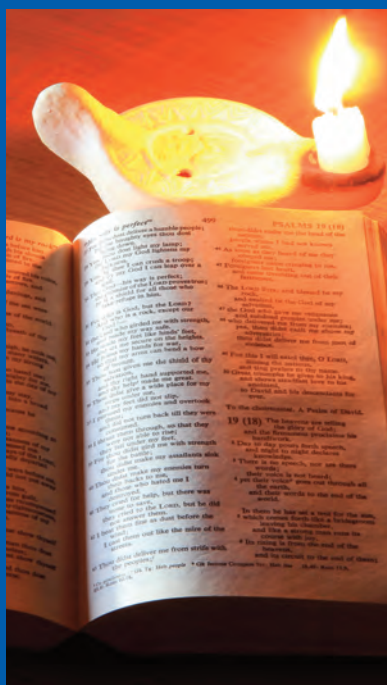




## Living in a Spirit of Faith



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Reflections for Lasallians

## Volume 3

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 3**

*compiled by the Lasallian Association of Great Britain*

Published by Lasallian Publications (GB)  
De La Salle Provincialate, 140 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7BP, UK.

First edition 2013

Private Circulation

ISBN for complete set of four volumes : 978-0-9540562-2-3

ISBN for this volume: 978-0-9540562-6-1

To obtain further copies of this volume or for information  
regarding the other volumes in this series, email:  
[publications@lasalle.org.uk](mailto:publications@lasalle.org.uk)

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Pilgrim Press, Our passion for *Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality and Liberation*, by Carter Heyward, 1984.

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# 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 <sup>1</sup>, and those who have accompanied the poor with the Lasallian Developing World Projects (LDWP) <sup>2</sup>. 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, is the third in a series of four and contains the themes, 'Together and by Association', 'Respecting Others, Bringing Those at the Margins to the Centre of Our Lives' and 'Loving the Vulnerable Self'.

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.

1. [www.kintbury.org](http://www.kintbury.org)
2. [www.delasalle.org.uk/ldwp/about.htm](http://www.delasalle.org.uk/ldwp/about.htm)



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# The Structure



The complete text, 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 is subdivided into 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





## The Institute Since 1880

The development of the Institute in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century made it a target for an anti-clerical, secular republican government. Although the majority of the population was Catholic they could not organise themselves into an effective opposition. Consequently legislation removed the Church's influence from public life.

Primary education was a chosen means to implement Government secularising policies. Primary education became compulsory, free and removed from religious influence, significantly affecting the Brothers who were involved in over 1,200 such schools in 1876 and none by 1900.

The situation was worsened by compulsory three year military service demanded of all young Brothers. Nevertheless, by 1900 there was an increase in numbers of Brothers - over 10,000 in France alone. Despite efforts to develop the Brothers' formation, difficulties of living in a military environment decreased the religious spirit of young brothers and created tensions in communities on their return. Brothers needed to adapt and move from publicly funded to private (fee-paying) schools, undermining their traditional commitment to absolute gratuity. In the midst of all this De La Salle was beatified (1880) and canonised (1900).

The Brothers' mission in France expanded in a variety of schools and projects - boarding schools, schools for the deaf, technical, vocational and teachers colleges, and youth clubs. The number of lay staff increased, filling the gaps left by those on military service. By 1904 the effect of the secularising Combes laws, made worse by poor direction from the Superiors, led to the effective suppression of the Institute in France. As in 1789, some Brothers found creative ways of continuing their ministry within France. Most Brothers chose exile. This led to a rapid expansion of the Brothers' Mission into many parts of the world and their courageous witness encouraged many young men to join the Brothers.

The introduction of the 1917 Code of Canon Law affected the Institute. Over 800 Brothers, 'novice employés', left the Institute being unwilling or unable to make the perpetual vows which the Church now required. After over 200 years this Institute practice was outlawed by the Church. Although changing the canonical status of Brothers from being a Society to being a Religious Institute, the Church appeared to value the Brothers more for their work than for their religious commitment.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the focus of Religious Life was on "flight from the world", renunciation and personal effort, leading to a "monastic-type" understanding of the Institute. This monastic emphasis introduced conflicting ideas about the nature of the Brothers' vocation, nevertheless they continued to commit themselves to preparing children for life.

Due to the anti-church laws in France, referred to as the 'Combes Laws', the administration of the Institute (the Generalate) was moved, in 1904, from France to Belgium. Two years later, in 1906, the relics of the our Founder, St John Baptist de La Salle, were quietly transferred there. In 1936 the Generalate moved to Rome and the following year our Founder's relics were installed in the new Generalate's chapel.



### Reliquary

The relics of De La Salle in the Generalate chapel, Rome.

During 1930s and 40s Brothers experienced significant religious persecution in Spain, Mexico, Germany and the Philippines through mistreatment, imprisonment, forced labour and loss of life, since as religious educators they were considered threats to various ideologies. Over 150



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

1. Anti-church laws passed from 1901-1905 by the French Government led by Émil Combes, culminating in the 1905 French law, 'Separation of the Churches and State'.





**Jaime Hilario**

Martyred in 1937 in Spain by firing squad for being a Brother.

See page 79.

Brothers in Spain alone were martyred, and have now been beatified. World War II caused great disruption for the Brothers. At least 150 Brothers died in different conflicts. Others were forced to live with considerable autonomy, unable to communicate with the central administration of the Institute. Others too were involved in a variety of activities to assist their neighbours. The Chapter of 1946 would need to address major issues - there could be no return to the old Rule.

Surprisingly Chapter discussions, partly on the direction of the Congregation for Religious' instigation, took place as if there had been no War, with strong efforts to re-instate the past. Unrealistic demands to "eliminate the feminine" and reduce the "necessary evil of lay involvement" in the Brothers' establishments were made.

By the time of the 1956 General Chapter a dawning awareness of the new kind of world had taken place in the Institute. New insights were developing. Lay colleagues were seen as "a necessary good". The Chapter promoted advanced theological studies and critical studies of the life of De La Salle and the origins of the Institute. The Jesus Magister Institute (JMI) for Studies, was a collaborative undertaking by various Institutes of Brothers. It was associated with the Lateran University, until the clerical administration realised that Brothers were capable of achieving better degrees than many of the priest-students. The affiliation of JMI was transferred to the Gregorian University.

We could see these innovations as prescient preparations for the renewal of Religious Life envisaged by Vatican II, which mandated renewal and adaptation "in the light of the Gospels, of the origins of the Congregation, and by appropriate adaptation to the changing circumstances of the world".

The Brothers' new self-understanding was expressed in the "Declaration" published by the 1967 Chapter, when cooperation and involvement of Brothers and lay colleagues at all levels, was promoted. Recent years have seen a change of understanding from "Brothers' school" to "Lasallian school", recognising that Brothers and lay colleagues of many faiths, cultures and ethnicities, are "associated together for the mission".

In 2013, over 80,000 teachers and about 3,000 Brothers are involved in a variety of educational establishments, in over 80 countries, educating about a million students. They share their understanding of God's offer of salvation with students, assisting them to become good citizens - serving their neighbours - and in becoming holy!

Some people considered Vatican II an unmitigated disaster, due to a significant reduction in the number of Brothers in the years that followed: they ignore the expansion of the Institute's mission. Concern and involvement in issues of justice, peace and care for Creation has become explicit. The spread and development of the Lasallian spirit is seen in lay colleagues, male and female. The development of Universities and Higher Education establishments and the increasing use of technology help in the evangelisation of increasingly sophisticated, if still deprived, young people globally.

This brief overview of the history of the Institute reminds all Lasallians, Brothers and lay people alike, where we have come from, where we can see God's workings with us, and on whose behalf we serve. We must conclude that God hasn't finished what God wants of the Institute in the future. That is the exciting part!





## Lasallian Sources

The second quote on each page is a specifically Lasallian one and has 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 Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría (2000 - 2014), who at the time of publication is the present Superior General. We have also taken quotes from various Lasallian publications such as Institute Circulars, MEL Bulletins (see below), the Brothers' Rule and from the writings of other Brothers.

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'.

## Abbreviations

- DEC:** 'The Declaration: The Brothers of the Christian Schools in the World Today.' One of the principal documents of the Brothers' 39<sup>th</sup> 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 ministry 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, Romeville, USA
- MED:** 'Meditations' written by De La Salle covering Sundays and the principal feast days 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 covers 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.
- Memorandum:** 'Memorandum on the Beginnings' by De La Salle, as quoted by Blain, *The Life of St John Baptist de La Salle*, Book I.
- Method:** 'Method of Mental Prayer', written by De La Salle.
- Scripture:** We have used well known common abbreviations for all the scripture references. One abbreviation we have used in this volume that people may not be familiar with is 'Qo' for Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth).

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



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



## Theme 7

# Together and by Association



Contemporary icon painted by  
Brother William Woeger (1999).

Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



Together by Association



# Opening to God's word

Ac 1:15-26

One day Peter stood up to speak to the people - there were about a hundred and twenty persons in the congregation: 'Friends, the passage of scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit, speaking through David, foretells the fate of Judas, who offered himself as a guide to the men who arrested Jesus - after having been one of our number and actually sharing this ministry of ours. As you know, he bought a field with the money he was paid for his crime. He fell headlong and burst open, and all his entrails poured out. Everybody in Jerusalem heard about it and the field came to be called the Bloody Acre, in their language Hakeldama. Now in the Book of Psalms it says:

*Let his camp be reduced to ruin,  
Let there be no one to live in it.*

And again:

*Let someone else take his office.*

'We must therefore choose someone who has been with us the whole time that the Lord Jesus was travelling round with us, someone who was with us right from the time when John was baptising until the day when he was taken up from us - and he can act with us as a witness to his resurrection.' Having nominated two candidates, Joseph known as Barsabbas, whose surname was Justus, and Matthias, they prayed, 'Lord, you can read everyone's heart; show us therefore which of these two you have chosen to take over this ministry and apostolate, which Judas abandoned to go to his proper place'. They then drew lots for them, and as the lot fell to Matthias, he was listed as one of the twelve apostles.

Med 132:2

The time came at length when God, having imperceptibly softened the heart of Augustine, made him hear a voice which said: 'Take and read.' He, having opened the epistles of St. Paul, was so struck by a passage of these holy writings that he was at once converted. As he himself declares, so strong a light then illumined his soul that he felt completely reassured, and the dark clouds of his doubt disappeared.

Basil Hume

It is important to adopt the attitude of waiting, of just being present at prayer even though the effort seems to us unrewarding. Success or failure - that is the attitude of Samuel: 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' This attitude may be as far as we will get. And in my opinion it is a mistake to expect in prayer a response from God. Often God's response is outside prayer. And often we do not link up an outside response with the effort we put into prayer. God speaks to us through events, through other persons, in opportunities presented to us day by day. But he speaks to us essentially and above all in the depths of our being, inspiring in us a greater wanting for God; and this, I think, is one of the characteristic fruits of the life of prayer; a greater desire for God, although our understanding of God is no greater now than it was, say, ten years ago. And then a greater understanding of the things of God will probably accompany that; though again, it is not an understanding based upon theological enquiry or any mental activity of ours: it is a knowledge of God based on our wanting God and a conviction growing all the time which is in fact a thing of grace and not something of our own discovery or contrivance.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Allowing intimacy with God

**Jn:1-3**

There was one of the Pharisees called Nicodemus, a leading Jew, who came to Jesus by night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who comes from God; for no one could perform the signs that you do unless God were with him'.

**Med 107:1**

In all we undertake for God's glory and the salvation of souls, we should begin by prayer to ask of God the light and grace necessary to secure success in this holy ministry. For we can achieve success only insofar as God helps us and as the Holy Spirit directs us..

**Carter Heyward**

... we have seen signs somewhere, hidden however deeply, in the recesses of what we dare admit. And we are so often reluctant to say so with passion – to insist, to stake our reputation, our interests, our possessions, and maybe even our lives upon what we have seen: the value, the power. The centrality, the holiness, indeed, the divinity of the human body, the whole body with its many members, breathing, pulsating, yearning, speaking – the body of humanity. We have seen each and all of us as God's hands and heart and spirit on earth.

We have seen signs which shall not be cut off. The branches shall not be cut off from the vine. Our power will not be diminished or rendered ineffective. The sacrament of life shall not be withheld – the body, the blood, the sensuality of God's presence on earth. God is here/now. She is no absent deity, no God away in God's heaven, but rather the power of God's actual love among us. This is our God incarnate. Our God in flesh. Our God with us, among us, between us. God our sister. God our mother. God our father. God our brother. God our friend God our lover. The sign is the power of human love. God's own lovemaking in history. That which strives for justice. That which strives toward mutuality. The creation of relations and governments in which no body is denied. No body betrayed. No body put down. No body cast out. No body crucified on the basis of greed, fear or malice.



# Trusting

Ps 23

Yahweh is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

In meadows of green grass he lets me lie.  
To the waters of repose he leads me; there he revives my soul.

He guides me by paths of virtue  
for the sake of his name.

Though I pass through a gloomy valley, I fear no harm;  
besides me your rod and your staff are there, to hearten me.

You prepare a table before me under the eyes of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil,  
my cup brims over.

Ah, how goodness and kindness pursue me, every day of my life;  
my home, the house of Yahweh, as long as I live!

A. Calcutt

Having given away all his wealth, so that, as he said, his Society 'is neither founded or endowed except by providence', it was his rule not to start any foundation but to wait on events.

Kevin Allen

Soil is organically nourished, and a basis for new life. This nourishment in part derives from the remains of plant and animal matter and with light, moisture and oxygen sustains life. The interdependence of these elements and the cyclical path of life and death in the soil supports growth in a way that the emptiness of a vacuum, no matter how materially expensive and ornately beautiful, cannot.

In my Christian understanding of the cycle of death and resurrection I see the soil as a useful metaphor. To be given life means we can enjoy and look forward to the promise of resurrection and eternal life. In life we will experience suffering and peace, failure and success, sadness and happiness. To be given life is to be given the chance to experience all the goodness there is which may at times come from adversity and sorrow. Christ is the light who promised to be with us throughout our life, so that we may be with him and all our loved ones when we have conquered death in this world.

And in Psalm 23 we are assured, 'Even though I go through the deepest darkness,  
I will not be afraid, Lord,  
for you are with me.'



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Being a disciple



Mk 6:7-11

Then he summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs, giving them authority over the unclean spirits. And he instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff - no bread, no haversack, no money for their purses. They were to wear sandals but, he added, 'Do not take a spare tunic'. And he said to them, 'If you enter a house anywhere, stay there until you leave the district. And if any place does not welcome you and people refuse to listen to you, as you walk away shake off the dust from under your feet as a sign to them.'

Med 116:1

You can enjoy the same advantage of being taught by the same master as St Mark by often reading the Epistles of St. Peter. Like him you should practise faithfully the holy truths contained therein, which are so consoling and so instructive.

Francis of Assisi

*Thy will on earth be done as it is in heaven, that we may love you with our whole heart by always thinking of you; with our whole soul by always desiring you; with our whole mind by directing all our intentions to you and seeking your honour in all things; with all our strength by spending all the powers and senses of body and soul in the service of your love and not in anything else; and that we may love our neighbour even as ourselves, drawing everything, to the best of our power, to your love; rejoicing in the good of others as in our own and being compassionate in their troubles and giving offence to no-one.*

*That we may love you  
with our whole heart  
by always thinking of you.*

Francis of Assisi



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



# Receiving and responding

Ac 2:1-4

When Pentecost day came round, they had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.

Med 43:1

On this day the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles and on all those who were gathered together with them in the large upper room. He came to bring them a new law, the law of grace and love, and poured himself out upon them like a strong, driving wind.

The Spirit of God should also come and rest upon you on this sacred day to make it possible for you to live and to act only by his action in you. Draw him within you by offering a well-disposed heart.

Vincent Kingston

To 'give and take' is a much used phrase in the context of negotiations and transactions and its use is often extended to everyday aspects of human relationships. But both 'giving' and 'taking' lack any element of real mutuality; in both, the action is one-sided. Offering and receiving, on the other hand, expresses far more respect and sensitivity in any working relationship. 'Offering' leaves the recipient his or her freedom to receive or reject what is being offered and 'receiving' unlike 'taking', implies that one is accepting what is being offered. There is, surely, much more reciprocity, much more love and life, and much more meaning in 'offering and receiving' than in 'giving and taking'.

*Offering and receiving ...  
expresses ...*

*respect,  
sensitivity,  
relationship.*



Vincent Kingston



**Acting in a Spirit of Zeal**

# Embracing uncertainty

Ac 16:6-10

They travelled through Phrygia and the Galatian country, having been told by the Holy Spirit not to preach the word in Asia. When they reached the frontier of Mysia they thought to cross it into Bithynia, but as the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them, they went through Mysia and came down to Troas. One night Paul had a vision: a Macedonian appeared and appealed to him in these words, 'Come across to Macedonia and help us'. Once he had seen this vision we lost no time in arranging a passage to Macedonia, convinced that God had called us to bring them the Good News.

Med 67:2

Have you so little faith as to fear that, if you accomplish your duty and devote yourselves entirely to bring about God's reign in your hearts and in the hearts of others, God would allow you to lack something necessary for you to live and be clothed?

Oscar Wilde

To regret one's own experiences is to arrest one's own development. To deny one's own experiences is to put a lie into the lips of one's own life. It is no less than a denial of the soul.

The important thing, the thing that lies before me, the thing that I have to do, if the brief remainder of my days is not to be maimed, marred and incomplete, is to absorb into my nature all that has been done to me, to make it a part of me, to accept it without complaint, fear or reluctance.

*The important thing ...  
is to absorb into my nature  
all that has been done to me, ....  
to accept it ....*

Oscar Wilde



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



Together by Association



7

# Risking

Jos 2:8-19

The others had not yet lain down when Rahab came up to them on the roof. She said to them, 'I know that Yahweh has given you this land, that we ourselves are afraid of you and that all who live in this territory have been seized with terror at your approach; for we have heard how Yahweh dried up the Sea of Reeds before you when you came out of Egypt and what you did with the two Amorite kings across the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you put under the ban.

When we heard this, our hearts failed us, and no courage is left in any of us to stand up to you, because Yahweh your God is God both in heaven above and on earth beneath. Swear to me now by Yahweh, then, since I myself have shown you kindness, that you too will show kindness to the people of my father's house, and will give me a sure sign of this; that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters and all who belong to them, and will preserve us from death.' Then the men answered her, 'If we do not, it is we, not you, who will deserve to die, unless you tell of our agreement. When Yahweh has given us the land, we will deal with you kindly and faithfully.' Rahab let them down from the window by a rope, for her house was against the city wall and she lived inside the wall itself. She said, 'You must make for the hills, to escape your pursuers. Hide there for three days till the pursuers have returned, and then go on your way.' The men answered, 'We for our part will be free of the oath you made us swear, except on these conditions. When we enter your land you must use this sign: you must tie this scarlet cord to the window from which you let us down, and you must gather with you in your house your father and mother and brothers and all your family. If anybody passes through the doors of your house to go out, his blood shall be on his own head and we are not to blame; but the blood of all who stay with you in the house shall be on our heads if a hand is laid on any of them.

Med 67:1-2

It is to you especially that Jesus Christ addresses these words of today's Gospel: 'Seek first the kingdom of God' (Mt 6:33). In fact, you should not have come to this house except to seek here the reign of God, first for yourself, and second for those whose instruction God has entrusted to you. Here you should seek only to establish within your soul this reign of God both in this life and in the next.

For this present life you should not be concerned about anything except to make God reign in your heart by his grace and by the fullness of his love. It is for him that you should be living; it is the life of God himself that ought to be the life of your soul. ....

Have you, then so little faith as to fear that, if you accomplish your duty and devote yourselves entirely to bring about God's reign in your hearts and in the hearts of others, God would allow you to lack something necessary for you to live and be clothed?

Van Gogh

I tell you, if one wants to be active, one must not be afraid of failures, one must not be afraid of making mistakes. Many people think they will become good by doing no harm; that's a lie ... it leads to stagnation, mediocrity.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



# Recognising a shared spirit and a shared humanity



I Co 2:1-11

As for me, when I came to you, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed. During my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ. Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling' and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. And I did this so that your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God. But still we have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the sages of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: *the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of anyone, all that has been prepared for those who love God.*

These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God. After all, the depths of anyone can only be known by their own spirit, not by any other person, and in the same way the depths of God can only be known by the Spirit of God.

Med 173:2

Your ministry requires that you should devote yourself to the well-being of the poor, since it is your duty to instruct them. Like St Francis, look upon the poor as the image of Jesus Christ, and as being the best disposed to receive his Spirit abundantly. In this way, the more you cherish them, the more you will be united to Jesus Christ.

Hasidim

An old rabbi once asked his pupils how they could tell when the night had ended and the day had begun.

'Could it be,' asked one of the students, 'when you can see an animal in the distance and tell whether it's a sheep or a dog?'

'No,' answered the rabbi.

Another asked, 'Is it when you look at a tree in the distance and tell whether it's a fig tree or a peach tree?'

'No,' answered the rabbi.

'Then when is it?' the pupils demanded.

'It is when you can look on the face of any man or woman and see that it is your sister and brother. Because if you cannot see this, it is still night.'



# Living hopefully

Ep 6:18-20

Pray all the time, asking for what you need, praying in the Spirit on every possible occasion. Never get tired of staying awake to pray for all the saints; and pray for me to be given an opportunity to open my mouth and speak without fear and give out the mystery of the gospel of which I am an ambassador in chains; pray that in proclaiming it I may speak as boldly as I ought to.

Álvaro Ezcheverría

I believe that all of us begin this Assembly with the same conviction: ONE FAMILY, ONE MISSION: Lasallians associated for the educational service of the poor. It is the belief that our hope in the Lasallian mission should be anchored in God. It is the belief in a God who wants all to be saved and arrive at the knowledge of truth, as our Founder recalled with such insistence and which gave origin to our Institute and its mission. For me this is so clear that if I were asked what is the purpose of our association, represented today in an extraordinary way in this International Assembly, my response would be that we fundamentally and primarily associate together because we want to be instruments of salvation for the young, especially the poor, the unloved, the confused, those who do not find meaning in their lives, those who have lost their way.

Daniel O'Leary

Two men were building a wall - long and high - one at each end. When asked what he was doing, the first brickie replied that, for a start, he had no interest whatever in his work. A wall is a wall is a wall. He was bored and listless. Brick after brick, day after day, month after month. He longed for Fridays; he hated Mondays. With no interest or involvement, his work was slowly killing him.

"I'm creating a cathedral," murmured the other man. "This is the South Wall of it. I've seen the plans. It will be such a beautiful building. I can't believe I'm part of it. When I watch the young children playing around here, I can see them and their own children, worshipping in this holy and lovely place for decades of their lives."

When talking to parents and teachers I often tell this story. It transforms the way we see things. It is what the incarnation has revealed. It is what the sacraments are for. It is why God created the world - so that one day we would tumble to the amazing reality that lies beneath what we too often term as 'ordinary'. That is why the story of the two workmen is called 'The Infinite Horizon'. There is an infinite horizon to every single, routine, menial task we perform. The heavens reverberate to the least of our whispers or acts of love.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Celebrating



Lk 1.68-75

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,  
for he has visited his people, he has come to their rescue  
and he has raised up for us a power for salvation  
in the House of his servant David,  
even as he proclaimed,  
by the mouth of his holy prophets from ancient times,  
that he would save us from our enemies  
and from the hands of all who hate us.  
Thus he shows mercy to our ancestors,  
thus he remembers his holy covenant,  
the oath he swore  
to our father Abraham  
that he would grant us, free from fear,  
to be delivered from the hands of our enemies,  
to serve him in holiness and virtue  
in his presence, all our days.

Let 85

It is a great consolation to me, my very dear friend, to know that you are wholeheartedly  
in love with your vocation.

Basil Hume

'Why should I rejoice?' you might say. It is my life's experience that there is no day on  
which I shall keep from tears and not know sadness or misfortune... If God be the good-  
ness which is claimed for him, if he has that love for us which no human love can match,  
then why does evil seem to rule our hearts and hold sway in his creation? Yet his message  
is still, 'Rejoice, do not be afraid...' [Joel 2:21]

We do not understand why we are fallen and sinful, burdened and wounded. He does  
not will our sadness or our pain. He wants us to know his goodness and to trust, to find  
his love and rejoice. The secret hidden in his words will slowly be shown to us. It is the  
secret of his love, warm, close and true. That love is the meaning of his life; it is the reason  
of his mission when he came to us as man.

*Rejoice,  
do not be afraid.*

Basil Hume



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



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

Ph 3:8-11

I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For him I have accepted the loss of everything, and I look on everything as so much rubbish if only I can have Christ and be given a place in him. I am no longer trying for perfection by my own efforts, the perfection that comes from the Law, but I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ, and is from God and based on faith. All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death. That is the way I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead.

Med 73:2

To support one another is a charity that each one is obliged to practise towards others, if we wish to preserve union with them and to show by our conduct that we form one and the same society with them.

Charles Dickens

"Spirit," said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, "tell me if Tiny Tim will live."

"I see a vacant seat," replied the Ghost, "in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die."

"No, no," said Scrooge. "Oh, no, kind Spirit! Say he will be spared."

"If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race," returned the Ghost, "will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it and decrease the surplus population."

Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.

"Man," said the Ghost, "if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child."

Cry about the simple hell people give other people – without ever thinking. Cry about the hell white people give coloured folks, without even stopping to think that they're people too.

Harper Lee



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



# Transforming



Ph 2:14-16

Do all that has to be done without complaining or arguing and then you will be innocent and genuine, perfect children of God among a deceitful and underhand brood, and you will shine in the world like bright stars because you are offering it the word of life. This would give me something to be proud of for the Day of Christ, and would mean that I had not run in the race and exhausted myself for nothing.

Med 48:1

When Jesus Christ is in you, is he there as living bread? Do you allow him complete freedom to communicate his divine freedom to your soul? Is he living in you to the extent that you can say that it is no longer you who live, but that it is Jesus Christ who lives in you?

Teresa of Calcutta

We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. See how nature, the trees, the flowers, the grass, grow in perfect silence – see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence... Silence gives us a new outlook on everything. We need silence to be able to touch souls. The essential thing is not what we say, but what God says to us, and through us. Jesus is always waiting for us in silence. In that silence he will listen to us, there he will speak to our soul and there we will hear his voice. Inner silence is very difficult, but we must make the effort. In silence we will find new energy and true unity. The energy of God will be ours to do all things well; the unity of our thoughts with his thoughts, the unity of our prayers with his prayers, the unity of our actions with his actions, of our life with his life. All our words will be useless, unless they come from within.

*Jesus is always waiting for us in silence*

Teresa of Calcutta



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



# Building community

**I Co 14:12**

It is the same in your own case: since you aspire to spiritual gifts, concentrate on those which will grow to benefit the community.

**Med 77:3**

Pray God to preserve his Holy Spirit always in your community, and often say to him with David: "Do not reject us, my God, from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from us."

**David Torkington**

"Oh dear", said Father Angelo, "I can see I have not explained myself properly. The purpose of the Franciscan life-style is not to produce an accepting community, but a community of brothers refashioned by the Holy Spirit into a Christian community, similar to the community of Christ and His disciples. The first apostolate then for Franciscans is to minister the love that they have received, to one another, so that the very community of God's life, the life of the Three in One, can be made flesh and blood in a human brotherhood that reflects the divine.

"The Gospel does not say that you should just tolerate one another, make allowances for one another, build an accepting community with one another, it says you should love one another with the same love that Christ has for you. It then goes on to say that you should forgive one another seventy times seven, love not just your friends, but your enemies too, and even pray for those who would torture you and put you to death. This is impossible for man, as the Gospel itself states quite clearly.

"Humanity's endeavour may well be able to generate, at least in part, an 'accepting community', but only God's endeavours can create a loving, caring, compassionate Christian community, that reflects the inner life of God here on earth."



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Living our commitment



Jos 24:14-24

'So now, fear Yahweh and serve God perfectly and sincerely; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve Yahweh. But if you will not serve Yahweh, choose today whom you wish to serve, whether the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are now living. As for me and my House, we will serve Yahweh.'

The people answered, 'We have no intention of deserting Yahweh and serving other gods! Was it not Yahweh our God who brought us and our ancestors out of the land of Egypt, the house of slavery, who worked those great wonders before our eyes and preserved us all along the way we travelled and among all the peoples through whom we journeyed? What is more, Yahweh drove all those peoples out before us, as well as the Amorites who used to live in this country. We too will serve Yahweh, for Yahweh is our God.'

Then Joshua said to the people, 'You cannot serve Yahweh, because Yahweh is a holy God, a jealous God who will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you desert Yahweh to follow alien gods, Yahweh in turn will afflict and destroy you after the goodness you have been shown.' The people answered Joshua, 'No; it is Yahweh we wish to serve'. Then Joshua said to the people, 'You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve Yahweh.' They answered, 'We are witnesses'. 'Then cast away the alien gods among you and give your hearts to Yahweh the God of Israel!' The people answered Joshua, 'It is Yahweh our God we choose to serve; it is Yahweh's voice that we will obey'.

Med 164:3

It is not enough to sail securely: you must reach the harbour: otherwise the distance you cover will be of no avail, because it will not be the goal you set out to obtain.

Rex Chapman

'You are salt to the world.' How common it sounds! Though without it life would be immeasurably reduced. You are calling me, Lord, to a mission of great consequence. Salt preserves and sustains and enhances. It brings out the flavour of a thing. You are urging me to join with your followers in bringing to perfection the full flavour of the universe in which we live.

Prevent me, Lord, from 'becoming tasteless', from turning my faith into an individual, pietistic affair, a matter only between the two of us. Throw me into the world, into the society in which I am living, to help bring out its true nature.

And yet partly I am afraid, it is a precipitous course, the risks are incalculable. You were 'edged out of the world and on to the cross'. The same might happen to a man who takes you too seriously. And partly I cannot summon up the enthusiasm to bother, to change my ways, to break out of the rut, to be different. It is an effort. Sometimes I seem to be saying – it is good to be a Christian, but not too Christian. 'But if the salt becomes tasteless ...'





# Being a communion of saints

**Qo 3:1-8**

There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven:  
 A time for giving birth, a time for dying;  
     a time for planting, a time for uprooting what has been planted.  
 A time for killing, a time for healing;  
     a time for knocking down, a time for building.  
 A time for tears, a time for laughter;  
     a time for mourning, a time for dancing.  
 A time for throwing stones away, a time for gathering them up;  
     a time for embracing, a time to refrain from embracing.  
 A time for searching, a time for losing;  
     a time for keeping, a time for throwing away.  
 A time for tearing, a time for sewing;  
     a time for keeping silent, a time for speaking.  
 A time for loving, a time for hating;  
     a time for war, a time for peace.

**Let 105**

If our hearts are torn by anger or hatred, it is impossible for us to maintain union with Jesus Christ; so, ceasing to be members of his mystical body, we cannot expect the Father to hear our prayers, since God does not recognise the Spirit of Jesus in us.

**Venerable Bede**

Christ is the morning star  
 who when the night  
 of this world is past,  
 brings to his saints  
 the promise of  
 the light of life  
 and opens everlasting day.

*A time for peace*

Ecclesiastes  
Qo 3:8



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Witnessing



Ac 16:25-34

Late that night Paul and Silas were praying and singing God's praises, while the other prisoners listened. Suddenly there was an earthquake that shook the prison to its foundations. All the doors flew open and the chains fell from all the prisoners. When the gaoler woke and saw the doors wide open he drew his sword and was about to commit suicide, presuming that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted at the top of his voice, 'Don't do yourself any harm; we are all here.'

The gaoler called for lights, then rushed in, threw himself trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas, and escorted them out, saying, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They told him, 'Become a believer in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, and your household too.' Then they preached the word of the Lord to him and to all his family. Late as it was, he took them to wash their wounds, and was baptised then and there with all his household. Afterwards he took them home and gave them a meal, and the whole family celebrated their conversion to belief in God.

Med 78:2

You also are called like the apostles to make God known, and for that purpose you need great zeal.

Henri Nouwen

To be a witness for God is to be a living sign of God's presence in the world. What we live is more important than what we say, because the right way of living always leads to the right way of speaking. When we forgive our neighbours from our hearts, our hearts will speak forgiving words. When we are grateful, we will speak grateful words' and when we are hopeful and joyful, we will speak hopeful and joyful words.

When our words come too soon and we are not yet living what we are saying, we easily give double messages. Giving double messages - one with our words and another with our actions - makes us hypocrites. May our lives give us the right words, and may our words lead us to the right lives.

*You also are called  
like the apostles  
to make God known*

De La Salle



**Acting in a Spirit of Zeal**



# Serving as mission

**1 Peter 4:7-11**

Above all never let your love for each other grow insincere, since love covers over many sins. Welcome each other into your houses without grumbling. Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others. If you are a speaker, speak in words which seem to come from God; if you are a helper, help as though every action was done at God's orders; so that in everything God may receive the glory, through Jesus Christ, since to him alone belong all the glory and power for ever and ever. Amen

**Med 160:2**

Your mission requires you to labour for the good of the Church and your country. You will work on behalf of the Church by making them [your pupils] true Christians, submissive to the teaching of their faith and to the teachings of the gospel. You will contribute to the good of your country by teaching them to read and write and all that pertains to your functions. But you must join prayer to your exterior efforts, for failing this, your actions will have little effect.

**Basil Hume**

Everything human, except sin, has a new significance since God became man. Jesus Christ lived the ordinary life of a carpenter of his day in Nazareth, and by doing so he has made holy all ordinary things and activities... When we think of our lives in terms of service of God, we cannot, must not, neglect the second commandment. We have to love our neighbour as ourselves. It is important to be clear about our responsibilities and duties in respect of other people. Our spiritual lives are not ways of being comfortable, of finding peace, and joy for ourselves only. Our striving for union with God is a personal and private matter no doubt. But the Gospel command to love other people is very clear. And this does not mean just having a vague sense of goodwill towards people. It involves not only wishing good things for other people, but helping them to obtain them. It will involve action.

*Each one of you  
has received  
a special grace*

1 Peter 4:9



**Acting in a Spirit of Zeal**

# Accompanying



Rt 1:15-18

Naomi said to her, 'Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her god. You must return too; follow your sister-in-law.'

But Ruth said, 'Do not press me to leave you and to turn back from your company, for

'wherever you go, I will go,  
wherever you live, I will live.  
Your people shall be my people,  
and your God, my God.  
Wherever you die, I will die  
and there I will be buried.  
May Yahweh do this thing to me  
and more also,  
if even death should come between us!'

Seeing that she was determined to go with her, Naomi said no more.

Med 73:2

To bear with the shortcomings of our neighbour is, moreover, a practice of charity which is essential to the preservation of union. Thus we show that we form but one body with each other, and being one body we share in the sufferings of individual members. One is never exempt from this duty of mutual endurance, for it is impossible for two people to live together without being a source of mutual suffering, and as we cause others to suffer, it is but just that we should bear with their failings also. This is a burden placed on everyone's shoulder. It helps to secure our salvation. And such a burden is light since Jesus Christ helps us to carry it.

Andrew SDC

We are called to discipleship in fellowship. There is great joy in the comradeship of discipleship and good people, but fellowship with others is to have in it something much more rich and sacramental than just the comfort that we get from their company. We are bound together in mystic reality with other people; and our failures help them to fall, and our triumphs help them to win. The rich joy of fellowship with one's brothers and sisters in life is in this, that our service to them, if it is true, is inseparably bound up with our loyalty to God. If my friendship is to be valuable, I as a friend must be valuable, and my value depends really on my own degree of union with God.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



# Being good shepherds

**Mi 5:1-4**

But you, Bethlehem, the least of the clans of Judah, out of you will be born for me the one who is to rule over Israel; his origin goes back to the distant past, to the days of old. Yahweh is therefore going to abandon them till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth. Then the remnant of his brothers will come back to the sons of Israel. He will stand and feed his flock with the power of Yahweh, with the majesty of the name of his God. They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power to the ends of the land.

**Med 33:1**

Jesus compares those who have charge of souls to a good shepherd who has great care for the sheep. The care God seeks to take of them is devolved upon you.

**Ronald Rolheiser**

To 'really see' someone, especially someone who looks up to you, is to give that person an important blessing. In a gaze of recognition, of understanding, in an appreciative look, there is deep blessing.

Often, it is not so important that we say much to those for whom we are significant, but it is very important that we see them.

Good kings and queens see their people; good parents see their kids; good teachers see their students; good priests see their parishioners; good coaches see their players; good executives see their employees; and, in really good restaurants, the owner comes round to the tables and sees his or her customers. And the customers are, without being able to explain why, grateful that the owner took the time and pain to see them. We are blessed by being seen.

Today the young are not being seen enough in this way. Our youth are acting out in all kinds of ways as a means of getting our attention. They want to and they need to be seen by us – parents, adults, teachers, priests, coaches, leaders.

They need our blessing. They need to see right in our eyes, the radical acceptance of their reality, and they need to read in our eyes the words:

'You are my beloved child; in you I am well pleased.' (Mk. 1:11)

Young people need our appreciative gaze; mostly they simply need our gaze – 'Period.' One of the deepest hungers inside young people is the hunger for adult connection, the desire to be recognised, seen by a significant adult. They desperately need, and badly want, the blessing that comes from our gaze and our presence. They need for us to see them. In the end, more than they want our words, they want our gaze.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



# Honouring



Jm 3:13-18

If there are any wise or learned people among you, let them show it by their good lives, with humility and wisdom in their actions. But if at heart you have the bitterness of jealousy, or a self-seeking ambition, never make any claims for yourself or cover up the truth with lies - principles of this kind are not the wisdom that comes down from above: they are only earthly, animal and devilish. Wherever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony, and wicked things of every kind being done; whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it also makes for peace, and is kindly and considerate; it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. Peacemakers, when they work for peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness.

Med 102:1

You perform one of the chief functions of the apostles by instructing the new Christians, that is, your pupils who are newly filled with the spirit of God in baptism, in the truths of their faith and in the practice of their religion. Render yourself worthy of so holy a ministry by retreat and application to prayer, after the example of the apostles.

Anon.

'I was naked' because I did not appreciate myself, and you clothed me with confidence. Others gave me the message that I was rubbish, but you clothed me with dignity. I was naked from the loss of my good name through a story that was untrue, but you stood with me. I was stripped by people who laughed at me but you spoke words of support and love.

'I was hungry' for a word of encouragement, and you praised me. I was hungry for a greeting, and you smiled at me. I was hungry for the friendship and support of an adult, and you were there.

'I was a stranger' to feeling good about myself, and you welcomed me when I felt insecure. I was a stranger to understanding, and you listened to me. I was a stranger to care and acceptance, and you opened your heart and took me in.



# Seeking wholeness

Ac 2:42-47

These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the community, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone. The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed. They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

Med 43:2 & 3

You need the fullness of the Spirit of God in our state, for you should live and be guided only according to the spirit and the light of faith. It is only the Spirit of God who can give you this disposition.

You carry out a work that requires you to touch hearts, but you cannot do this except by the Spirit of God. Pray to him to give you today the same grace he gave the holy apostles, and ask him that, after filling you with his Holy Spirit to sanctify yourselves, he also communicate himself to you in order to procure the salvation of others.

Vera Dolton

A wheel is not a notion. If we come together in this way, it is not to rejoice in the pattern we have made, but to work together to make progress along our pilgrim way as a people of God, called to be servants in the world and ministers to each other.

The wheel will need structure, strength, power, an agreed direction and a boundary – a rim which is well shaped, hard wearing and able to get a grip on the realities of the road.

There are times when we will be pressed against the road at the hard edge of engagement. Then we will need to know the support of the rest of the wheel's structure and be aware of the still centre which empowers us.

*We will need to know  
the support of the rest  
of the wheel's structure*

Vera Dolton



**Acting in a Spirit of Zeal**

# Reconciling



**Mt 5:38-42**

You have learnt how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer the wicked no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer them the other as well; if someone takes you to law and would have your tunic, let them have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with them. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

**Med 74:1**

The way to maintain union in a community is to suffer each other's defects in a charitable spirit, to be disposed to condone each other's faults, as we wish them to condone our own. We necessarily accept this mutual forbearance when we decide to enter a community.

**Lionel Blue**

A newspaper rang up and asked me to recall my childhood memories of the religious festivals we celebrated at home. 'Yes,' I replied, 'I have some very strong memories. I remember especially the rows we used to have.' 'Oh,' said the voice at the other end, 'what were they about?'

Well our rows weren't about Jewish law or tradition or something dignified like that. A lot of them were about my alleged debauchery, which was pretty thick as I was only five at the time...

Such rows never could debauch me for I learned very early on that where there are two Jews there are three opinions. And the scriptures bear this out, for they tell the story of the rumpus between the prophets, the Almighty and the Children of Israel, which has never stopped.

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.



# Collaborating

Pr 31:10, 25-31

A perfect wife — who can find her?  
She is far beyond the price of pearls.

She is clothed in strength and dignity,  
she can laugh at the days to come.

When she opens her mouth, she does so wisely;  
on her tongue is kindly instruction.

She keeps good watch on the conduct of her household,  
no bread of idleness for her.

Her sons stand up and proclaim her blessed,  
her husband too, sings her praises:

'Many women have done admirable things,  
but you surpass them all!'

Charm is deceitful, and beauty empty;  
the woman who is wise is the one to praise.

Give her a share in what her hands have worked for,  
and let her works tell her praises at the city gates.

Med 99:2

You have been called by Jesus Christ to accomplish his ministry, to teach the poor. Are you as faithful to the divine call as St Paul was? Do you correspond as promptly with the inspirations of grace? Are you as zealous in the accomplishment of the duties of your state? Do you often say like St Paul, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me do?', and are you docile in accomplishing all God asks of you?

Jacques Lacourt

There are those who see the deity as a blind destiny which weighs down on human beings and which they cannot escape. No matter what, they say, the chips are down. Some draw a good number, others a bad one. There's nothing you can do about it. It's fate.

The Bible says precisely the opposite. Everyone is responsible for his or her own life. The creation is handed over to men and women to make it into a habitable world, a brotherly and sisterly world. People even have power to use their freedom badly.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Peacemaking



I Co 10:23-24

'For me there are no forbidden things', but not everything does good. True, there are no forbidden things, but it is not everything that helps the building to grow. Nobody should be looking for their own advantage, but everybody for the other person's.

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, that, as St Paul says, 'the peace of Christ, the very condition of your calling as members of a single body, may reign in your hearts,' you must endeavour, through his assistance, to surmount all that might be an obstacle thereto.

Dom Helder Camara

Come, Lord,  
do not smile and say  
you are already with us.  
Millions do not know you,  
and to us who do,  
what is the difference?  
What is the point of your presence  
if our lives do not alter?

Change our lives,  
shatter our complacency.  
Make your world our life's purpose.  
Take away the quietness  
of a clear conscience.  
Press us uncomfortably.  
For only thus  
is that other peace made,  
your peace.

*Change our lives,  
shatter our complacency.  
Make your world  
our life's purpose.*

Dom Helder Camera



**Acting in a Spirit of Zeal**

# Hungering for justice

Mi 6:8

What is good has been explained to you;  
this is what Yahweh asks of you:  
only this, to act justly,  
to love tenderly  
and to walk humbly with your God.

Let 15

If you yourself have no great enthusiasm for this work, which seems to be the case, then you will not succeed.

Bishops' Conference of England & Wales

147. Acting justly in the full meaning of this phrase, embraces walking humbly with God, and loving tenderly those around us. It is not only about recognising the equal dignity of human beings for what they are now, as fellow creatures, but also of seeing in them what God is calling them to be, as fellow-heirs of the kingdom of heaven. In the context of the Gospel message, justice is not something that can be established first and then mercy or compassion added afterwards. Rather, it is only the mercy of God that establishes justice and without mercy there can be no justice. This understanding of justice shapes how we judge the imperfect structures of justice, and how we seek to bring about justice, in ourselves and in our society.

148. A justice that is founded upon love will seek to be generous-hearted and to work especially for those who are in most need. At the same time, it will renounce any kind of injustice or discrimination. The Second Vatican Council stated clearly that 'any kind of social and cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design.' (*The Church in the Modern World, paragraph 29*)

149. A justice founded on humility will realise the need to learn from others in order to recognise different forms of injustice and will realise that the justice of the kingdom of God lies in the future, and can only be known in part in the present. Acting justly does not imply having a complete knowledge of the future, having a plan of the perfect society or having a scale against which we can weigh all things. It is only God who possesses such knowledge and human claims to possess this kind of perfect knowledge can lead quickly to injustice. Acting justly involves listening, recognising need, avoiding discrimination and working as creatively and as wisely as one can, but also recognising that fruits of justice can only be established by God, 'If the Lord does not build a house, in vain the masons toil.' (*Psalm 127:1*)



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

## Theme 8

# Respecting others, bringing those at the margins to the centre of our lives



An icon of the Founder, culturally reappropriated as an Arab. The Arab text translates as St John Baptist De La Salle. In taking seriously the thought at the heart of this section, to shift the centre of our lives towards service of the marginalized, our hearts and our work must turn towards the developing world which faces many of the same challenges as seventeenth century France where De La Salle was called to minister.

## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



# Opening to God's word

Ps 146:5-10

Happy those who have the God of Jacob to help them,  
whose hope is fixed on Yahweh their God,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
and the sea, and all that these hold!

Yahweh, forever faithful,  
gives justice to those denied it,  
gives food to the hungry,  
gives liberty to prisoners.

Yahweh restores sight to the blind,  
Yahweh straightens the bent,  
Yahweh protects the stranger,  
and keeps the orphan and widow.

Yahweh loves the virtuous,  
and frustrates the wicked.  
Yahweh reigns for ever,  
your God, Zion, from age to age.

Alfred Calcutt

During their novitiate, his Brothers were trained – through daily personal conversation with God around the Gospel, through guidance, through openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a growing sense of the real nature of their work – to develop Christ's own outlook on life.

Shelia Barrett

Make me a channel of your Word.  
May it live within me.  
Open my ears to hear your Word,  
focus my mind to listen to your Word  
and dwell on it within me,  
so that I may share your Word,  
communicate your Word,  
even be your Word to others  
wherever they are and in whichever situation.



## Acting in a Spirit of Faith

Respecting others, bringing those at the margins to the centre of our lives

# Allowing intimacy with God

1 Jn 4:7-12

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 his 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 he sent his Son  
to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away.  
My dear people,  
since God has loved us so much,  
we too should love one another.  
No one has ever seen God,  
but as long as we love one another  
God will live in us  
and his love will be complete in us.

Mel 3

It is necessary also to understand and to fix in our heads and in our attitudes how much our educational work is intimately connected with the bonds we create, with the relationships built up, with human understanding of those we come to help. It is only then that the purely educational work can begin. This is not easy. It is a fundamental attitude that needs to be communicated to anyone who is prepared to take the risk of doing this work.

Kim Gaines Eckert

Christ came to earth to form relationships with people. The Christian life beckons us to engage in a relationship with our Creator. David Benner argues, "Intimate relationships with others prepare us for intimacy with God." Likewise, intimacy with God prepares us for intimacy with other people. We can cultivate intimate relationships by getting to know ourselves and sharing that self in relationships. We can also grow in intimacy by inviting others to be genuine and authentic with us - appreciating, respecting and even celebrating their unique differences and gifts. Although pursuing whole and healthy intimate relationships is hard work and requires us to take risks and be vulnerable, it is worth it. And, thankfully, we have a Saviour who fills us and empowers us to love with his love. We are called to live life in relationships with others, and we honour God and reflect him well when we heed that call.



Respecting others, bringing those at the margins to the centre of our lives



# Trusting

Dt 15:4

Let there be no poor among you then. For Yahweh will bless you in the land that is given you for your inheritance.

Med 67:3

If you devote yourself to work in the harvest of souls, how can you fear that the one who employs you in this task as his co-workers will refuse you the food you need to do this work?

Dorothee Sölle

There is a sentence in the Bible which has become very important in the labour movement particularly. It runs: 'Everything is possible for the one who believes.' (Mk 9:23) When the LIP clock factory at Besançon was taken over by the workers, a young man climbed up the front of the building and wrote these old words on the factory: 'Tout est possible.' Whether the young man knew the ancient book from which the statement comes is unimportant. The important thing is that we learn it, and that this kind of language, which doesn't merely promise hope but actually creates it, does not perish.

I am a Christian if I believe that everything is possible. The blind learn how to see, old Nazis stop suppressing their past, technocrats listen to the powerless. The lame walk, the deaf hear, the poor hear the news of liberation. Perhaps at this point one must leave the individualist tone of the spiritual and go over from the 'I' to the 'we', from voluntarism into the experiences of history. I am a Christian because I believe that what was promised to everyone is possible.

*Everything is possible  
for the one who believes.*

Mark 9:23



James Kimpton, RTU



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Being a disciple

Rm 8:1-4

The reason why those who are in Christ Jesus are not condemned, is that the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. God has done what the Law, because of our unspiritual nature, was unable to do. God dealt with sin by sending God's own Son in a body as physical as any sinful body, and in that body God condemned sin. This was done in order that the Law's just demands might be satisfied in us, who behave not as our unspiritual nature but as the spirit dictates.

Med 170:2

You are obliged to know in order to teach. But rest assured that you will know the sacred scriptures better by meditating on them than by learning them by heart.

Carlo Carretto

God's call is mysterious; it comes in the darkness of faith. It is so fine, so subtle, that it is only with the deepest silence within us that we can hear it. And yet nothing is so decisive and overpowering for a person on this earth, nothing surer or stronger. This call is uninterrupted: God is always calling us! But there are distinctive moments in this call of his, moments which have a permanent mark on us – moments which we never forget.

Three times in my life I have been aware of this call.

The first one brought about my conversion when I was eighteen years old. I was a school-teacher in a country village. In Lent a mission came to the town. I attended it but what I remember most of all was how boring and outdated the sermons were. It certainly wasn't the words which shook my state of apathy and sin. But when I knelt before an old missionary – I remember how direct his look was and how simple – I was aware that God was moving in the silence of my soul.

From that day I knew I was a Christian, and was aware that a completely new life had been opened up for me.



# Receiving and responding

Jn 4:10-14

Jesus said, 'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you: Give me a drink, you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.' 'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?' Jesus replied, 'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside them, welling up to eternal life'.

Med 38:1

God has a greater wish to bestow favours upon you than you have to receive them. God's compassion for your miseries is greater than the anxiety you have to be delivered from them.

Teresa of Avila

Lord Jesus, you have no body on earth but ours, no hands but ours, no feet but ours. Our eyes are the eyes by which you look out with compassion on God's world; ours are the feet with which you go about doing good. Ours are the hands with which you give your blessing now.

*Lord Jesus,  
you have.... no feet  
but ours.*

Teresa of Avila



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Embracing uncertainty

Ep 3:20

Glory be to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; to whom be glory from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

Med 35:3

Do not complain any more when you experience trials whether interior or exterior. Rest assured, on the contrary, that the more you suffer, the easier it will be to give yourself entirely to God.

Sean Sellors

Having invited a small group of thirteen year old students to write their personal letters to God, this is what one of them wrote:

Dear God

Why is there suffering in the world? Why are there people going without? Why are you letting wars happen? Why is there death? Where are you? Do you love those who don't love you? Can you help people? What religion is the right one? Why did you let my dad die? Will I ever see him again? Is there a heaven? Why are there different races? It just causes conflict. Why are there problems? Is Jesus your Son? Will we ever see you? Do I deserve my family? What is my future? Did you make the universe? If so, why? Do you believe in us as a human race? What is our purpose on this earth? Why create diseases such as cancer? Are we on the right path? Why should we believe in you?

Such questions are not to be taken lightly. They may be expressions of a kind of uncertainty or even an abandonment that may move us to cry out, as Jesus did, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' However, looked at in another way, our questions, our uncertainties, our yearnings could be seen as an invitation to explore and deepen our relationship with Jesus. We could sit in an attitude of attentive stillness, take our questions to him and remain silently with open hearts and minds in his presence. Such 'Come and see' moments (see John 1:38-39) may not resolve our questions, but they can attune us more finely to the presence of Jesus within us and around us. We will then be able to draw from his presence nourishment and strength for the journey, as we travel with Jesus along his way towards his truth and his life.



# Risking

Mk 10:46-52

They reached Jericho; and as he left Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (that is, the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting at the side of the road. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout and to say, 'Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me'. And many of them 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 said, 'Call him here'. So they called the blind man. 'Courage,' they said 'get up; he is calling you'. So throwing off his cloak, he jumped up and went to Jesus. Then Jesus spoke, 'What do you want me to do for you?' 'Rabbuni,' the blind man said to him 'Master, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has saved you.' And immediately his sight returned and he followed him along the way.

De La Salle

Stir up your trust in the Lord's infinite goodness, and honour God by leaving in the divine hands the care of your person. Be not troubled about the present or disquieted about the future, but be concerned only about the moment you must now live. Do not let anticipation of tomorrow be a burden on the day that is passing. What you lack in the evening, the morrow will bring you, if you know how to hope in God. God will work miracles rather than let you suffer want. In addition to the words of Jesus Christ, I offer you as proof the universal experiences of the saints. Providence performs miracles daily, and they cease only for those who have no trust.

Rex Chapman

Your tomb, they say, is empty.  
Christ is risen, they say.  
You are risen indeed I reply.  
Lord, deepen my faith in the new man 'born in a grave'.  
Deepen my faith in myself to burst forth from the tomb within  
that is so carefully sealed and guarded.  
Deepen my faith, optimism, hope in life.  
Deepen our faith in each other, so that we, the church, so carefully sealed  
and guarded against the Spirit may burst open with new life.

*Deepen my faith  
in myself  
to burst forth  
from the tomb within*

Rex Chapman



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Recognising a shared spirit and a shared humanity



Jn 13:3-9

Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to God, and he got up from table, removed his outer garment and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand'. 'Never!' said Peter. 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus replied, 'If I do not wash you, you can have nothing in common with me.' 'Then, Lord,' said Simon Peter, 'not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!' Jesus said, 'No one who has taken a bath needs washing, he is clean all over. You too are clean, though not all of you are.'

Med 37:3

God looks on poor children with compassion and takes care of them as being their protector, their support and their father, and entrusts them to your care. This God of goodness places them in your hands and undertakes to give them everything you ask for them.

Elizabeth O'Connor

I was part of the volunteer staff of an overnight shelter for street women. It was a very cold night and the women began to arrive early in the evening. The rooms reserved for them were behind the sanctuary of the church and were used for other purposes during the day. Foam rubber mats were laid out over the entire area in one room. Many of the women chose a mat as soon as they arrived. Some had very little with them, though most of them had the bags that had given them the name of bag ladies. One carried her possessions in a child's wagon, and another, more affluent, had hers piled dangerously high in a supermarket cart. The conversation was disconnected, but the atmosphere was warm and peaceful. Each one was given a bowl of stew, bread and tea...

When morning came the peaceful atmosphere inside the shelter turned hostile. Distraught women - some of them old and sick - could not comprehend why they were once more being 'pushed out' into the streets. We who had received them so warmly the night before were the very ones hurrying them along, benefactors so soon to become enemies.

In the narrow hall where the women were having breakfast, an old woman with a gentle face knelt to pray. She was in the way of another woman who taunted her; 'Get up woman. God don't hear your prayer.' The praying woman did not respond and her taunter said again, 'God don't hear your prayer, woman. God don't hear your prayer.'

I asked myself, 'Does God hear her prayer?' Then I remembered. God is in me and where I am God is. The real question was, 'Did I hear her prayer?' What would it mean to hear her prayer?



# Living hopefully

Rm 5:6-11

We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful people. It is not easy to die even for a good person - though of course for someone really worthy, someone might be prepared to die - but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Having died to make us righteous, is it likely that he would now fail to save us from God's anger? When we were reconciled to God by the death of Christ, we were still enemies; now that we have been reconciled, surely we may count on being saved by the life of the Son? Not merely because we have been reconciled but because we are filled with joyful trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation.

Med 34:2

'... your hearts will be glad. The happiness of the servants of God, in fact, is in the heart which, in Our Lord's comparison, indicates the most vital organ in the human body, and therefore it is enduring and not easily changed, for it is grounded on that which sustains the life of grace in their soul, the love of God, through prayer and the sacraments.

Carlo Carretto

When I was a boy I looked for God by directing my gaze towards the light coming from on high.  
As a lad I looked for God in my brothers and sisters around me.  
When I grew up I sought God along desert tracks.  
Now I have come to the end of the road, I have only to close my eyes and there God is, within me.  
If I see light I see God in the light, and if I see darkness I feel God in the darkness. But always within me.  
I no longer even feel the need to search for God, or to kneel down to pray, or to think or speak to communicate with God.  
I only need to think of my human state – and there, in faith, I see God in the midst.  
You living in me and I living in you, I say with John. And John it is, the great Gospel mystic, who records yet another of Jesus' sayings, surely the most concise of all syntheses of contemplation and action, of heaven and earth, of doing and being: "Live on in my love"  
Live on... live on...(cf. Jn 15.9)



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Celebrating

**Mt 22:1-10**

Jesus began to speak to them in parables once again, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come. Next he sent some more servants. 'Tell those who have been invited,' he said, 'that I have my banquet all prepared, my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, everything is ready. Come to the wedding.' But they were not interested: one went off to his farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his servants, maltreated them and killed them. The king was furious. He despatched his troops, destroyed those murderers and burnt their town. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, go to the crossroads in the town and invite everyone you can find to the wedding.' So these servants went out on to the roads and collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

**Med 79:3**

How happy you should esteem yourself for having been called to this work in the Church, which St Francis Xavier made it his glory to perform. You should endeavour to share in the zeal he had for this noble task, and take the means he used to obtain so many conversions.

**John Powell**

In one sense most human searches are a success. We all seem to find whatever it is we are looking for. The object of our expectations seems to have been there all the time, waiting to be discovered by us. From childhood on, some of us seem to be braced for disappointment. Of course we then find disappointments in abundance. Life becomes a scenario of broken dreams and disillusion. Our heroes always seem to collapse and reveal feet of clay. What can go wrong, does go wrong. After wandering through all the trials of life, we find that the road is a dead end.

Others of us have been guided by a different compass. We seem to be moving along the high road. The scenery is beautiful, and the people along the way are very helpful. We seem to be surrounded by goodness and good fortune. There are a few dark days, here or there, but in the end everything seems to work out well. We know by personal experience what the Lord God meant when He looked upon His creation and beamed: 'It is very good!'



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

2 Co 8:13-15

This does not mean that to give relief to others you ought to make things difficult for yourselves: it is a question of balancing what happens to be your surplus now against their present need, and one day they may have something to spare that will supply your own need. That is how we strike a balance:

As scripture says: Those who gathered much had none too much, those who gathered little did not go short.

MTR 1:2

It is characteristic of God's providence and vigilance over human conduct to substitute for fathers and mothers persons who have enough knowledge and zeal to bring children to the knowledge of God and the mysteries of God. According to the grace of Jesus Christ that God has given to them, they are like good architects who give all possible care and attention to lay the foundation of religion and Christian piety in the hearts of these children, a great number of whom would otherwise be abandoned.

Anon.

A water vendor used to go to the river every morning, to fill his two jars, then went to the town and distributed water to his clients. One of the jars being cracked, would lose some water; the other being very new, would earn more money. The poor cracked one felt inferior. One morning it decided to speak to its master. "You know", it said, "I am half-empty when we arrive in town. Please pardon my weaknesses."

On the way to the river the next day, the master spoke to the cracked jar. 'Look at the road side. It is pretty. It is full of flowers. It is on account of you,' said the master.

'Every morning, it was you who watered the edge of the road. I bought an envelope of flower seeds and I sowed them along the road. And you, without knowing it, without willing it, you watered them every day.'

Never forget this: We ourselves are somehow fissured, but God knows how to make marvels with our weaknesses, if only we ask him.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Transforming



2 Co 9:6-9

Do not forget: thin sowing means thin reaping; the more you sow, the more you reap. Each one should give what they have decided in their own mind, not grudgingly or because they are made to, for God loves a cheerful giver. And there is no limit to the blessings which are sent to you by God who will make sure that you will always have all you need for yourselves in every possible circumstance, and still have something to spare for all sorts of good works. As scripture says, God was free in almsgiving, and gave to the poor: his good deeds will never be forgotten.

MTR 4:3

This must be your goal when you instruct your disciples, that they live a Christian life and that your words become spirit and life for them. Your words will accomplish this, first, because they will be produced by the Spirit of God living in you, and second, because they will procure for your disciples the Christian spirit. In possessing this spirit, which is the very Spirit of Jesus Christ, they will live that true life which is so valuable to us because it leads surely to eternal life.

Deborah Sawyer

His earthly ministry complete, the Ascension removes Jesus from the frame, and the events of Pentecost ignite the age of the Church. The period after Jesus' ministry is not to be a waiting time but a doing time. "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven?" (Acts 1:11). This scene in that room in Jerusalem with those men and women from Galilee, lost and awkward after the traumatic events of the Passion, is transformed by the drama of Pentecost.

The characters change from followers into leaders, forging the foundations of the Early Church. In Judaism, the Festival of Weeks became the time to celebrate the giving of the Torah: the gift that transforms the Jewish people into the people of God. The tongues of fire described in Acts echo the spectacular and violent scene when God descends on Sinai, amidst fire and smoke, thunder and lightning (Exodus 19:16-19), to give the Torah to Moses. The gift of the Spirit for those who follow Jesus identifies them as the people of God; it empowers and transforms them.



# Building community

Ac 4:33-35

The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed for their own use anything that they had, as everything they owned was held in common. The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and they were all given great respect. None of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or houses would sell them, and bring the money from them, to present it to the apostles; it was then distributed to any members who might be in need.

Med 65.1

A community where charity and unity are lacking is a kind of hell. Nothing but complaints, murmuring and backbiting is to be heard, causing trouble and disquietude. The only remedy to such disorders is union and charity.

Loa Tzu

Go with the people,  
Live with them,  
Learn from them,  
Love them.  
Start with what they know and build with what they have.  
But of all the best leaders, when the job is done  
The task accomplished, the people will say  
'We have done this ourselves.'

Nick Green

Having completed a tenth Lasallian Developing World project it is still true to say that not only has each one been unique but I learn and become aware of more and more things every time. I learn about the ways of life of those in a different environment and culture. I learn about how those in our host country regard us from the western world. I see and hear things which make me view life from a different perspective. I learn more about my place in the world in relation to others at home and in the developing world, and in relation to the world as a complete creation – quite magnificent and, paradoxically, very humbling.

*Go with the people,  
Live with them,  
Learn from them,  
Love them.*

Loa Tzu



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Living our commitment



Rm 15:1-7

We who are strong have a duty to bear with the failings of the weak, without thinking of ourselves. Each of us should think of his neighbours and help them become stronger Christians. Christ did not think of himself: the words of scripture - *the insults of those who insult you fell on me* - apply to him. And indeed everything that was written in long ago in the scriptures was meant to teach us something about hope from the examples scripture gives of how people who did not give up were helped by God. And may he who helps us when we refuse to give up, help you all to be tolerant with each other, following the example of Christ Jesus, so that united in mind and voice you may give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It can only be to God's glory, then, for you to treat each other in the same friendly way as Christ treated you.

Álvaro

I am convinced that God in his infinite wisdom and love will continue to offer children and young people the means of salvation and life in abundance. That is why it seems to me that the fundamental question that we should ask ourselves is, 'will it happen with us or without us'? With all my heart, and I am sure that you also hope the same, I want this to happen with us. There is no doubt that we all want the Lasallian charism and mission to continue in the world for the educational service of children and young people, starting with the poor.

Pope Francis

Wherever we live let us let this light of the gospel shine! We are taught to see the face of Jesus reflected in the other, to overcome indifference and individualism, which corrode Christian communities and corrode our heart, and we are taught to welcome all without prejudice, without discrimination, without reticence, with sincere love, giving them the best of ourselves, and above all, sharing with them what is most precious to us, which is not our works or our organisations, No! Our most precious possession is Christ and his Gospel.

*We are taught to see the face of Jesus reflected in the other.*

Pope Francis



**Acting in a Spirit of Zeal**

# Being a communion of saints

Lk 4:18-21

'The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. I have been sent to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.' He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen'.

MTR 3.2

In order for you to fulfil this duty with as much perfection and exactness as God requires of you, frequently give yourselves to the Spirit of our Lord to act in your work only under his influence, so that your own spirit may have no part in it. The Holy Spirit then, will come upon them generously, so that they will be able to possess fully the Christian spirit.

John Jackson

A newspaper photographer was sent to Ecuador in 1987 to cover the earthquake that devastated much of the country. In the midst of such catastrophic suffering, he witnessed a simple scene. He wrote:

The line was long but moving briskly and in that line, at the very end, stood a young girl, about twelve years of age. She waited patiently as those at the front of that long line received a little rice, some canned goods or a little fruit.

Slowly but surely she was getting closer to the front of that line, closer to the food. From time to time she would glance across the street. She did not notice the growing concern on the faces of those distributing the food. The food was running out. Their anxiety began to show, but she did not notice. Her attention seemed always to focus on three figures under the trees across the street.

At long last she stepped forward to get her food. But the only thing left was a lonely banana. The workers were almost ashamed to tell her that was all that was left. She did not seem to mind to get that solitary banana. Quietly, she took the precious fruit and ran across the street where three small children waited – perhaps her sisters and a brother.

Very deliberately she peeled the banana and very carefully divided the banana into three equal parts. Placing the precious food into the eager hands of those three younger ones - one for you, one for you, one for you – she then sat down and licked the inside of that banana peel. In that moment, I swear, I saw the face of God.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Witnessing



Is 1:16-18

Your hands are covered with blood,  
wash, make yourselves clean.

Take your wrongdoing out of my sight.  
Cease to do evil.  
Learn to do good,  
search for justice,  
help the oppressed,  
be just to the orphan,  
plead for the widow.

'Come now, let us talk this over,' says Yahweh.  
'Though your sins are like scarlet,  
they shall be as white as snow;  
though they are red as crimson,  
they shall be like wool.'

Álvaro

One important and indispensable criterion in our continuing formation should be the educational service of the poor, as stated in the Rule: 'Following the example of their Founder, Lasallians, as persons and in community, look upon their intellectual and spiritual development in terms of a progressive conversion to the poor.'

Jean Vanier

Jesus, poor and humble, stripped off his clothes and washing his friends' feet, shows that the poor and the weak can become a source of unity. Good leaders, if they are attentive to each person, can be instruments of unity by creating good and just laws and regulations. They call forth other people's understanding and goodwill. The poor, the weak and the suffering creates unity by awakening people's hearts. Weakness and littleness can attract hearts, just as a baby can be a source of unity for that family. Where there are natural catastrophes, people of different classes, backgrounds and religions often join together to help those in distress, and solidarity is born. Hearts are sensitive to suffering and frequently respond with generosity.

*Learn to do good,  
search for justice,  
help the oppressed,  
be just to the orphan,*

Isaiah



# Serving as mission

1 Th 5:14-23

And this is what we ask you to do, friends: warn the idlers, give courage to those who are apprehensive, care for the weak and be patient with everyone. Make sure that people do not try to take revenge; you must all think of what is best for each other and for the community. Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus. Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything - hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

Med 199.1 & 189.1

You must look upon this work, entrusted to you as one of the most important and most necessary services in the Church.

Every day you are with the poor and you are commissioned by God to clothe them with Jesus Christ himself and with his Spirit. Have you been careful, before undertaking such a holy ministry, to clothe yourselves with him in order to communicate this grace to them?

A Muslim Tale

Once, a poor, unkempt man appeared at the gate of a king's palace. He was in rags and not at all suitably dressed to be admitted into the monarch's presence. So the guards stopped him.

'You cannot enter the palace in rags,' they said.

The man insisted. He began to quarrel with the guards, raising his voice so loud that the king heard it. He sent for the man.

When he appeared before the king, the noblemen around raised their eyebrows. What was this pauper doing here?

'What is your problem?' the king enquired.

'Oh, I have many problems. But the immediate one is that your guards refused me entry to the palace. Am I not your subject?'

'Yes, you are... indeed, you are. But you must dress properly and suitably,' the king said. The poor man looked up and said, 'O king, it is not wrong to enter a palace in rags and empty-handed. But to come out of a palace empty-handed and in rags is indeed a disgrace.'



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Accompanying

Jn 3:18-24

My children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active; only by this can we be certain that we are children of the truth and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence, whatever accusations it may raise against us, because God is greater than our conscience and knows everything.

My dear people, if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask God, we shall receive, because we keep the commandments and live the kind of life that God wants.

The commandments are these:

that we believe in the name of the Son Jesus Christ  
and that we love one another as we have been told.

Whoever keeps these commandments lives in God and God lives in them.

We know that God lives in us by the Spirit that has been given us.

Álvaro Ezcheverría

Like Jesus we too have been anointed by the force of the Spirit who forces us to go out of ourselves and our interests in order to surrender ourselves with others in an attitude of service and accompaniment as servants and ambassadors. As our Founder said,

*Oh, how fortunate you ought to consider yourselves, to be working in the field of the Lord, since Our Lord says that the reaper will infallibly receive his reward (John 4:36).*

*For the future, then, devote yourself with zeal and affection to your work, since it will be one of the most helpful ways to assure your salvation (Med 207.1).*

Pamela Nash

Going out on a Lasallian Developing World Project to Kenya was a remarkable experience and it left quite an impression on me. I saw young children living on the street who have nothing. They are living rough and 'high' on glue all the time. You would see a child with a bottle of glue up his or her sleeve all the time, and that is how they live.

The secondary school I was staying at in Nyeri, near Nairobi, has a street children programme. They stay there permanently and school pays for half of their education. While there, I was involved in helping build an extension on to the staff housing and assisting with repairs at a nearby primary school. It was a great experience and a privilege to be able to help people with such obvious needs.

We also visited the shanty homes of some of the local people who were working with us on the project. On occasions, we would go home with them for dinner and it was only then that you realised that what they were living in was basically sheds. It was quite sobering to discover that there are a lot of people in the world who are worse off than me, and I hope that working on the project will help me to become less selfish in my outlook.



# Being good shepherds

Jm 2:1-9

My friends, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people. Now suppose someone comes into your synagogue, beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor person comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed person, and say, 'Come this way to the best seats'; then you tell the poor person, 'Stand over there' or 'You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest'. Can't you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned yourselves into judges, and corrupt judges at that?

Listen, my dear friends: it was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him. In spite of this, you have no respect for anybody who is poor. Isn't it always the rich who are against you? Isn't it always their doing when you are dragged before the court? Aren't they the ones who insult the honourable name to which you have been dedicated? Well, the right thing to do is to keep the supreme law of scripture: you must love your neighbour as yourself; but as soon as you make distinctions between classes of people, you are committing sin, and under condemnation for breaking the Law.

Nicholas Hutchinson

Am I prepared (as expressed by Jean Vanier) to be wounded when one of the flock is wounded, to be in anguish when one of them is in anguish? Do I call them forth to experience real love - or do they therefore turn to other pastures which do not nourish? Are others able to learn from me as a shepherd how to communicate to God? If there is no real pasture, people will die of depression, of starvation, of thirst.

John Baptist De La Salle goes on to ask:

Do you build on the affection  
the young people have for you  
to lead them to God?

Mel 5

[Working as a shift supervisor on the Kids Help Line in Australia] I no longer have direct contact with the young people who call, and sometimes I miss that laughing with them sharing their delight in some wonderful happenings in their lives sitting quietly while they cry or providing a safe outlet for their anger. I'm still there for them though - now it's supporting Counsellors, and often it's during a crisis when they need us to act quickly when they need emergency assistance. I hear their voices when they've lost all hope or when they're very frightened and I listen while Counsellors support them with their calm, measured responses and I know that the kids of this country are being well served - by all of us here on every level.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Honouring

Mt 26:6-13

Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, when a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of the most expensive ointment, and poured it on his head as he was at table. When they saw this, the disciples were indignant. 'Why this waste?' they said. 'This could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.' Jesus noticed this. 'Why are you upsetting the woman?' he said to them. 'What she has done for me is one of the good works indeed! You have the poor with you always, but you will not always have me. When she poured this ointment on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. I tell you solemnly, wherever in all the world this Good News is proclaimed, what she has done will be told also, in remembrance of her.'

Rule 1.1

Every Christian wishing to act according to the laws of the Gospel should show honour and respect to all others, considering them as children of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.

Lucien Deiss

For all the children everywhere in the world  
that they might find, like the child Jesus,  
the love of a father or a mother to welcome them, let us pray.

For children who suffer from the wickedness of others  
who are hurt by their hatred or killed in their wars  
that they may find peace and joy, close to God our Father, let us pray.

For the children who are neither wanted nor loved,  
that they may know that God their father  
loves them as no one on earth can love them, let us pray.

For children who are orphans,  
that they may discover in a family which adopts them,  
the love of their father in heaven, let us pray.

For children who are born infirm,  
with a deformed body or a deficient mind,  
that they may find the beauty of the heart  
close to God, the source of all splendour, let us pray.

God our Father,  
source of all fatherhood in heaven and on earth,  
we pray to you:  
let your love watch over all the children of the world,  
let it help them in grace and wisdom.



Respecting others, bringing those at the margins to the centre of our lives



# Seeking wholeness

Pr 14:21

Those who look down on their neighbour sin; blessed are those who take pity on the poor.

Med 196.3

Keep the goals of your work as completely pure as those of Jesus Christ himself; by this means you will draw upon yourselves and all your labours his blessing and grace.

Julian of Norwich

Whether we are moved to know God or our soul, either motion is good and true. God is closer to us than our own soul, for he is the foundation on which our soul stands and he is the means which keeps the substance and the sensuality together, so that they will never separate. For our soul sits in God in true rest, and our soul stands in God in sure strength, and our soul is naturally rooted in God in endless love. And therefore if we want to have knowledge of our soul and communion and discourse with it, we must seek in our Lord God in whom it is enclosed.

*God is closer to us  
than our own soul*

Julian of Norwich



**Acting in a Spirit of Zeal**

# Reconciling

Is 32:15-20

Once more there will be poured on us the spirit from above; then shall the wilderness be fertile land and fertile land become forest. In the wilderness justice will come to live and integrity in the fertile land; integrity will bring peace, justice give lasting security. My people will live in a peaceful home, in safe houses, in quiet dwellings — the forest shall be beaten down and the city laid low. Happy will you be, sowing by every stream, letting ox and donkey roam free.

Let 105

Each day look for every possible opportunity of doing kindness for those for whom you feel dislike.

Daniel J O'Leary

Although the pursuit of self-esteem requires a self-awareness and self-acceptance that comes from silence and discipline, it is still one of the most exciting journeys of all. It demands commitment and patience, trust and letting go, and it costs 'not less than everything', as T.S. Eliot puts it with reference to attaining that 'condition of simplicity' which is the 'work of the saints'. It is in our handling of the difficulties — the surprise conflicts, the frequent disappointments, the moments of doubt — that same kind of evaluation can be made. Progress will usually be slow, but once we sense that we are going with the current, that we are tapped into, and supported by, the divine energy that drives all creation to its goal, we are not depressed any more by failure and severe challenges. There is an awesome power to be harnessed when such synergism is focused in the interests of self-esteem.

*Each day  
look for every possible  
opportunity of doing kindness  
for those for whom you feel dislike.*

De La Salle



# Collaborating

I P 2:4-6

He is the living stone, rejected by people but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourself close to him so that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God, may be living stones making a spiritual house. As scripture says: See how I lay in Zion a precious cornerstone that I have chosen and the man who rests his trust on it will not be disappointed.

Álavaro

Lasallians, I am convinced that our commitment to the educational service of the poor is our particular way of building the Kingdom and of accomplishing the work that God has entrusted to us, based on our poverty, clearly aware of our limitations, like workers and prophets of a better world. Christians today sense that the very future of faith depends on our closeness to, or our separation from, the poor. My question is: *'Might not the future of our Institute depend on that as well?'*

Ambrose Walsh

Called and sent, we live our following of Christ in the power of his spirit outpoured, his presence in our lives, the object of our faith. No less the object of the profoundest faith is the presence of the Spirit in our being sent. Unless we take this to heart and ponder it deeply, we shall spend a long time trying to do in our own power what we cannot do. We can, and must bring our natural gifts and acquired skills to our service of Christ and his Church but it is another thing altogether, to remember that we must submit them to the Spirit's anointing and leadership. It is a wonderful thing indeed, to integrate all our natural talents into our Christian calling but even more wonderful to be open to those supernatural gifts which the Spirit alone can give for the building up of the Church.

*He is the living stone, rejected by people but chosen by God*

I Peter 2:4



**Acting in a Spirit of Zeal**

Respecting others, bringing those at the margins to the centre of our lives

# Peacemaking

Is 52:7

How beautiful on the mountains,  
are the feet of one who brings good news,  
who heralds peace, brings happiness,  
and tells Zion,  
'Your God is king!

Álvaro Ezcheverría

Our Founder asked us to always start from reality as the place where we can find God's call in our regard and to collaborate in his plan of salvation. Today, unfortunately, the reality we are presented with regarding children and peace is tragic and it is a call for solidarity and commitment.

As an Institute we came into being for children and their defence and we need to have that posture deeply rooted in our hearts and the heart of all those who share the Lasallian mission. Education gives us many possibilities to do this. It is not just about combating everything that is opposed to the rights of children and adolescents but it also deals with preventing any form of violence, recalling that children and young people today in our classrooms will be the men and women of tomorrow who, with their convictions and attitudes, will be able to change any kind of practice that is seen to be to the detriment of children.

CAFOD

**Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.** In the world which you entrusted to us, I think of those who are poor; the hungry, the homeless, and refugees, the victims of conflict and violence. I raise them all to you Lord, and ask for your help and power to work for their release from poverty and suffering.

**Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.** Your peace, Lord — so often, I'm thinking of my peace. I want to be left alone, I don't want to have to think about everyone else's problems; after all I've enough of my own. Make me an instrument of your peace. Here, now, where I am in my own life and in the lives of those I touch and influence. Help me to build the kind of relationships that make for peace.

**Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.** In this community and this country of mine, help me to understand what life is like for those in more difficult situations. I pray, Lord, for all who work for reconciliation, for fellowship and for justice, which is the only foundation for peace. Help me. Lord, to be one of them.

Lord,  
make me an instrument  
of your peace.

Francis of Assisi



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



Respecting others, bringing those at the margins to the centre of our lives



# Hungering for justice

Lk 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord  
and my spirit exults in God my saviour,  
who has looked upon me, a lowly handmaid.  
Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed,  
for the great things have been done for me by the Almighty whose name is holy,  
and whose mercy reaches from age to age for those who hold God in awe.  
God has shown a powerful arm,  
has routed the proud of heart.  
Princes have been pulled down from their thrones and the lowly exalted.  
The hungry have been filled with good things, the rich sent empty away.  
God has come to the help of his servant Israel, mindful of his mercy  
— according to the promise made to our ancestors—  
of mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.

Bulletin 249

The tradition inaugurated by St. La Salle established service to the poor as a constituent element of the Lasallian charism. The Lasallian concern for justice responds to the most basic of Catholic Christian beliefs and principles: a radical, unconditional respect for the dignity of every person, from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. It was that same radical respect that led St. John Baptist de La Salle to sell his property to feed the hungry and to make the education of the poor not only a priority, but a life's work, a ministry.

As this definition of justice suggests, and as Catholic Social Teaching maintains, an active respect for human dignity demands not only short term solutions to human needs - food, water, clothing, shelter for today, i.e. works of mercy. It also requires that in prophetic fashion the hard questions be asked, and long term solutions be sought. Why are people hungry, naked, homeless, poor, jobless or under-paid, or marginalized? Our response to the gospel proclamation that each and every human life is sacred most certainly requires that we who follow Jesus Christ engage in works of mercy.

James Kimpton

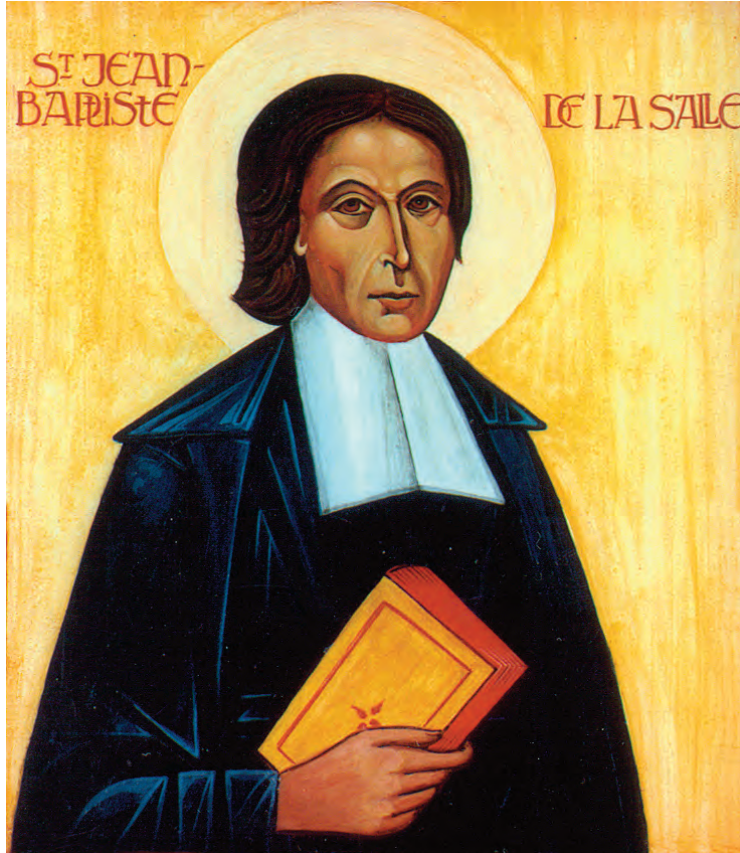
Today I have had to bury Swathi. I have had to bury many small children who came to us too late and too ill to save. But Swathi was special. Both her parents died of AIDS, this dreadful disease which makes me very angry. Then Swathi was found to be HIV+ and was then consistently rejected by relatives, institutions and hospitals until she reached us from 500 miles away and was taken in and much loved by everyone here. At the end she suffered a lot and her going away was a merciful release. But what a waste! And I think of the other lovely children we care for who also have this incurable disease. They seem, and are, all so special.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

## Theme 9

# Loving the vulnerable self





# Opening to God's word

**Ps 19:105-109**

Your word is a lamp for my feet,  
a light on my path.  
I have sworn — and maintain it —  
to keep your upright judgements.  
I am utterly wretched Yahweh;  
true to your promise, give me life.  
Accept, Yahweh, the tribute from my mouth,  
and teach me your judgements.  
My life is in your hands perpetually,  
I do not forget your Law

**Med 192**

Read the Holy Scriptures frequently, and may this reading fill you with God's divine Spirit.

**Roly Bain**

The God of whom we speak is the God of vulnerable love, the crucified one who is yet risen from the dead. It's very easy to keep Christ hanging on His cross, where we can see Him, and live terribly martyred and long-faced lives; but that doesn't allow for resurrection nor for Him suddenly popping up when you least expect Him. The Church is much better at observing Good Friday than celebrating Easter. For me, God is the God of tears, who laughs with us as well as cries with us, sharing our sorrows as well as our joys; and He also laughs for us when we don't feel able, and weeps for us when we have no tears left. He's the God I can shout at and share a joke with, whom I stand in awe of and am embraced by, who demands nothing and everything from me.

*Your word  
is a lamp for my feet,  
a light on my path.*

Psalm 19



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Allowing intimacy with God



Is 41:8-10

You, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham my friend. You whom I brought from the confines of the earth and called from the ends of the world; you to whom I said, 'You are my servant, I have chosen you, not rejected you', do not be afraid, for I am with you; stop being anxious and watchful, for I am your God. I give you strength, I bring you help, I uphold you with my victorious right hand.

Method

Wherever I go I will find you, my God;  
there is no place  
that is not honoured by your presence.

J Chrysostom - ETTY HILLESUM

Just as what brings heat makes things expand, so it is the gift of love to stretch hearts wide open; it is a warm and glowing virtue... for he who is loved wanders in the inmost heart of the lover without any fear.

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One ought to be able to live without books, without anything. There will always be a small patch of sky above, and there will always be enough space to fold two hands in prayer.

For once you have begun to walk with God, you need only keep on walking with him and all of life becomes one long stroll - such a marvellous feeling.



# Trusting

I K 3:16-28

Then two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. 'If it please you, my lord,' one of the women said 'this woman and I live in the same house, and while she was in the house I gave birth to a child. Now it happened on the third day after my delivery that this woman also gave birth to a child. We were alone together; there was no one else in the house with us; just the two of us in the house. Now one night this woman's son died; she overlaid him. And in the middle of the night she got up and took my son from beside me while your servant was asleep; she put him to her breast and put her own dead son to mine. ....!'

'Bring me a sword' said the king; and a sword was brought into the king's presence. 'Cut the living child in two,' the king said 'and give half to one, half to the other.' At this the woman who was the mother of the living child addressed the king, for she burned with pity for her son. 'If it please you, my lord,' she said 'let them give her the child; only do not let them think of killing it!' But the other said, 'He shall belong to neither of us. Cut him up.' Then the king gave his decision. 'Give the child to the first woman,' he said 'and do not kill him. She is his mother.'

All Israel came to hear of the judgement the king had pronounced, and held the king in awe, recognising that he possessed divine wisdom for dispensing justice.

Med 96:1

Are we attentive to the inspiration we receive from God, and as prompt in following them as the magi were in allowing themselves to be guided by the star? The happiness and even the very salvation of our soul often depends on our prompt acquiescence to the call of grace.

Motele

From tomorrow on, I shall be sad –  
From tomorrow on!  
Today I will be glad.  
What is the use of sadness – tell me that? –  
Because these evil winds begin to blow?  
Why should I grieve for tomorrow – today?  
Tomorrow may be so good, so sunny,  
Tomorrow the sun may shine again;  
We shall no longer need to be sad.  
From tomorrow on, I shall be sad –  
From tomorrow on!  
Not today; no! today, I will be glad.  
And every day, no matter how bitter it be,  
I will say:  
From tomorrow on, I shall be sad,  
Not today.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Being a disciple



Lk 18:-23

A member of one of the leading families put this question to him, 'Good Master, what have I to do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: *You must not commit adultery; You must not kill; You must not steal; You must not bring false witness; Honour your father and mother.*' He replied, 'I have kept all these from my earliest days till now'. And when Jesus heard this he said, 'There is still one thing you lack. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But when he heard this he was filled with sadness, for he was very rich.

Med 170.1

If you wish to be filled with God's Holy Spirit, and fully competent in your employment, let your chief study be the holy scriptures, and especially the New Testament, that it may be the guiding rule of your life, and of those whom you have to instruct.

Thérèse of Lisieux

I was still being tormented by this question of unfulfilled longings and it was a distraction in my prayer, when I decided to consult St Paul's letters in the hope of getting an answer. It was the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the First Letter to the Corinthians that claimed my attention. The first of these told me that we can't all of us be apostles, all of us be prophets, all of us doctors, and so on; the Church is composed of members which differ in their use; the eye is one thing and the hand is another. It was a clear enough answer, but it didn't satisfy my aspirations or bring me peace. .... I went on reading and at the end of the chapter I met this comforting phrase: '*Be ambitious for the higher gifts. And I am going to show you a way that is better than any of them.*' (1 Cor 12:31)

What was it? The Apostle goes on to explain that all the gifts of heaven, even the most perfect of them, without love, are absolutely nothing; charity is the best way of all, because it leads straight to God. Now I was at peace; when St Paul was talking about the different members of the mystical body I couldn't recognize myself in any of them; or rather I could recognize myself in all of them. But charity - that was the key to my vocation. If the Church was a body composed of different members, it couldn't lack the noblest of all; it must have a heart, and a heart burning with love. And I realized that this love was the true motive force which enabled the other members of the Church to act; if it ceased to function the Apostles would forget to preach the gospel, the Martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. Love, in fact, is the vocation which includes all others; it's a universe of its own, comprising all time and space - it's eternal. Beside myself with joy, I cried out; 'Jesus, my Love! I've found my vocation, and my vocation is love.'



# Receiving and responding

**Ezk 37:1-10**

The hand of Yahweh was laid on me, and I was carried away by the spirit of Yahweh and set down in the middle of a valley, a valley full of bones. I was made to walk up and down among them. There were vast quantities of these bones on the ground the whole length of the valley; and they were quite dried up.

Yahweh said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?'

I said, 'You know, Lord Yahweh.'

Yahweh said, 'Prophesy over these bones. Say, "Dry bones, hear the word of Yahweh. The Lord Yahweh says this to these bones: I am now going to make the breath enter you, and you will live. I shall put sinews on you, I shall make flesh grow on you, I shall cover you with skin and give you breath, and you will live; and you will learn that I am Yahweh."'

I prophesied as I had been ordered. While I was prophesying, there was a noise, a sound of clattering; and the bones joined together. I looked, and saw that they were covered with sinews; flesh was growing on them and skin was covering them, but there was no breath in them.

Yahweh said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man. Say to the breath, "The Lord Yahweh says this: Come from the four winds, breath; breathe on these dead; let them live!"'

I prophesied as I had been ordered, and the breath entered them; they came to life again and stood up on their feet, a great, an immense army.

**Med 44.1**

Do you avail yourself of the light of faith to discern the things of this world, in order to distinguish the true from the false; the genuine from that which only appears such? If you wish to act as a disciple of Christ, and as one enlightened by the Spirit of God, this should be your only guiding light.

**Anon.**

Take time to think..  
It is the source of power.  
Take time to play...  
It is the secret of perpetual youth.  
Take time to laugh...  
It is the music of the soul.  
Take time to pray...  
It is the greatest power on earth.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Embracing uncertainty



Dt 32:10-14

In the waste lands God adopts him, in the howling desert of the wilderness. Yahweh protects him, rears him, guards him as the pupil of his eye. Like an eagle watching its nest, hovering over its young, spreading out its wings to hold him, supporting him on pinions. 'Yahweh alone is his guide, with him is no alien god. Yahweh gives him the heights of the land to ride, feeds him on the yield of the mountains, gives him honey from the rock to taste, and oil from the flinty crag; curds from the cattle, milk from the flock, with rich food of the pastures, rams of Bashan's breed, and goats, rich food of the wheat's ear, and blood of the fermenting grape for drink.

Let 101

Do not have any anxiety about the future. Leave everything in God's hands for he will take care of you.

Dennis Linn et al

During the bombing raids of World War II, thousands of children were orphaned and left to starve. The fortunate ones were rescued and placed in refugee camps where they received food and good care. But many of these children who had lost so much could not sleep at night. They feared waking up to find themselves once again homeless and without food. Nothing seemed to reassure them. Finally, someone hit upon the idea of giving each child a piece of bread to hold at bedtime. Holding their bread, these children could finally sleep in peace. All through the night the bread reminded them, "Today I ate and I will eat again tomorrow."

*Do not have any anxiety about the future.*

De La Salle





# Risking

Jn 12:23-28

Jesus replied to them:

'Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

I tell you, most solemnly,

unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies,

it remains only a single grain;

but if it dies,

it yields a rich harvest.

Anyone who loves their life loses it;

anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for the eternal life.

If anyone serves me, they must follow me,

wherever I am, my servant will be there too.

If anyone serves me, my Father will honour them.

Now my soul is troubled.

What shall I say:

Father, save me from this hour?

But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour.

Father, glorify your name!'

A voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.'

Let 14

Do you fear putting yourself entirely in the hands of Providence?

Michael Curran

The vulnerable self is that person we try to hide from others, from God and even from ourselves. We hide behind many walls, walls created by such things as our fears, resentments, self-pity, arrogance and our need for control. These walls, built over a life-time, are our protection; protection from being hurt, rejected and ignored; protection from revealing who we really are, for so often we see only our flaws and not our gifts, and it is our flaws that we wish to hide.

Unfortunately these walls not only avert harm, but also love. Unless we take the risk of lowering our barriers, we will never experience fully the caring and compassionate love that God, and others, have for us. To begin the process of lowering our barriers we need to name them and we can do this in the context of prayer by asking God to reveal them to us; many of which we already know, but may not wish to acknowledge. Once we have named our protective walls, we can then ask God to help us to lower them, and eventually remove them, so that we may become fully open to him and to his saving love.



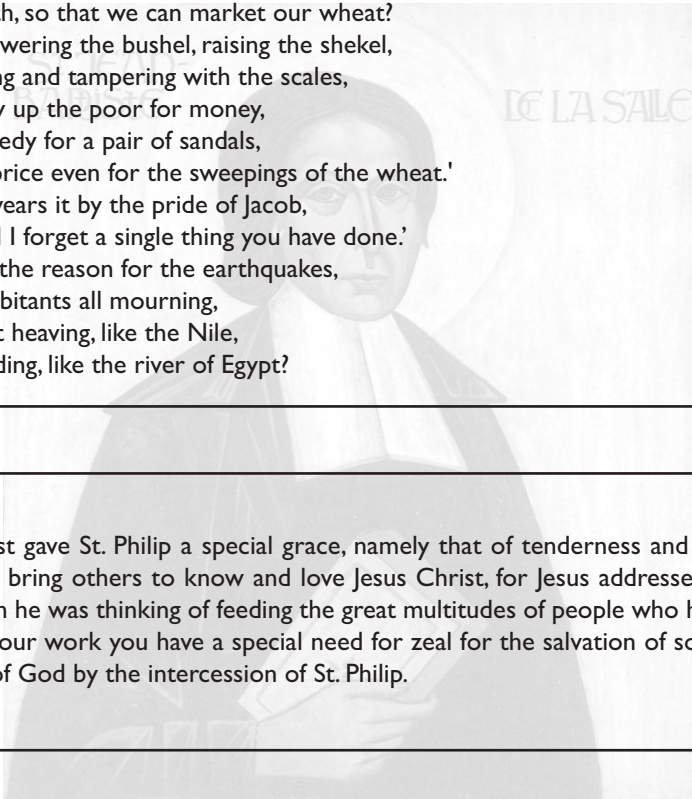
## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Recognising a shared spirit and a shared humanity



Am 8:4-8

Listen to this, you who trample on the needy  
and try to suppress the poor people of the country,  
you who say, 'When will New Moon be over  
so that we can sell our corn,  
and Sabbath, so that we can market our wheat?  
Then by lowering the bushel, raising the shekel,  
by swindling and tampering with the scales,  
we can buy up the poor for money,  
and the needy for a pair of sandals,  
and get a price even for the sweepings of the wheat.'  
Yahweh swears it by the pride of Jacob,  
'Never will I forget a single thing you have done.'  
Is this not the reason for the earthquakes,  
for its inhabitants all mourning,  
and all of it heaving, like the Nile,  
then subsiding, like the river of Egypt?



Med 119.3

Jesus Christ gave St. Philip a special grace, namely that of tenderness and an engaging manner to bring others to know and love Jesus Christ, for Jesus addressed himself to Philip when he was thinking of feeding the great multitudes of people who had followed him... In your work you have a special need for zeal for the salvation of souls. Ask this earnestly of God by the intercession of St. Philip.

John Donne

No man is an island,  
Entire of itself.  
Each is a piece of the continent,  
A part of the main.  
If a clod be washed away by the sea,  
Europe is the less.  
As well as if a promontory were.  
As well as if a manor of thine own  
Or of thine friend's were.  
Each man's death diminishes me,  
For I am involved in mankind.  
Therefore, send not to know  
For whom the bell tolls,  
It tolls for thee.



# Living hopefully

Ps 138

I thank you, Yahweh, with all my heart,  
because you have heard what I said.  
In the presence of the angels I play for you,  
and bow down towards your holy Temple.

I give thanks to your name for your love and faithfulness;  
your promise is even greater than your fame.  
The day I called for help, you heard me  
and you increased my strength.

Yahweh, all kings on earth give thanks to you,  
for they have heard your promises;  
they celebrate Yahweh's actions,  
'Great is the glory of Yahweh!'  
From far above, Yahweh sees the humble,  
And from far away marks down the arrogant.

Though I live surrounded by trouble,  
you keep me alive to my enemies' fury!  
You stretch your hand out and save me,  
your right hand will do everything for me. Yahweh,  
your love is everlasting,  
do not abandon us whom you have made.

Med 34:1

In today's gospel our Lord says that the servants of God will 'weep and lament while the world rejoices', but that their distress 'shall be turned into joy'... The happiness which follows their distress will last forever.

Charles de Foucauld

Father,  
I abandon myself into your hands.  
Do with me what you will.  
Whatever you may do, I thank you:  
I am ready for all, I accept all.  
Let only your will be done in me  
And in all your creatures –  
I wish no more than this, O Lord.  
Into your hands I commend my soul;  
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,  
For I love you, Lord,  
And so need to give myself,  
To surrender myself into your hands,  
Without reserve,  
And with boundless confidence,  
For you are my Father.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Lk 15:20-24

'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

Med 43.8

Thus, when we receive the body of Christ, we participate in our saviour's life and have a pledge of eternal life. We are even assured of living for ever if we preserve the spirit of Christ, which is what he leaves with us.

Bob Barrett

When you see, 'A celebration of the life of ...' on a funeral order of service, you may wonder what is meant by this. Surely it is not just a comforting euphemism to support us in our bereavement? No! We are giving expression to our thanksgiving for a life that has touched each one of our lives in a special way. What is more, when we hear the warm, appreciative tributes, the memories of the life of a unique person, who used their gifts in God's service, this brings the celebration to life. Yet, I can't help wondering, sometimes, whether the person received this affirmation, this recognition during his or her own lifetime. To let someone know that who they are and what they do really matter to us and to other people can be very encouraging and life giving.

Equally, each one of us can celebrate that we have been called, that we have been given a 'talent' by God, to make our own contribution to the building up of the kingdom. There is a verse in psalm 15 which gives us an insight into how we could respond to this individual calling:

*'The lot marked out for me is my delight,  
welcome indeed the heritage that falls to me!'*

We may not be called to do something spectacular, but we are called to make a difference in the way we live our lives. The words of the psalm help us to realise that we should embrace our individual calling not as a duty but as a delight, and that is something that is worth celebrating every day.





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

Jn 15:12-13

After this I will pour out my spirit on all mankind. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men see visions. Even on the slaves, men and women, will I pour out my spirit in those days.

Med 104.2

It is God, by his power and very special goodness, who has called you to give the knowledge of the Gospel to those who have not yet received it. Do you look upon yourselves then as ministers of God?

Anon.

Lord you know better than I know myself that I am growing older and will someday be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but you know Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains: They are increasing and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others' pains, but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a Saint - some of them are so hard to live with - but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And, give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so. Amen.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

2 K 5:9-15

So Naaman came with his team and chariot and drew up at the door of Elisha's house. And Elisha sent him a messenger to say, 'Go and bathe seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will become clean once more'. But Naaman was indignant and went off, saying, 'Here was I thinking he would be sure to come out to me, and stand there, and call on the name of Yahweh his God, and wave his hand over the spot and cure the leprous part. Surely Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, are better than any water in Israel? Could I not bathe in them and become clean?' And he turned round and went off in a rage. But his servants approached him and said, 'My father, if the prophet had asked you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? All the more reason, then, when he says to you, "Bathe, and you will become clean".' So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, as Elisha had told him to do. And his flesh became clean once more like the flesh of a little child.

Returning to Elisha with his whole escort, he went in and stood before him. 'Now I know' he said 'that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel. Now, please, accept a present from your servant.'

MTR 1.2

You, then, whom God has called to this ministry, work according to the grace that has been given to you to instruct by teaching and to exhort by encouraging those who are entrusted to your care, guiding them with attention and vigilance, in order to fulfil towards them the principal duty of fathers and mothers towards their children.

Bridget Hewitt

Chanting in repetitive phrases, as has been realised by many of the world's religions, is a very real way in which to enter a deeper dimension of ourselves, to reach under the surface of lives lived too often in a superficial way.

Most of us are, as had been well said, 'circumference people', and it is not easy for us in our world of instant access and deliver, to reach a deeper level of life. The idea of God, too, is so often only a concept that lives on the periphery of our consciousness. What begins to emerge in Taizé, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say what we find ourselves being invited into, is a meeting – a meeting with our own deeper selves, but also a meeting with a greater Presence, which many of us will name God.

The time of silence, wrapped around as it is by the chanting, provides time for this meeting to sink into deeper places within ourselves.



# Building community

## Ac 6:1-6

About this time, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenists made a complaint against the Hebrews: in the daily distribution their own widows were being overlooked. So the Twelve called a full meeting of the disciples and addressed them, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food; you, must select from among yourselves seven people of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom; we will hand over this duty to them, and continue to devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word'. The whole assembly approved of this proposal and elected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

## Med 65.3

It sometimes happens, even in a religious community, that we do good to others because we have received similar treatment from them, or that we refuse a service, or do it with a bad grace, because those who ask it are displeasing to us, or have done something to grieve us. Such charity is merely human. How far it is from deserving to be considered disinterested; from disclaiming its own rights.

## Declaration

Societies, like individuals, grow old and die once the habits inherited from the past outweigh the will to renewal. It is not easy to balance fidelity to the institutions that sparked our origins and the requirements of life today. The destiny of the Institute is in the hands of the Brothers. They must not expect those in authority to give ready-made solutions to the new problems that come from a world in evolution. It is up to each Brother, in the presence of God, to start out along the path of spiritual conversion, determined to have a personal share in the great community work of renewal and adaptation. This is the price each must pay, if stagnation is to be warded off and the Institute is to live in youth and vigour.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Living our commitment



1 P 5:1-4

Now I have something to tell your elders: I am an elder myself, and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, and with you I have a share in the glory that is to be revealed. Be the shepherds of the flock of God that is entrusted to you: watch over it, not simply as a duty but gladly, because God wants it; not for sordid money, but because you are eager to do it. Never be a dictator over any group that is put in your charge, but be an example that the whole flock can follow. When the chief shepherd appears, you will be given the crown of unfading glory.

Med 104:2

You should not be content to have offered yourself to God once; you should renew this offering every day, so consecrating all your actions.

Bob Barrett

How easy it is to miss the significance of leftovers. A short while ago they were, in many respects, similar to what they are now, wholesome and nourishing, but our attitude towards them has changed. The special occasion, the celebration, the feast is over, our appetites, for the moment, have been satisfied, and these unfinished fragments, over which grace has been gratefully spoken, remain.

What is to become of them?  
How will we treat them?

When the five thousand were fed and appetites were satisfied, Jesus told his disciples to gather up the leftovers. In his eyes the leftovers were as valuable as the feast. They could continue to nourish and sustain; their potential should not be ignored or wasted.

Thinking metaphorically,  
How many of us feel like leftovers?  
Perhaps we consider that we have passed our best, or have let our best opportunities pass us by. However, remembering the care that Jesus took with what remained after feeding the five thousand, we should be encouraged to gather up our leftovers and invite his Spirit to breathe new life into them. For, whatever our personal hour is, we are still being called to labour in the Lord's vineyard and to be nourished by his Word and his Eucharist.





# Being a communion of saints

**Dn 3:24, 38-42**

And they walked into the heart of the flames, praising God and blessing the Lord. Azariah stood in the heart of the fire, and began to pray: .....

‘We have at this time no leader, no prophet, no prince,  
no holocaust, no sacrifice, no oblation, no incense,  
no place where we can offer you the first-fruits and win your favour.  
But may the contrite soul, the humbled spirit be as acceptable to you  
as holocausts of rams and bullocks,  
as thousands of fattened lambs:  
such let our sacrifice be to you today,  
and may it be your will that we follow you wholeheartedly,  
since those who put their trust in you will not be disappointed.  
And now we put our whole heart into following you,  
into fearing you and seeking your face once more.  
Do not disappoint us;  
treat us gently, as you yourself are gentle and very merciful.’

**MTR 3.3**

What Jesus Christ says to his apostles he also says to you, that you may understand that 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 the branch of the vine, which can bear fruit only if it remains attached to the stem and draws its sap and strength from the vine. This is the source of all the goodness of the fruit.

**Aelred**

This is true, perfect, enduring and eternal friendship which envy does not corrupt, nor suspicion lessen nor ambition dissolve. When thus put to the test it does not cease, thus assailed it does not fall into ruins. Although a prey to so much abuse, it is seen to be unyielding and remains unmoved when attacked by so many insults. Go therefore and do likewise.

*What Jesus Christ says  
to his apostles  
he also says to you.*

De La Salle



**Acting in a Spirit of Zeal**

Mt 15:21-28

Jesus left that place and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Then out came a Canaanite woman from that district and started shouting, 'Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.' But he answered her not a word. And his disciples went and pleaded with him. 'Give her what she wants,' they said 'because she is shouting after us.' He said in reply, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.' But the woman had come up and was kneeling at his feet. 'Lord,' she said, 'help me.' He replied, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs.' She retorted, 'Ah yes, sir; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.' And from that moment her daughter was well again.

Med 39.2

Since you are expected to bring about the sanctification of your pupils, you ought yourself to possess holiness in an uncommon degree, for you have to communicate it to others as much by good example as by the words of salvation which you address them each day.

Henry Drummond

There are some men and women in whose company we are always at our best. While with them we cannot think mean thoughts or speak ungenerous words. Their mere presence is elevation, purification, sanctity. Suppose *that* influence prolonged through a month, a year, a life-time, and what could not life become? To have lived with Socrates must have made one wise; with Francis of Assisi, gentle. But to have lived with Christ must have made one like Christ, that is to say, *A Christian*.

As a matter of fact, to live with Christ did produce this effect. A few raw, uninspiring men, were admitted to the inner circle of His friendship. The change began at once. Day by day we can almost see the first disciples grow. Occasionally, very occasionally, they do a thing or say a thing that they could not have done or said had they not been living there. Slowly the spell of his life deepens. Their manners soften, their words become more gentle, their conduct more unselfish. As swallows who have found a summer, as frozen buds the spring, their starved humanity bursts into fuller life. They do not know how it is, but they are different men. One day they find themselves, like their Master, going about doing good. To themselves it is unaccountable, but they cannot do otherwise. They were not told to do it. But the people who watch them know well how to account for it – "They have been with Jesus". The mark and seal of His character is upon them.





# Serving as mission

Mk 5:18-20

As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed begged to be allowed to stay with him. Jesus would not let him but said to him, 'Go home to your people and tell them all that the Lord in his mercy has done for you'. So the man went off and proceeded to spread throughout the Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him. And everyone was amazed.

A. Calcutt

The global conditions, the social conditions, in which we operate have enormously changed compared with his day. St De La Salle cannot tell us about these. Understanding them and working with them, that is the challenge that falls upon us. We teachers, now, in our very varied circumstances, have to shape and reshape a ministry whose reality and greatness he recognised.

C. Guérin-Lesueur

Meet, Listen, Question are the fundamental attitudes that I have chosen after twelve years in the mobile classroom. It is really seeing and meeting these people [travellers] that enabled me to adapt my teaching methods to the needs of their situation; to adapt myself to this context; and to be prepared to think of new ways of learning, which in fact, were taught to me by the people I had come to teach.

I was able to spend these twelve years working with much serenity, despite some situations which were difficult to understand. Many people questioned me about them and this gave me an opportunity to restate what was most important: a contact that is respectful and concerned for the person, however different or awkward he may be. My wish for all those who will dare to undertake this kind of human adventure is that they open their eyes and their whole being sufficiently to be captivated by the ardent desire of an authentic encounter.

*The global & social conditions, in which we operate have enormously changed compared with De La Salle's day.*



Calcutt



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Accompanying



1 S 25:32-35

David said to Abigail, 'Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who sent you to meet me today! Blessed be your wisdom and blessed you yourself for restraining me today from the crime of bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand! But as Yahweh the God of Israel lives, who kept me from harming you, had you not hurried out to meet me, I swear that Nabal would not have had one male left alive by the morning.' David then accepted from her what she had brought him and said, 'Go home in peace; see, I have listened to you and have granted your request.'

MTR 2.3

If you want the instructions you give those whom you want to instruct to be effective in drawing them to the practice of good, you must practice these truths yourselves, and you must be full of zeal so that your students may be able to receive a share in the grace which is in you for doing good, and that your zeal draw upon you the Spirit of God to animate your students in the same way.

Laurence Freeman

Last month I meditated with a group of homeless people who meet weekly with their passionate street priest, a young woman who has a mild antipathy to church buildings but loves to pray with these marginal people...

Our full half-hour meditation was unexpectedly still and silent. Clearly, as individuals and especially finding themselves part of a trusting group, they were open to a profound level of prayer that the "learned and clever" as Jesus called them only preach about...

The poor you will always have with you, Jesus warned. Or was it also strangely a promise? The marginal are a reminder to everyone that humanity is a family. Even the black sheep, the disabled, the unemployable and those chronically down on their luck are brothers and sisters to the glitterati and those who may drop a few million but will never feel the pinch of austerity we are entering. The conscious link between these extremes of society – from the most adored monarch to the lowliest subject – is the true test of a civilisation.

*Even the black sheep,  
the disabled,  
the unemployable and those  
chronically down on their luck  
are brothers and sisters*

Laurence Freeman





# Being good shepherds

Lk 15:4-7

Who among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till they found it? And when they found it, would they not joyfully take it on their shoulders and then, when home, call together their friends and neighbours? 'Rejoice with me,' they would say, 'I have found my sheep that was lost.' In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine virtuous people who have no need of repentance.

Med 203.3

God has made you guides and guardians of these young children.

Basil Hume

As teachers, our task is to portray and expound the Word of God. Our proclamation has to live. It is communicated to others in proportion as we have made it our own. From our lips should be heard not only that Word of God which we find in the Scriptures, but a word from God out of a heart that is full with the experience of God within us.

As shepherds, our task is to care for those committed to our charge, helping wounded humanity on its pilgrimage through the complexities and difficulties of modern life. We must guide the people of God to take its responsibility to bring the Gospel to a secular world that does not know and does not recognise God. The healing hand which we can extend to those who are as weak and frail as we are, is Christ's loving hand. The words we pronounce, the gestures we make, are his words, his gestures transmitted through us.

*As shepherds, our task is to care for those committed to our charge*

Basil Hume



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

# Honouring



Ep 4:25-32

So from now on, there must be no more lies: You must speak the truth to one another, since we are all parts of one another. Even if you are angry, you must not sin: never let the sun set on your anger 'or else you will give the devil a foothold. Anyone who was a thief must stop stealing; they should try to find some useful manual work instead, and be able to do some good by helping others that are in need. Guard against foul talk; let your words be for the improvement of others, as occasion offers, and do good to your listeners, otherwise you will only be grieving the Holy Spirit of God who has marked you with his seal for you to be set free when the day comes. Never have grudges against others, or lose your temper, or raise your voice to anybody, or call each other names, or allow any sort of spitefulness. Be friends with one another, and kind, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ.

Med 167:1

How many times has Jesus Christ perhaps called you? Have you not, like St. Augustine, often replied: 'Tomorrow, tomorrow I will be converted? Do you not still say as much every day?

John Chrysostom

While you adorn the temple do not despise your brother in distress.

Would you honour the body of Christ? Do not despise his nakedness; do not honour him in church clothed in silk vestments and then pass him by unclothed and frozen outside. Remember that he who said, 'This is my body', and made good his words, also said, 'You saw me hungry and gave me no food', and, 'in so far as you did it not to one of these, you did it not to me'. In the first sense the body of Christ does not need clothing but worship from a pure heart, in the second sense it does need clothing and all the care we can give it.

We must learn to be discerning Christians and to honour Christ in the way which he wants to be honoured. It is only right that honour given to anyone should take the form most acceptable to the recipient not to the giver. Peter thought he was honouring the Lord when he tried to stop him washing his feet, but this was far from being genuine homage. So give God the honour he asks for, that is give your money generously to the poor. God has no need of golden vessels but of golden hearts.



# Seeking wholeness

Mt 9:20-22

Jesus rose and his disciples followed him. Then from behind him came a woman, who had suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years, and she touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, 'If I can only touch his cloak I shall be well again.' Jesus turned round and saw her; and he said to her, 'Courage, my daughter, your faith has restored you to health.' And from that moment the woman was well again.

Med 45:3

Do you not do many things through purely human motives, and merely because you feel so inclined? Do you really perform all your actions as being in the presence of and belonging entirely to God, with nothing in view but God's divine good pleasure?

Ronald Rolheiser

We are forever trying to give ourselves wholeness, but we cannot. We cannot self-justify. We cannot make ourselves immortal. We cannot write our own names into heaven. Only a certain kind of love can give us substance. Only God's love can write our names into heaven.

In John's Gospel the first words out of Jesus's mouth are an invitation: "What are you looking for?" The entire Gospel of John then tries to answer that question: what are we looking for? Throughout John's Gospel Jesus tells us that we are looking for many things: living water which quenches our deepest thirst and never needs to be drunk again, a truth that sets us free, a re-birth to something above, a light that shines eternally. But these images can seem abstract. What's the real kernel inside them?

The Gospel of John eventually answers that in a very clear way. Near the end of the Gospel (indeed, this was probably the original end of John's Gospel) we have that poignant post-resurrection meeting between Jesus and Mary of Magdala. It takes place in a garden, the archetypal place where love happens: Mary carrying spices to embalm His dead body, goes searching for Jesus on Easter Sunday morning. She meets Him but doesn't recognise Him. Supposing Him to be the gardener, she asks Him where she might find the body of the dead Jesus. Jesus replies by repeating the question with which He opened the Gospel: "What are you looking for?" Then, before she can answer, He gives the deepest answer to that question: He pronounces her name in love: "Mary." In that particularised affirmation of love He writes her name into heaven. He gives her substance.



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



# Reconciling



Mt 5.21-24

You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his fellow will answer for it before the court; if someone calls their neighbour 'Fool' they will answer for it before the Sanhedrin; and if anyone calls another 'Renegade' they will answer for it in hell fire. So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your neighbour has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with them first, and then come back and present your offering.

Med 74.2

Some perchance will say, 'I do not mind suffering such a thing from my Brother, but as for this other matter, I cannot bear it' or 'my character is too different from his.' Thus, as soon as something occurs which you find too hard to bear, you fail to show charity towards your Brother and union with him. Yet charity should 'endure to the last'.

Basil Hume

The Gospel is not only a programme for action it is also a proclamation of a power at our disposal. Moreover, forgiving and healing should characterise our treatment of each other. Christ's manner of action has to be the model for ours. As pastors we need to learn how to use his healing power, or how to be instruments enabling him to exercise that power on one another. Just as I tend to believe that most people are sick rather than sinful so too I think that the most corrosive factor in any community or family are the wounds which we unwittingly inflict on one another. Those need forgiveness and healing: Christ's forgiveness and healing, and ours too. In both cases forgiving and healing are an expression of God's love at work in us and among us.

*Forgiving and healing  
should characterise  
our treatment of each other.*

Basil Hume





# Collaborating

2 S 7:18-22

King David then went in and, seated before Yahweh, said, 'Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and what is my House, that you have led me as far as this? Yet in your sight, Lord Yahweh, this is still not far enough, and you make your promises extend to the House of your servant for a far-distant future... What more can David say to you, when you yourself have singled out your servant, Lord Yahweh? For your servant's sake, this dog of yours, you have done so great a thing by revealing this to your servant. In this is your greatness, Lord Yahweh; there is none like you, no God but you alone, as our own ears have heard.'

Med 57.1

It often happens that what we undertake does not meet with the success we expected, because it is begun through self-will, and is done with no other motive than that which self-determination can suggest.

Bob Barrett

An interesting and amusing image of collaboration is a three-legged race. Participants publicly demonstrate their commitment to cooperation by being bound together at the ankle and by supporting each other with a firm arm hold. From the outset of the race they do their very best to achieve a shared ambition. Any individual strength is shared, any weakness is mutually borne. Self-seeking is abandoned as the pair jointly risk failure in the pursuit of a vision of success which inspires their efforts. In real life, of course, a collaborative venture is far longer than a three-legged race, but we can ask the Lord to 'bind us together with love'. With his love uniting us our gift to each other is the willingness to persevere with renewed strength, even though our task may, at times, seem daunting.

*We can ask the Lord to 'bind us together with love'.*

Bob Barrett



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Co 1:18-20

As he is the Beginning, he was first to be born from the dead, so that he should be first in every way; because God wanted all perfection to be found in him and all things to be reconciled through him and for him, everything in heaven and everything on earth, when he made peace by his death on the cross.

Med 91.2

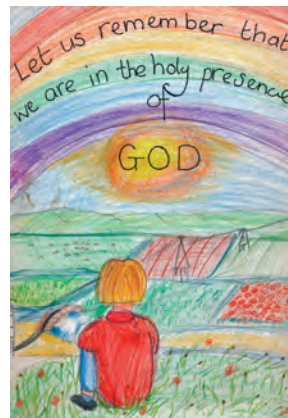
The first reason why there is sometimes a lack of union in community is that some seek to be preferred to their companions from a purely human consideration. If we wish to live in peace and harmony, we must mutually bear one another's burdens.

Huub Oosterhuis

You speak in silence  
and all languages interpret you.  
You are the truth of all words,  
their permanence and their comfort  
and every man who listens with an open mind  
can hear you in his own language  
and in his own life.  
Put words into our mouths, then,  
that comfort and shed light,  
make us alive to justice and to right,  
groan in us for a new creation,  
guide our hearts and our faith,  
let our thoughts and our labours be fruitful  
and give us the bread of peace.

*You speak in silence*

Huub Oosterhuis



A student, St. Augustine's Catholic College, Trowbridge





# Hungering for justice

Is 401-2, 11

'Console my people, console them' says your God. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of Yahweh double punishment for all her crimes.'

God is like a shepherd feeding the flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewe.'

Institute Bulletin

When we speak of the poor we are speaking of the impoverished. And the impoverished lead us to question ourselves about the causes, diverse and varied, which have led to this situation. They lead us to speak of justice. For this reason it is not surprising that in the Rule of the Brothers we read: "The Brothers 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." (n. 40) And what is said of the Brother is applicable, without any shadow of doubt, to every Lasallian educator.

Educating in and for justice pre-supposes, as a result, bringing ourselves and our young charges close to the concrete realities of the poor. It also involves getting to know these, studying and reflecting around them and acting both in an individual and collective way in works of assistance as well as in social activities.

J & P

Justice and Peace is an issue that touches our lives at its deepest level, leaving none of our experience untouched ... it requires a complete reorientation in our thinking, our theology and our lives.

*[Lasallian Educators]  
have always in view  
the promotion of justice in  
the light of the gospel.*

Institute Bulletin



Odeh A. Amarin, De La Salle College, Amman, Jordan



## Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

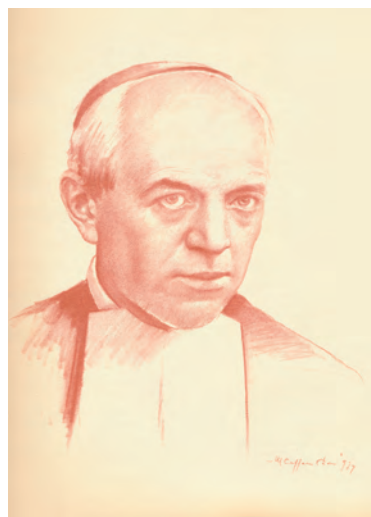
## Brother Mutien-Marie

Brother Mutien-Marie was born Louis-Joseph Wiaux in 1841, in Belgium. After the novitiate, he joined the community in Malonne, where primary and secondary education and also teacher-training took place; he would remain there until his death 57 years later.

A former student recalled the good influence he had on them: "He would smile and show by his expression that he was listening with the greatest attention to what was being said." "His method for offering correction was simple: he never tried to appear learned; he took one step at a time, and this his students much appreciated, and they loved him for it. I learned a great deal from him."

The classroom and the courtyard were as much a context for the spirituality of Brother Mutien as the chapel or community life. Most of the time it was hard for him or for anyone else to tell when prayer left off, and school or his supervising duties began. For some 15 years he gave up free time on a Saturday to teach catechism - not to the 'easier' youngsters of the boarding school - but to poor children in the village day school.

He died aged 75 on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1917. He was canonised in 1989 and his feast day is January 30<sup>th</sup>.



Mario Caffaro-Rore

**Saint Mutien-Marie FSC**  
1841 - 1917

## Brother Jaime Hilario

Brother Jaime Hilario taught for several years, joined the staff of the Novitiate and then became the Vocations Director. His deafness became even more limiting, making it impossible for him to resume teaching, and he worked in the gardens of the House of Formation in Tarragona, south of Barcelona.

The day before the Spanish Civil War was to break out in July 1936, Jaime started a journey to visit his family, but was stopped in the way and identified as a Brother. His lawyer advised him not to reveal his identity as a religious Brother, but simply to state his occupation as a gardener. In that way he would be perceived as a worker rather than as a religious. But this he would not do.

In January 1937 he was tried, found guilty of being a De La Salle Brother and sentenced to death.

He was placed before a firing squad and when two volleys failed to harm him, the commander shot him at close range. His last words were: "To die for Christ, my young friends, is to live."

Brother Jaime Hilario was canonised in 1999 along with the Brother martyrs of Turón and Fr Inocencio, a Passionist, who were martyred in 1934. Their joint feast day is October 9<sup>th</sup>.



Mario Caffaro-Rore

**Saint Jaime Hilario FSC**  
1889 - 1937





# Glossary of Lasallian terms

**Abbreviations:** Lasallian Abbreviations can be found on page V of this publication

**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 which take the vows of Religion. The De La Salle Brothers first vow - Association for the education of children, especially of the poor - asserts their commitment to God's Mission, which is supported by taking the vows of Religion, Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. At final profession they also make a vow of Stability.

**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.

