



Living in a Spirit of **Faith**



Acting in a Spirit of **Zeal**

Reflections for Lasallians

Volume I

A resource for reflection and prayer
for Lasallians discerning the way forward
in today's world.

Reflections for Lasallians

Living in a Spirit of Faith, Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Volume I

compiled by the Lasallian Association of Great Britain

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Lasallian Sources

The second quote on each page is a specifically Lasallian one. These quotes have been sourced from various works by De La Salle, or from books written on him or about the Institute he founded. Besides De La Salle, we have quoted from the writings of three Superior Generals, Charles Henry (1966 - 1976), John Johnston (1986 - 2000) and Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, who at the time of publication is the present Superior General. We have also taken quotes from various Lasallian publications such as Intitute Circulars, MEL Bulletins and the Brothers' Rule.

Where possible we have tried to make the quotes relevant to all Lasallians. To this end we decided to change one word in the Brothers' Rule of 1987, replacing the word 'Brother' with 'Lasallian'.



Our Vision

The vision behind the creation of this book has been to bring together writings which speak of our distinctively Lasallian focus, including ideas to inspire and encourage, challenge and unsettle and lead towards a deeper relationship with God in Christ. It has been compiled by a team of people representing the different branches of the Lasallian family, all people committed to live in the awareness of God's presence: Brothers, former Brothers, students and staff from Lasallian schools, people toiling in the vineyard in both formal and informal education, those who have spent a year touching and inspiring hearts at St Cassian's Retreat Centre, Kintbury, and those who have accompanied the poor with the Lasallian Developing World Projects (LDWP). We hope that this resource will be like a well that people can return to many times to receive spiritual nourishment and a deeper insight into what it means to be a Lasallian.

As a group we found it difficult to pinpoint exactly how we have been influenced and inspired by the significant experiences that shape us as Lasallians. As we shared our experiences we found twelve themes (see opposite) that resonated with all of us because they represented what for us is distinctive about Lasallian spirituality. These twelve themes became the foundation stones of this publication.

We then chose twenty-five relevant Christian headings, notions relevant to the whole church, to which we as Lasallians may wish to respond. Our hope is that the Lasallian themes might be like a prism through which all the headings could be interpreted and given a distinctively Lasallian light. The twelve themes run throughout each book, and the headings are intended to throw a different light on them, just as in our own experience we may come to understand the theme in different ways, at different times in our lives.

This book, the first of four, contains the first three themes, 'Being Aware of God's Presence', 'Responding to God's Calling' and 'Discerning God's Will Now'.

We hope you will use this book as a vehicle for praying and reflecting upon your own Lasallian vocation. The book is a resource that can be used in many different ways. For example, an individual may simply choose a page and spend ten minutes reading and meditating upon the quotations, whilst a group may also take a page and have someone read aloud a quotation followed by a period of silent meditation, and ending with an opportunity for everyone to share their thoughts and reflections. We hope it may also prove of value in the school context for staff and students.

For those of us who have worked over several years on this publication we offer it to you in a spirit of faith and zeal, that it may deepen your spiritual life and enrich your vocation as a Lasallian.



Living in a Spirit of Faith, Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



The Structure



The complete publication, published in four volumes is divided into the two major Lasallian characteristics, spirit of faith and spirit of zeal, which in turn are subdivided into six themes:

Living in a Spirit of Faith

1. Being Aware of God's Presence
2. Responding to God's Calling
3. Discerning God's Will Now
4. Trusting God's Providence
5. Recognising God's Love for Each of Us
6. Living the Creative Cycle of Death and Resurrection

Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

7. Together and by Association
8. Respecting Others, Bringing Those at the Margins to the Centre of Our Lives
9. Loving the Vulnerable Self
10. Accompanying the Poor
11. Being Educators, Especially of Youth
12. Touching and Inspiring Hearts with the Christian Spirit

Each of the above themes are subdivided by the same 25 headings listed below, each page containing a biblical, a Lasallian and a modern-day quote.

1. Opening to God's word
2. Allowing intimacy with God
3. Trusting
4. Being a disciple
5. Receiving and responding
6. Embracing uncertainty
7. Risking
8. Recognising a shared spirit and shared humanity
9. Living hopefully
10. Celebrating
11. Accepting ourselves as God's gift to others and accepting others as God's gift to us
12. Transforming
13. Building community
14. Living our commitment
15. Being a communion of saints
16. Witnessing
17. Serving as mission
18. Accompanying
19. Being good shepherds
20. Honouring
21. Seeking wholeness
22. Reconciling
23. Collaborating
24. Peacemaking
25. Hungering for justice





St John Baptist de La Salle: 1651 – 1719

Patron Saint of Teachers

In his Gospel Luke tells us that 'Jesus went through all the towns and villages teaching the people'. In a quite literal sense John Baptist de La Salle followed in Jesus' footsteps in this essential mission. In an age when travel was laborious, he walked the alleys, streets and roads of his homeland in order to set up schools and spread the good news of God's love and salvation. Pope Paul VI has reminded us that this gospel has the energy capable of transforming people's lives from within and that we are called to evangelise not only individuals but the roots of cultures. In our own age, when travel is extensive and easy and communications permeate the fabric of our day, how do we measure up to the command to live and spread the gospel? This book is designed to ask that question and to help each of us to create a living answer.

The 'journey' of John Baptist's life took him from Rheims to Paris and then onto other towns in France. More significantly it also took him from ease to hardship, from affluence to poverty, from a position of influence to one of insignificance. He did not see any of these transitions as random chance or even as principally the result of his own choices. He saw them as God's hand guiding the course of his life. He was consistently attentive to the discovery of God in the events of his life and in his associations with others for the fulfilment of God's purpose. It is a mode of perception very suited to the rush and complexity of modern life, demanding as it does prayerful reflection, sharing with others and apostolic action.

The splendid Gothic Cathedral of Rheims is where the kings of France were once crowned. It is a refined building of soaring columns, stained glass and myriad shapely sculptures. Here, in 1667, the 16 year old De La Salle was appointed a canon for life and given a substantial stipend to go with the privilege. He processed, elegantly dressed, into the carved choir stalls each day and sang the office with the other canons. Sixteen years later, the 32 year old priest persuaded the archbishop to accept his resignation. At this crucial stage of his life he took the step of joining his fortunes with those of the poor group of teachers whom he had recruited to teach in the schools for the poor. Stepping into that alternative lifestyle was just as much a challenge as going today into the ambit of deprived and disorientated youths or into work with drug addicts. But in his case there were no suitable wages to justify it and no escape to genteel life after working hours. He and his Brothers had chosen to live with the poor and consequently to be poor.

His commitment was radical. In fact, it shocked his family and many of his contemporaries. And it was with a mere two of his Brothers that he went further and made the breathtaking vow to continue their association for the work of the schools even if it meant they were 'obliged to live on bread alone'. But although his life became a statement about the social and spiritual needs of his time, what he did bears no comparison to modern 'radical' protest, the shock tactics of some campaigners, the confrontational violence of others. His radicalism was a direct response to the



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call of God in his life. Over the years he was gently drawn in to carrying out what God wanted of him. Aged 28, on a doorstep in Rheims in 1679, he had met Adrien Nyel just arrived in the town and had offered to help in his work of setting up free schools for the poor. It was a moment whose consequences he was unable to foresee, 'one commitment leading to another', as he was later to say.

De La Salle acted in a spirit of faith. Once he was clear about what God wanted of him he went ahead even if it was not obvious how that action could be accomplished. Allied to this strong faith was a zealous drive which made him prepared to suffer all kinds of attacks and setbacks in order to help those in need. He and the early Brothers worked intensively and creatively to provide a model of education that would enable youngsters to grow into well-balanced emotional, intellectual and spiritual persons. The legacy of his work across the world proves that his faith and his efforts were not misdirected.

As Founder of the Brothers, De La Salle was strongly guided by reflecting on the experience of events in his life. As a man of prayer, he was also shaped by his daily reading of Holy Scripture. For him this was the word of God for all Christians in all times and for him personally as he worked his way through the joys and difficulties of his life. So it is fitting that Scripture is the key source of inspiration in this book, the one that underlies and tests all the other contributions. His own life and writings are the second major strand so that we can draw courage from the example of one who has led the way in such a striking fashion. His understanding of God calling lay people to ministry in the Church, teachers in particular, is one that speaks to our times. He still also provides rich practical advice for teachers and those working with young people, and we would all do well to recall frequently the phrase that he instituted in the schools and communities, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God". Modern writings then complete this compilation. These latter are a necessary glimpse of God at work in the people of our own time and culture. They enable us to relate our own experience to that of enlightened contemporaries and they challenge us to respond.

God's plan for De La Salle did not include living a quiet, untroubled life. His life and his talents were for sharing. If at one time his Brothers thought that the sharing was just for them and their students, that era has certainly passed. The Founder of the Brothers is seen now first of all as a gift to the whole Church, one of the foundation blocks. He is also valued as a great pioneer in education. He is then the particular gift of God to those many people who encounter something of his legacy in the course of their lives and are drawn together by it. And that now includes a rich variety of people, some working with youth, others with adults; some studying, others retired. Some are married, some single; some are brothers, sisters or priests; some have degrees, others practical skills. There is a place for all, just as there is in Jesus' parable of the Wedding Feast. Nor do we have to be the smartest in order to join in. We need to be honest people aiming to do our best, learners and listeners centred on God. This book is an invitation to that heavenly feast. We won't fail to get there if we keep in mind that our life is a journey of faith into love.

Further information can be found at the following websites:

www.delasalle.org.uk

www.lasalle.org

Further reflections can be found in the 'Reflect and Pray' section of : www.prayingeachday.org





Abbreviations

- DEC: 'The Declaration: The Brothers of the Christian Schools in the World Today.' One of the principal documents of the Brothers' 39th General Chapter (1967), published in 1968.
- DLS: De La Salle – St John Baptist De La Salle, 1651–1719, founder of the De La Salle Brothers.
- L. Sch: 'The Lasallian School' by William Mann, published in 1991 by Brothers of the Christian Schools (De La Salle), Long Island – New England Province, Rhode Island, USA.
- LDWP: Lasallian Developing World Projects, part of the District of Great Britain, which runs summer mini projects in poor parts of the world that assist local communities in improving their educational facilities.
- Let: Letters written by De La Salle taken from 'The Letters of John Baptist de La Salle' translated by Molloy & Loes, published in 1988 by Lasallian Publications, Romeoville, USA
- MED: 'Meditations' written by De La Salle covering Sundays and the principal feastdays of the Church, was first published in English by Battersby in 1953. A more recent translation was published by Lasallian Publications, USA, in 1994.
- MEL: The MEL Bulletin is an on-going series of booklets published by the De La Salle Generalate in Rome that cover topics related to the Lasallian Educational Mission. 'MEL 7' refers to the seventh book in the series.
- MTR: 'Meditations for the Time of Retreat', written by De La Salle and first published in 1730. English version published by St. Mary's Press, Winona, USA in 1975.

Scripture: We have used well known common abbreviations for all the scripture references.

A glossary of Lasallian terms used in this volume can be found on page 80.



Theme 1

Being Aware of God's Presence



Living in a Spirit of Faith



Being aware of God's Presence



Opening to God's word

Lk 18.35-42

Now it happened that as he drew near to Jericho, there was a blind man sitting at the side of the road begging. When he heard the crowd going past he asked what it was all about, and they told him that Jesus the Nazarene was passing by. So he called out, 'Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me.' The people in front scolded him and told him to keep quiet, but he only shouted all the louder, 'Son of David, have pity on me'. Jesus stopped and ordered them to bring the man to him, and when he came up, asked him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' 'Sir', he replied, 'let me see again'. Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight. Your faith has saved you'. And instantly his sight returned and he followed him praising God, and all the people who saw it gave praise to God.

Med 96:3

Recognise Jesus beneath the poor rags of the children whom you have to instruct. Adore him in them. Love poverty and honour the poor, after the example of the Magi, for poverty should be dear to you who are responsible for the instruction of the poor. May faith lead you to do this with affection and zeal, because these children are the members of Jesus Christ.

Frank Simmons

Live, Jesus, in our hearts

Where does Jesus dwell?
How does his presence stay?
At first light, do we, at his call awaking,
to him in joy, all other thoughts forsaking,
return an act of love?

And journeying through the day,
(our daily Emmaus)
do we pause and find our hearts are burning,
and listening to his voice, his love discerning,
find heaven a moment there?

Then at the end of day,
glimpsing eternity,
do we take the chance of contemplating
Jesus' love, assured that he is waiting
to welcome us above?

Where then does Jesus dwell
if not within ourselves?
Where once invited, he will be staying,
responding to our voices saying
"Live, Jesus, in our hearts
FOREVER."

Lk 24



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Allowing intimacy with God



Ps 139.1-6, 23-24

Yahweh, you examine me and know me,
you know if I am standing or sitting,
you read my thoughts from far away,
whether I walk or lie down,
you are watching,
you know every detail of my conduct.

The word is not even on my tongue,
Yahweh, before you know all about it;
close behind and close in front you fence me round,
shielding me with your hand.
Such knowledge is beyond my understanding,
a height to which my mind cannot attain.

God, examine me and know my heart,
probe me and know my thoughts;
make sure I do not follow pernicious ways,
and guide me in the way that is everlasting.

DLS

Let us remember that we are in the holy Presence of God.

Catherine of Siena

I have told you how tears well up from the heart: the heart gathers them up from its burning desire and holds them out to the eyes. Just as green wood, when it is put into the fire, weeps tears of water in the heat because it is still green (for if it were dry it would not weep), so does the heart weep when it is made green again by the renewal of grace, after the desiccating dryness of selfishness has been drawn out of the soul. Thus are fire and tears made one in burning desire. And because desire has no end it cannot be satisfied in this life. Rather, the more it loves, the less it seems to itself to love. So love exerts a holy longing, and with that longing their eyes weepthe Holy Spirit's tears of fire.

*“Yahweh,
you examine me
and know me”* Psalm 139



Trusting

Nb 22:31-35

Then Yahweh opened the eyes of Balaam. He saw the angel of Yahweh standing on the road, a drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed down and fell prostrate on his face. And the angel of Yahweh said to him, 'Why did you beat your donkey three times like that? I myself had come to bar your way; while I am here your road is blocked. The donkey saw me and turned aside from me three times. You are lucky she did turn aside, or I should have killed you by now, though I would have spared her.' Balaam answered the angel of Yahweh, 'I have sinned. I did not know you were standing in my path. However, if you are angry with me, I will go back.' The angel of Yahweh answered Balaam, 'Go with these people, but only say what I tell you to say.' So Balaam went with the chiefs sent by Balak.

Let 118

You are right in saying that, in the light of faith, you see things quite differently from when they are looked at in themselves without going beyond the natural view.

Empedocles - Anthony de Mello

God is a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.

The temple was built on an island and it held a thousand bells, bells big and small, fashioned by the finest craftsmen in the world. When the wind blew or a storm raged, all the bells would peal out in a symphony that would send the heart of the hearer into raptures. But over the centuries, the island sank into the sea and, with it, the temple bells. An ancient legend said that the bells continued to peal out, ceaselessly, and could be heard by anyone who would listen. Inspired by this legend, a young man travelled thousands of miles, determined to hear those bells. He sat for days on the shore, facing the vanished island and listened with all his might. But all he could hear was the sound of the sea. He made every effort to block it out. But to no avail; the sound of the sea seemed to flood the world. He kept at his task for weeks. Each time he got disheartened he would listen to the village pundits who spoke with uncton of the mysterious legend. Then his heart would be aflame... only to be discouraged again when weeks of further effort yielded no results. Finally he decided to give up the attempt. Perhaps he was not destined to hear the bells. Perhaps the legend was not true. It was his final day, and he went to the shore to say goodbye to the sea and the sky and the wind and the coconut trees. He lay on the sand, and for the first time, listened to the sound of the sea. Soon he was so lost in the sound that he was barely conscious of himself, so deep was the silence that the sound produced. In the depth of the silence, he heard it! The tinkle of a tiny bell followed by another, and another and another and soon, every one of the 1000 temple bells was pealing out in harmony, and his heart was wrapt in joyous ecstasy. Do you wish to hear the temple bells? Listen to the sound of the sea. Do you wish to catch a glimpse of God? Look intently at creation.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Being a disciple



Ga 2:20 Ecc 3:22

I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in this body I live in faith: faith in the Son of God who loved me and who sacrificed himself for my sake.

I see there is no contentment for a human being except happiness in achievement; such is the lot of human beings. No one can tell us what will happen after we are gone.

Med 2:2

Because you have to prepare the hearts of others for the coming of Jesus Christ, you must first of all dispose your own hearts to be entirely filled with zeal, in order to render your words effective in those you instruct.

Bukhari

The Prophet Muhammad was once asked :‘What actions are most excellent?’ He replied, ‘To gladden the heart of human beings, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the sufferings of the injured.’

*“What actions
are most excellent?
.... to help the afflicted...”*

Bukhari



Receiving and responding

Lk 17:20-21

Asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was to come, he gave them this answer, 'The coming of the kingdom of God does not admit of observation and there will be no one to say, "Look, it is here! Look, it is there!" For look, the Kingdom of heaven is among you.'

MTR 5:1

Admire the goodness of God, who provides for all the needs of creatures, taking the means to procure for them the knowledge of the true good, that is, the salvation of their souls. Offer yourself to God for this purpose, to assist the children entrusted to you, as far as will be required of you.

H. Melville - T. Jefferson - S. Burnham

We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibres our actions run as causes and return to us as results.

Say nothing of my religion. It is known to God and myself alone. Its evidence before the world is to be sought in my life: if it has been honest and dutiful to society the religion which has regulated it cannot be a bad one.

To believe in God or in a guiding force because someone tells you to is the height of stupidity. We are given senses to receive our information within. With our own eyes we see, and with our own skin we feel. With our intelligence, it is intended that we understand. But each person must puzzle it out for himself or herself.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Embracing uncertainty



Mt 14:25-31

In the fourth watch of the night he went towards them, walking on the lake, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified. 'It is a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, 'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.' It was Peter who answered. 'Lord,' he said, 'if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.' 'Come,' said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. 'Lord! Save me!' he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. 'Man of little faith,' he said 'why did you doubt?'

Med 20:3

This community is founded on Providence.

John Wesley

Do you know why that cow looks over that wall? I will tell you. She looks over the wall because she cannot see through it, and that is what you must do with your troubles – look over and above them.

*“Lord! Save me!”
Peter cried.
Jesus put out his hand
at once and held him.*

Matthew 14:30-31



Risking

Mt 10:17-23, 26-28

'Beware of people: they will hand you over to sanhedrins and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the pagans. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how to speak or what to say; what you are to say will be given to you when the time comes; because it is not you who will be speaking; the Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you.

'Brother will betray brother to death, and the parent their child; children will rise against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by all on account of my name; but those who stand firm to the end will be saved. If they persecute you in one town, take refuge in the next; and if they persecute you in that, take refuge in another. I tell you solemnly, you will not have gone the round of the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

'Do not be afraid of them therefore. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops.

'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell.'

Med 20:3

Be assured that once you have placed yourselves in God's hands, willing to suffer whatever and as much as God may desire, though you are left in sorrow, you will be helped by God's grace to endure this trial, perhaps in a way that is not obvious, or else God will deliver you from it by surprising means and at a time you least expect it.

Joan Chittister

Tell us about the place of risk in the spiritual life,' the disciples said. So the Zen master told the story of the peasants who were taken by cargo plane month after month to work on the Burma road. The flight was long and the work was boring, so the men took to playing cards as they were flown from site to site. But since they had no money, they decided that the person who lost would be required to throw himself out of the airplane without a parachute. 'Why, that's horrible!' the disciples gasped. 'Ah, yes,' the master said, 'but it certainly made the game more exciting.' The message is clear: There is nothing in life more meaningful than gambling with our lives. In fact, isn't that why disciples become disciples in the first place?



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Recognising a shared spirit and a shared humanity



Mt 25:32-46

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.' Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?' And the King will answer, 'I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.' Next he will say to those on his left hand, 'Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me.' Then it will be their turn to ask, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?' Then he will answer, 'I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me.' And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.

Med 139:3

Is your faith such as to enable you to touch the hearts of your students and inspire them with the Christian spirit? This is the greatest miracle you can perform, and one which God expects of you.

Abraham Heschel

Just to be is a blessing.
Just to live is holy.





Living hopefully

Lk 5:17-26

Now he was teaching one day, and among the audience there were Pharisees and doctors of the Law who had come from every village in Galilee, from Judaea and from Jerusalem. And the Power of the Lord was behind his works of healing. Then some men appeared, carrying on a bed a paralysed man whom they were trying to bring in and lay down in front of him. But as the crowd made it impossible to find a way of getting him in, they went up on to the flat roof and lowered him and his stretcher down through the tiles into the middle of the gathering, in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith he said, 'My friend, your sins are forgiven you'.

The scribes and the Pharisees began to think this over. 'Who is this man talking blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?' But Jesus, aware of their thoughts, made them this reply, 'What are these thoughts you have in your hearts? Which of these is easier: to say, "Your sins are forgiven you" or to say, "Get up and walk"? But to prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,' - he said to the paralysed man - 'I order you: get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.' And immediately before their very eyes he got up, picked up what he had been lying on and went home praising God.

They were all astounded and praised God, and were filled with awe, saying, 'We have seen strange things today'.

Circular 447

Finally, our hope and prayer today is that the reception of the 43rd General Chapter, in the weeks and months ahead, might be for each of us and for the whole of our Lasallian Family a 'Pentecost' kind of experience... giving us a renewed hope in our future and the courage and zeal needed to face together and by association the greatest challenges of the 21st Century. There can be no doubt that the Reign of God, the proclamation of the Good News, the service of the poor, and ongoing renewal of our Lasallian educational mission will call for conversion. And, yet, what each of us might fear to attempt alone is possible, by God's grace, when we commit ourselves to do it together.

P. Adams - Fosdick

It seems to me that people have vast potential. Most people can do extraordinary things if they have the confidence or take the risks. Yet most people don't. They sit in front of the telly and treat life as if it goes on forever.

Rebellion against your handicaps gets you nowhere. Self-pity gets you nowhere. One must have the adventurous daring to accept oneself as a bundle of possibilities and undertake the most interesting game in the world - making the most of one's best.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Celebrating



Psalm 93

Yahweh is king, robed in majesty,
Robed is Yahweh and girded in power.

The world is indeed set firm; it can never be shaken;
Your throne is set firm from of old,
From all eternity you exist.

The rivers lift up, Yahweh,
The rivers lift up their voices,
The rivers lift up their thunder.

Greater than the voice of many waters,
more majestic than the breakers of the sea,
Yahweh is majestic in the heights.

Your decrees stand firm, unshakeable,
Holiness is the beauty of your house,
Yahweh, for all time to come.

Prayer

I believe, O my God,
That you are the treasure of my soul...
You take up your dwelling in me
To let me enjoy your companionship,
To make it a place of your delight.
I adore you in my soul...
Fill me with your blessings and your grace.

G. M. Hopkins

Glory be to God for dappled things -
For skies of coupled-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh firecoal chestnut falls; finches wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced - fold, fallow and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.





Accepting ourselves as God's gift to others and accepting others as God's gift to us

Rm 8:7-39

These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us. For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Damian Lundy

Oh the word of my Lord, deep within my being,
Oh the word of my Lord, you have filled my mind.

Before I formed you in the womb
I knew you through and through,
I chose you to be mine.
Before you left your mother's side
I called to you, my child, to be my sign.

(Jeremiah 1)

Anon.

It is a fact we cannot love our neighbours if we do not love ourselves. The commandment of the Lord is to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. Therefore we must have love for the person God has created within us before we can love the people around us. The greater the love we have for ourselves, the greater the love we express to others.

Most of us have a constant struggle with a sense of inferiority. We tend to play a painful comparison game... True appreciation of our personal uniqueness offers each one of us the truth that sets us free from these endless and painful contests. God says to each of us 'you are unique, the one and only you. From all eternity and into all eternity, there will be only one you. I have loved you with an eternal love'.

*"I called to you, my child,
to be my sign."*

Damian Lundy



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Mk 9:23-24

'If you can?' retorted Jesus. 'Everything is possible for anyone who has faith.' Immediately the father of the boy cried out, 'I do have faith. Help the little faith I have!'

M. Sauvage & M. Campos

The use of the word 'miracles' seems to us highly significant. In the Gospels the miracles of Christ are first and foremost 'signs.' They manifest in a sensible way the presence and transforming power of the 'new world' amid the reality of the 'old world'... In a similar way, De La Salle regards as a 'miracle' the transformation which the presence of Lasallians as educators effects in the lives of poor and abandoned children. The miracle in this instance is not an inherently marvellous event; the change comes about in the daily texture of quite ordinary human lives; it introduces the poor into an existence that is one of simple decency, and gives them a share in the promises of God which are fulfilled in the Church. What is miraculous is the victory of the man of faith, hope and love over social determinisms that were seemingly condemning these children to a subhuman existence. The real miracle is thus the paschal victory of evangelical life over the death that results from oppression by the 'world.' This victory of life over death is a sign of the power of God at work in the ministers he has chosen.

Anon.

He wastes his time who looks up to see God if he cannot first of all see himself, especially the invisible things of his own spirit.

Be sure of this: he who wants to see God must first cleanse his soul, for it is a mirror which reflects everything clearly if it is clean. When the mirror is dirty you see nothing clearly. So with the soul: when it is dirty you can know neither yourself nor God. Just as when a candle is burning you can see the candle itself by its own light, and other things too, so when your soul is burning with the love of God, and your heart is feeling a continual desire to love him, then by the light of his grace, which he infuses into your reason, you can see both your unworthiness and his goodness.





Building community

Ps 127:1

If Yahweh does not build a house, in vain do its builders toil. If Yahweh does not guard a city, in vain does its guard keep watch.

Med 77:1

In Community the Spirit of God should be the only guide, and people ought to breathe only God, whom they must only think of pleasing and to whom they have consecrated themselves in service.

L. M. Bujold

My home is not a place, it is people.

*“My home is not a place,
it is people.”*

L. M. Bujold



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Living our commitment



Rm 6:12-14

That is why you must not allow sin to reign over your mortal bodies and make you obey their desires; or give any parts of your bodies over to sin to be used as instruments of evil. Instead, give yourselves to God, as people brought to life from the dead, and give every part of your bodies to God to be instruments of uprightness; and then sin will no longer have any power over you - you are living not under law, but under grace.

Med 60:1

Our Lord warns us... that there are many 'in sheep's clothing, who are ravenous wolves within.' Such, in fact, may even be found in the holiest communities, and for this reason the Council of Trent has laid it down that the habit does not make the monk ... Everything about you, both interiorly and exteriorly, must bespeak the holiness proclaimed by your state. Your exterior conduct must be holy by being edifying, that is, your reserve and your modesty must be such as to make it appear that God is truly dwelling in you, and that you have God alone in view in everything you do. Your actions must be holy, being performed through a holy motive, with your attention fixed firmly on God.

Frank Welton

But I say to you, and I say it with all the earnestness that I have, if you are prepared to fight for the right of adoring Jesus in His Blessed Sacrament, then, when you come out from before your tabernacles you must walk with Christ, mystically present to you, through the streets of this country, and find the same Christ in the peoples of your cities and villages. You cannot claim to worship Jesus in the tabernacle if you do not pity Jesus in the slum... It is folly, it is madness, to suppose that you can worship Jesus in the Sacrament and Jesus on the throne of glory when you are sweating Him in the bodies and souls of His children... You have your Mass, you have your altars, you have begun to get your tabernacles. Now go out into the highways and hedges, and look for Jesus in the ragged and the naked, in the oppressed and the sweated, in those who have lost hope, and in those who are struggling to make good. Look for Jesus in them; and when you have found Him, gird yourself with His towel of fellowship and wash His feet in the person of his brethren.

“It is folly ...to suppose that you can worship Jesus in the Sacrament ... when you are sweating Him in the bodies and souls of his children.”

Frank Welton



Being a communion of saints

Jn 10:11-16

I am the good shepherd:
the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep.
Hirelings, not being shepherds
and the sheep not belonging to them,
abandon the sheep and run away
as soon as they see a wolf coming,
and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep;
this is because they are only hired
and have no concern for the sheep.
I am the good shepherd;
I know my own and my own know me,
just as the Father knows me
and I know the Father;
and I lay down my life for my sheep.
And there are other sheep I have
that are not of this fold,
and these I have to lead as well.
They too will listen to my voice,
and there will be only one flock,
and one shepherd.

Themes

[In his meditations on the lives of the saints, De La Salle] highlights the aspects of the saint that he wishes to apply to his disciples, to the ministry that they exercise in the Church, but especially to their spiritual journey in the continual process of conversion and seeking holiness. This theme of conversion is constantly referred to in the life and mission of the saints.

George Herbert

A broken Altar, Lord, Thy servant rears,
Made of a heart, and cemented with tears,
Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;
No workman's tool hath touch'd the same.

A heart alone
Is such a stone
As nothing but
Thy power doth cut
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame,
To praise thy name:

That, if I chance to hold my peace,
These stones to praise thee may not cease.
O, let thy blessed sacrifice be mine
And sanctify this altar to be thine!



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Witnessing



2 Cor 5:18-21

It is all God's work. It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation. In other words, God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding peoples faults against them, and he entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. So we are ambassadors of Christ; it is as though God was appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God.

MTR 3.2

Since you are ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ in the work that you do (2 Cor 5:20) you must act as representing Jesus Christ himself. He wants your disciples to see him in you and receive your instructions as if he were giving them to them. They must be convinced that your instructions are the truth of Jesus Christ who speaks with your mouth, that it is only in his name that you teach, and that it is he who has given you authority over them.

Seneca Epistles

Live among men as if God beheld you; speak to God as if men were listening.

*“Live among men
as if God beheld you;”*

Seneca Epistles





Serving as mission

Mt 20:25-28

But Jesus called to them and said, 'You know that among the gentiles the rulers lord it over them, and great men make their authority felt. Among you this is not to happen. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

Charles Henry

Within the People of God Lasallians are called to exercise the function of witness, investing it with a specific character. They are signs of the action and the presence of the Spirit of God in our own day; signs of the present reality of the new world inaugurated by Christ and announced by the word of the Church; signs of the power of the Risen Lord who grants to all people the power to respond to the God who calls them; signs of a renunciation which does not destroy their human dignity, their love of earthly life, or their readiness to serve others, but rather makes them less self-centred in their activities, more all-embracing in their love, more available in their service.

Zen - Shakespeare

“What is the deepest meaning of Buddhism, Master?”
The Master made a deep bow to his pupil.

If I but accents borrow
That can my speech diffuse, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I razed my likeness. Now, banished Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemned
So may it come thy master whom thou lov'st
Shall find thee full of labours.

“Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant..”

Gospel According to Matthew



Living in a Spirit of Faith



Accompanying



Mk 16:15-18

And he said to them, 'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will be associated with believers; in my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.'

Rule 40

Lasallians have always in view the promotion of justice in the light of the gospel and either the direct or indirect service of the poor as the preferred aspect of their ministry of education.

They work directly for the poor by providing an education for the economically deprived, victims of social injustice, delinquents, and those neglected by the rest of society.

When Lasallians work with students from families that are more or less well off, they teach them their duties and responsibilities with regard to social justice and charity towards everyone.

Margaret Wright

Lord, when I look upon the world
Let me see it through your eyes.
An old man, forgotten, lonely,
A child's bewildered cries.
And when they see me watching,
Let them know I understand.
Help me give your love and peace, Lord.
Help me reach out with your hand.

And when I listen to the world
Let me hear it with your ears.
A teenager's frustration,
A new mother's mounting fears.
And when they see me listening
Let me know I really care.
Help me find some time to listen,
Just an hour or two to spare.

And when I reach out to the world,
Let me have your healing touch.
For those with empty hearts, Lord,
And those that hurt so much.
And when they feel me touch them,
Let them know how much You care.
Heal their pain and give them hope Lord,
Let them know you're always there.





Being good shepherds

I Samuel 16:6-13

When they arrived, he caught sight of Eliab and thought, 'Surely Yahweh's anointed one stands there before him', but Yahweh said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height for I have rejected him; God does not see as people see; humans look at appearances but Yahweh looks at the heart'. Jesse then called Abinadab and presented him to Samuel, who said, 'Yahweh has not chosen this one either'. Jesse then presented Shammah, but Samuel said, 'Yahweh has not chosen this one either'. Jesse presented his seven sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'Yahweh has not chosen these'. He then asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' He answered, 'There is still one left, the youngest; he is out looking after the sheep'. Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send for him; we will not sit down to eat until he comes'. Jesse had him sent for; a boy of fresh complexion, with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. Yahweh said, 'Come, anoint him, for this is the one'. At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of Yahweh seized on David and stayed with him from that day on. As for Samuel, he rose and went to Ramah.

Med 32:2

It is also necessary, says Our Lord, that the sheep should know their shepherd in order to follow him. Two things are required, therefore, of those who have charge of souls, and should characterise them. Firstly, they should be very virtuous, in order to serve as an example, for unless they walk in the right path, those who follow them would be led astray. Secondly, they should manifest great tenderness for the souls confided to them, so that anything which might be capable of injuring or wounding these souls will call for their attention. In this manner the sheep will love their shepherd and be pleased in his company, since they will find therein their repose and their relief.

Anon. - Mandatum

The mark by which the Sisters of St Louis recognise themselves must be the tender love they have for one another. The life principle of the Sisters of St Louis will be the spirit of love... those aspirants who are of open, kind and candid disposition, obliging and compassionate, shall be preferred.

Ubi Caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
(Where charity and love are, there is God.)



Living in a Spirit of Faith



Honouring



Lk 13:34-35

'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you refused! So be it! Your house will be left to you. Yes, I promise you, you shall not see me till the time comes when you say: Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!'

Prayer

God of love, you can easily fill me with all that is lovable and loving in you. Set me aflame with love for you and give me a burning love for my neighbour.

Dalai Lama - Etienne De Grellat

Therefore with my two hands joined, I appeal to you the reader, to ensure that you make the rest of your life as meaningful as possible... relinquish your envy, let go your desire to triumph over others. Instead try to benefit them. With kindness, with courage and, confident that in doing so you are sure to meet with success, welcome others with a smile.

Be straightforward. And try to be impartial. Treat everyone as if they were a close friend. I say this neither as Dalai Lama, nor as someone who has special powers or abilities. Of these I have none. I speak as a human being; one who, like yourself, wishes to be happy and not to suffer.

I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.





Seeking wholeness

Ws 11:24-12:3

Yes, you love everything that exists, and nothing that you have made disgusts you, since, if you hated something, you would not have made it. And how could a thing subsist, had you not willed it? Or how to be preserved, if not called forth by you? No, you spare all, since all is yours, Lord, lover of life! For your imperishable spirit is in everything! And thus, gradually, you correct those who offend; you admonish and remind them of how they have sinned, so that they may abstain from evil and trust in you, Lord.

Med 121:12

In this world there are crosses of thieves and those of Jesus Christ. Those of the thieves have no grace attached to them and impart no movement of life in those who endure them, because those persons carry them with the wrong dispositions. Those of Jesus Christ are those that often work miracles, and procure a good spirit of self-denial and practice of other virtues... Is the cross you carry the cross of Jesus Christ? How do you recognise this? Do the difficulties you suffer lead you to practice many virtues? If these crosses turn you away and make you complain, they are the crosses of thieves.

Eberhard Arnold

It is not right to try to remove all suffering, nor is it right to endure it stoically. Suffering can be used, turned to good account. What makes a life happy or unhappy is not outward circumstances, but our inner attitude to them.

“What makes a life happy or unhappy is not outward circumstances, but our inner attitude to them.”

Eberhard Arnold



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Reconciling



Tm 14:14-19

It is to God, therefore, that each of us must give an account of himself. Far from passing judgment on each other, therefore, you should make up your mind never to be the cause of your brother tripping or falling. Now I am perfectly well aware, of course, and I speak for the Lord Jesus, that no food is unclean in itself; however, if someone thinks that a particular food is unclean, then it is unclean for him. So let us adopt any custom that leads to peace and our mutual improvement.

De La Salle

Mildness, humility and respect for your neighbour should always be apparent in your conduct.

Lionel Blue

My grandparents were unsophisticated folk, but they knew that in most rows you are arguing with part of your own self. It is your own doubts you are suppressing. Unless you make up, you may hurt others but you will certainly maim yourself as well. They never left me any goods to inherit because they didn't have many, but they tried to show me by example in early childhood how to have a holy row, and make it up, and how to resolve a religious conflict with decency.

“Mildness, humility and respect for your neighbour should always be apparent in your conduct.”

De La Salle



Collaborating

Ex 24:1-11

To Moses he had said, 'Come up to Yahweh, yourself and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel and bow down in worship at a distance. Moses alone must approach Yahweh; the others must not, nor must the people go up with him.'

Moses went and told the people all the commands of Yahweh and all the ordinances. In answer, all the people said with one voice, 'We will observe all the commands that Yahweh has decreed.' Moses put all the commands of Yahweh into writing, and early next morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain, with twelve standing-stones for the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he directed certain young Israelites to offer holocausts and to immolate bullocks to Yahweh as communion sacrifices. Half of the blood Moses took up and put into basins, the other half he cast on the altar. And taking the Book of the Covenant he read it to the listening people, and they said, 'We will observe all that Yahweh has decreed; we will obey.' Then Moses took the blood and cast it towards the people. 'This,' he said, 'is the blood of the Covenant that Yahweh has made with you, containing all these rules.'

Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel. They saw the God of Israel beneath whose feet there was, it seemed, a sapphire pavement pure as the heavens themselves. He laid no hand on these notables of the sons of Israel: they gazed on God. They ate and they drank.

Med 180:3

You can perform several miracles
in regard both to yourselves and your work;
in your own regard,
by an entire fidelity to grace...
And in regard to your work...
Such are the miracles God gives you the power to perform,
and which are asked of you.

Benet Conroy

Take my little twig and grow a tree through me;
My single snowdrop can become a grove,
My sentence blossom to a book.
Transform my single string into a cello.
That tiny note I try to sing
May it become a four-part choir.
My scrape of bow you make a symphony.
That single dot of paint
Transform into a masterpiece
The blob of clay mould to a stately pot.

But in my heart I know
Unless it's you
I am condemned to finger paint,
To pat cold clay,
And plink upon the keys.
Give me a chord or two
For in that chord
the heart will show;
Not mine, but yours

Take my candle, start a lighthouse.
Take my torch and light a city.
Take my e-mail start a network.
Take my smile and give a million hugs.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Peacemaking



Dn 10:15-19

When he had said these things to me I prostrated myself on the ground, without saying a word; then someone looking like a son of man came and touched my lips. I opened my mouth to speak, and I said to the person standing in front of me, 'My lord, anguish overcomes me at this vision, and what strength I had deserts me. How can my lord's servant speak to my lord now that I have no strength left and my breath fails me?' Once again the person like a man touched me; he gave me strength. 'Do not be afraid,' he said 'you are one specially chosen; peace be with you; be strong!' And as he spoke to me I felt strong again and said, 'Let my lord speak, you have given me strength'.

Med 22:2

In order that Christ may reign in your soul it is necessary that you should combat, under his standard, the enemies of your salvation, who are also his own. For, as he wishes to establish peace in your soul... you must endeavour, through his assistance, to surmount all that might be an obstacle thereto. Thus you must overcome your passions and evil inclinations, for, as St Paul says... 'We have to be sure of this, that our former nature has been crucified with him, and the living power of our guilt annihilated, so that we are the slaves of guilt no longer.'

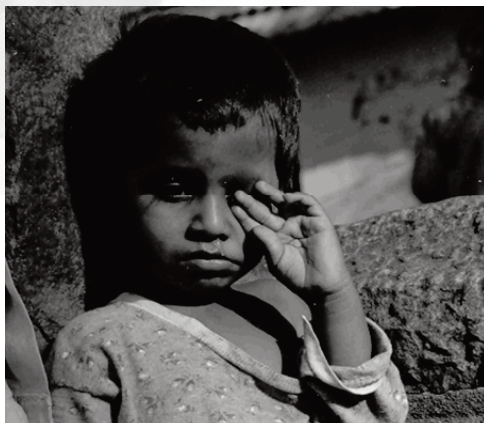
From this hour let us endeavour to receive him in the fullness of his spirit by abandoning ourselves entirely to his direction, and in allowing our interior to be so governed that we may truly say: 'It is Christ that lives in me.'

H Camara

We must have no illusions. We must not be naïve. If we listen to the voice of God, we make our choice, get out of ourselves and fight non-violently for a better world. We must not expect to find it easy; we shall not walk on roses, people will not throng to hear us and applaud, and we shall not always be aware of divine protection. If we are to be pilgrims of justice and peace, we must expect the desert.

“We must not expect to find it easy ... If we are pilgrims of justice and peace, we must expect the desert.”

Helder Camara



Hungering for justice

Ps 85:8-13

I am listening. What is God's message?
Yahweh's message is peace
For all people, for the faithful.
If only they renounce their folly,
saving help is near for those who fear Yahweh
whose glory will dwell in our land.

Faithful love and loyalty join together,
Saving Justice and Peace embrace.
Loyalty will spring up from the earth,
And Justice will lean down from heaven.

Yahweh will give prosperity,
And our soil will yield its harvest.
Justice will walk before Yahweh, treading out a path.

Bill Wolff

When troubled youth are accepted for whom they are; and when God is seen in the eyes of each of these young people; and when all who are in service to these young people are confident that their work has purpose and meaning; and when the work is informed by the best practices and science available so that innovation and excellence will naturally follow; and when the devotion of St John Baptist De La Salle and the legacy of the Brothers is an inspiration to all ... It is then you are assured of finding a Lasallian response to children and youth at risk.

John Deeney

For people who want to change things there is always scope to do something, even if we have to work on the micro scale. It was Ghandi who said, 'You have to be the change that you want to see in the world.' We need to avoid unrealistically tinted views of any sort and practise looking at our situation in a clear and realistic fashion so that we can see the issues we can tackle and those that we can raise our voices about.

A favourite quotation of mine that applies very much to everyday life comes from Cardinal Hume and echoes the sentiment earlier expressed by Ghandi:

'The future of humanity does not depend on political reform, social revolution or scientific advance. Something else is needed. It starts with a true conversion of mind and heart.' I think that without that continual effort to change ourselves we will fail even to see the issues at the heart of justice and peace.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Theme 2

Responding to God's Calling



Opening to God's word

Eph 3:16-19

Out of God's infinite glory, may God give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God.

Med 3:1-2

Those who instruct others... are but the voice that disposes hearts to receive our Lord and his holy teaching; but the one who really disposes them, and the one who gives efficacy to their words, is none other than God.

It is... by the movement of the... Spirit that all those who announce God's kingdom speak even today.

Anon.

Believe that you are far more wonderful than you ever dared to imagine, because you are.
 Believe that you can be more capable than you have ever dreamed, because you can.
 Believe that you have more courage than you can seek, because you do have more.
 Believe that you are stronger than your fears have allowed you to know, because you are.
 Believe that you can love more fully than you ever thought, because you are able to.
 Believe that you are truly more unique and special than you have ever allowed yourself to acknowledge, because you really are.
 Believe it if it's the last thing you do;
 Believe it because it's true.

“Believe that you are far more wonderful than you ever dared to imagine, because you are.”

Anon.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Allowing intimacy with God



Jn 15:14-17

You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall not call you servants any more, because a servant does not know the master's business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; and then the Father will give you anything you ask in my name. What I command you is to love one another.

Med 144:3

You should show the great love you have for Jesus by being eager to talk with him in prayer and by your desire to receive him as often as possible in the Eucharist.

Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría

Paschal Time reminds us that by rejoicing in the mystery of the Resurrection we allow ourselves to be filled with the dynamism and the mystery of life which is hidden with Christ in the Father. Jesus takes upon himself the will of the Father with all its consequences and thus he is condemned to death. In the eyes of mortals his cause is lost, dead, vanished for ever and for evermore. To all appearances his mission is a failure. All our hopes are lost.

But even when dying, Jesus retains his confidence in the Father: Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. He believes in the loving faithfulness of the Father. And the Father answers the powers of death with the definitive and total Yes to life. By raising Jesus from the dead the Father appoints him Lord of Life, Lord of the living and the dead, and he shows the whole world that he acts in union with Jesus in all that he did and taught.

Christ Risen is the Good News of love which conquers death and renews and rebuilds life. It is the Good News of justice and freedom, which conquers every kind of oppression, marginalisation and slavery. The Father proclaims that the forces of evil do not have nor will they ever have the final word in the history of humanity. The definitive word is the word of love and peace.





Trusting

2 Th 3:3-5

But the Lord is faithful, and will give you strength and guard you from the evil one, and we, in the Lord, have every confidence that you are doing and will go on doing all that we tell you. May the Lord turn your hearts towards the love of God and the fortitude of Christ.

Let 45

It is true that we must put our trust in God's grace, but in a religious community we receive graces only to the extent that we are obedient. So ask God for an unquestioning obedience. There is nothing you need more. Listen to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, trusting less in your dislikes and difficulties.

Herbert McCabe

False religion says, 'Do not fear. Trust in God who will see that none of the things you fear will happen.'

True religion says, 'Do not fear. The things you fear may well happen to you but they are nothing to be afraid of.'

“May the Lord turn your hearts towards the love of God ...”

2 Thessalonians 3:5



Living in a Spirit of Faith



Being a disciple



Mt 4:18-19

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men'.

Rule 5

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

It is by faith that Lasallians judge all earthly realities in the light of the Gospel.

It is by faith that Lasallians, 'co-operators with Jesus Christ', consecrate their whole existence to the building up of the kingdom of God through the service of education.

It is by faith that they are aware of God's presence in their undertakings, their cares and their joys.

It is by faith that Lasallians learn to see in every happening and in every person, especially in the poor, a sign and a call from the Spirit.

J.H. Westerhoff - C. Jamison

There is a great difference between learning about the Bible and living as a disciple of Jesus Christ. We are not saved by our knowledge, our beliefs or our worship in the Church; just as we are not saved by our actions or our religion. We are saved by the anguish and love of God, and to live according to that truth is to have faith.

Discerning God's will is not just making blind guesses; it's a process by which a person's vision comes into focus so that they start to see what God sees. Then they can choose to marry or enter a monastery or whatever life they see ahead. Saying a liturgical "yes" to vows in a ceremony is not, however, the same as choosing; to choose means to live the choice each day. A chosen Christian way of life is a daily choice to keep on a certain path in response to God's loving invitation. That can never be wrong.



Receiving and responding

2 Th 1:11-12

Knowing this, we pray continually that our God will make you worthy of your call, and by his power fulfil all your desires for goodness and complete all that you have been doing through faith; because in this way the name of our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in you and you in him, by the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gabriel Moran

God has given all of creation over to the humans in the centre. We humans are not separated from or above nature. We are the still point at the centre of nature which goes beyond nature by being receptive to nature. What we call progress is usually a limited view of one group living at the expense of another group. Nonetheless, however illusory most human achievements have been, we cannot stop trying to do good work. For reasons that God only knows we humans share in the power to sculpt and fashion a different world. Awareness is our greatest gift but it is often experienced as a burden; thus hankering to return to nature. But the great need we humans have is to expand our imaginations and deepen our receptive powers. We might then get a glimpse of the spirituality of our work.

John Henry Newman

God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission — I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. Somehow I am necessary for His purposes, as necessary in my place as an Archangel in his — if, indeed, I fail He can raise another, as He could make the stones children of Abraham. Yet I have a part in this great work: I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good, I shall do His work; I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep His commandments and serve Him in my calling.

Therefore I will trust Him. Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. My sickness, or perplexity, or sorrow may be necessary causes of some great end, which is quite beyond us. He does nothing in vain; He may prolong my life, He may shorten it; He knows what He is about. He may take my friends, He may throw me among strangers, He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide the future from me — still He knows what He is about.

O my God, I give myself to Thee. I trust Thee wholly. Thou art wiser than I — more loving to me than I am to myself. Deign to fulfil Thy high purposes in me whatever they be; work in and through me. I am born to serve Thee, to be Thine, to be Thy instrument. Let me be Thy blind instrument. I ask not to see, I ask not to know — I ask simply to be used.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Embracing uncertainty



Lk 8:22-25

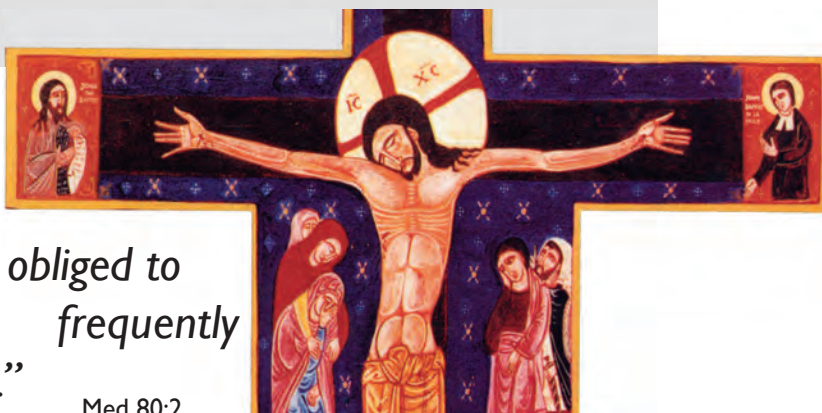
One day he got into a boat with his disciples and said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side of the lake.' So they put to sea, and as they sailed he fell asleep. When a squall came down on the lake the boat started taking in water and they found themselves in danger. So they went to rouse him saying, 'Master! Master! We are going down!' Then he woke up and rebuked the wind and the rough water; and they subsided and it was calm again. He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' They were awestruck and astonished and said to one another, 'Who can this be, who gives orders even to winds and waves and they obey him?'

Med 80:2

The obligation you have to instruct children and bring them up in the spirit of Christianity should make you very assiduous in prayer, in order to obtain from God the graces you need to carry out your work well and to draw upon yourselves the light you must have to know how to form Jesus Christ in the hearts of the children who are entrusted to your guidance, and communicate to them the spirit of God. Realise that to fill yourself with God as much as you should in the state in which Providence has placed you, you are obliged to converse frequently with God.

Henri Nouwen

Often we want to be able to see into the future. We say, "How will next year be for me? Where will I be five or ten years from now?" There are no answers to these questions. Mostly we have just enough light to see the next step: what we have to do in the coming hour, or the following day. The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with the trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go. Let's rejoice in the little light we carry and not ask for the great beam that would take all shadows away.



"...you are obliged to converse frequently with God."

Med 80:2



Risking

Jr 20:7-9

O, Lord, you persuaded me, and I allowed myself to be persuaded. You are stronger than I am, and you overpowered me. Now I am mocked by everyone in the city. These messages from the Lord have made me a household joke. And I can't stop! If I say I'll never mention the Lord or speak in the Lord's name, the Lord's word burns in my heart like a fire. It's like a fire in my bones! I am weary of holding it in!

Dec 53:2

Societies, like individuals, grow old and die once the habits inherited from the past outweigh the will to renewal in fidelity both to the intuitions that sparked their origins and the demands of life today. In the long run the future of the Institute is in the hands of Lasallians. They must not wait for ready-made solutions from those in authority to the new problems that come from a world in evolution. It is up to each, in the presence of God, to start out along the path of spiritual conversion and determine to have a personal share in the communal work of adapted renewal. This is the price to be paid if the Institute is to ward off the threat of stagnation and live in youth and vigour.

Anthony de Mello

'He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it'

Has it ever struck you that those who most fear to die are the ones who most fear to live? That in running away from death we are running away from life? What is death? A loss, a disappearance, a letting-go, a saying goodbye. When you cling you refuse to let go, you refuse to say goodbye, you resist death. And even though you may not realise it, that is when you resist life too. For life is on the move and you are stuck, life flows and you have become stagnant, life is flexible and free and you are rigid and frozen. Life carries all things away and you crave for stability and permanence. So you fear life and you fear death because you cling. When you cling to nothing, when you have no fear of losing anything, then you are free to flow like the mountain stream that is always fresh and sparkling and alive.

"It is up to each, in the presence of God, ... to ... share in the communal work of adapted renewal."

Declaration 53:2



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Recognising a shared spirit and a shared humanity



Acts 10:30-39

Cornelius replied, 'Three days ago I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, when I suddenly saw a man in front of me in shining robes. He said, "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been accepted as a sacrifice in the sight of God; so now you must send to Jaffa and fetch Simon known as Peter who is lodging in the house of Simon the tanner, by the sea." So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Here we all are, assembled in front of you to hear what message God has given you for us.'

Then Peter addressed them: 'The truth I have now come to realise,' he said, 'is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him.'

'It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ - but Jesus Christ is Lord of all people. You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself.'

Declaration 40

In the words of the Founder, a Lasallian is with the students from morning to evening. This means that St John Baptist De La Salle conceived of education in terms of a familial relationship between the teacher and the student. Lasallians are totally immersed in the life of the students: they share their interests, their worries, their hopes. Lasallians are not so much schoolteachers instilling a set of teachings, as older family members who help them to be aware of what the Spirit is speaking within themselves, of what their own abilities are and, little by little, how they may discover their true place in the world.

M. J. Ryan

We stand before you, Lord,
with hands wide open,
ready to receive you.

We bring before you, Lord,
our modest gifts,
like tiny seeds,
not knowing what fruits
you may bring out of them.

We wait before you, Lord,
asking that our hands and gifts,
offered in your service,
will make a difference to the world
beyond our imaginings.

In the name of Jesus,
who once was weak
and now is exalted.



Living hopefully

Jr 17:7-8

A blessing on those who put their trust in Yahweh, with Yahweh for their hope. They are like a tree by the waterside that thrusts its roots to the stream: when the heat comes it feels no alarm, its foliage stays green; it has no worries in a year of drought, and never ceases to bear fruit.

MTR 15:3

Pray fervently that God will be pleased to make your institute grow and bear fruit day by day so that, as St. Paul says, the hearts and minds of the faithful may be strengthened in holiness and justice.

Bob Barrett

While I was researching the concept of hope, I looked up the word 'hope' in a dictionary of etymology and then in a thesaurus. What I discovered presented me with a surprising contrast. The dictionary disappointingly informed me that, 'The origins of the word hope are obscure.' Yet another dictionary stated tersely, 'of unknown origin.' However, in the thesaurus there was a wealth of words communicating the wide variety of ways in which hope is experienced and expressed. There can be just a glimmer of hope but also a ray or beam of hope. We can hope against hope, keep hope alive, trust, have faith, foster hope, encourage, comfort or enthuse. This striking difference between disappointment and plenty set me wondering about two questions. Can the experience of hopelessness be somehow related to where we expect the fulfilment of our desires or aspirations to be coming from? Is hope very near to us all the time but we are unable to receive its sustaining communication? I then recalled the words of Jonah as he lay in the whale: 'The water came over me and choked me ... I went down to the very roots of the mountains, into the land whose gates lock shut for ever.' (Jonah 2:5-6) This imaginative description creates a vivid picture of a seemingly hopeless situation. He was surrounded by the enclosing waters, felt his life slipping away and yet, at that very moment, he reached out to the one he hoped in. 'When I felt my life slipping away, then, O Lord I prayed to you, and in your holy Temple you heard me.' He put his trust in the one who was the origin or source of his hope and discovered how close hope was to him. My own journey of exploration into the word and world of hope inspires me to communicate my discovery to all who are daunted with problems, however small or however large.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Celebrating



Ex 3:3-6

'I must go and look at this strange sight,' Moses said, 'and see why the bush is not burnt.' Now Yahweh saw him go forward to look, and God called to him from the middle of the bush. 'Moses, Moses!' he said. 'Here I am' he answered. 'Come no nearer' he said. 'Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your father,' he said, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this Moses covered his face, afraid to look at God.

Lasallian School

The Lasallian School is a school where people pray, a place of ecumenical encounter. Out of respect for consciences, for convictions and personal progress, it creates and gives life to a community of faith the members of which act, pray, celebrate, commit themselves according to their capabilities.

Oscar Romero - A. Desjardins

Christianity is not a collection of truths that one has to believe, of laws one has to keep, a list of prohibitions. That would be repugnant. Christianity is a person that loved me so much that he demands my love. Christianity is Christ.

The law commands us to do what we would do naturally if we only had love. The Way consists of finding that love, which then becomes the law.



Accepting ourselves as God's gift to others and accepting others as God's gift to us.

Is 2:3

Many nations will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the Temple of the God of Israel. There God will teach us God's ways, so that we may be obedient. Come people of Israel, let us walk in the light of the Lord!'

Álvaro Echeverría

'Institutes of consecrated life are invited courageously to propose anew the enterprising initiative, creativity, and holiness of their founders in response to the signs of the times emerging in today's world.' (Vita Consecrata)

Lasallians, our Founder revealed extraordinary imagination, know-how, boldness, and perseverance. Both 'The Declaration' and the Pope urge us to respond to current needs with similar enterprising initiative, creativity, and holiness.

Anthony de Mello

'Blessed are those servants whom the Master finds awake when He comes.' Luke 12:37

Everywhere in the world people are in search of love, for everyone is convinced that love alone can save the world, love alone can make life meaningful and worth living. But how very few understand what love really is, and how it arises in the human heart. It is so frequently equated with good feelings towards others, with benevolence or non-violence or service. But these things in themselves are not love. Love springs from awareness. It is only inasmuch as you see someone as he or she really is here and now, and not as they are in your memory or your desire or in your imagination or projection, that you can truly love them; otherwise it is not the person that you love but the idea that you have formed of this person, or this person as the object of your desire not as he or she is in themselves.

Therefore the first act of love is to see this person or this object, this reality as it truly is. And this involves the enormous discipline of dropping your desires, your prejudices, your memories, your projections, your selective way of looking, a discipline so great that most people would rather plunge headlong into good actions and service than submit to the burning fire of this asceticism. When you set out to serve someone whom you have not taken the trouble to see, are you meeting that person's need or your own? So the first ingredient of love is to really see the other.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Transforming

Ez 36:25-28

I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you, and make you keep my laws and sincerely respect my observances. You will live in the land which I gave your ancestors. You shall be my people and I will be your God.

Let 2:1

Pray earnestly that whatever pleases God may be done in your regard.

John Deeney

That 'touching of the heart' was an expression that De La Salle bequeathed to his teachers. It was to be one of their aims when working with young people. They should aim to nurture a deep and loving response to God and to other people. But he did not expect teachers to work just at that level; he wanted them to form minds as well as touch hearts. and the purpose of the schools was also to educate young people in how to behave in society, how to learn, to work and to think. He wanted students to leave school as well-motivated and skilful people.

"I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you."

The Book of Ezekiel



Building community

Col. 3:12-15

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

International Assembly 2006

Fellow Lasallians:

We recognise that we are on a hopeful and enthusiastic journey, seeking a response to the will of God today. Our fellow travellers are people of great faith who are all members of one family with one name; Lasallian. We come from different cultures and different religions, but we are united by a common mission, a common spirit, a common charism. We are in solidarity with and want to remain faithful to our Founder, John Baptist De La Salle, in our response to the new realities

Along this journey we have discovered that the 'way' had to be walked, as Jesus did, in community:

- a community built on the encounter, the discernment, and the shared generosity of its members
- a community that responds to the cry of the poor by sharing personal gifts and talents, passion and fervent zeal
- a community that recognises, on the one hand, that each of its members has a unique identity and, on the other hand, that dialogue with the other who is different is essential
- a community that comes together and by association for a mission.

Jean Vanier

When he created the first community of the apostles, Jesus chose to live with men who were very different from one another: Peter, Matthew (the tax collector) Simon (the Zealot), Judas, and so on. They would never have come together if their Master had not called them.

We shouldn't seek the ideal community. It is a question of loving those whom God has set beside us today. They are signs of God. We might have chosen different people, people who were more cheerful and intelligent. But these are the ones God has given us, the ones he has chosen for us. It is with them that we are called to create unity and live a covenant.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Living our commitment



Is 40:30-31

Young folk may grow tired and weary, youths may stumble, but those who hope in Yahweh renew their strength, they put out wings like eagles. They run and do not grow weary, walk and never tire.

John Harriot

I am convinced that what is most important for vocation ministry is that we believe in our own vocation and in the validity of that vocation today. In so doing we make article 141 of the Rule our own:

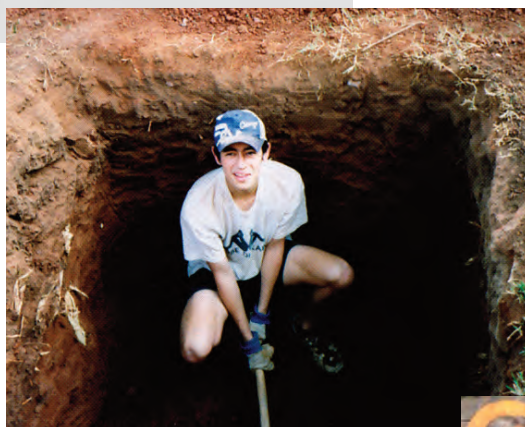
'The words of St. John Baptist De La Salle are still true:
"The need for this Institute is very great."
The young, the poor, the world, and the Church
still need the ministry of Lasallians.'

Anon.

The young, the poor, the world and the Church still need the ministry of Lasallians. If we are made in the image of God, we are made in the image of the Trinity; and the life of the Trinity must in some sort be reflected in the pattern of our human life... Thus to the Father is credited all that we understand by generation, creation, maintenance; and much of our human activity can be seen as cooperation in that work... Likewise all human works of compassion, healing, reconciliation, sacrifice, forgiveness, making amends and making good again, reflect the work of redemption and reconciliation identified most closely with the Son... And finally the special role of the Holy Spirit is reflected in every positive idea and inspiration, however slight and humble, in every advance in knowledge and wisdom, in every flash of imagination, in every movement of the heart.

*"The young,
the poor,
the world
and the Church
still need
the ministry of Lasallians."*

Rule 141



Being a communion of saints

Jr 29:11-14

'I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord. 'They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me. I will be found by you,' says the Lord. 'I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and bring you home again to your own land.'

Álvaro Echeverría

Our community is Christocentric and not egocentric. 'The community has Jesus Christ as its cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord' (Ephesians 2:20-21). The centrality of the mystery of Christ is a Lasallian constant. For the Founder, Jesus Christ was in our midst within the community and therefore the first fruit that sprung up from his presence is 'that all our actions may be related to Jesus Christ and tend towards him as their centre, and draw all of their power from him as the branches of the vine draw their sap from the vine. And so there is continual movement of our actions to Jesus Christ, and of Jesus Christ to us since it is He who gives them the spirit of life.'

Anthony de Mello - M. Williamson

Holiness is not an achievement, it is a Grace, a Grace called Awareness, a Grace called Looking, Observing, Understanding. If you would only switch on the light of awareness and observe yourself and everything around you throughout the day, if you would see yourself reflected in the mirror of awareness the way you see your face reflected in a looking glass, that is, accurately, clearly, exactly as it is without the slightest distortion or addition, and if you observe this reflection without any judgement or condemnation, you would experience all sorts of marvellous changes coming about in you. Only you will not be in control of those changes, or be able to plan them in advance, or decide how and when they are to take place. It is this non-judgemental awareness alone that heals and changes and makes one grow. But in its own way and at its own time... It is enough for you to be watchful and awake. For in this state your eyes will see the Saviour. Nothing else, but absolutely nothing else. Not security, not love, not belonging, not beauty, not power, not holiness - nothing else will matter any more.

We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And when we let our own light shine, we subconsciously give other people permission to do the same.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Ga 5:22-26

When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, this kind of fruit will be produced in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Let us not be conceited, or irritate one another, or be jealous of one another.

Álvaro Echeverría

I believe that we are all aware that the topic of vocation is a vital one for us. But I believe that what is most important is not a preoccupation about survival or about not dying. What is fundamental is to respond to the growing needs of the poor and the young and to respond with fidelity to their calls. They are our 'raison d'être'. What should inspire us is the building up of the Kingdom. It is love for needy men and women that should inspire us to be active witnesses.

Geshe Langri Thangpa

With the determination to accomplish the highest welfare of all sentient beings, I will learn to hold them supremely dear.

Whenever I associate with others, I will learn to think of myself as the lowest among all and respectfully hold others to be supreme from the very depths of my heart.

In all actions I will learn to search into my mind, and as soon as a disturbing emotion arises, endangering myself and others, I will firmly face and avert it.

I will learn to cherish ill-natured beings and those oppressed by strong misdeeds and sufferings, as if I had found a precious treasure.

When others treat me badly, with abuse, slander, and so on, I will learn to take all loss and offer the victory to them.

When the one whom I had benefited with great hope hurts me very badly, I will learn to view that person as an excellent spiritual guide.

In short, I will learn to offer everyone without exception all help and happiness, directly and indirectly, and respectfully take upon myself all harm and suffering.

I will learn to keep all these practices and, by understanding all phenomena as illusions, be released from the bondage of attachment.



Serving as mission

Is 6:1-8

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord Yahweh seated on a high throne; the train filled the sanctuary; above stood seraphs, each one with six wings: two to cover its face, two to cover its feet and two for flying. And they cried out one to another in this way, 'Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh Sabaoth, whose glory fills the whole earth.'

The foundations of the threshold shook with the voice of the one who cried out and the Temple was filled with smoke. I said, 'What a wretched state I am in! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have looked at the King, Yahweh Sabaoth.'

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal which had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. With this my mouth was touched and the seraph said: 'See now, this has touched your lips, your sin is taken away, your iniquity is purged'.

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?' I answered, 'Here I am, send me.'

De La Salle

God who guides all things with wisdom and gentleness and who is not at all accustomed to force the inclinations of people, wishing to draw me entirely into undertaking the care of the schools, did so in a quite imperceptible way, and over a long period of time, so that one commitment led me into another without my having foreseen it in the beginning.

John Sankey

I mentioned that there are De La Salle foundations in over eighty-four countries worldwide and on their badges or logos is incorporated the symbol of the star. Brother Edward, our Jersey founder, explained the symbolism of the star when he wrote in 1939, 'Every pupil, present or past, is expected to be a star in his own sphere; not a 'shooting star' that will shine only for a short time, say when he is at school, and then disappear, but as a 'constant star' ever steady in the fulfilment of his various duties, always fair in sport, constantly keen and honest in business, evenly exemplary in behaviour.'

'Every pupil is expected to be a star in his own sphere.'

Some of you boys here today – not necessarily the brightest, nor boys most proficient in games, or gifted in music or art – some quite ordinary boys – may well be called to do something extraordinary in your lives. When that moment of calling comes you will know it, but it will be very easy for you to say, 'O Lord, no! I can't do that!' or 'O Lord, no! I'll have to give up so many things!' or 'O Lord, no! Can't you find somebody else?'

Today we thank God that John Baptist De La Salle, over three centuries ago and racked with self-doubt, said, 'O Lord, yes!'



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Accompanying



Gn 2:18-23

Yahweh God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate.' So from the soil Yahweh God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These were brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him. So Yahweh God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he slept, took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. Yahweh God built the rib taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. The man exclaimed, 'This at last is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh! This is to be called woman for this was taken from man.'

Álvaro Echeverría

To what extent do we offer young people a witness of God as absolute in our lives? To what extent do we offer them a witness of the centrality of Jesus in our lives? To what extent do we offer them a spirituality and an experience of mysticism that is attractive?

Francis Brienen

God of surprises,
when I think you are not present in my life,
you reveal yourself in the love of friends and family
and nurture me in your never-ending affection.

God of surprises,
when we think you are not present in our community,
you labour to make us of one heart
and cause us to share gladly and generously.

God of surprises,
when people think you are not present in our world,
you bring hope out of despair
and create growth out of difficulty.

God of surprises,
you are ever with us.

When the days go by and our vision fades, keep surprising us.
When our hope dims and our patience wears thin, keep coming to us.
Teach us to keep lamps lit and to be prepared,
that we may see your loving presence among us.





Being good shepherds

Psalm 32:8-11

I will instruct you, and teach you the way to go;
I will watch over you and be your adviser.

Do not be like senseless horse or mule
that need bit and bridle to curb their spirit
(to let you get near them).

Many torments await the wicked,
but grace enfolds the man who trusts in Yahweh.

Rejoice in Yahweh,
exult, you virtuous,
shout for joy, all upright hearts.

Álvaro Echeverría

Today, more than ever before, it is clear that what young people need is the proclamation, transmission and witness of objective and transcendent values. They need 'models of a way of life' much more than they need theoretical directions - no matter how wonderful and convincing these theories may seem to be.

Henri Nouwen

Spiritual leadership is the leadership of the Good Shepherd. As Jesus says, good shepherds know their sheep, and their sheep know them (see John 10:14). There must be a true mutuality between shepherds and their sheep. Good leaders know their own, and their own know them. Between them is mutual trust, mutual openness, mutual care and mutual love. To follow our leaders we cannot be afraid of them, and to lead our followers we need their encouragement and support.

Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd to show the great intimacy that must exist between leaders and those entrusted to them. Without such intimacy, leadership easily becomes oppressive.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Honouring



Mk 10:42-45

Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that in this world kings are tyrants, and officials lord it over the people beneath them. But among you it should be quite different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all.

For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many.'

Álvaro Echeverría

Young people today are more attuned to life experiences than to the world of ideas. In consequence, a community that questions, challenges and encourages a young person to follow Jesus is a community which is characterised by mutual love and has a special preference for those in need. It is a community where people live simply and happily, sharing their lives, work, and facilities. It is a welcoming community where people are available, pray together and celebrate God's mystery in their lives. This is affirmed in one of the most beautiful texts of the 42nd General Chapter: 'The community offers a challenge, in vocational terms, to the extent that it gives witness to the values of brotherhood, a deep spiritual life, dedication to evangelisation and the educational service of the poor; gratuity, a welcoming and open spirit, incarnation within the local culture, the joy of living together as brothers and sisters.'

Anthony de Mello

It is a sobering thought that the finest act of love you can perform is not an act of service but an act of contemplation, of seeing. When you serve people, you help, support, comfort, alleviate pain. When you see them in their inner beauty and goodness you transform and create. Think of some of the people you like and are drawn to you. Now attempt to look at each of them as if you were seeing them for the first time, not allowing yourself to be influenced by your past knowledge or experience of them, whether good or bad. Look for things in them that you may have missed because of familiarity, for familiarity breeds staleness, blindness and boredom. You cannot love what you cannot see afresh. You cannot love what you are not constantly discovering anew. Now make this same gift to yourself and you will discover to your joy that you are being transformed by this strangely loving attitude that arises within you toward this thing you call yourself, an attitude that arises within you and moves out through you to every living creature.





Seeking wholeness

Jn 10:10

I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.

Lasallian Sch

The Lasallian School strives to get all the young people and adults who come to the school to live together in harmony, by respecting their personal, ethnic, racial or religious differences, and by a friendly understanding and true tolerance.

Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ
for all the benefits Thou hast given me,
And for all the pains and insults Thou has borne for me.
O merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother;
may I know Thee more clearly,
love Thee more dearly,
follow Thee more nearly:
day by day.

*"I have come
so that they may have life
and have it to the full."*

Gospel according to John



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Reconciling



Jr 3:22 - Col 3:13-15

'My wayward children,' says the Lord, 'come back to me, and I will heal your wayward hearts.'

You must make allowances for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you so you must forgive others. And the most important piece of clothing you must wear is love. Love is what binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

John Johnston

The grace that the Lord offers us at every moment is nothing less than 'undying love', without which 'all you say will produce no good effect' (Med 3:1). Indeed, to love Jesus Christ with undying love is to love others in the same way. As the 'Declaration' says, our vocation is a 'vocation to love'. We are called to have 'a genuine love for the contemporary world' and to love the people of our day 'just as they are'. Through love we are to reveal to children, young people and adults 'that God loves them and calls them also to give witness to God's love in all their human relationships' (Declaration 3:4,5).

Damian Lundy

Eucharist is followed by reconciliation. The first thing Peter saw as he came ashore was 'some bread there and a charcoal fire with some fish cooking on it'. The charcoal fire could not have failed to remind him of his threefold denial of Jesus before the cock crew. A new start is needed and, after breakfast, Jesus asks Simon Peter, 'Do you love me?' It is an emotional question, asked three times, and it is therefore an opportunity to move beyond the threefold denial to a fresh start. The fact that Jesus addresses his old follower as 'Simon, son of John' each time, is also to be noted, for John tells us that the Lord's very first words to the man he was to choose to lead his community had been, 'You are Simon, son of John...' Now we see Jesus taking Peter back to the start of their relationship, and giving him another chance, another call. Peter's vocation will involve a change of job, from fisherman to shepherd... Peter is asked to take care of Jesus' flock, not his own. The Lord then renews Peter's call to discipleship by saying: 'Follow me'.



Collaborating

I Col 12:12-27

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts. If the foot were to say, 'I am not a hand and so I do not belong to the body', would that mean that it stopped being part of the body? If the ear were to say, 'I am not an eye, and so I do not belong to the body', would that mean that it was not a part of the body? If your whole body was just one eye, how would you hear anything? If it was just one ear, how would you smell anything?

Instead of that, God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? As it is, the parts are many but the body is one. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I do not need you', nor can the head say to the feet, 'I do not need you'.

What is more, it is precisely the parts of the body that seem to be the weakest which are the indispensable ones; and it is the least honourable parts of the body that we clothe with the greatest care. So our more improper parts get decorated in a way that our more proper parts do not need. God has arranged the body so that more dignity is given to the parts which are without it, and that there may not be disagreements inside the body, but that each part may be equally concerned for all the others. If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it.

Now you together are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it.

L. Sch

For Lasallian educators, to work 'together and by association' does not only mean adhering to directions of an educational project or forming a school community; it means feeling themselves as partners in this project, responsible for its success and personally committed to putting it into operation and to the success of the school.

Anon.

By
flying in a
V formation, as each bird
flaps its wings the whole flock adds
71% more flying range than if each bird flew alone.

People who share a common sense of direction and a sense of community can get where they want to more quickly and easily because they are travelling on the thrust generated by everyone. When the lead goose gets tired it rotates back into the formation so that it can continue to take advantage of the lifting power immediately in front. Geese honk to encourage those in the front to maintain their speed. We need to be sure that our honking from the back is to encourage those up front, and not something else. When a goose gets sick or wounded two geese will drop out of formation with it. They stay together until it flies or dies. If we had as much sense, wouldn't we be standing together, especially when things get tough?

Father, you give marvellous inbred wisdom to your creatures. Instil in us the wisdom we need to carry on your work with the love for each other that will enable us to succeed.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Jn 20:19-23

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you', and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you'. After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained'.

MEL 7

We believe that all children should be free to grow in health, peace and dignity and that we must:

- Leave no child out;
- Put children first;
- Listen to children;
- Educate every child;
- Protect children from exploitation;
- Protect the earth for children;
- Fight poverty by investing in children.

Anon.

A testimony from Greenham Common:

I stood at the fence one night in September, feet rooted to the muddy ground, hands deep in my pockets, watching through the wire that flat ravaged land that is now never dark, never quiet, imagining through the fence a field of bracken and scrub, a field of flowers, a field of corn, a field of young children playing. Red police car, blue lights flashing, 'What are you doing, then, love? Not cutting the fence, are you?' 'No, just praying at it.' A soldier with a dog walks up and down inside, suspicious, watching me watching him. 'Good evening.' 'Good evening.' I wait, not knowing what I'm waiting for. The kingdom of the Lord? A hundred yards to my left, women cut the wire, roll away the stone, and walk through into the tomb. No angels greet them; no resurrection yet.

Yet still women witness to that possibility, the possibility that something may be accomplished which in our own strength we cannot do. Women waiting, watching, just being there, behaving as if peace were possible, living our dream of the future now. 'Why do you come here? Why do you keep coming?' – a soldier near Emerald camp on an earlier visit - 'It's no use, there's nothing you can do. What do you women think you can do by coming here? The missiles are here, you won't change anything, why do you come?' We come to watch, we come to witness, we come with our hands full of ribbon and wool, flowers and photos of loved ones, hands full of poems and statements and prayers, hands full of hope and the knowledge that such hope is impossible to rational minds.



Hungering for justice

Psalm 1

Happy are those who never follow the advice of the wicked,
or loiter on the way that sinners take,
or sit about with scoffers,
but find their pleasure in the Law of Yahweh,
and murmur the law day and night.

They are like trees that are planted by water streams,
yielding its fruit in season,
its leaves never fading;
It is nothing like this with the wicked, nothing like this!

No, these are like chaff blown away by the wind.
The wicked will not stand firm when Judgement comes,
nor sinners when the virtuous assemble.
For Yahweh takes care of the way the virtuous go,
but the way of the wicked is doomed.

Rule 14

Lasallians are entrusted with their mission by the Institute, a mission especially to the poor. As a community, they become increasingly conscious of the reasons for the poverty that surrounds them, and so become earnestly involved in the promotion of justice and human dignity through the educational service they provide.

This concern of Lasallians for the poor serves also to motivate their activities when they deal with people in a more favourable social environment, urging these to become more sensitive to unjust situations of which the poor are so often the victims.

Institute Bulletin No.249

The mission of the church in the world is tailored at any time to the perceived needs of the human family. The tripling of the human population over the last 60 years has been accompanied by the relative shrinking of the globe as the means of communication and travel have continued to become ever more efficient. Technology has replaced much of the unpredictability of magic so that 'success' is now achieved by personal strife. Access to resources is competitive, and power and privilege are at a premium. In this theatre the Church is called upon to witness to justice, and to assert itself in the defence of the downtrodden and marginalised. And with its informed and disinterested membership it is uniquely placed to promote the protection of natural resources from over-exploitation. Hundreds of thousands of dedicated religious men and women are organising to bear this witness and respond to the demands of this promotion. This mission in favour of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation is becoming the visible face of the Church in the world.

In a world that often doubts that truth can be known, and in a time when the poor long to find signs of God's holy presence while hungering for prophets of authentic justice and lasting peace, the tradition of St. La Salle is our guide. Education for justice – both works of mercy in service to the poor and social action leading to long-term change – are two expressions of our shared ministry. With the presence of Jesus in our hearts we can with confidence follow in the footsteps of St. La Salle to respond with confidence, "Here I am. What are your wishes?"



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Theme 3

Discerning God's Will Now



Living in a Spirit of Faith





Opening to God's word

Ps 119:169-176

Yahweh, may my cry approach your presence; let your word endow me with perception!
May my entreaty reach your presence; rescue me as you have promised.
May my lips proclaim your praise, since you teach me your statutes.
May my tongue recite your promise, since all your commandments are righteous.
May your hand be there to help me, since I have chosen your precepts.
I long for you, Yahweh, my saviour, your Law is my delight.
Long may my soul live to praise you, long be your rulings my help!
I am wandering like a lost sheep: come and look for your servant.
No, I have never forgotten your commandments.

Rule 67

Lasallians find the principal sources for their prayer in Holy Scripture, the liturgy, and the challenges that come to them from their ministry, from the Church, and from the world.
They read and meditate on the word of God every day; they prolong this contact with the Lord in their spiritual reading.

Lionel Blue

All of us come to religion and to prayer with the wrong questions and the wrong demands. The trouble arises if we stay with them, after we have learned better. There is no harm in asking 'God give me this', or 'God give me that', provided you know you might not get it, and approach it with the same humour as Topol in the song 'If I were a Rich Man'. All that we know for certain that God can give us is Himself. He will also let us find Him, as we are told, if we seek Him in the dark places of our life and He will come and live with us. But do we want Him inside us? At a certain point in our prayer life, the consequences of prayer sharpen dramatically. It is no longer a pleasure, it is a demand for internal change. As in any other relationship, we have to ask ourselves if we want to go on and venture out of our depth. It is only when we are out of our depth and stumble, leaning on God who does not seem to be there, that we pass our eleven plus in religion.

“Lasallians find the principal sources for their prayer in Holy Scripture, the liturgy and from their ministry.”

Rule 67



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Allowing intimacy with God



Ex 34:29-35

When Moses came down from the mountain of Sinai - as he came down from the mountain, Moses had the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands - he did not know that the skin on his face was radiant after speaking with Yahweh. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, the skin on his face shone so much that they would not venture near him. But Moses called to them, and Aaron with all the leaders of the community came back to him; and he spoke to them. Then all the people of Israel came closer, and he passed on to them all the orders that Yahweh had given him on the mountain of Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. Whenever he went into Yahweh's presence to speak with the Lord, Moses would remove the veil until he came out again. And when he came out, he would tell the people of Israel what he had been ordered to pass on to them, and the children of Israel would see the face of Moses radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he returned to speak with Yahweh.

John Johnston

I think it important to state explicitly that the Declaration in no way advocates a separation of community from mission. On the contrary, Lasallians are associated to pursue a common objective, namely, the Kingdom of God. To the extent that they are aware of their apostolic mission, '...communities are renewed, the sharing of minds and hearts becomes more intimate, the need for prayer and the life of faith takes on new life... When everything is referred back to the common mission, communities overcome the risks of becoming closed in on themselves and of suffocating in the pettiness of small internal problems, which threaten even the most regular communities when they are not constantly renewed by an apostolic spirit.' (Declaration 25,4)

It is essential, therefore, particularly if Lasallians are involved in a variety of services, that the members of the community have regular opportunities to share with one another their apostolic goals, objectives and experiences.

St John of the Cross

With no other light or guide
Than the one that burned in my heart;
This guided me
More surely than the light of noon
To where He waited for me
- Him I knew so well -
In a place where no one else appeared.
O guiding night!
O night more lovely than the dawn!
O night that has united
The Lover with His beloved.
Transforming the beloved in her Love.





Trusting

Ps 121

I lift my eyes to the mountains:
where is help to come from?
Help comes to me from Yahweh,
who made heaven and earth.

No letting our footsteps slip!
This guard of yours does not doze!
The guardian of Israel
does not doze or sleep.

Yahweh guards you, shades you.
With Yahweh at your right hand
sun cannot strike you down by day,
nor moon at night.

Yahweh guards you from harm,
he guards your lives,
he guards you leaving, coming back,
now and for always.

Declaration 3:5, 6:1, 7:1

Spiritual renewal implies a more concentrated effort to be present among people, a real attempt to be sensitive to the special circumstances of each, to keep abreast of the constantly changing reality of the human situation, to have an effective love for contemporary life and for those who live in it, taking people seriously on their own terms.

Fidelity to the present moment of history and fidelity to the Founder, far from opposing or excluding each other, are closely related....

Fidelity to the specific intentions of the Founder and to the tradition of the Institute is confided to us as living people. It is we who carry on the task of discovering how fidelity to this charism can be lived in the present time.

Walter Raleigh

Even such is Time, which takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust,
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways
Shuts up the story of our days.
And from which earth, and grave, and dust,
The Lord shall raise me up I trust.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Being a disciple



Is 43:1-3

But now, thus says Yahweh, who created you, Jacob, who formed you, Israel:

Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name, you are mine.
Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you;
or through rivers, they will not swallow you up.
Should you walk through fire, you will not be scorched
and the flames will not burn you.
For I am Yahweh, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your saviour.

Blain

De La Salle did nothing without consulting his Brothers, thus making himself more their disciple than they were his. Their rules, their constitutions, their customs were their own work. The only thing peculiarly his own was that he inspired and that he knew how to suggest to them, give them credit, and lend them the authority that comes from experience. For the rest he left it up to them to examine, find fault and reformulate. He gave the initial impulse but he did not supply the finishing touches.

Zen - Anon

If you cannot find the truth right where you are, where do you expect to find it?

Scratched on a concentration camp wall:

I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining.
I believe in Love even when feeling it not.
I believe in God even when He is silent.

*“I have called you by
your name,
you are mine.”*

The Book of Isaiah



Receiving and responding

Mt 27:46-50

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood there heard this, they said, 'The man is calling on Elijah!' and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink. 'Wait!' said the rest of them, 'and see if Elijah will come to save him.' But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

De La Salle

Had I known how it would have turned out,
I wouldn't have touched it with the tip of my little finger.

R. S. Thomas

In Church

Often I try
To analyse the quality
Of its silences. Is this where God hides
From my searching? I have stopped to listen,
After a few people have gone,
To the air recomposing itself
For vigil. It has waited like this
Since the stones grouped themselves about it.
These are the hard ribs
Of a body that our prayers have failed
To animate. Shadows advance
From their corners to take possession
Of places the light held
For an hour. The bats resume
Their business. The uneasiness of the pews
Ceases. There is no further sound
In the darkness but the sound of a man
Breathing, testing his faith
On emptiness, nailing his questions
One by one to the untenanted cross.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Embracing uncertainty



Mt 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves' But he replied, 'Scripture says: *Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God*'.

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down; for scripture says: *He will put you in his angels' charge, and they will support you on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.*' Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says: *You must not put the Lord your God to the test.*'

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these,' he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says: *You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.*' Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

Edwin Bannon

[De La Salle had] an acute consciousness of the religious significance of the undertaking which he believed God had entrusted to him. The contrasts between the demands of that undertaking, considered as part of the history of salvation, and a sense of his own inadequacy for the task, filled him now with a sharpened sense of the nature of sin, specifically his own. A sentence of St John of the Cross seems not too wide of the mark to describe the Founder's state of mind at this time: 'the greatest affliction of the sorrowful soul in the state of the dark night is to be convinced beyond all doubt that God has abandoned it, that He has it cast away as an abominable thing.' Certainly everything that had happened to him seemed now to tell him that God no longer wanted him with the Brothers.

Sheila Cassidy

This then, is how I see the pastoral care of the afflicted. They need not just physical and emotional care, understanding and forgiveness, but they need to know that God loves them. They need to know, moreover, the passion and the tenderness with which he loves and there is no one but us to take this message to them. We must be his hands, his lips, his voice and we must deliver his message in a form they can understand. Mostly, this means that we must not so much say how much God loves people but reveal to them that they are loveable. By treating people with all our skill, compassion and love we are revealing to them that they are infinitely precious, that they are worthy of love. Sometimes this is all that we can do to tell people of God's love for them, for if a person has no faith he or she will not understand us however ardently we speak about God. At other times, of course, our stumbling words will find a home in someone's heart. These words must always be tempered to understanding of the person we are speaking to, but above all they must come from our own heart, from our own personal store of lived knowledge. This is why it is so vital that pastors should be men and women who pray, who 'know' God, for how else can we speak with authority, give hope to those who would otherwise despair?



Risking

Jud 6:14-17, 36-40

At this Yahweh turned to him and said, 'Go in the strength now upholding you, and you will rescue Israel from the power of Midian. Do I not send you myself?' Gideon answered him, 'Forgive me, my Lord, but how can I deliver Israel? My clan, you must know, is the weakest in Manasseh and I am the least important in my family.' Yahweh answered him, 'I will be with you and you shall crush Midian as though it were one person'.

Gideon said to him, 'If I have found favour in your sight, give me a sign that it is you who speak to me.' Gideon said to God, 'If you really mean to deliver Israel by my hand, as you have declared, see now, I spread out a fleece on the threshing-floor; if there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is left dry, then I shall know that you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have declared.' And so it happened. Gideon rose the next morning, squeezed the fleece and wrung enough dew out of the fleece to fill a drinking cup. Then Gideon spoke to God again, 'Do not be angry with me if I speak once again. Let me make trial with the fleece just once more. Let the fleece alone be dry, and let there be dew on the ground all round it.' And God did so that night. The fleece alone stayed dry, and there was dew on the ground all round it.

Edwin Bannan

Providence, the community's sole foundation, had proved so soon a true foundation. And thus it would continue so long as faith flourished as the distinguishing mark of De La Salle's followers. The biographers mention in this context that the Founder used to say: 'Our Brothers will survive on condition that they remain poor. But they will lose the spirit of their state if they begin to look for things over and above what is necessary for them.' ... He had made himself poor with the poor, for the sake of the poor. He had reached a point in his journey of faith when the road ahead would lead him to what was still uncertain and unclear – except for the certainty and clarity his faith gave to him that Providence was guiding him – and others with him – along it, step by step.

Bob Barrett

The Divine Risk

Here in my room hangs he who longed for love
while favoured close friends cowered fearing pain;
and as I kneel I ask what love was there
unknown, a seeming secret being shared by
some, while crowds of strangers proudly scoffed
or thought or worried more for empty things.
And he, eternal love in human form,
flesh-covered God, committing all to
men to crush or cherish at their will,
appeals in suffering with no stern demand.
He risks his love, tormented with the pain
of sin and callousness; all is achieved, and yet
fulfilment of 'I thirst' is only ours.
Lord, lest you hang forgotten on my wall
and stay a stranger in my heart,
make known to me the love you are
so that I too will risk my love,
your Spirit finding flesh in me.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Recognising a shared spirit and a shared humanity



Lk 18: 9-14

He spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else, 'Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, "I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of humankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get." The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

John Johnston

De La Salle and the first Brothers clearly understood themselves as people called primarily to the education of poor, abandoned, marginalised children. In his moving meditation for Christmas Day, our Founder, employing the first rather than the second person, writes:

'We are poor Brothers, forgotten and little appreciated by the people of the world. Only the poor come looking for us; they have nothing to offer us but their hearts.' (Med. 86,2)

We know well, Lasallians, that our call is not only to administer schools of academic or professional quality. Our call is to give a human and Christian education to youth, especially youth who are poor. (Rule 3) Aware of and deeply moved by the human and spiritual distress of many children, De La Salle modelled his life on that of Christ: 'Jesus drew especially near to those on the margins of society, and showed them special favour' ...he enabled them 'to experience liberation even now' ...he made them 'feel loved by God, thus revealing his tender care for the needy.'

Anon.

Hear me Lord, on behalf of all those who are dear to me, all whom I have in mind at this moment. Be near them in all their anxieties and worries. Give them the help of your saving grace. I commend them all with trustful confidence to your merciful love. Remember, Lord, all who are mindful of me, all who have asked me to pray for them, all who have been kind to me, all who have wronged me or whom I have wronged by ill-will or misunderstanding. Give all of us grace to bear with each other's faults and to share each other's burdens. Have mercy also on the souls of our loved ones who have gone before us. Grant them peace and happiness in your presence. Amen



Living hopefully

Hab 3:16-19

I have heard. My whole body trembles, my lips quiver at the sound; decay creeps into my bones, my steps falter beneath me. Calmly I await the day of anguish which is dawning on the people now attacking us. (For the fig tree is not going to blossom, nor will there be any fruit on the vine, the yield of the olive will fail, the fields afford no food; the sheep will vanish from the fold, nor will there be any cattle in the stalls.) But I will rejoice in Yahweh, I will exult in God my saviour. Yahweh my Lord is my strength, making my feet as light as a doe's, setting my steps on the heights.

Med 138

You are obliged by your duty of state to teach the truths of the Gospel every day. Practise yourself what all Christians are held to comply with before attempting to teach others to do so. If you have not the special grace of being a precursor like St John the Baptist, you have at least that of being a co-operator in his ministry. But remember that to render your mission efficacious you must first realise this spiritual fruit in yourself. Endeavour to bring this about as soon as possible

James Kimpton

Because our three Reaching the Unreached (RTU) Children's Villages are full up and because many children still need help, we started a home-sponsorship programme for children who would normally be admitted to a Children's Village. As long as children go to school we support them, but they still are able to live at home. This way the child was not institutionalised, and also the whole family benefited. We also provide every child in the family with all their needs to continue schooling. On this programme we now have 243 families so that 720 children benefit and have no excuse for not going to school.

These new programmes, we know, will cost RTU up to £50,000 annually. We know that Providence will provide all we need. It never fails.
And now an entry from my diary.

December 2004

Soon after starting work in the morning, a very distressed young mother came to me with such a tiny, sickly, marasmic baby boy. "You take care of this child. You save him." I took him in my arms. He was barely alive, like a tiny dying baby bird. It was dying. So thin, so emaciated. A triangular face, pinched, no fat at all, and its little shrunken arms stretched out. I took him to our small prayer room, sat down, placed him on my lap and prayed deeply after blessing him with holy oil, it was so vulnerable, so close to death, so fragile.

The next day a shorter entry.

The little baby that was so ill yesterday is safe now.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Celebrating



Ecc 9:7-10

Go, eat your bread with joy and drink your wine with a glad heart; for what you do God has approved beforehand. Wear white all the time, do not stint your head of oil. Spend your life with the person you love, through all the fleeting days of the life that God has given you under the sun; for this is the lot assigned to you in life and in the efforts you exert under the sun. Whatever work you propose to do, do it while you can, for there is neither achievement, nor planning, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in Sheol where you are going.

Let 16

God be blessed and God's will be done.

Sheila Barrett

The whole of life could be celebrated as a gift, if only we had eyes to see this. Yet how many times in a single day do we fail to notice moments of wonder, because we are too busy or too preoccupied or too burdened.

For me there was a moment of awakening after someone very dear to me had been diagnosed with a potentially life threatening condition. I was looking out into the garden on an October morning. Everything there seemed dark and lifeless. The vision of deadness and hopelessness which confronted me, reflected my sombre mood. I was filled with a terrible fear and sadness. Then, as I continued to gaze out of the window, the light began to change, until the whole garden was bathed in an incredibly warm glow, and the whole scene was transformed from despair into hope-full-ness. As I stood there, I do not know for how long, it was as if I was in a kind of paradise and I felt lifted up.

That experience was an amazing gift and it showed me I was not alone. Since then I have become more attuned to noticing things that give me joy and which are signs of God's presence in my life: little things that are freely given. Like the gift of an orchid coming back into a profusion of flowers – a Dendrobium orchid - which my daughter sent me as a special present several years ago. Whenever this happens I cherish the gift and celebrate the moment with a deep sense of joy and thank God for all these signs of his love and presence.

“The whole of life could be celebrated as a gift, if only we had eyes to see this.”

Sheila Barrett





Accepting ourselves as God's gift to others and accepting others as God's gift to us.

Dt 34:5-8, 10

There in the land of Moab, Moses the servant of Yahweh died as Yahweh decreed; he was buried in the valley, in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but to this day no one has ever found his grave. Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye undimmed, his vigour unimpaired. The people of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days. The days of weeping for the mourning rites of Moses came to an end. Since then, never has there been such a prophet in Israel as Moses, the man Yahweh knew face to face.

Circular

The Brothers welcome sharing with Partners, and particularly with those who desire to live according to the Lasallian charism, the contribution of their respective identities. They see this as a sign of spiritual and apostolic enrichment.

John Main

For this purpose they contribute in a creative and dynamic way to the setting up, and the development of different structures of association, assuming the role of alert and, if necessary, critical judges. The specific character of their contribution is based on the total gift of their life, the witness of their community life, the experience of God as an absolute.

“The specific character of their contribution is based on the total gift of their life.”

John Main



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Transforming



Jb 42:2-6

I know that you are all-powerful: what you conceive, you can perform. I am the one who obscured your designs with my empty-headed words. I have been holding forth on matters I cannot understand, on marvels beyond me and my knowledge. (Listen, I have more to say, now it is my turn to ask questions and yours to inform me.) I knew you then only by hearsay; but now, having seen you with my own eyes, I retract all I have said, and in dust and ashes I repent.

MTR 3:2, 3

In order to fulfil your responsibility with as much perfection and care as God requires of you, frequently give yourself to the Spirit of our Lord to act only under his influence and through any self-seeking. This Holy Spirit will then fill your students with Himself.

All the good you are able to do in your work for those entrusted to you will be true and effective only insofar as Jesus Christ gives it his blessing and as you remain united with him. It is the same for you as it is for a branch. It can bear fruit only if it remains attached to the vine and draws its sap and strength from the vine. This is the source of all the goodness of the fruit.

Jesus Christ wants you to understand from this comparison that the more your work is energised by him, the more it will produce good in your disciples. This is why you must ask him earnestly that all your teaching be energised by his Spirit and draw all its power from him.

Martin Luther

Behold, Lord, an empty vessel that needs to be filled. My Lord, fill it. I am weak in faith; strengthen me. I am cold in love; warm me and make me fervent, that my love may go out to my neighbour. I do not have a strong and firm faith; at times I doubt and am unable to trust you altogether. O Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in you. In you I have sealed all the treasure I have. I am poor; you are rich and came to be merciful to the poor. I am a sinner; you are upright. With me, there is an abundance of sin; in you is the fullness of righteousness. Therefore I will remain with you, of whom I can receive, but to whom I may not give.

“This Holy Spirit will then fill your students with himself.”

De La Salle





Building community

Col 3:16-17

Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

De La Salle

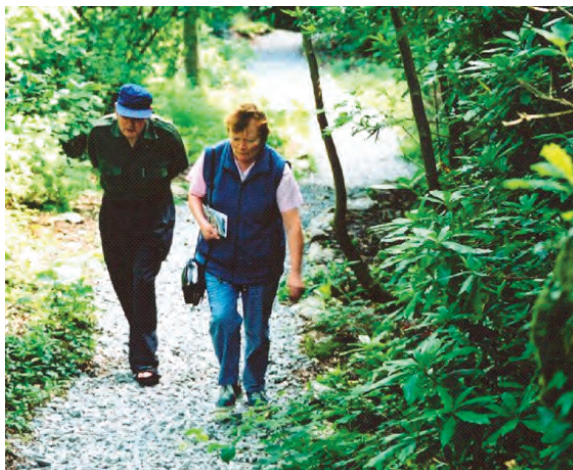
I shall always consider the work of my salvation and that of establishing and directing our Community as God's work. Hence I shall commit to God the care of all this, so as to do nothing of what concerns me without God's orders, often consulting God on all I shall have to do, whether it relates to the one or to the other, often saying those words of the prophet Habakkuk, 'Lord, the work is yours.'

BYM (Quakers)

To make a home safe and friendly, to comfort one person in sorrow, to share with another in joy, to do one's work as effectively as possible, to listen with understanding, to be gentle and courteous – these are the humble tasks to which we are called. They build the home or the church or the community, which is the first step towards the Kingdom of God on earth. The second is to be aware of greater tasks and to be ready to be used in solving them. Ready, not worried or anxious or envious, but content to wait, exercising a ministry of prayer to sustain and support one another.

*“Teach each other,
and advise each other,
in all wisdom.”*

Colossians 3:16



Living in a Spirit of Faith



Living our commitment



I Jn 4:15-21

If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them, and they in God. We ourselves have known and put our faith in God's love towards ourselves. God is love and anyone who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in them. Love will come to its perfection in us when we can face the day of Judgement without fear; because even in this world we have become as God is. In love there can be no fear, but fear is driven out by perfect love: because to fear is to expect punishment, and anyone who is afraid is still imperfect in love. We are to love, then, because God loved us first. Anyone who says, 'I love God', and hates those around them, is a liar, since anyone who does not love the neighbour that they can see cannot love God, whom they have never seen. So this is the commandment that God has given us, that anyone who loves God must also love their neighbour.

John Johnston

I close this long meditation on Peace, Identity and Conversion, with these passages from Chapter 10 of our new Rule, 'Vitality of the Institute', passages I find pertinent and inspiring:

'The words of St John Baptist De La Salle are still true: "The need for this Institute is very great". The young, the poor, the Church and the world need the ministry of the Lasallian community (141).....

The vitality of the Institute depends on the quality and fidelity of each of its members (143)...

Each Lasallian, regardless of age, has a role to play in the vitality of the Institute (145).....

The life of an institute is a continual challenge to be creative while remaining faithful to its origins. It can sometimes call for difficult commitments, as St John Baptist De La Salle discovered at various points of his life. Today, as in the past, he challenges Lasallians, not only as the one who established the Institute, but as the Founder who continues to inspire and to sustain it. (149)

Filled with the spirit which he left them as their legacy, Lasallians grow in the living tradition of the Institute. In communion with those who have gone before them they continue to respond with ardent zeal to the appeals of the Lord, the Church and the world, in order to procure the glory of God.' (149)

Ignatius Loyola

Teach us, Lord,
to serve you as you deserve,
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labour and not to ask for any reward
save that of knowing that we do your will.





Being a communion of saints

I Jn 4:7-10

My dear people, let us love one another since love comes from God and everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Anyone who fails to love can never have known God, because God is love. God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world God's only Son so that we could have life through him; this is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God's love for us when the Son was sent to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away.

Med 77:1

In community... the Spirit of God should be the only guide, and people ought to breathe only God and think only of pleasing God because they have consecrated themselves to God's service.

Anon.

This is the Church of my dreams —
The Church of the warm heart,
Of the open mind,
Of the adventurous spirit;
The Church that cares,
That heals hurt lives,
That comforts old people,
That challenges youth;
That knows no divisions of culture or class;
No frontiers, geographical or social,
The Church that enquires as well as affirms,
That looks forward as well as backward;
The Church of the Master,
The Church of the people;
High as the ideals of Jesus,
Low as the humblest human;
A working Church,
A worshipping Church,
A winsome Church;
A Church that interprets
truth in terms of truth;
That inspires courage for this life and hope for the life to come;
A Church of courage;
A Church of all good men —
The Church of the living God.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Witnessing



Lk 21:12-19

But before all this happens, people will seize you and persecute you; they will hand you over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and bring you before kings and governors because of my name - and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. Keep this carefully in mind: you are not to prepare your defence, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated by all on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your endurance will win you your lives.

Med 138:2

By your vocation you are obliged to announce the truths of the Gospel every day. Practise those that are required of all Christians before you undertake to teach them to others.

Anthony Porter

If I were to ask God: "please tell me about yourself", my God's reply would be along the following lines:

"I am the creator of all. You have felt in awe at the immensity of creation seen in the night sky. You have appreciated the beauty and the variety of the natural world you live in. You have tried to respect and enhance the dignity of each unique person I have created, for whom I care immensely.

I have likened myself to a good shepherd, in Old Testament times, when I am often thought of as a harsh judge and as warlike, and only more rarely as gentle and caring.

'The Lord Yahweh says this: I am going to look after my flock and keep all of it in view. I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness. They will rest in good grazing ground; they will browse in rich pastures I shall be a true shepherd to them! (Ezekiel 34)

Continued on the next page





Witnessing (continued)

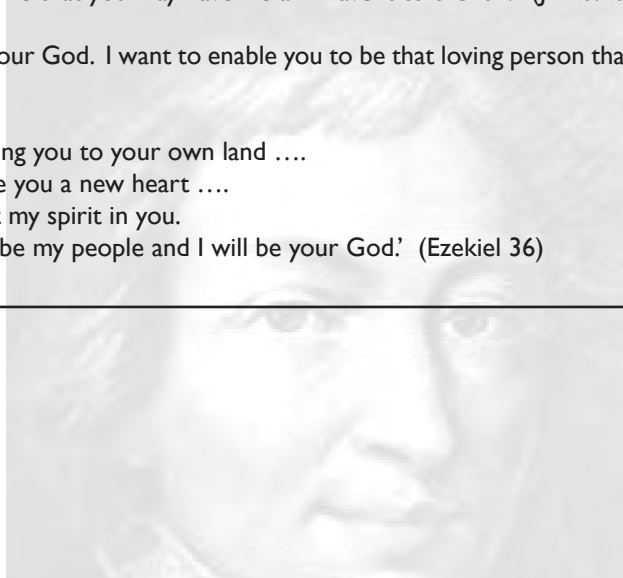
Anthony Porter

The life that I offer is a life in its fullness. Living in me enhances, not diminishes, your human life, because it adds to your physical, intellectual and emotional life a spiritual life which has no limits, and which leads directly to that fullness of life in eternity for which I created you.

‘I have come that you may have life and have it to the full.’ (Jn 10.10)

I want to be your God. I want to enable you to be that loving person that you, too, want to be:

‘I shall bring you to your own land
I shall give you a new heart
I shall put my spirit in you.
You shall be my people and I will be your God.’ (Ezekiel 36)



Brother Anthony Porter (far left on the back row) at the Commissioning of the St Cassian's Team, September 2011



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Serving as mission

Jn 13:13-17

When he had washed their feet and put on his clothes again he went back to the table. 'Do you understand' he said 'what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you. I tell you most solemnly, no servant is greater than his master, no messenger is greater than the man who sent him. Now that you know this, happiness will be yours if you behave accordingly.'

Med 114:2

When we are employed in an apostolic ministry, we must add zeal to action, or else all we do will have but little result.

Mirpur Workshop - Jean Vanier

Judge each day not by the harvest but by the seeds you plant.

Note that [in the washing of his disciples' feet] this is the only place in the gospels where Jesus says, 'I have given you an example.' Jesus is our model. In other places he asks us to learn from him or to do certain things he has done. Here he insists that if we want to be his disciples, to be part of his kingdom, we have to follow his example and wash each other's feet. We have to do things that seem to go beyond common sense and against our habits, customs and cultural traditions.

Of course, Jesus is asking us above all to have a certain attitude towards others. It is not just a question of washing feet. The washing of the feet is a sign and a symbol. Jesus is asking us to live and act constantly with a humble and loving heart in regard to others. But at the same time, Jesus insists on the importance of washing, of touching each other's feet.



Accompanying

Lk 24:13-27

That very same day, two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days'. 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth' they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

Med 187:2

He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' Often reflect that you should be a person of prayer, because you must pray not only for yourself but also for those whom you have to guide.

Häring

When we receive the Body of Christ we are always confronted with his question as to whether we want to be truly at one and to act in solidarity as corporate members of the Body of Christ. A truly Eucharistic, grateful memory will help us to say our responsible 'Amen' when the need of others appeals to us for our active love. The creative, healing, caring solidarity of the Christian community with the sick and suffering is an integral dimension of the Eucharistic memorial and of a faith-filled memory bearing fruit in caring, healing love.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Being good shepherds



Jer 3:14-17

“Come back, disloyal children - it is Yahweh who speaks - for I alone am your Master. I will take one from a town, two from a clan, and bring you to Zion. I will give you shepherds after my own heart, and these shall feed you on knowledge and discretion. And when you have increased and become many in the land, then - it is Yahweh who speaks - no one will ever say again: Where is the ark of the covenant of Yahweh? There will be no thought of it, no memory of it, no regret for it, no making of another. When that time comes, Jerusalem shall be called: The Throne of Yahweh; all the nations will gather there in the name of Yahweh and will no longer follow the dictates of their own stubborn hearts.”

Med 33:1

Jesus compares those who have care of souls to a good shepherd who is very careful of his sheep. One of the qualities Our Lord says distinguishes him is that he knows them all individually. This is also one of the essential qualities required of those who instruct others, for they must get to know their pupils, and discern the manner in which to act towards them.

Jean Vanier

Is not one of our problems today that we have separated ourselves from the poor and the wounded and the suffering? We have too much time to discuss and theorise, and have lost the yearning for God which comes when we are faced with the sufferings of people.

“...we have separated ourselves from the poor and the wounded and the suffering.”

Jean Vanier





Honouring

Is 33:3-5

At the sound of your threat peoples flee, when you rise nations scatter, they gather loot as the grasshopper gathers, they leap on it as locusts leap. Yahweh is exalted, for he is enthroned above, and fills Zion with justice and integrity.

Med 80:3

Make it appear, by the care you take of your pupils, that you have a real love for them. They are the living images of Jesus Christ.

Aidan Kilty

Bishop Patrick Lynch, Auxiliary Bishop of Southwark spoke on a recent occasion of how he had been introduced, while a student at St Mary's College, Moraga, USA, to the Lasallian practice of 'remembering that we are in the presence of God'. He had been introduced to the practice by a Lasallian educator at the University for whom the 'practice' of the presence of God was evidently a way of life.

As a way of life, it is gradually assimilated into the consciousness and begins to inform the different aspects of our being, including our relationships with others, especially those who are confided to our care. It also influences behaviour patterns through its impact on our appreciation of truth, justice, fidelity, goodness and beauty. Clearly, too, the practice of the presence of God, the Abba of Jesus, offers a constant and supportive road-map that speaks of God's fidelity in the midst of life's complexities, including its inevitable joys and sorrows. As Lasallian educators, to be able to offer something of that experience, to those 'confided to our care', especially to the young people on their challenging journey to self-identity, is both a joyful privilege and an onerous responsibility. It involves, as St La Salle tells us, "the power to perform miracles by touching the hearts of those entrusted to our care".

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



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Seeking wholeness



2 Ch 7:14-16

I had rather boasted to him about you, and now I have not been made to look foolish; in fact, our boasting to Titus has proved to be as true as anything that we ever said to you.

His own personal affection for you is all the greater when he remembers how willing you have all been, and with what deep respect you welcomed him. I am very happy knowing that I can rely on you so completely.

De La Salle

...(One) will never work better for one's salvation, and will never acquire greater perfection, than by accomplishing the duties of one's daily employment, provided that one carries these out in view of God's intention. It is necessary to keep that always in mind.

Renoir -
Pierre Lacout

You should wander about and daydream a bit. It's when you are not doing much of anything that you are accomplishing most. Before you can have a roaring fire, you've got to gather a good supply of wood.

In silence which is active, the inner Light of God begins to glow – a tiny spark. For the flame to be kindled and to grow, subtle argument and the clamour of our emotions must be stilled. It is by an attention full of love that we enable the Inner Light to blaze and to illuminate our dwelling and to make of our whole being a source from which this light may shine out.

Words must be purified by a redemptive silence if they are to bear the message of peace. A right to speak is a call to the duty of listening. Speech has no meaning unless there are attentive minds and silent hearts. Silence is the welcoming acceptance of the other. The word born of silence must be received in silence.





Reconciling

Lk 15:28 - 31

'He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, "Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property - he and his women - you kill the calf we had been fattening."

'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours.'

Let 105

Put up with the faults of others and be generous in the interpretation you put on them.

Ben Foy

Waiting for Pope Benedict XVI in Hyde Park in September 2010 the 80,000 crowd were spell-bound listening to a man and wife speak movingly about the violent and unprovoked death of Jimmy, their second youngest child, on the day after his sixteenth birthday, 10th May 2008. They spoke about "the anger which had killed their son"; about their decision "not to allow anger to destroy them"; and about their determination "to work to destroy anger". Their simply spoken words were greeted with several minutes of standing ovation, recognising the sincerity of their witness.

Their faith and courage, their bravery, compassion and forgiveness struck a chord in the crowd, aware of so many parents in cities today who sadly find themselves in a similar position. Barry and Margaret Mizen gave expression to the hope that reconciliation can be worked for and achieved and not just through pious words. Having squarely confronted their own pain and grown through that experience, the Mizen family have further committed themselves to work with young people under the age of 24. They talk with troubled and violent young people in schools and prisons to develop an understanding of anger, aggression and the importance of forgiveness.

Their efforts are not just talk. A key aim of the "Jimmy Mizen Foundation" they established, is "to help such young people play a positive role within their communities as independent and responsible individuals." They have provided resources and opportunities helping young people in London and Liverpool to flourish where they might otherwise find themselves in the same situation as their son's killer.

Compassion is at the root of their commitment to work for reconciliation – demonstrated dramatically in visiting their son's killer in prison. In 2011 they invited political parties to agree about "the issues of how young people grow in this country, what they're subjected to, and to bear in mind some of these young people have awful lives!" Rather than cursing the dark they are lighting candles, and in that light are giving a real hope for reconciliation in our society today.



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Collaborating

I Cor 15:58

Never give in, then, my dear friends, never admit defeat; keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain.

Med 73:2

To support one another is a charity that each Lasallian is obliged to practise towards each other... if one wishes to preserve union with others and to show by personal conduct that one forms one and the same society with them.

Terry Collins

Association presupposes commitment which in turn requires spiritual maturity and a process of personal conversion. People will have different levels of commitment to the same goal, and their commitment will take on different forms. But, some kind of commitment is essential and involves two aspects. There is the commitment to work for others (serving the poor through education) and the commitment to work with others (by associating).

*“Keep on working
at the Lord’s work
always.”*

First Letter to the Corinthians



Peacemaking

Is 66:12-14

For thus says Yahweh:

Now towards her I send flowing peace, like a river, and like a stream in spate the glory of the nations.

At her breast will her nurslings be carried and fondled in her lap. Like a son comforted by his mother will I comfort you. (And by Jerusalem you will be comforted.)

At the sight your heart will rejoice, and your bones will flourish like the grass. Yahweh's hand will be revealed to those who serve , but fury to the enemies of Yahweh.

John Johnston

John Paul II speaks of individuals, families and nations that are prisoners of events in the past. He advocates a 'healing of memories', in order that the evils of history not be allowed to continue to sow discord.

'This does not mean forgetting past events; it means re-examining them with a new attitude, and learning precisely from the experience of suffering... The deadly cycle of revenge must be replaced by the new-found liberty of forgiveness'.

The Pope insists that even those who have suffered injustice are called to persevere courageously on the way of peace, a way which involves, necessarily, forgiving. How demanding this orientation is, particularly for those of us who have endured violence and even war, whatever the root cause: personal, ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, political, economic, linguistic...

To refuse to be dominated by lingering anger and the desire to strike back, and, instead, to begin again to live familiarly with those we think have offended us, we need 'undying love'.

Vincent Kingston

The words of Oscar Romero -

*'We cannot do everything
and there is a sense of liberation in realising that.*

*This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well.*

*It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.'*

- remind us that we can't do everything. We just choose an area of concern that fits our particular circumstances, talents, energy level and inclination – and keep chipping away at it. We do our bit and entrust the rest to the Lord. (And yet somewhere in there is the nagging paradox that, as St Teresa put it, God has no hands / eyes / voice and heart but ours....) I expect that the way many of us would get involved is through some form of advocacy, by becoming a voice for the voiceless through the ministry of the pen, since many campaigns call for letters to MPs, Government departments, multinationals etc



Living in a Spirit of Faith

Hungering for justice

Is 30:18

But Yahweh is waiting to be gracious to you, to rise and take pity on you, for Yahweh is a just God; happy are all who hope in God.

L. Sch

The Lasallian School considers it essential to educate the pupils in a sense of justice and peace. It proposes an enquiry on these questions; it arouses an awareness of the causes and concrete situations of injustice and violence; it develops a critical mind which enables the pupils to analyse these problems clearly.

Ronald Rolheiser

In the gospels, and in the Christian scriptures in general, the call to reach out to the poor and to help create justice in the world is as non-negotiable as keeping the commandments and going to church. Indeed, striving for justice must be part of all authentic worship. This challenge is contained in the Eucharist itself. The Eucharistic table calls us to justice, to reach out to the poor.

How? First, by definition, the Eucharistic table is a table of social non-distinction, a place where the rich and the poor are called to be together beyond all class and status. At the Eucharist there are to be no rich and no poor; only one equal family praying together in a common humanity. In baptism we are all made equal and for that reason there are no separate worship services for the rich and the poor. Moreover, St Paul warns us strongly that when we gather for the Eucharist, the rich should not receive preferential treatment.

Indeed, the gospels invite us in the opposite direction. When you hold any banquet, they tell us, we should give preferential treatment to the poor. This is especially true for the Eucharist. The poor should be welcomed in a special way. Why? Because, among other things, the Eucharist commemorates Jesus's brokenness, his poverty, his body being broken and his blood being poured out. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin expresses this aptly when he suggests that the wine offered at the Eucharist symbolises precisely the brokenness of the poor. In a sense the true substance to be consecrated each day is the world's during that day - the bread symbolising appropriately what creation succeeds in producing, the wine (blood) what creation causes to be lost in exhaustion and suffering in the course of that effort. The Eucharist offers up the tears and blood of the poor and invites us to help alleviate the conditions that produce tears and blood.

And we do that as a famous hymn says, by moving "from worship into service". We don't go to the Eucharist only to worship God by expressing our faith and devotion. The Eucharist is not a private devotional prayer, but is rather a communal act of worship which, among other things, calls us to go forth and live out in the world what we celebrate inside a church - namely, the non-importance of social distinction, the special place that God gives to the tears and blood of the poor, and the non-negotiable challenge from God to each of us to work at changing the conditions that cause tears and blood. The Eucharist calls us to love tenderly, but, just as strongly, it calls us to act in justice.





Glossary of Lasallian terms used in this volume

- Association:** One of the vows the Brothers take and is seen as one of the defining elements of being a Lasallian, that they work 'together and by association' in carrying out the Lasallian educational mission.
- Circular:** Refers to publications from the Brothers' General Council in Rome.
- Consecrated life:** Denotes a form of Christian living, usually in Community, the members of whom have taken vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. Besides these three vows, the De La Salle Brothers take two additional ones: the Vow of Stability and the Vow of Association.
- Declaration:** The full title of the Declaration is, The Declaration on the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the World Today. A document prepared for the General Chapter in 1966 that gives an understanding of the spirit, purpose and work of the Brothers.
- Founder:** St John Baptist De La Salle, who set up the religious Institute known as 'Fratres Scholarum Christianarum' (Brothers of the Christian Schools), known also as the De La Salle Brothers or, in the USA, 'The De La Salle Christian Brothers'. 'FSC, from the Latin, is usually written after the Brothers' names.
- General Chapter:** The General Chapter is conducted at the Generalate in Rome and is representative of all Brothers worldwide; legislation is undertaken, and the Superior General is elected for a seven-year term. The General Chapter held in 2007 was the 44th in the history of the Institute.
- Institute:** The De La Salle Brothers are often referred to as a Religious Order but technically they are a Religious Institute approved by the Catholic Church. Therefore in some documents the overall organisation is referred to as the Institute.
- Lasallian:** The word Lasallian is often added to another word such as school or spirituality indicating that there is a connection of ideas with St John Baptist De La Salle and with the De La Salle Brothers. On its own, the word Lasallian can also refer to a person who in a spirit of faith and zeal wishes to be involved in the Lasallian Educational Mission (see below).
- Lasallian Charism:** In a context of faith, Charism is a gift which the Holy Spirit gives a person for community service or, better yet, to enable the person to contribute to the community's mission. The two major gifts of the Lasallian Charism that De La Salle identified were faith in God, and zeal for the Lasallian educational mission.
- Lasallian Educational Mission:** '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.' (Rule 3)
- Lasallian School:** A school run on the principles outlined by St John Baptist De La Salle and the founding Brothers.
- Mission:** from the Latin root meaning 'sent', the term includes various works or apostolates to which the Church sends people and institutions.
- Partners:** A term used to describe people who are co-workers, associates, or colleagues of the Brothers.
- Rule:** The Rule for the De La Salle Brothers published in 1987 and revised in 2002. See also below the note on Lasallian Sources regarding changes made to the Rule in this volume. As we go to print, the Rule of 1987 (updated 2002) is being revised for the General Chapter of 2014.
- Themes:** Refers to 'Lasallian Themes', a three-volume publication published by the De La Salle Brothers, Rome, in 1992.

