



Our Lasallian Heritage



St. John Baptist de La Salle often used the expression "God be blessed" whenever he encountered something disturbing, surprising, or glorious.

*My God,
you have given your word
that we have the privilege
of having you in our midst.*

*My Jesus,
you are present to pour forth
your Spirit upon us,
as you did pour forth upon the
apostles and first disciples
when they were gathered in
the upper room, persevering in
prayer and united in mind and
heart.*

*Grant me the grace to be inti-
mately united in mind and heart
with those who share this work,
and to share in the dispositions
of the Holy Apostles in the upper
room.*

*May I receive your Holy Spirit in
the measure that you will for me
so that I may share in your zeal
for the education of those
you have confided to my care.*

- De La Salle (Adapted)

What We Are About

For over three hundred years, Lasallian education around the globe has been quietly guiding young people into adulthood. The amazing thing is that this movement grew out of a single, focused vision about the young, the Gospel, teachers and teaching. As in personal life, as in business, as in any enterprise, persistence of attention works like drops of water falling on a stone – it eventually makes a real difference. When De La Salle died in 1719, there were 100 Brothers in 23 places throughout France. Currently, 1,039,200 students are being educated by 96,400 Lasallian educators in 1,083 schools and in many other institutions throughout the world. And all of them are about the same thing. All of them preach the same Good News. All of them share the same Lasallian story and vision.

The continuity of this heritage is found each day in the life of your Lasallian institution, and it is kept alive by those who take seriously their responsibility to do so. They are the ones who pursue clarity about three things: *what* we are doing, *who* we are doing it for, and *how* we prioritize the pieces of the doing. Our Lasallian heritage has been clear and consistent on these points for the last 340 years. A tremendous amount of written material clearly presents the primary mission of Lasallian education.

The only way to ensure that the continuity of that mission continues to have its impact is by spending time thinking and talking about what we do, how we do it, and why we do it. If our convictions about those things are not well-rooted, then we might as well close our doors and join the common crowd. Our distinctive lived identity is what gives us the credibility to call ourselves "Lasallian."

Reflection Questions

- 1) How would I describe the "Lasallian" piece of my ministry or institution to a colleague or relative?
- 2) If I had the time, what areas of the Lasallian heritage would I like to pursue? (Why don't I have the time?)

De La Salle

“God diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge throughout the world by human ministers. Just as He commanded light to shine out of darkness, so He also kindles a light in the hearts of those whom He has called to announce His word to children, to enlighten them by making the glory of God known to them....”

“He sends persons with the necessary enlightenment and zeal to help children attain the knowledge of God and His mysteries. According to the grace of Jesus Christ given to them by God, they are like good master-builders who give all possible care and attention to lay the foundation of religion and Christian virtue in the hearts of these children, many of whom would otherwise be abandoned....”

“Saint Paul says that God has a field which He cultivates, a building which He is constructing, that He has chosen you to help in this work by announcing to children the gospel of His Son and the truths that are contained in it. ... Provide them with the means of salvation appropriate to their development. ... Be faithful to this in order to do as much as you are able and as God requires of you for the salvation of those whom He has entrusted to you.” (*Meditation 194*)

“The purpose of this Institute is to give a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor, according to the ministry which the Church has entrusted to it. Christian schools, which need to be constantly renewed, are the preferred sphere of activity for the Brothers. The Institute is open also to other forms of teaching and education, suited to the needs of time and place.”

– *Rule, article 3*

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“The service of the poor through education is a work of preference for us as Brothers of the Christian Schools. This is made clear by the sense of unity among those in the world today, by the appeals that have been made by the Second Vatican Council and recent popes, by the fact of our religious vocation which dedicates us in a special manner to the imitation of Christ, and by fidelity to the specific intentions of our Founder. ... The General Chapter emphasizes that the apostolate with the poor is an integral part of the finality of the Institute.”

– *Declaration 28.1*



"Our charism in the Church is to make the loving and saving presence of Jesus Christ a visible and effective reality in the world of education."

“[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”

– *Br. John Johnston,
Superior General*

