



The planning team was wise to plan for things to come to a conclusion by lunchtime—the members earned the gratitude of the participants for one, and the well-designed syntheses meant everything that needed to be said had been said, for another.

To prepare for the iCap each Visitor and President prepared a State of the District report. Before the meetings the Superior and Council read these and looked for themes and identified challenges and opportunities. Next week the participants will engage in a similar exercise. In order to set the stage for that thinking, Brother Antxon Andueza, General Secretary, guided the assembly through a review of the strengths and concerns revealed in these District snapshots.

Two ways we determine strength is by measuring *vitality* and *viability*. We start with questions like, What is the energy level? What are signs that we are life-giving? How sustainable is the mission? the community? Of course, more precise questions have been developed over the years to add pixels to the overall picture. The purpose today was to zero in on four recurring *vitality* themes—the importance, even urgency, of:

- +providing formation and accompaniment of young Brothers and Partners, with a particular attention to leadership.
- +breaking down any existing walls between Brothers and Partners to ensure a shared responsibility and association for the mission of educating the poor.
- +promoting and strengthening of vocations in the Lasallian network and family.
- +cultivating a deeper spiritual life and communal life.

The “writing committee” (Brothers Hilaire Raharilalao, Paco Chivas, and Bob Schaefer) has been the proverbial fly on the wall during the week, and offered their impressions of the week. Their synthesis was perceptive and provocative. We didn’t have a back-and-forth with them, but in my mind that’s OK. Sometimes it good to leave the door ajar on a Friday, in order to let fresh insights find their way into the room over the weekend.

Brother Timothy Coldwell, FSC  
General Councilor, RELAN  
March 9, 2018

