

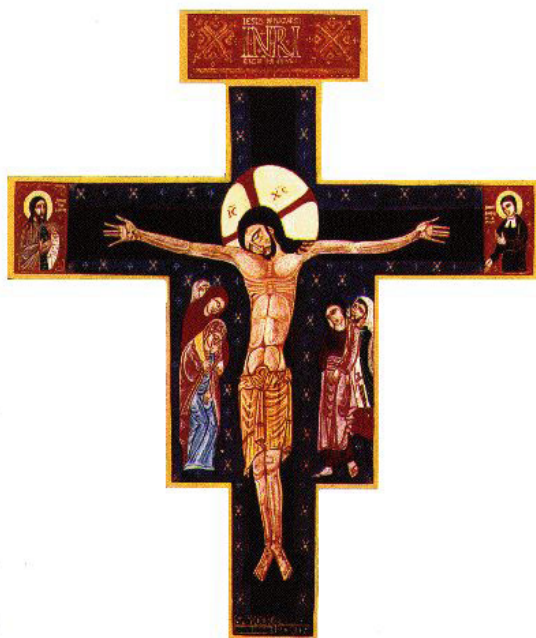


Our Lasallian Heritage

Lasallian Life — A Spirit of Faith & Zeal

If there is one thing that captures Lasallian spirituality in a nutshell, it is the spirit of faith and zeal. De La Salle came to understand his work and the work of those in the schools as an expression of this single spirit, one that is expressed through the two equally important dimensions of faith and zeal. He told his followers that this spirit "should animate all their actions, be the motive of their whole conduct, and those who do not possess it and those who have lost it should be looked upon as dead members..."

The spirit of faith encompasses all those dispositions, attitudes, commitments and activities that take part in a deeper perspective than the one that is normally taken. It is the kind of spirit that looks at situations from God's viewpoint rather than our own. We begin to find new insights, new talents, and new challenges as this spirit of faith becomes habitually exercised. Eventually, such faith seems incomplete unless it becomes expressed in some kind of action or activity, unless it is translated into zeal. It bears similarities to falling in love - with someone or something. In order to grow, to live, it must be expressed in some sort of way, brought to life in daily reality.



Reflection Questions

- 1) What is my understanding of the meaning of those two key words: Faith & Zeal?
- 2) How do I and we "feed" ourselves in these two key areas of Lasallian identity? What kinds of results would come from brainstorming?

The spirit of zeal describes a kind of drive that animates a person who is fully committed to Christian education. Such zeal is found each day in classrooms, offices, and sporting fields throughout the Lasallian world. It is a zeal that has a specific character, a definitive perspective, a realistic viewpoint. The spirit of zeal makes sure that whatever needs to be done will be done. Because it is based on a recognition of God's ongoing life in the midst of the world, this spirit of zeal initiates a confident, creative, and courageous approach to one's daily challenges. It is a spirit that has a "holy power" [De La Salle] because it is so closely aligned with the insights of faith.

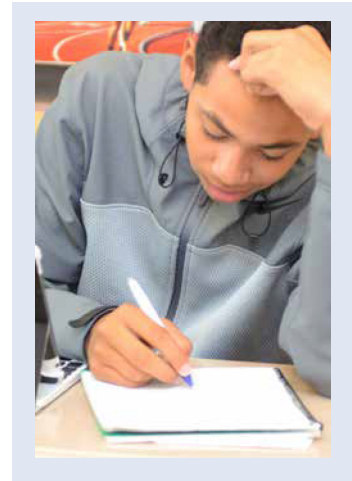
Faith and zeal are equally important as aspects of the same reality, as dimensions of the same experience. Without zeal, faith has no substance, and without faith, zeal has no purpose. Faith and zeal more than complement each other; they bring both to life. With zeal, faith finds expression, and with faith, zeal finds direction. In the work of Lasallian education, both realities are brought to the fore in equal measure. God is to be found both in the chapel and in the classroom.

An education in the Lasallian tradition provides students with salvation that is both spiritual and practical. And just as De La Salle found himself drawing more closely to God as he drew himself more fully into the work of education, so also may we deepen our experienced lives by living this single spirit of faith and zeal more authentically in guiding those confided to our care. You will only find out by trying it.

De La Salle

Do not distinguish between the duties of your state and what pertains to your salvation and perfection. Rest assured that you will never effect your salvation more certainly and that you will never acquire greater perfection than by fulfilling well the duties of your state, provided you do so with a view to accomplishing the will of God.

(Collection – p. 78)



“That which is of the utmost importance, and to which the greatest attention should be given in an Institute is that all who compose it possess the spirit peculiar to it.”

– Rule of 1718

“The spirit of this Institute is a spirit of faith which leads [us] to look upon everything with the eyes of faith, to do everything in view of God and to attribute all to God.”

– Rule, Article 5

“The spirit of faith inspires [Lasallian educators] with an ardent zeal to serve those entrusted to them and to work with those who share this aim.”

– Rule, Article 7



“It is apostolic to awaken in students a serious attitude towards life and the conviction of the greatness of man’s destiny; it is apostolic to make it possible for them, with intellectual honesty and responsibility, to experience the autonomy of personal thought; it is apostolic to help the students to use their liberty to overcome their own prejudices, preconceived ideas, social pressures, as well as the pressures that come from disintegration within the human person; it is apostolic to dispose students to use their intelligence and their training in the service of their fellowmen, to open them to others: to teach them how to listen and to try to understand, to trust and love; it is apostolic to instill in students a sense of trustworthiness, brotherhood, and justice.”

– Declaration, 41.2

“Fidelity to the specific goals of the Founder and to the tradition of the Institute is confided to us as the living persons that we are, and it is as such that we have to carry on the search.”

– Declaration, 7.1



“The enduring challenge of the Founder incites us to live the present moment every day of our life with enthusiasm, with pride, with joy... and, above all, with undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.”

– Br. John Johnston, FSC

