:

In "The World Is Too Much with Us," 18th century British poet William Wordsworth writes:

*The world is too much with us; late and soon
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!*

Part of my job as principal is to keep reminding all of us about the partnership we share: school, students, and parents. In today's difficult and fragmented world, we Catholic educators often stand in stark contrast to society's materialistic values. Our role is to assist you by offering our values as paradigms of faith, service, compassion, honesty, and integrity in conscious opposition to society's misplaced values of winning, grabbing, accumulating, consuming, and enjoying. That isn't always easy.

For two weeks recently I taught a section of our Social Justice course for seniors while one of our teachers was recuperating from back surgery. When the topic of "materialism" presented itself in the text, I asked about the Upper-Division Ball. Based on last year's ball and "local custom," this is what the students anticipate spending. The boys will spend about \$500: tuxedo (\$65-150); bid (\$90); pictures (\$50); haircut (\$10-20); corsage (\$25); limo or party bus (\$50). The boys were quite honest about "party supplies" (\$100) and the rental of a hotel room or condo (\$150) often reserved by a student's parents. The girls will also spend about \$500: dress (\$150-200); shoes (\$60); accessories (\$40); nails/hair/pedicure (\$150); tanning salon (\$65); boutonniere (\$10); miscellaneous (\$30). In rough figures, our students will spend between \$750 and \$1,000 per couple. If 200 couples attend the ball — all 497 juniors and seniors are invited — our students will spend nearly \$200,000.

Here are my questions and perhaps they are yours, too: \$200,000 for what? What are "party supplies"? Why does my child need to share a limo or party bus? Why are there bags and coolers in the trunk? Why would my child need to pack a change of clothes and toiletries? Do I want my child to spend the night in a hotel room with other couples or alone with his/her date? Which parent(s) actually rented the condo or cabin in Tahoe for the kids? Why? Will they be there with the kids?

Some expenses may surprise you. Others are considered "once-in-a-lifetime" expenses. And most are attending the ball with a "friend" and not their "one true love." That's a lot of money to spend on a friend. That's a lot of money, period. Could we do something else with \$200,000 or even \$100,000? What if the Upper-Division Ball were a semi-formal dinner dance? What if the kids donated what they would spend on tuxedos, fancy

dresses, flowers, tanning and toe nails, limos, party supplies, and hotel rooms—"the difference"—to our Lasallian sister school in Africa so that the children there could have all of the immunizations and vaccinations we take for granted in well-baby and preventative health care?

I think some parents console themselves by thinking that their children will be "safer" in a limo. So what would be "unsafe" about using the family car? I can't imagine allowing my teenager to stay in a hotel or to attend a party in a hotel room after the ball. A reasonable curfew is 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning; not late Sunday afternoon. Are tanning salons even environmentally safe? (To be fair, the girls told me that only 50% of the girls do this.) My sister tells me that she looks forward to her first pedicure when the last child graduates from college in six years.

I hope that you will sit down with your child and share this letter. I hope that you will talk with and feel supported by other parents, too. You have a right and an obligation to ask these questions. I hope that you will not "hold your tongues" because your child is eighteen years old, or because there will be a "scene" if the topic is broached, or because "everyone else's parents" approve. I do not want to imagine you "holding your breath" during an all-night vigil praying that your child is safe.

We are just another high school if we are not about living and witnessing to the Gospel values which give meaning and context to our faith. I do not think that we should wink, or briefly turn our backs, or hold our collective breath when it comes to such things. The ball is not what it once was because our world and our society are not what they once were. The expectations placed upon students by society, advertising, and peer pressure are enormous. My heart goes out to these kids. I watch them struggle all the time with what the world is teaching them in contrast to what you hold dear, what they hold dear, and what we hold dear. And the stakes are higher each year for them. Imagine telling your friends that you don't want to chip in for a limo or a hotel room or that you might even consider making your own dress? Would a student dare risk wearing a suit and tie to the ball?

I hope that one of the reasons you sent your child to Christian Brothers was so that we could ask some of these questions. I hope, too, that I will hear from you. Indeed, "The world is too much with us; late and soon / Getting and spending we lay waste our powers."

Sincerely,

Rudolf Schulze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

February 2003

Dear Parents:

Of libraries, volunteers, and the visual and performing arts...

I need your help! You may have heard about an "adjustment" I have made with respect to our library services to ensure that our library is an important, accessible, and relevant learning space for students and teachers. In accepting the librarian's seventeen-point course of action for updating and systematizing the library, I had to make some tough choices because the budget is tight, the project is very technical, and we have one librarian. The task at hand requires every minute of a full-time, forty-hour week from now until the end of the school year.

I have moved the computers and technology components of the library into our Technology Center for the second semester so that all of the electronic tools that were available for research will continue to be available for our students and teachers, simply in a new location for this semester. *In doing so, I have also expanded the hours for our library resources in the Technology Center and I need your help. Would you consider volunteering a bit of time to help us help your children?* In addition to school hours, we want the Technology Center open from 6:45 – 7:45 each morning, and from 4:00 - 6:00 in the afternoons, Monday through Thursday. Teachers have been generous in stepping up to help, but we have no money to pay for assistance, and could really use some volunteers! (All we have to do is have you fingerprinted. Our dime.) Any takers? Please contact Mr. Tom Rutten, Dean of Students, who is handling the master schedule on this project.

As for the visual and performing arts, some insights and news... Nearly every day I notice students who are wearing varsity jerseys, uniforms, and club shirts and carrying instruments—saxophones, trumpets, flutes, even a tuba. I am delighted that students can play sports here, be a part of a club, and still have time for music. At many schools, instrumental music and chorus are before-school or after-school activities and students are forced to make choices: Chorus or football practice? Jazz Band or debate? Imagine the wide receiver tenor, the soprano long distance runner, or the tuba-wielding debater? Here the choices are made a little easier with a seven-period day.

I attended our Christmas Choral and Instrumental Concerts. They were *wonderful* evenings. So much so that I asked our Jazz Choir to sing something special after our Advent Prayer Service. I have scheduled an assembly on May 1st so that the entire student body can hear a couple pieces from the instrumental and choral programs. We have five bands and four choral groups; we are adding another choral group (Men's Chorus) in the fall. Nearly 600 students participate in our instrumental, choral, drama, and media programs. Just about every student spends some time with the art department sketching, drawing, painting, or sculpting.

Because so many students are involved in the visual and performing arts, I want them to be represented on the Principal's Advisory Council by a "director." There are eleven people who advise me on the Council: the assistant principals, deans, the Brother Director of the Community, and the "directors" of student activities, campus ministry, athletics, guidance, and admissions. Next fall, the visual and performing arts will have a voice at that table.

Our Founder, Saint John Baptist de La Salle exhorts us to provide "a human and Christian education for young people, especially the poor." Humanity began creative expression on the walls of caves. We treasure the pictures which children draw of themselves, their families, pets, and houses. What kid doesn't like putting on a play? What teenager doesn't like music, "rap" notwithstanding? We see choreography in football and rigorous athleticism in dance.

"Not all are called to be artists in the specific sense of the term," says Pope John Paul II in his *Letter to Artists*. "Yet, as Genesis has it, all men and women are entrusted with the task of crafting their own life: in a certain sense, they are to make of it a work of art, a masterpiece."

I think that libraries and visual and performing arts programs help a lot.

Sincerely,

Rudolf Schulze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

December/January 2003

Dear Parents:

It is Wednesday, November 20th, and I am at 33,000 feet on my way to Chicago with three of our visual and performing arts teachers to attend the annual Brother Huether Lasallian Workshop sponsored by the Christian Brothers. Next to me sits a knit-one, pearl-two grandmother and a nun in full religious habit. They are discussing religion, Jesus, and the resurrection. (So far the nun is winning!) In front of me are a young couple and their remarkably quiet two-year-old son.

I wish I had the window seat. I enjoy looking out upon the world: "Glory be to God for dappled things....Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;" as Hopkins writes in "Pied Beauty." At home, at school, and in life I do not often see the world from the 33,000-foot view. We live our lives mostly at "sea level" in the ordinary hustle of our daily lives, relationships, and responsibilities. Once in a while, though, we have opportunities to glimpse reality from a different vantage point where we can see patterns and designs and where we don't see fixed boundaries or borders.

At the risk of suborning heresy, I imagine that the Incarnation and birth of Jesus were about what God saw at the 33,000-foot level: a disordered, broken, babbling world of desperation, indifference, and evil.

I imagine that what God saw was a world in need of a word—the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1) The Incarnation is once and for all and for all time. Jesus—the Word—came for one reason. We see that reason "advertised" on posters during professional football games—"John 3:16": "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."

Students struggle with the mystery of the Incarnation. They get themselves trapped in the same philosophical arguments that prompted the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.): How can God be a man? How can a man be God?

They find it hard to believe that Jesus was like us in all things but sin. Just like us. He had his diapers changed,

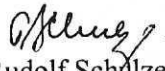
got the flu, and had to be taught by his parents to walk, speak, count, write, sing, and play—just like any other kid. We know that Jesus would have attended Christian Brothers High School if there had been one in Nazareth. We also know that he got into a bit of trouble at the age of twelve (Luke 3:41ff.) when he stayed behind in Jerusalem listening to and asking questions of the teachers in the temple while his parents frantically searched for him for three days. You will recall that we do not hear about Jesus again until he's about thirty years old. An eighteen-year "time out"! We know, too, that Jesus was tempted like we are, had feelings like we do, and had to make choices.

The true miracle of the Incarnation is that no part of creation had ever been without the Word who, in union with the Father and the Spirit, fills all things that are. But 2000 years ago, the Word entered the world in a new way. Jesus came to destroy the power of death so that we might know what it means to live as full human beings—that we might learn *how* to live for God. By becoming one of us, Jesus has shown us that the beauty and grace of our humanity is to *praise* God by developing and sharing our talents and gifts, to *revere* God by acknowledging that we are created in God's image in spite of our weaknesses and limitations, and to *serve* God by serving one another.

I am privileged to witness the Incarnation every day in the lives of your sons and daughters. I see the Word taking shape in them through your example and our teaching. I marvel at the tenacity with which they search for truth, struggle to find meaning in our world, and grapple with the elusive and insidious power of evil. They want so much to love and be loved.

As we celebrate the Incarnation and Jesus' birth, we welcome again the Word which God speaks in our hearts and minds.

Merry Christmas and God's blessings on a new year filled with good health, peace, and joy!


Rudolf Scholze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

November, 2002

Dear Parents:

It's November. The Church asks us to remember the heroes and sheroes who have gone before us—all saints and all souls. I like thinking about saints, those whom the Church has honored and those who share or have shared our lives. I like thinking about all souls, too. Praying for those who are praying for us. We honor our veterans this month and elect men and women to public office. Our nation pauses in thanksgiving at the end of the month. Some of us will get the flu. Others of us will get flu shots!

Changes. Changing seasons. I get a little weary when adults resist change; I get nervous when students resist change. Change is a part of life. I have watched a number of nieces and nephews grow up. At early points in their lives they could do everything. They could sing, dance, draw, paint, and play any sport or game. They could all cook, act, write stories, and invent things. But they appreciated routine—naps, snacks, walks, feeding the ducks, and eating with the grown-ups. They also appreciated the limits we set (no matter how loudly they screamed!). But even that changed as they matured.

I am reminded of a book by John Powell entitled *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* It is a wonderful little book about how teenagers *change*. The book addresses the human condition, interpersonal relationships, and dealing

with emotions. There is a wonderful section about games, roles, and masks.

A teenager answers the title question with this response: *I am afraid to tell you who I am, because if I tell you who I am, you may not like who I am, and it's all that I have.*

How often do we presume or take for granted the image in which we would like to create our children and our students? I know I do. I don't want them to get hurt. I don't want them to suffer. Instead of letting them find the fork in the "two roads diverged in a yellow wood," I want to draw the map and drive the car for them! But I can't. And we can't as parents and teachers.

It is they who must tell us who they are, and this is precisely the time of life in which they are discovering that awesome mystery. They will try on many hats and may coats until they find the ones that fit. It is our task to be signposts, sounding boards, beacons of faith, lighthouses, fog horns, stop signs, and scarecrows. We must help them find out who they are, accept who they are, celebrate who they are, and love who they are. We must love them for their changing. For it is in loving who they are that we will find the hero and shero—the saint—in them.

Sincerely,

Rudolf Schulze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

October, 2002

Dear Parents:

You would have been very proud of your sons and daughters at our September 11th Prayer Service. It was a wonderfully moving, religious experience carefully prepared by the students of the Liturgy, Mass, and Prayer class who chose the readings, prayers, symbols, and music for our celebration. You could have heard a pin drop as nearly 1,200 students, faculty, staff, and guests left the gymnasium one by one. They were each given a single carnation to place before the cross on the Main Lawn while Barber's *Adagio for Strings* played hauntingly in the background. The assembly was told that each carnation represented three people who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

It was my request that we frame our day and our service with scripture, prayer, and symbol, rather the patriotic themes which characterized so many of our national and media celebrations that day. I wanted our students to remember and pray for the ordinary people who were going about their ordinary lives that fateful day, and the extraordinary people who never tired of trying to save them. Ours was a celebration about ordinary life and real heroism. Our shared silence was nearly an hour in length while we prayed, remembered, and listened.

The first reading at our Holy Spirit Liturgy this year was from the First Book of Kings (19:11-12)

Then the Lord said, "Go outside and stand on the mountain before the Lord; the Lord will be passing by." A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord—but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake—but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire—but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.

I am convinced that our students found what Elijah himself found at the entrance to the cave: God's holy presence. We recall that presence many times each day as we begin every class, every meeting, and just about everything else we do here with the words: "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God."

Last month I wrote about how different their world is from the world I saw at their age. But as I reflect on the generations within my own family who have taught me what is important in life I see that my grandparents had the Depression, my parents had the Holocaust, you and I will forget neither "the day Kennedy was shot" nor the Vietnam Wars, and these kids tell their children and grandchildren about 9/11. Maybe their world is not so different.

Sincerely,


Rudolf Schulze
Principal



Falcon Family News

Christian Brothers High School Monthly Newsletter

September 2002

Dear Parents:

I am writing this letter on Thursday, August 22, 2002, the first day of classes for the 2002-2003 academic year. The last bell has rung and I am looking out my window as the students are moving toward cars and carpools, sports practices and club meetings, and maybe even some tutoring.

As I watch them walking about I suspect that their world is quite different from the world I say at their age. First of all, these kids have "toys" that weren't around a generation ago: cell phones, disc players, and gameboys. Their backpacks seem heavier. They are truly puzzled when I use words like "erasable paper," "liquid paper," or "correct-type." "Spell Check" used to mean physically opening a dictionary! They dress differently than we did—some outfits are baggier, some are far too tight; most are colorful; stripes are back, and "red" and "blue" are big colors around this place. Boys and girls wear shirts that say "Brothers." I've noticed that their hair color changes with the light and how their ears sparkle with modest studs and earrings. Even their music, food, and language are different. Just as it should be.

As I reflect on my teaching career, I'm not sure that I could pass the classes I've been teaching for the last 25 years. I'd invite you to one of our dances, but you wouldn't let them out of the house again!

But the more things change, the more things stay the same. What hasn't changed is the fact that high school kids are deciding not just *what* they want to do with their lives, but *who* they want to be. And although Christian Brothers High School changes with the times, our teachers understand teenagers and are committed to educating the whole person—body, mind, heart, and soul. We remain firmly committed to your sons and daughters as they negotiate their way through these formative years—as they decide *who* they want to be.

Your daughters and sons will spend most of their lives in the 21st century. We promise to give them what they need for the journey—knowledge and skills for success and a love for life-long learning. We promise to give them the tools to build their lives on solid ground—values, faith, and zeal. We promise to remind them always that they are in the holy presence of God because they are created in God's image. And finally, we promise to show them how to place their gifts and talents at the service of others.

Welcome to a wonderful school year!

Sincerely,

Rudolf Schulze
Principal