

ASSOCIATED

FOR THE LASALLIAN MISSION



BACKGROUND & GUIDE

Background

Institute *Circulars* are one type of publication from our Motherhouse in Rome. Throughout our history, they have been an administrative document published by a canonical Superior. In some districts, the Brother Visitor publishes circulars while the Superior General and his Council publish similar items for the whole Institute. They serve to make important events known, indicate the situation of the Institute with regard to important topics or to present short biographies of deceased Superiors.

The Circular for this prayer service – Circular 461 – was a special publication by the Superior General and his General Councilors in 2010. They wrote:

“[W]e believe that the time has come to write to you about what it means in today’s world to serve “together and by association” in the Lasallian educational mission of providing a human and Christian education to the young, especially those who are poor. We also are writing in response to the call from the 44th General Chapter to take the initiative to construct a possible model of the Lasallian Family.¹ Many insightful Lasallians who have examined this topic in the past and many current studies, surveys, and reflections have influenced this circular, which we clearly state is neither exhaustive nor the final word on the topic of association. This circular is not intended to be normative nor intended to silence new research or experiences. We chose not to curtail but rather to fan into flame the work of the Spirit as new forms of association emerge and develop. We hope that this circular will motivate and inspire you to greater faith in and zeal for the Lasallian educational mission.”

Guide

- ❖ Choose readers before the meeting. Ask them to read their part and become familiar with it, so that they are able to read it slowly and deliberately.
- ❖ Provide any instructions (For example: “We will read Common Prayer on the back together, and the group reflection will be in groups of 3 people....”)
- ❖ Be sure to observe the pauses (30 – 60 seconds), and allow time for a short silence (5 – 10 seconds) between the lettered sections. These are the “breathing” and “praying” and “reflecting” moments for everyone.
- ❖ The Common Prayer Responses may be said together (fairly slowly), or by individuals around the table, taking a small section each.
- ❖ If at all possible, do NOT skip the Group reflection, because that is where the prayer and formation come together. It’s the “meat” of the prayer service.
- ❖ Invite people to voice their prayer intentions – allow for silence – and put in the “Let us pray to the Lord...” if the person does not do so themselves.
- ❖ The closing prayer may be said by the leader or by everyone together.
- ❖ **NOTE:** If possible, it will be helpful to have copies Circular 461 printed and available for the Board members, either before the meeting or afterwards.

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Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

[PAUSE]

Reading: *(Based on John 21: 3-6)*

After Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene, to his disciples, and then to Thomas who had doubted his resurrection, seven of his disciples were sitting along the shore of Lake Tiberius repairing their nets in the late afternoon, talking about all of the things that they had experienced in last couple of weeks. It was getting late, and they had been talking quite a while when Simon Peter suddenly said: "Enough of all this talking, I'm going fishing." He then got into their boat and started to cast off the ropes.

"Wait!" said the others, "We will go with you." They all scrambled into the boat, rowed to the middle, and all night long fished all over the lake. But they couldn't catch a thing.

As morning dawned, they made their way back to the shore, and as they got closer they noticed someone standing there in the early morning light. The person shouted at them as they got closer, "Friends, have you caught anything?"

They shouted back, "No, not a thing! The fish aren't biting at all."

The boat was now close enough so that they didn't have to shout anymore, and the man on the shore told them, "Look, why don't you let your nets down on the other side of the boat, the right side, even though you always let them down on the left side. I'm sure that you will catch some fish if you do that."

Since they didn't have anything to lose and it wouldn't take a lot of effort to try it, they rowed out again about a hundred yards and threw out their net on the right side of the boat. To their great amazement, the net was suddenly brimming over with fish. In fact, it was so full that they couldn't even drag it up into the boat. They found what they were seeking in a place and direction they had never considered or found promising.

Personal Reflection Moment: How does this Scripture passage apply to us today here at the school. Which character in the story do you identify with most easily?

Reading: *(From Circular 461)*

- a) Circular 461 offers "lenses to sharpen the cultural, ethnic, and national norms and to preserve the core element of Lasallian association: the mission of human and Christian education of young people, especially those who are poor." [1.11]
- b) The dynamic of association, that is, of associating for a common purpose, is an essential component of the Lasallian adventure... Association today plays a central role in Lasallian thought and action. (1.1 & 1.11)
- c) [T]he term 'association' should not be understood in a legal or canonical sense. It represents the link that unites all those committed to the Lasallian Mission, i.e., those who see themselves responsible for it and who contribute to its vitality. (4.10)
- d) One dedicated Lasallian associate describes association this way: "I am Lasallian. I am Lasallian 24 hours a day – in my work, with my family, when I pray. The values I hold, the person I try to be, the work I do and the relationships I have are all lived

within this context. Being Lasallian is where I find God and it is where I am called to try and live as faithfully as I can the values of the gospel.” (4.21)

- e) [I]t is important to be continually reminded that the ultimate purpose of association is found in the expression, “**associated for.**” Service in the Lasallian Mission is no mere abstract concept. Association exists *for* the educational advancement of the young, especially those who are poor. (6.4)
- f) Picture the faces of the disciples as they again cast their nets in disbelief that one side of the boat rather than the other would be of any consequence. Imagine now their faces as they try to gather in their bursting nets. Doubt and frustration are quickly transformed to awe and amazement and finally into the joy of recognizing the Lord they had so sorely missed. Is this not part of our story too? Are we not living in an age that invites us to go to the “other side of the boat” and lower our Lasallian Educational nets “together and by association” hoping to fish a great quantity of “souls far from salvation?” (7.1)

Our Common Prayer Response: (From Psalm 139)

O Lord, you have probed me and you know me;
you know when I sit and when I stand;
you understand my thoughts from afar.
My journeys and my rest you scrutinize,
with all my ways you are familiar.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O Lord, you know the whole of it.
Behind me and before, you hem me in
and rest your hand upon me...
Truly you have formed my inmost being;
you knit me in my mother’s womb.
I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made;
wonderful are your works.

Group Reflection [Optional but Valuable]

- ❖ How does this board cultivate association among ourselves, with the local school community, and with the larger Lasallian family?
- ❖ What could we do to learn more about “Association” and its impact on us?
- ❖ Is there a way for us to become more familiar with Circular 461?

Intentions

We pray to the Lord....**Lord, hear our prayer!**

Closing Prayer:

Gracious and loving God. You guide all that we say and do here at [name of school], bringing together particular students, parents, teachers, staff, coaches, administrators and others, inspiring our efforts and accompanying the results of our deliberations and decisions. Let you Holy Spirit be part of all that we do and say today, and give us the grace to carry out our responsibilities with wisdom, prudence, and charity.

It is your work that we do; help us to be worthy of the task. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **AMEN**

St. John Baptist de La Salle ... Pray for us!

Live, Jesus, in our hearts Forever!