

Bro. Ghebretensae Ghebrekristos Visits The Eritrean La Sallians in The U. S. A (June 12 – August 25, 2014)

The purpose of Bro. Ghebretinsae's (Bro. Gheb) trip to North America was to encourage and motivate alumni of the Eritrean Christian Brothers to strengthen the newly formed La Sallian Saint Joseph School Association.

The La Sallian St. Joseph School Association sincerely believes that the mission of what Saint John Baptist De La Salle established, more than 300 years ago, is still alive and true today as it was then. What the Eritrean Christian Brothers have been doing for the last 60 years is a witness of the mission. We believe all human beings have been born to this world with the right to *equal opportunity*; the opportunity to grow, learn and excel in a caring environment. It has been an honor to restate our commitment to support the Christian Brothers in Eritrea.

The U.S. and Canadian branch of the La Sallian Saint Joseph School Association invited Bro. Gheb to visit the U.S. and Canada. However, due to the Canadian visa issues, Bro. Gheb could only visit the U.S. The report below covers his visit to the U.S.

Bro. Gheb flew from Asmara to Cairo and arrived in New York on 12 June 2014 with a connection flight to Boston. Mr. Asfeha Woldu and his wife welcomed him in Boston and took him to their residence in Providence Rhode Island. He stayed with them for about three weeks to rest and to get used to the new country and climate.

On June 26, Bro. Gheb flew to Maryland and participated in the annual Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement conference that took place at St. Philip's Parish in Washington D.C. He enjoyed the prayer sessions and the company of several friends and new acquaintances.

From June 29 to July 8, Bro. Gheb stayed with Drs. Ghiorghis and Aberash in Germantown, Maryland. That first week of July, Ghiorghis took Bro. Gheb to four must visit locations in the area. The first was a visit to Washington D.C., the heart and the Capital of U.S.A. He saw the White House, the Capitol, and walked in the National Mall (Figures 1, 2, and 3). If you see Bro. Gheb wearing a fisherman's hat in some of the pictures do not be surprised! In late June when he was visiting here, the temperatures were quite high. Along with the increased temperatures, sometimes humidity posed a serious problem. There was concern that these weather conditions would bother Bro. Gheb. However, he did not complain at all. He enjoyed all the long walks.



Figure 1: Bro. Ghebretensae and Ghiorghis in Washington DC – The Whitehouse is in the background.



Figure 2: Bro. Ghebretensae in Washington DC – In front of The Capitol



Figure 3: Bro. Ghebretensae in Washington DC - The National Mall

The second visit was to The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. There, The Blessed Virgin Mary is honored as Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception and the Principal Patroness of the USA. It is said that the shrine is the largest Catholic Church in the USA, and the eighth largest church building in the world. The basilica is adjacent to the Catholic University of America (Figure 4).

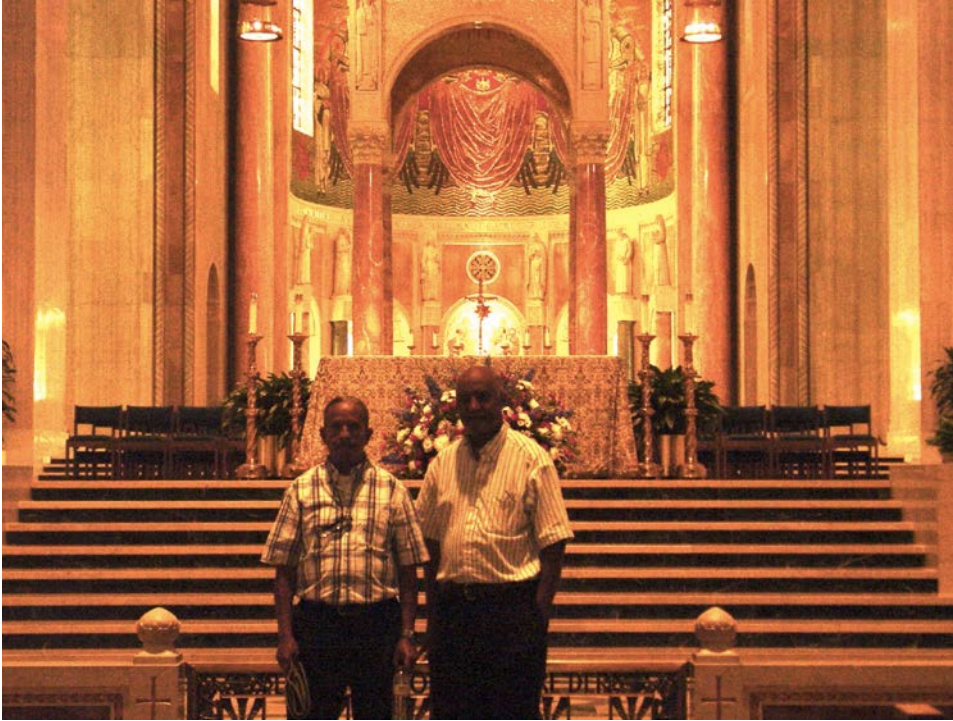


Figure 4: Bro. Ghebretensae and Ghiorghis inside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

The third stop was at St. John's College High School, also in Washington D.C. Ghiorghis had pre-arranged the visit with Bro. Michael Andrejko, the Principal of the school (Figure 5). This school is the second oldest De La Salle Christian Brothers' school in the United States. Bro. Andrejko gave us a tour the beautiful school, its athletic facilities, and its sports grounds. In June, schools are on summer break so the regular classes were not in session. There was considerable maintenance work going on at the school. Ghiorghis recalled that he and his friends used to do similar activities back in Eritrea at De La Salle School in Asmara and at St. Joseph's School in Keren during the school break in the old days.



Figure 5: Bro. Ghebretensae and Bro. Michael Andrejko at St. John's College High School, Washington, D.C.

On a separate day, for the fourth and final stop, Ghiorghis and Aberash took Bro. Gheb to the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes (Figures 6, 7, and 8). This shrine is located in Emmetsburg, Maryland on a mountainside overlooking Mount St. Mary's University main campus. A great statue of Our Lady rises as a beacon atop the Pangborn Memorial Campanile along the mountainside. Included in these grounds is the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, an American saint and the founder of the Sisters of Charity. The origins of the works on these holy grounds including the university are attributed to Father John DuBois, back in 1805 when he built a church and named it "St. Mary's on the Hill". Bro. Gheb loved this mountainside shrine for its location, trees, plants, and the various holy grounds dedicated to specific themes. Examples of these include the Stations of the Cross, Mother Theresa's Garden, Mother Seton Walk, Our Lady of Lourdes Garden, Chapel of Saint Mary on the Hill, The "Glass Chapel", Corpus Christi Chapel, Grotto Cave Area, and many others. There are many statues representing many saints. One can see statues of different saints, St. Bernadette, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Francis of Assisi, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Louis Marie De Montfort, Our Lady of Grace Shrine, St. John Paul II Statue and Memorial Shrine, St. Therese of the Child Jesus, The Holy Family, St. Faustina, and many others. This beautiful mountainside shrine devoted to Our Mother Mary attracts hundreds of thousands of pilgrims each year from all over the world. Built

about two decades after the apparition of Mary at Lourdes in France in 1858, the shrine features one of the oldest American replicas of the Lourdes.



Figure 6: Bro. Ghebretensae and Ghiorghis at The National Shrine Gardens in Emmetsburg, Maryland



Figure 7: Bro. Ghebretensae at The National Shrine in Emmetsburg, Maryland - Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes



Figure 8: Bro. Ghebretensae and Ghiorghis at The National Shrine in Emmetsburg, Maryland – Our Lady of Guadalupe

July 4 is Independence Day in the U.S. Bro. Gheb saw the barbeque on the grill (Figure 9). Later that evening, Bro. Gheb enjoyed the fireworks with Ghiorghis, his family and other visiting relatives. The following day, July 5, Bro. Gheb participated in a college graduation celebration for Ghiorghis' son. This was an important milestone. Bro. Gheb was very happy to see a son of an alumnus of the Eritrean La Sallian education system to compete and succeed here in the US. On the same day, some members of the La Sallian Saint Joseph School Association and Bro. Gheb had their first formal meeting (Figures 10 and 11). Bro. Gheb briefed the group about the developments of the La Sallian works in Eritrea, including the opportunities and the

challenges. Ghiorghis briefly shared with the group the objectives for the association and the upcoming main meeting that would be taking place in the Bay area in California.



Figure 9: July 4th Weekend – Cook out on the deck at the Ghenbot's.
From left to right, Ghiorghis, Hailu (visiting from Chicago),
and Bro. Ghebretensae



Figure 10: Bro. Ghebretensae and some DC area La Sallian Saint Joseph School Association members and friends (front row – Ezana Neguse, Dr. Mehari Stifanos; standing, from left to right, Hermon Stefanos, Mekonnen W/Michael, Wedi Shiberim, Dr. Ghiorghis, Bro. Gheb, and Dr. Mesghenna Yassin)



Figure 11: Bro. Ghebretensae and some DC area La Sallian St. Joseph's School Association members and friends enjoying a meal
(from left to right: Dr. Ghiorghis, Wedi Shiberim, Bro. Gheb, Hiabu Hasebu, Mekonnen W/Michael, Hermon Stefanos, and Dr. Mehari Stifanos)

On July 8, Dr. Aberash and our daughter Rahwa took Bro. Gheb to Washington Dulles International Airport in Washington DC. From there, he flew to Las Vegas, Nevada, and arrived at 11:30 AM. Amanuel Yosief and his family were waiting for him at the airport.

Amanuel reported that in Las Vegas, Bro. Gheb was very excited to visit his former students and others he helped grow and excel academically and spiritually. Amanuel indicated that it was a lifetime honor for him and others to see and be visited by our father and a true La Sallian Brother who lives a saintly life (Figure 12). The Keren Community in Las Vegas had the opportunity to meet and share memories with Bro. Gheb at a dinner reception at Mr. Paulos Yosief's house (GjoGjo as Bro. Gheb would call him). Amanuel said that it was a great evening of sharing respect and admiration to the good brother.



Figure 12: Bro. Ghebretensae, Mr. Amanuel Yosief and his children enjoying a meal - Las Vegas, NA

Amanuel and his family took Bro. Gheb to visit the Hoover Dam (a video clip of his visit will be provided separately). The dam is one of the greatest wonders mankind has ever built. It is a visible demonstration that people can do wonders provided the right opportunity. It is a place that millions of people visit every year. Hoover dam was built during the great Recession, and currently it produces electricity for Nevada, Arizona and California including providing all of the water supply for Las Vegas.

Naturally, any one who visits Las Vegas somehow ends up checking out the casinos. So, Amanuel and company took Bro. Gheb to visit the local casinos. Unfortunately, he was too saintly for the machines to let him win any money!

Brother Gheb then flew from Las Vegas to the Bay Area to attend the Second International Meeting of the La Sallian Saint Joseph School Association in Berkeley, California on August 10, 2015.

On August 10, The U.S. La Sallian St. Joseph Association welcomed officially Bro. Gheb at St. Joseph The Worker Catholic Church in Oakland CA. Mr. Ghebrea Meskel and his group had been planning for the event for months. Present were Teklehaimanot Manna from Arizona, Anday Tesfay, Musa Jmie, Tewolde (one of the famous soccer players from the old days of Keren Lalay, St. Josepha School) and many more others. The main event consisted of Holy Mass celebrated by Abba Ghebriel, where a sizeable local Catholic Eritrean community was present, a reception, and presentations during the reception. Attendees were welcomed and greeted in the reception hall where there was a background music played using a CD by the La

Sallian choir (Lasallawian Mezemran Asmara), a gift brought by Bro. Gheb. Abba Ghebriel blessed the table and guests were seated to enjoy the food and drinks prepared by the wonderful and generous mothers and sisters of the La Sallian friends (Figures 13-17). Four formal presentations were made. The first talk (Appendix 1, Slides 1-7) was by Dr. Ghiorghis Ghenbot. He brought the audience up to speed with the origins of the La Sallian educational system in Eritrea, their accomplishments to date, and their future goals. The second one was by Bro. Gheb. He discussed about the current works of the Eirtrean Brothers, their achievements, and their goals. The third talk was by Mr. Amanuel Yosief. He presented on the organizational structure of the Eritrean La Sallian St. Josephs School Association and on the previous year's first international meeting the Association had in Europe where Bro. Gheb was the guest of honor. The fourth and the last presentation (Appendix 2, A Plea to the St. Josephs La Sallian School Association Members and Supporters – 'Lebewa' in Tigrigna) was by Dr. Ghiorghis where he passionately asked La Sallian alumni and friends to understand the goals of the Eritrean La Sallian Saint Joseph's School Association, spread the word, and support the cause. Finally, Mr. Ghebreab Meskel delivered the closing remarks. He thanked Bro. Gheb for travelling all the way from Eritrea to join our meeting, Abba Ghebriel for celebrating the mass, the CA organizers, and the guests who were so generous in every sense.



Figure 13: Dr. Ghiorghis Ghenbot and Mr. Ghebreab Gehal getting ready for the presentations - St. Joseph The Worker Catholic Church, Oakland CA



Figure 14: Bro. Ghebretensae delivering his well anticipated speech -
St. Joseph The Worker Catholic Church, Oakland CA



Figure 15: Bro. Ghebretensae and Fr. Gabriel at the reception -
St. Joseph The Worker Catholic Church, Oakland CA



Figure 16: Bro. Ghebretensae, Musa Gimi, Paulos Yosief, Tecklehaimanot Manna, and Musie enjoying the receptions - St. Joseph The Worker Catholic Church, Oakland CA



Figure 17: Mr. Anday Tesfay and Bro. Ghebretensae

After the meeting, Bro. Gheb flew to Los Angeles and was met by Dr. Abiel Gebremedhin. He had a wonderful time with his family. On August 18, 19 and 20, Bro. Gheb had the opportunity to attend the Keren High School Association reunion; an international meeting of people who attended Keren High School. It was a time of relaxation and reunion with hundreds of people who knew him, or have been his students. After the reunion, on August 20, Amanuel and Paulos drove Brother Gheb from Los Angeles back to Las Vegas so he could see along the way what the natural landscape of the area looked like.

On August 22, 2014 Bro. Gheb wrapped up his North American trip and flew to Rhode Island to his best friend and classmate Mr. Asfaha Woldu. Brother Gheb left the US for Eritrea on August 25, 2014.

As I write this report, I feel blessed to have participated in this event. In the name of our La Sallian friends, Ghebreab, thank you for your dedication and for being able to organize your local La Sallian friends to make the event happen. And happen it did with great success. The reception was well planned, the food was great, and so was the music as well as the anticipated outcome. Please extend our gratitude to all of them. Amanuel, thank you for arranging all the flights that Bro. Gheb had to take for the round trip and for keeping open the line of communication with the Brothers in Eritrea and our international colleagues in Canada and Europe. Many thanks to our International Leadership team Mussie Ghirmay, Amanuel Yosief, and Dawit Amar, and to all fellow La Sallians who helped in one way or another. Finally, thank you Bro. Ghebretensae for honoring our invitation and for travelling all the way from Eritrea to the U.S.A. It is a long trip. When you dedicated your life for the education of your fellow Eritreans, the Good Lord has granted you a piece of joy here on earth by letting you see the fruit of your labor and all those who you and the other Brothers have touched by your examples and prayers. Rest assured, greater joy is awaiting you in heaven.

If I can, Bro. Ghebretensae, let me ask you two favors. First, please remember us in your prayers. Second, strengthen your Brothers through the Holy Spirit who Jesus promised to his apostles before ascending to heaven and by whose power the Apostles went out from their hiding to proclaim the Good News with great knowledge and boldness.

May Jesus live in our hearts!
 Your's in De La Salle,
 Dr. Ghiorghis Ghenbot

For Appendix 1 (Slides 1-7), Background, Update, and Objectives of the La Sallian St. Josephs School Association, please see the next pages.

Appendix 2: A Plea to the St. Joseph's La Sallian School Association Members and Supporters – ('Lebewa' in Tigrigna), please see the next pages.

Appendix 1 (Slides 1-7)

Background, Update, and Objectives of the La Sallian St. Josephs School Association

Welcome Bro. Ghebretensae Ghebrekristos

G.Ghenbot, Ph.D. 10August 2014 Berkeley, CA

The power of the Eritrean De La Salle Brothers Education

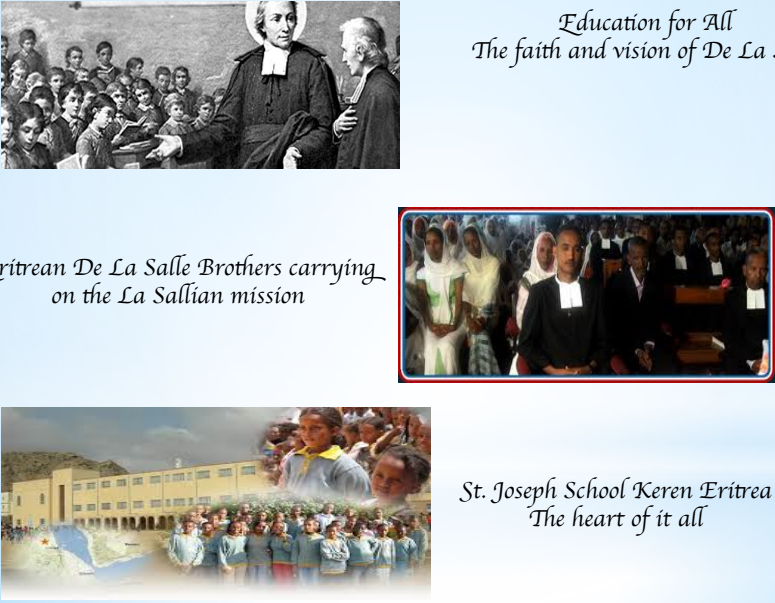


From goat tending to computer lab

G.Ghenbot, Ph.D. 10August 2014 Berkeley, CA

*Education for All
The faith and vision of De La Salle*

Eritrean De La Salle Brothers carrying on the La Sallian mission



*St. Joseph School Keren Eritrea
The heart of it all*

G.Ghenbot, Ph.D. 10August 2014 Berkeley, CA



La Sallian St. Joseph School Association
Supporting the mission of the Eritrean De La Salle Brothers



G.Ghenbot, Ph.D. 10August 2014 Berkeley, CA



La Sallian education building the future leaders

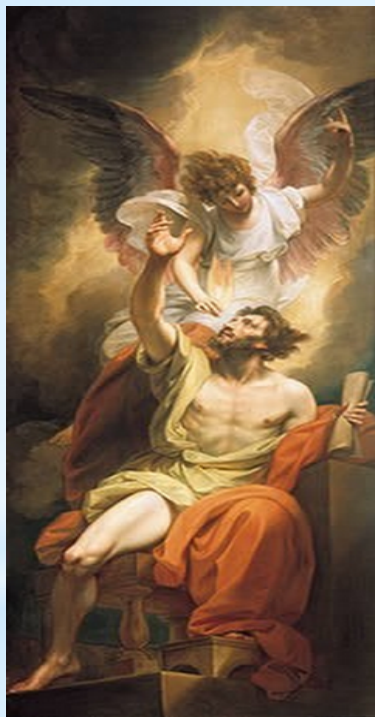


G.Ghenbot, Ph.D. 10August 2014 Berkeley, CA

Testing times build character



G.Ghenbot, Ph.D. 10August 2014 Berkeley, CA



*Brothers, be committed to your call -
our people need you*



G.Ghenbot, Ph.D. 10August 2014 Berkeley, CA

Appendix 2:
A Plea to the St. Joseph's La Sallian School Association Members and
Supporters – ('Lebewa' in Tigrigna)

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St Joseph The Worker Catholic Church

1640 Addison St., Berkeley, CA 94703

10 August 2014

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