

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LA SALLE SISTERS

The La Salle Sisters' Congregation was established in 1966 by De La Salle Christian Brothers, District Vietnam. They were officially recognized by the Holy See in 2002 as a women's congregation under the Archdiocese of Saigon, Vietnam. Today, La Salle Sisters are present in Vietnam, Thailand, the United States, Australia, and Cambodia. The mission of the La Salle Sisters is similar to that of the Brothers, which is to provide a human and Christian education to young people, especially the poor.

At the invitation of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, Vietnam District, the congregation of La Salle Sisters sent three Sisters to serve at Truong Vinh Ky Private Primary School in August 2016. These La Salle Sisters provide their humble service, enthusiastically cooperate with the Brothers to educate the students as teachers and staff.

Realizing the learning needs of many ethnic minority students who were not well prepared to enter the first grade at Truong Vinh Ky School, the La Salle Sisters searched and bought land on the border of the Vietnamese Kinh and ethnic minorities of Vietnam with the intention of building La Salle Sisters' house. They took advantage of that opportunity and opened kindergarten programs, especially for ethnic minority children. They want to welcome some ethnic minority girls to live with them so that these students can get the best support to continue their schooling. La Salle Sisters' dream is to contribute to the mission of the Brothers, to help ethnic minority children go to school, reduce the number of minority students dropping out and give these students a better future to get a good job out of the cycle of poverty.

Recognizing limited financial and human resources, the La Salle Sisters understand that they cannot serve many minority students. Therefore, in the coming years, they will open the kindergarten program as a summer education activity for about 30 ethnic minority children. Hopefully, with the grace of God and the support of the benefactors, the Sisters will accept some ethnic minority girls to stay with them as a boarding program to support them in doing well, reduce early drop-out and prevent them from marrying early. Culturally, many

ethnic minority boys and girls marry at the age of 13 or 14. These problems leave many ethnic minority families in an unbreakable circle of poverty.

Currently, the La Salle Sisters Community serving at Truong Vinh Ky School is composed by four Sisters. Since they arrived in Gialai province until the present time, they live in a small house that the Brothers bought for them as a makeshift house. The new house of La Salle Sisters is currently under construction and finishing in the final steps. It is hoped that the work will be completed to be ready to welcome the first group of ethnic minority students into the summer kindergarten program in June 2021.

With the Lasallian spirit, full of faith and enthusiasm, the Sisters have been contributing together with the Brothers in Gialai province, bringing to Truong Vinh Ky school a quality Lasallian education, rich in humanity. The silent presence of La Salle Sisters, with the love of poor children following the example of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the Founder, will surely be precious witnesses, contributing to spreading Lasallian spirit to the highlands of Gialai province, among parents of students, especially poor ethnic minority students.