

INSTITUTE IDENTITY, MISSION, AND ORGANIZATION

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 470 – was published by the Superior General and his General Councilors in March of 2015. They wrote:

“[The 45th General Chapter expresses the collaborative efforts of Lasallians to discern the needs, priorities and aspirations of the Institute. Above all, it represents a collective determination to reflect upon its own experiences in 78 countries and provide a solid foundation for a broad agenda that is responsive to a number of today’s and tomorrow’s global challenges. An agenda that is also worthy of the aspirations of our communities and ministries for a better future. *Circular 470* can serve as a guide for the Institute’s agenda.”

This prayer service focuses on the later sections in the Circular that speak about our mission, identity and organization.

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 a pause (1 – 2 minutes) for the Personal Reflection Moment.
- ❖ 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 470 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 Acts 1: 12-21)*

After the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and gathered in the upper room where they were all staying. These included Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas, the son of James. Here they were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, along with a number of others, such as the brothers of Jesus, Mary his mother, and other women who were part of a group that numbers about 120.

At one point, Peter stood up and said, “My friends, scripture has been fulfilled, including the part that David foretold about Judas, who betrayed us and led the soldiers to him. We will need to choose someone among us who can take his place as a witness to the resurrection, someone who has accompanied us from the time of the baptism of John until the day when Jesus was taken up from one.”

Those present proposed two candidates who qualified, Joseph and Matthias. After this, they all prayed in this way: ““Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” After praying, they cast lots – which today would be the equivalent of flipping a coin – and the choice fell on Matthias, who was immediately added to the eleven apostles.

Personal Reflection Moment: *Can you think of a time in your life when God showed his will for you through a “flip of a coin” kind of experience?*

Reading: *(From Circular 470)*

Vision Statement: Compelled by pressing needs, enlightened by the Gospel, inspired by our living memory, we transform lives through quality education for all.

Mission Statement: The purpose of this Institute is to provide young people, and especially the poor, with a human and Christian education, in accordance with the ministry entrusted to it by the Church.

Core Values:

- *Faith:* Acknowledging God’s presence in all that we are and do.
- *Service:* Fulfilling all our actions for the love of God.
- *Communion in Mission:* Incarnating Jesus through our association in communities and ministries.

In the spirit of the Rule, the Brother Superior General and the Brothers of his Council consider authority to be a service that should be exercised in a spirit of co-responsibility and subsidiarity.

This spirit calls us to be attentive to the lives of the Brothers and to the variety of situations in the Institute and to discern together how to address them. At the same time,

it falls to the General Council to assume its responsibilities by making decisions and by encouraging the initiatives necessary for the smooth running of the Institute, in accordance with its charism. (*Circular 470, Pp. 12-20*)

Our Common Prayer Response: (*From Psalm 45*)

The LORD of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold. ...

God is within, it cannot be shaken;
God will help it at the dawning of the day.

Nations are in tumult, kingdoms are shaken:
he lifts his voice, the earth melts away...

Come and behold the works of the LORD,
the awesome deeds he has done on the earth.

He puts an end to wars over all the earth;
the bow he breaks, the spear he snaps, the shields he burns with fire:

“Be still and know that I am God,
exalted over nations, exalted over earth!”

The LORD of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Group Reflection [*Optional but Valuable*]

- ❖ How is your role as Board members similar to the role of the Brothers of the General Council to the Superior General? How is it different?
- ❖ Give some examples from your experience where you saw authority as being a service to others rather than something else?
- ❖ What kinds of things would be helpful for the board to know about the organizational structure of the Institute of the Brothers of Christian Schools?

Intentions

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

Closing Prayer:

You, God, have arranged the moon and the stars in their places, the galaxies and the entire universe in both simplicity and complexity. Your hand is seen in the smallest seed and in the largest nebulae. Help us to have the sort of vision that knows how to see the large and the small in equal perspective, the sort of mission that finds you Son in the poor, the marginalized, and those in need, and the sort of values that reflect the best of who we are and can be for others. As we meet today, give us your grace and guidance.

It is your work that we do; help us to be worthy of the task. We ask this through the same 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!