

# VITALITY

## OF THE SHARED 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 469 – was published by the Superior General and his General Councilors in November of 2014. It is a report of the documents and conclusions from the General Chapter, a gathering of representative Brothers from around the Institute who meet in Rome to choose the Superior General and his General Councilors for the next 7 years, and who have legislative and canonical authority for the direction of the Institute. This was the 45<sup>th</sup> gathering of such Brothers since the first one was called by our Founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle.

This prayer service revolves around the criteria for schools that “run well” (an expression used by De La Salle) that the General Chapter developed as part of its process.

#### 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 of the IA 2013 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 1:** *(Based on John 10:11-16)*

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. .. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

**Reading 2:** *(From De La Salle's Meditation 33.1)*

Jesus Christ compares those who have charge of souls to a good shepherd who has great care for the sheep. One quality he [or she] must possess, according to our Savior, is to know each one of them individually. This should also be one of the main concerns of those who instruct others: to be able to understand their pupils and to discern the right way to guide them.

They must show more mildness toward some, more firmness toward others. There are those who call for much patience, those who need to be stimulated and spurred on, some who need to be reprovved and punished to correct them of their faults, others who must be constantly watched over to prevent them from being lost or going astray.

This guidance requires understanding and discernment of spirits, qualities you should frequently and earnestly ask of God, for they are most necessary for you in the guidance of those placed in your care.

**Personal Reflection Moment:** How and where can (or should?) these two readings inform the board's conversation about your particular institution?

**Reading 3:** *(From the Documents of the 45<sup>th</sup> General Chapter – Section 3.6)*

To assure the vitality of the corporate commitment of Lasallians “that the school runs well,” [DLS, Letter 42] we propose the following criteria:

- The presence of teachers who consider themselves responsible for the development of an educational community.
- The personal attention to every student, especially to the poor.
- The active and committed participation on the part of students to their own formation.
- The offering of explicit religious formation for all: students, parents, teachers, staff members, etc.
- The promotion and formation, in all schools, of intentional groups and communities of faith or of service: Associates, *Signum Fidei*, Young Lasallians, Lasallian Volunteers, etc.
- The promotion of mutual inclusivity and collaboration in all areas.
- The quality of human relationships everywhere.
- The awareness of God's presence in the educational enterprise.

## **Our Common Prayer Response:** *(From Psalm 23)*

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;  
he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff—  
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
my whole life long.

## **Group Reflection** *[Optional but Valuable]*

- ❖ Even though we are not shepherds and probably don't know any shepherds, what does this image of "shepherd" evoke in us in terms of our board responsibilities?
- ❖ As you read the section from the Documents of the 45<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, what strikes you or what stands out for you, especially in terms of your school? Why?
- ❖ The Documents of the 45<sup>th</sup> General Chapter were published in November 2014. They are applicable to much of the Lasallian world, even if they do not directly address all the Lasallian groups. Is there a way that the Board might become more familiar with this document, simply for information's sake?

## **Intentions**

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

## **Closing Prayer:**

Gracious and loving God, Shepherd of our souls, Jesus is the Good Shepherd and calls us to be good shepherds also. As we carry out our responsibilities as board members, guide our thoughts, words, and actions so that we will truly be good shepherds for those who are confided to our care.

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!