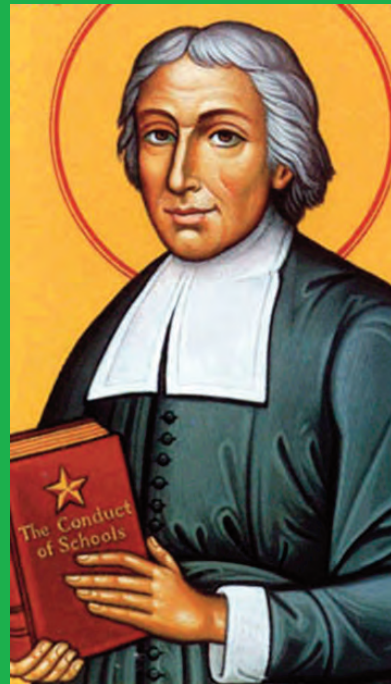




Living in a Spirit of Faith



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Reflections for Lasallians

Volume 4

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 4

compiled by the Lasallian Association of Great Britain

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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 ¹, and those who have accompanied the poor with the Lasallian Developing World Projects (LDWP) ². 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 fourth in a series of four and contains the themes, 'Accompanying the Poor', 'Being Educators, Especially of Youth' and 'Touching and Inspiring Hearts with the Christian Spirit'.

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

2. www.delasalle.org.uk/ldwp/about.htm



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

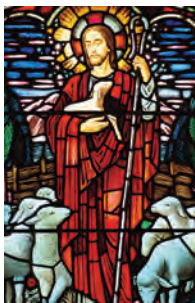
Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

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





Educators “called to be shepherds” says John Baptist De La Salle

by Br Nicholas Hutchinson,
first appeared in ‘The Lasallian: Great Britain and Malta’

PASTORAL CARE

In the Western world the shepherd walks (and perhaps not far) at the rear of the flock, whereas in the East the shepherd leads from the front – which helps explain what Jesus says about the sheep following the good shepherd, with Jesus himself lying down to form the gate (Jn 10:7-9) to protect the sheep at night in a stone-walled area. The Latin word for ‘shepherd’ gives rise to our expression of ‘pastoral’ care.

John Baptist De La Salle writes: *“It is necessary, says Jesus,
that the sheep should know their shepherd,
in order to follow him.
Shepherds should show good example
and have great tenderness for those confided to their care,
so that anything that might wound them
will call for their attention.
And so the sheep will love their shepherd.”* Med 33.2

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 with God? If there is no real pasture, people will die of depression, of starvation, of thirst (cf 67ff of ‘Be Not Afraid’ by Jean Vanier: Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1975).

John goes on to ask: *“Do you build on the affection
the young people have for you
to lead them to God?”*

TOUCHING HEARTS

It was with great perception 300 years ago that John Baptist De La Salle urged that we not only aim to give everyone *equal* respect but that we also appreciate the need to treat people *differently*:

*“One of the qualities which Jesus says distinguishes him
is that he knows all the sheep individually.”* Med 33.2
*You, too, must get to know your students
and discern how best to act towards each person.
Some require great mildness,
while others need to be directed with firmness.
Some require much patience;
others need to be goaded on,
and some need to be corrected.
This varied conduct must depend upon knowledge
and discernment of character.”*

This action of treating people differently is reflected in how we “touch hearts” (Med 139.3): “saying to each what is most befitting” (Med 64.2), contributing to the way we help people to feel about



★
Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



themselves. A revealing phrase – challenging to us all – was written by one of Charles Darwin’s daughters about their father (1809-1882): “Whatever was best in us came out in the sunshine of his presence.”

What kind of shepherd am I? Do I have equal respect for everyone yet also treat people differently, reflecting the uniqueness of each? Do I seek to encounter and respect young people as individuals, discovering how to affirm and help draw out the best in each? John asks if I have “neglected some students because they are the slowest or the poorest, showing favouritism towards others because they are pleasant or have more lovable qualities than others” (MTR 14.1).

CORRECTING STUDENTS

It is very significant that John Baptist De La Salle refers to “correction” rather than to “punishment”. Focussing on the positive, a suitable ‘correction’, John says, for one who has repeatedly been late, is for that individual to be among the first to arrive during the coming week.

“Reproof and correction cause the young to reflect on what they need to do, leading them to watch over themselves so as not to make the same mistakes all the time.” MTR 11.1

“The result of wise correction is that those receiving it are disposed to correct their faults, whereas when correction is administered through uncontrolled emotion and without having God in view, it serves only to turn disciples against their teachers, arousing in them feelings of revenge and ill-will, which sometimes last a long time.” MTR 12.3

I would argue that the likes of giving ‘lines’ to students is not positive in itself, and hardly encourages reflection or the possibility of growing in wisdom and in feeling ‘ownership’ for their surroundings. Any punishment such as the ‘giving of lines’ is precisely that: punishment (perhaps even with a touch of being vindictive), whereas ‘correcting’ students leaves room for manoeuvre and a strengthening of relationships.

I was very taken on seeing the tangible results around a school in which a Brother (now-deceased) usually administered correction by giving students a bucket of daffodil bulbs to plant in the school grounds. Months – and even years later - individuals could see the effects of their contribution which arose from ‘correction’, rather than ‘punishment’.

“Make your reproofs and corrections with the greatest possible wisdom and in a manner best suited to make them useful for those receiving them. Students must be corrected justly, as reasonable people. They must be helped to recognise the wrong they have done, to understand the correction which their fault deserves, to agree to it, and to recognise it as a means of becoming more wise. Is the correction to help them change their conduct - or is it to punish them for annoyance caused to you?”
“To deal with young people harshly is to forego all hope of bringing about any good”.

MTR 12.1



Med 114.2





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. Due to his long name we have sometimes referred to him as Álvaro. 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' 39th General Chapter (1967), published in 1968.
- DLS:** De La Salle – St John Baptist De La Salle, 1651–1719, Founder of the De La Salle Brothers.
- L. Sch:** 'The Lasallian School' by William Mann, published in 1991 by Brothers of the Christian Schools (De La Salle), Long Island – New England Province, Rhode Island, USA.
- LDWP:** Lasallian Developing World Projects, part of the 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.
- Bishops' Conference** refers to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

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



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



Theme 10

Accompanying the Poor



Detail from an African mural showing St John Baptist De La Salle with children from a local Lasallian school.

Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



Accompanying the poor



Opening to God's word

Mt 19:23-26

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you solemnly, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Yes, I tell you again, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.' When the disciples heard this they were astonished. 'Who can be saved, then?' they said. Jesus gazed at them. 'For you,' he told them, 'this is impossible; for God everything is possible.'

Med 176:1

Nothing could be more admirable than the humility of Saint Francis Borgia. He had been one of the chief nobles at the Court of Spain, but having withdrawn from the world to enter the Society of Jesus, he thereafter sought to be accounted as low as he had once been high in the estimation of the great... You were perhaps in a very modest position in the world, and yet do you not strive to evade contempt as eagerly as this Saint sought after it? Endeavour at least to accept humiliations willingly when occasion offers.

Cecil Day Lewis

How many children starving, did you say?
A million? Five million? It is sad,
Tragic really. But after all, they are
Thousands of miles away, remote as the Black Death
Or the dying stars. Oh, I do sympathise:
But I never count much beyond ten -
Tragedy multiplied by millions fades
Into a faceless limbo of statistics
And leaves imagination cold on the outside.
Charity, I say, must begin at home.

Let charity begin at home.
Think of one child, your own or the next-door neighbours'.
Tetter the pretty skin with sores, let the bones show through it
Like ribs of a stranded wreck. This is your child-
This derelict with the animal breath of famine
Whispering through his frame. He understands nothing,
Nothing he knows but a mother long sucked dry
Of milk and tears, a father drained of hope.
You are that father, you are that mother.
Your child. Imagine. Is it so hard to imagine?

Thousands of miles away, yet still they are your next-door neighbours
Within the giant stride, the magic ring of compassion.
Let one child plead for all, as the Christ-child spoke for all
Innocents bundled away into a bloodless limbo.
This need not be so. Our target is mankind's conscience:
Not by our wringing hands will our concern be measured
But in shelter, seed and ploughshares, that hope may be reborn.
Put one stranger's child to the breast of your warm compassion.
Find its father a share in the earth, his only birthright.
Sow a few handfuls of seed and give that child a future.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Allowing intimacy with God



Mt 19:13-15

People brought little children to him, for him to lay his hands on them and say a prayer. The disciples turned them away, but Jesus said, 'Let the little children alone, and do not stop them coming to me; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs'. Then he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

Med 59:2

When Our Lord found that these people had neglected to provide themselves with bodily food, he supplied it himself, being careful to give sustenance to those who are completely devoted to his service. We may, indeed, safely abandon ourselves to him in such circumstances, for the more completely we rely on Providence, the more attentive it will be to supply our wants. Strange to say, these people did not utter a word of complaint or murmuring for three days; it sufficed them to know that Our Lord was aware of their needs. And, indeed, has this good master ever abandoned those who seek only to please him, and whose only solicitude is to follow him?

Institute Bulletin 249

In the earliest communities it was understood that faith in Jesus was linked to opting for the poor. So we find Peter curing a paralytic and the many actions of the first followers of Jesus. Also in the tradition of the Church it has been understood that faith in Jesus cannot be separated from the struggle for justice. There are many Fathers of the Church, many saints, who made justice the motive for their struggle and their hope.

St Paul had hard words about meals which were not shared and at which the first places were for the richest. St James says "God has chosen the poor" and "faith without works is dead".

The justice of which we speak is the justice of Jesus who comes to announce the face of God to the poor through His own life and the signs of love, the miracles, which are His acts of salvation.

Faith in Jesus cannot be separated from the struggle for justice.

Bulletin 249



Trusting

Ps 123

I lift my eyes to you,
to you who have your home in heaven,
eyes like the eyes of slaves
fixed on their master's hand;

like the eyes of a slave-girl
fixed on the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes are fixed on Yahweh our God,
for him to take pity on us;

pity us, Yahweh, take pity on us,
we have had more than our share of scorn,
more than our share
of jeers from the complacent,
of scorn from the proud.

Med 59:3

Let us admire the goodness of Jesus Christ with regards to these people who followed him. 'I am moved with pity for the multitude,' he said, and he worked a miracle to feed them... God will likewise give you all you need, if you think only of your sanctification and of accomplishing the duties of your state. As God said to Catherine of Siena: 'Think of me and I will think of you.' God, who has created everyone, wishes them to have what is necessary, and provides it when they have not the means of doing so.

Isaac of Syria

A man who, while remembering God, respects every man, by a hidden movement of God's hand himself receives help from every man. A man who protects the injured has God as his helper; a man who stretches his hand to aid his brother has God's arm to support him.

*"I am moved with pity
for the multitude," he said and
he worked a miracle to feed them.*

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Being a disciple



Rm 12:1-13

Think of God's mercy, my friends, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God. Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do.

In the light of the grace I have received I want to urge each one among you not to exaggerate their real importance. Each of you must judge yourself soberly by the standard of the faith God has given you. Just as each of our bodies has several parts and each part has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other. Our gifts differ according to the grace given us. If your gift is prophecy, then use it as your faith suggests; if administration, then use it for administration; if teaching, then use it for teaching. Let the preachers deliver sermons, the almsgivers give freely, the officials be diligent, and those who do works of mercy do them cheerfully.

Do not let your love be a pretence, but sincerely prefer good to evil. Love each other as much as friends should, and have a profound respect for each other. Work for the Lord with untiring effort and with great earnestness of spirit. If you have hope, this will make you cheerful. Do not give up if trials come; and keep on praying. If any of the saints are in need you must share with them; and you should make hospitality your special care.

Dec

Apostolic action degenerates into empty activity or into self-seeking only when one loses the ability to see the call of God in the real needs of the world.

Jean Vanier

The poor and the weak have revealed to me the great secret of Jesus. If you wish to follow him, you must not try to climb the ladder of success and power, becoming more and more important. Instead, you must walk down the ladder, to meet and walk with people who are broken and in pain. The light is there, shining in the darkness, in the darkness of their poverty. The poor with whom you are called to share your life are perhaps the sick and the old; people out of work, young people caught up in the world of drugs, people angry because they were terribly hurt when they were young, people with disabilities or sick with AIDS or just out of prison; people in slums or ghettos, people in far-off lands where there is much hunger and suffering, people who are oppressed because of the colour of their skin, people who are lonely in overcrowded cities, people in pain.

We are discovering too, that the life-giving Jesus is hidden in them. He is truly there. If you become a friend of the poor, you become a friend of Jesus. If you enter a close relationship with those who are poor, you enter into an intimate relationship with Jesus and you will be led into the heart of the Beatitudes.



Receiving and responding

Mc 10:7-8

Proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils. You received without charge, give without charge.

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
make me more appreciative of others.

Help me never to fail to say thanks
for what is done for me,
and never to take anyone for granted.

Help me to be quick to notice
when someone is discouraged or unhappy
or left out of things.

Help me always to see people's needs
and be ready
to speak a word of encouragement or praise.

Lord Jesus,
all through today help me to see people with your eyes.

Anon.

Help us to appreciate our riches.
Do not believe that we are poor
just because we do not have what you have.
Help us to discover our chains.
Do not believe that we are slaves
just because you see our chains.
Be patient with our people.
Do not believe we are backward
just because we do not follow your path.
Be patient with our progress.
Do not believe we are lazy
because we do not keep to your tempo.

Be patient with our symbols.
Do not believe that we are ignorant
because we cannot read your words.
Sing with us about the beauty
of the life that you share with us.
Stay with us and accept
that we can give you something.
Keep us company on our way;
neither in front nor behind.
Come with us to live and find God.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Embracing uncertainty



Gen 15:12-18

Now as the sun was setting Abram fell into a deep sleep, and terror seized him. Then Yahweh said to Abram, 'Know this for certain, that your descendants will be exiles in a land not their own, where they will be slaves and oppressed for four hundred years. But I will pass judgement also on the nation that enslaves them and after that they will leave, with many possessions. For your part, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a ripe old age. In the fourth generation they will come back here, for the wickedness of the Amorites is not yet ended.'

When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, there appeared a smoking furnace and a firebrand that went between the halves. That day Yahweh made a Covenant with Abram in these terms:

'To your descendants I give this land,
from the wadi of Egypt to the Great River, the river Euphrates'.

Med 81:1

In order to begin to give ourselves entirely to God we must become poor. We ought even to have as much esteem for poverty as people of the world have for riches. This is the first step Christ requires of us if we would enter upon the path of perfection. Do you really love poverty? As a proof thereof are you content to suffer the want of anything, even of what is necessary? Test yourself in this matter.

Geoffrey King

I was diagnosed almost two years ago with motor neurone disease, admittedly with a rare variant of the disease that typically progresses more slowly than the more common forms. ... At present my determination is to live as fully as possible within these already significant limitations. ... For me life is a gift from God. So far it has been an extraordinarily generous gift. I have been able to do things, and to experience things, and to go to places (places of the heart as well as geographical places) that I would never have conceived of when I was say, 20.

I have had a wonderful life and for this I am immensely grateful. I have now entered into much darker places, but even here I find new life: there is a sense of adventure, for example, in finding how to do even simple things from the constraints of an electric wheelchair. ...

Having motor neurone disease, then, has enabled me to live life in new ways. I actually see it as a gift, a very challenging and mysterious gift, from a life-giving God.



Risking

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!'

Med 39:1

Have you truly renounced all things in heart and mind? Have you placed yourself totally in God's hands, relying implicitly on providence. Make this generous act in imitation of St Peter and through his intercession.

Jean Vanier

Insecurity and weakness are like a door through which passes the strength of God. Do not flee from insecurity; do not seek to have all the answers. If you do, you risk turning away from God who is leading you in to the Kingdom.

'The Lord gives power to the weary and to the helpless ones he gives strength ... Those who trust in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall soar up with wings, like eagles. They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and never falter. (Isaiah 40:31).

If we are called to walk with the poor in community Jesus will always be there saying 'Do not be afraid, for I am with you' (John 6:20)

*Insecurity and weakness
are like a door
through which passes
the strength of God.*

Jean Vanier



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Recognising a shared spirit and a shared humanity



Jn 1:16-18

Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received - yes, grace in return for grace, since, though the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

MTR 4:1 - Prayer

Earnestly ask Jesus Christ to make his Spirit come alive in you since he has chosen you to do his work.

Lord, help me not to be so busy that I miss the most important things.

Help me not to be too busy to hear your voice when you speak to me.

Help me not to be too busy to listen to anyone who is in trouble or difficulty.

Help me not to be too busy to stand still for a moment, to think and remember.

Help me not to be too busy, to look up and see a glimpse of beauty and love in your world.

Help me not to do anything that would dim the world's beauty or make people sadder.

Help me always to add something to the world's beauty and to the world's joy.

Teresa of Calcutta

One evening a gentleman came to our house and told me, 'There is a Hindu family with eight children, and they have not eaten for a long time. Do something for them.' I took some rice and I went straight away.

I could see in the children's faces terrible hunger. And yet when the mother took the rice she divided it in two portions and went out. When she came back I asked her, 'Where did you go? What did you do?' She gave me one answer only, 'They are hungry also.' She had next-door neighbours, a Muslim family, and she knew they were hungry. I did not bring any more rice for that day because I wanted them to experience the joy of giving. I was not surprised that she gave, but I was surprised that she knew that they were hungry. Do we know? Do we have time to know? Do we have time, even to smile at somebody?



Living hopefully

Is 25:6 - 9

On this mountain, Yahweh Sabaoth will prepare for all peoples
a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines,
of food rich and juicy, of fine strained wines.
On this mountain God will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples,
and the shroud enwrapping all nations,
he will destroy Death for ever.
The Lord Yahweh will wipe away the tears from every cheek;
Israel's shame will be taken away everywhere on earth,
for Yahweh has said so.
That day, it will be said,
'See, this is our God in whom we hoped for salvation;
Yahweh is the one in whom we hoped.
We exult and we rejoice that we have been saved.'

Med 142:1

St Bonaventure's love of poverty was so great that he composed a book entitled *The Apology of the Poor*, to make known the excellence of this virtue. In this work he shows that voluntary poverty is the fountain of evangelical perfection, because we renounce all things, and even the desire to possess anything, which is called poverty of spirit, and thus eradicate that love of money which St. Paul speaks of as being 'the root from which every kind of evil springs.' Hence, says St. Bonaventure, when Jesus wished to lead his disciples to perfection, he began by making them realise the blessings enjoyed by those who are truly poor in spirit.

Jon Sobrino

The most important question about God is not where God is in the midst of tragedy, but how he is present. We may answer philosophically or poetically, with resignation or in protest. The answer of Christian faith is that in tragedies, God is on the Cross, giving hope. ...That hope gives life. And because of that resurgent hope, no matter how hard it is to live through catastrophes, we cannot rule out the possibility of resurgent life in the midst of everything.

*The answer of Christian faith
is that in tragedies,
God is on the Cross,
giving hope.*

Jon Sobrino



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Celebrating



Ps 118:1

Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good, for God's love has no end.

Alan Hourly

Marking a friend's birthday by a small celebration offers an opportunity to show, once a year, deep seated feelings that are in danger of being masked by the daily routine of life. People need visible signs to express what is invisible.

In the writings of John Baptist de La Salle, the only celebrations mentioned are those included in the calendar of the Catholic Church. This should not suggest, however, that De La Salle was not aware of more secular forms of celebration.

Peter Henriot

St Ignatius Loyola encourages me to conclude each day with an 'examen of consciousness' that begins with an act of thanksgiving. I look over the events of the day and particularly focus on the good moments, the happy events, the graced occasions, the blessed times. Even in the roughest of days, I can still find many moments to be thankful for, for God's love has no end.'

By beginning my review of the day with this attitude of gratitude, I can then look more honestly and bravely at the difficult moments, the missed opportunities, the recognised failures. And I can look forward more confidently to the coming of a new day.

I think that this method of reviewing my personal life can also be applied to my evaluation of social and political events. By that I mean that it is important to recognise the good things that are occurring even in the midst of so many problems and troubles. If I focus only on the bad, I'll never see the good!

Take Africa, for example. So much media coverage in Europe and America is filled with stories of war, famine, disease, poverty, and other negative events. But little attention is given to the positive events. In Zambia, we live in a nation of peace, struggling to make democracy work. We have a vibrant church and an active and intelligent civil society. We experience God's grace in the selfless care of the sick and in the dedication of many women and men to improve family life. Recognising these blessings, I then can truly exclaim, 'God's love has no end.'

Gracious God, we thank you for your abundant blessings. Help us to always recognise what is good and gifted in ourselves and in our society so that we may work together for a better future. Amen.



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

Jn 1:14

The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Med 137:3

You have given yourself up to God in the place of those whom you teach, and by making yourself responsible for them you owe God, as it were, soul for soul. Have you sometimes reflected on the contract you have thus made by taking charge of those whom God has confided to you, and of your duty to honour it?

Mahatma Gandhi

The rich cannot accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor in society. If this knowledge were to penetrate and spread amongst the poor, they would become strong and would learn how to free themselves by means of non-violence from the crushing inequalities which have brought them to the verge of starvation.

I cannot imagine anything nobler or more national than that for, say, one hour in the day, we should all do the labour that the poor must do, and thus identify ourselves, with them and through them with all mankind. I cannot imagine better worship of God than that in his name I should labour for the poor even as they do.

'Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow,' says the Bible. Sacrifices may be of many kinds. One of them may well be 'bread labour'. If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of over-population, disease and no such misery as we see around. Such labour will be the highest form of sacrifice. Men will no doubt do many other things either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this will be labour of love for the common good. There will then be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable.

This may be an unattainable ideal. But we need not, therefore, cease to strive for it. Even if without fulfilling the whole law of sacrifice, that is, the law of our being, we performed physical labour enough for our daily bread, we should go a long way towards the ideal.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Lk 7:44 - 50

Then he turned to the woman. 'Simon,' he said 'you see this woman? I came into your house, and you poured no water over my feet, but she has poured out her tears over my feet and wiped them away with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but she has been covering my feet with kisses ever since I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. For this reason I tell you that her sins, her many sins, must have been forgiven her, or she would not have shown such great love. It is the one who is forgiven little who shows little love.' Then he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' Those who were with him at table began to say to themselves, 'Who is this man, that he even forgives sins?' But he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace'.

Med 139:2

Rest assured that you will do good in the Church only in so far as you are filled with faith, and conduct yourself by the Spirit of Faith, which is the spirit of your Institute with which you should be animated.

Bill Mann

Some years ago I visited a school for children with learning difficulties. Prior to my visit the teachers had prepared a special school assembly to mark the occasion. One of the youngsters, called Michael, had been asked and had agreed to read out a poem he had written. On the day of the assembly Michael did not arrive at school. His teacher phoned his home and discovered that Michael was suffering from an attack of nerves at the thought of reading out his poem to the assembled school. However, following reassurances from his teacher, Michael did come into school after all.

At the assembly, at the point when Michael's poem was to be read out, the Principal stepped forward and explained to everyone: "I am now going to read out a poem that has been written by Michael. I would like Michael to come and stand next to me so that you will know that this excellent poem was written by him and not by me." Encouraged by the Principal's words of praise, Michael asked if he could, after all, read out his poem. The message of Michael's poem was unmistakable:

"I was 'nobody' when I came to this school but I'm 'somebody' now."

*Conduct yourself by
the Spirit of Faith,
which is the spirit of
your Institute.*

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



Building community

Jm 2:5-6,8

It was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be 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?

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 distinction between classes of people, you are committing sin, and under condemnation for breaking the law.

Med 179:1

The poorer we are the more fully we shall possess the spirit of Jesus Christ, who gloried in living a life of poverty and who chose to establish his church (community) on this virtue as a foundation.

Benet Conroy

The storm had scattered us like chickens before the hawk; all our morning's work — making concrete bricks — was washed down the hill. The clouds cleared like badly parked cars at the approach of a traffic warden, the sun scorched and the land steamed. It was time for a walk to the market to recover from the disappointment. I was after a souvenir or two, something characteristic; but life was too hard allaying daily needs for people to have leisure for touristy things. It had to be a hoe: short-shafted, broad shaped, locally made. They were £1 each and I bought three. They perched on my shoulder, local style, and the stallholder laughed and the children followed at a close distance, curious at what I might do with them, for hoes are practical things.

Then another storm, like that hawk again. In seconds it was a power shower, drops stinging and soaking. I saw her panic and try to save the sugar cubes set out in little heaps on her table. I ran, pulling out of my pocket two Woolworth's carrier bags, handed her one and together we shovelled her precious wealth into the dryness of the bags. We sped for shelter, joining a crowd under the corrugated roof, There was plenty of gossip, lots of laughter, pieces of wisdom; at least that's what I supposed for I couldn't understand a word. There were definite comments on the hoe-carrier, for bemused glances and body-language told me that.

Once again the clouds cleared and the land steamed. She waved me to her table and together we wiped it dry. She took the bags and carefully laid out her sugar cubes; a heap of three here, of four there. In the morning each day she bought the sugar cubes, divided them up and sold them in lots for a tiny profit. Her daily return bought her a little food and another box of cubes. In the meantime we took on a third of her country's budget in debt repayment. These thoughts do bite when the reality is faced and felt.

I made to leave. The hoe-maker beckoned me over and returned me a discount on each of my hoes. He'd seen the Woolworth's bags and had to respond. Inly moved, I took the quiet route back to the compound.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Living our commitment



Lk 16:9-13

And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into the tents of eternity. Those who can be trusted in little things can be trusted in great; those who are dishonest in little things will be dishonest in great. If then you cannot be trusted with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? And if you cannot be trusted with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own?

No servant can be the slave of two masters: they will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.

Let 4:8-9

It is a very useful practice to apply oneself to the remembrance of God's presence. Be faithful to it. Nothing will draw down on you the blessings of God so much as fidelity in carrying out the small matters.

Anon.

Give us, Lord, a vision of our world as your love would make it:
A world where the weak are protected, and none goes hungry or poor;
A world where the benefits of culture are shared and everyone can enjoy them;
A world where different races and nations live in mutual respect;
A world where peace is built with justice and justice is fired with love.
And give us the inspiration and courage of your Spirit to build it. Amen

*Give us, Lord,
a vision of our world
as your love would make it:
A world where
the weak are protected,
and none goes hungry or poor.*



Anon.



Being a communion of saints

★
Accompanying the poor

Heb 12:18-24

What you have come to is nothing known to the senses: not a blazing fire, or a gloom turning to total darkness, or a storm; or trumpeting thunder or the great voice speaking which made everyone that heard it beg that no more should be said to them.

They were appalled at the order that was given: If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned. The whole scene was so terrible that Moses said, 'I am afraid, and was trembling with fright.' But what you have come to is Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem where the millions of angels have gathered for the festival, with the whole Church in which everyone is a 'first-born son' and a citizen of heaven. You have come to the very God the supreme Judge, and been placed with spirits of the saints who have been made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator who brings a new covenant and a blood for purification which pleads more insistently than Abel's.

Med 179:1

Poverty should be so dear to you that, holding nothing but God, you may find in God what cannot be found in creatures, and may be fit to receive from that relationship the plenitude of grace, both for yourself and others, especially the love of the poor and that zeal which you need to lead them to God.

Peter Henriot

This time last year, Zambia was moving into a very serious food shortage. Failure of rains had brought failures of crops. Many people, especially the old, young and sick, were facing starvation. When asked, 'How many bags of maize meal (the staple food) have you?' both the government and private business had to answer, 'All too few!'

We did not have the opportunity for the miracle worked by Jesus. The few maize bags we had did not suddenly multiply many thousands of times over! But what did make a big difference was the generous response of Zambians willing to share with each other and the assistance offered by other African countries and by countries in the North. Groups like CAFOD helped to greatly relieve the hunger through donations of food and provision of agricultural inputs as well as in the long term through support for advocacy programmes to improve national policies on issues such as trade.

The nineteenth century Russian philosopher, Nikolai Berdyaev, remarked, 'Hunger for myself is not a material problem; hunger for me, sisters and brothers, is a spiritual problem.' I think that is what Jesus tried to teach us in his miracle.

When I sit down to my three meals a day, I often hear the echo of Jesus' words, 'How many loaves have you?' and I pray that I might be more sharing of what I do have with those that have so little.



★ 16

Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Mt 5:13-16

You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of everyone, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.

Med 4

Be convinced of what St. Paul says, that you plant and water the seed, but it is God through Jesus Christ who makes it grow, that he is the one who brings your work to fulfilment. So, when you encounter some difficulty in the guidance of your disciples, when there are some who do not profit... turn to God in confidence.

Sean Hyde

Despite my frustrations over what, at times, seem like hopeless situations, I am still full of hope. Hope, because I have never felt closer to the presence of Christ than when I sat with the hungry, shoeless children of Nyeri, Kenya. I believe that having been given this incredible opportunity to witness some of the many injustices of our world, we are now challenged to do more. We are challenged to work for justice, not only in far off places, but in our own country, our own city, our own streets. We don't have to look far.

On my second Lasallian Developing World Project in India, I walked the streets of Calcutta one warm summer night. I stepped over a child who might have been asleep on the pavement, or he might have been sick, even dying. I came to eat my own meal but found I could not. The thought of the child came back again and again. So I put some of my own food in a bag and went in search of the child, who was still there, on the side of the street. I shook him gently till he awoke. He seemed frightened by this stranger in the night but he downed the food fast. Since we had no other language in common, I patted him on the head and left again.

Back in my relatively comfortable room I tried to pray. I asked God why these things were allowed. Why did he not do something about so much pain? Was he all that all-mighty after all? I questioned in my anger and my fear and my guilt. Until at last, it was as if I heard the answer of God, from the quiet of my own conscience: 'But I am doing something: I made you.'



Serving as mission

Lk 10:29-37

But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said 'and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have.' Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the brigands' hands?' 'The one who took pity on him', he replied. Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself'.

Alfred Calcutt

The work of the schools, as De La Salle said, 'demands the whole person'; it was a profession in its own right. Beyond this, perhaps fairly soon, he perceived that the work of his Brothers, but not of them only, was a fundamental ministry in the Church, for it carried out God's plan of salvation with regard to children.

A Prayer for Faith

Lord, when I am hungry
Give me someone to feed;
When I am thirsty
Give water for their thirst.
When I am sad
Someone to lift from sorrow.
When burdens weigh upon me
Lay upon my shoulders the burden of my fellows.
Lord, when I stand greatly in need of tenderness,
Give me someone who yearns for love.

May your will be my bread;
your grace my strength;
your love my resting place.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Accompanying



Lk 6:20-26

Then fixing his eyes on his disciples he said:
'How happy are you who are poor: yours is the kingdom of God.
Happy you who are hungry now: you shall be satisfied.
Happy you who weep now: you shall laugh.

Happy are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, for then your reward will be great in heaven. This was the way their ancestors treated the prophets.

'But alas for you who are rich: you are having your consolation now.
Alas for you who have your fill now: you shall go hungry.
Alas for you who laugh now: you shall mourn and weep.
Alas for you when the world speaks well of you! This was the way their ancestors treated the false prophets.'

Vincent Kingston

How does one respond to the Founder's meditations for Christmas-tide? 'We are poor Brothers, forgotten by the world and of no consequence. Only the poor come to us...' rings somewhat hollow to me here in the plush surrounds of north Oxford. His words are indeed challenging and we certainly do not do them justice by trying to interpret or explain them away as referring to 'poverty of spirit'... One of the South American bishops, Pedro Casaldaliga, speaking at the turn of the century said: 'In the new millennium Christians will be either poor or friends of the poor, or they will not be Christians at all'

A Lasallian Creed

I believe that to educate is to help someone to be.
I believe that I should live my job as teacher as a mission and not as a profession.
I believe that the fulfilment of the mission without concealment or hypocrisy requires a reference to values.
I believe that it is necessary to define myself as a person of faith, even though in doing so I may lose the esteem of others.
I believe that I should ensure that my presence, my use of time and my relationships with colleagues and students are occasions for raising up values and ideals.
I believe that my presence in the school may be the means of awakening in someone the possibility of believing, of bringing out the meaning of the gospel.
I truly believe that the protagonist of education is the student, and not the book the method or the teacher.
I believe that I should be up-to-date in the specific knowledge that I am to teach.
I believe that I should be in tune with new techniques in order to help students to develop all of their capabilities. *

* continues on page 29



Being good shepherds

2 K 4:2-7

Elisha said, 'What can I do for you? Tell me, what have you in the house?' 'Your servant has nothing in the house,' she replied 'except a pot of oil.' Then he said, 'Go outside and borrow jars from all your neighbours, empty jars and not too few. When you come back, shut the door on yourself and your sons, and pour the oil into all these jars, putting each aside when it is full.' So she left him; and she shut the door on herself and her sons; they passed her the jars and she went on pouring. When the jars were full, she said to her son, 'Pass me another jar'. 'There are no more' he replied. Then the oil stopped flowing. She went and told the man of God, who said, 'Go and sell the oil and redeem your pledge; you and your children can live on the remainder'.

MTR 5

It often happens that the pupils have not the strength of body or mind to carry the burdens that often crush them. They need the light of watchful guides to lead them on the path of salvation: guides who have an adequate understanding of what God expects of young people and their usual shortcomings.

Guadium et Spes - Anon.

When the Church has taken the poor seriously, it is then that it has become truly apostolic. When the Church goes out to them in mission, the paradoxical result is that they, the poor, evangelise the Church, they are advocates and teachers.

Our Father, who is in us here on earth,
Holy is your name in the hungry who share their bread and song.
Your Kingdom come, a generous land where confidence and truth reign.
Let us do your will – a cool breeze for those who sweat.
You are giving us our daily bread
when we manage to get back our lands or get a fairer wage.
Forgive us for keeping silent in the face of injustice and for burying our dreams.
Don't let us fall into the temptation of taking up the same arms as the enemy.
but deliver us from evil which disunites us
and we shall have believed in humanity and in life,
and we shall have known your kingdom
which is being built for ever and ever.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Honouring



1 S 2:6-8

Yahweh gives death and life,
brings down to Sheol and draws up;
Yahweh makes poor and rich,
humbles and also exalts.

Yahweh raises the poor from the dust,
lifting the needy from the dunghill
to give them a place with princes,
and assigning them a seat of honour;
for to Yahweh the props of the earth belong,
on these he has poised the world.

Med 143:2

Since it is your privilege to be employed in teaching, especially the poor, you ought, according to the spirit of your Institute, to have more consideration for these than for the rich.

Pope Francis

In Christianity, the attitude we must have towards the poor is, in its essence, that of true commitment. This commitment must be person to person, in the flesh. It is not enough to mediate this commitment through institutions, which obviously help because they have a multiplying effect, but that is not enough. They do not excuse us from our obligation of establishing personal contact with the needy. The sick must be cared for, even when we find them repulsive and repugnant. Those in prison must be visited.

The first attention we pay to poverty is assistance: "Are you hungry? Here - here is something to eat." But our aid cannot end there. We must build towards human promotion and integration in the community. The poor must not be perpetually marginalised. We cannot accept the underlying idea that "we who are doing well give something to those who are doing badly, but they should stay that way, far away from us." That is not Christian. It's indispensable that we integrate them into our community as soon as possible.

What is degrading to the poor is not giving them the oil that anoints them with dignity; a job. A poor man must not be looked at with disgust: he must be looked at in the eyes. Sometimes it may be uncomfortable but we have to be up to the task. The great danger - or great temptation - when aiding the poor, is falling into an attitude of protective paternalism that, at the end of the day, does not allow them to grow.



Seeking wholeness

Rm 5:3-5

But that is not all we can boast about; we can boast about our sufferings. These sufferings bring patience, as we know, and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us.

Med 139:1

You should pray then that there may be nothing in you displeasing in God's sight, since you have to instil God's holy love in the hearts of those whom you instruct.

A Sufi Story

One day Mullah Nasrudin had a visit from one of the villagers, Abdul Ali. Abdul told him a sad story. The wind had blown all his figs off the tree and they were too bruised to sell. His family would starve without the flour, rice and olive oil he had hoped to buy with the proceeds. Could Nasrudin possibly lend him some money? Just until the grape harvest?

Nasrudin pointed to a basket on a high shelf. "Help yourself, Abdul. Take what you need. But return it as soon as you can so that it can be used to help others."

"Of course", said Abdul, emptying every last coin from the basket. "You can depend on me. Allah be with you", and he departed.

The time of the grape harvest came and went – no Abdul. Four years passed before Nasrudin had another visit from him. About to thank him for returning the money, Nasrudin looked at him as he entered uneasily, eyes looking shiftily round the room, and so he waited. They talked of this and that and Abdul began to relax. Eventually he sighed, "Fate is against me. My goat has died and we have no milk. Unless I can buy a new goat my youngest child will die."

"See that basket on the high shelf? That is where I keep the money to help those in trouble." Abdul was up in a flash – but the basket was empty.

"Someone must have borrowed the money and not returned it", said Nasrudin sadly. Abdul fled - but could not go fast enough to escape the Mullah's warning. "Life is like that basket. A person cannot always be taking and never giving. Neither baskets nor lives fill themselves with treasure."



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Reconciling



Rm 3:23-26

Both Jew and pagan sinned and forfeited God's glory, and both are justified through the free gift of his grace by being redeemed in Christ Jesus who was appointed by God to sacrifice his life so as to win reconciliation through faith. In this way God makes his justice known; first, for the past, when sins went unpunished because he held his hand, then, for the present age, by showing positively that God is just, and justifies everyone who believes in Jesus.

Med 74:3

When God placed you in community a burden which is heavy to bear was imposed on you. And what is this burden if it is not the defects of your fellow Lasallians? Yet, no matter how heavy this may be, St. Paul insists that we must bear it. 'Bear the burden of one another's failings,' he says, 'then you will be fulfilling the law of Christ.' Have you grasped this lesson? Have you understood it perfectly? Then practise it.

Sheila & Bob Barrett

On a recent visit to Chester Cathedral we stumbled upon a modern design of a cross on the altar of the Lady Chapel. It was immediately recognisable as a cross, but was very different from the traditional crucifix, and challenged us into trying to understand what its creator was saying to us. At first its shape was so unusual that our original reaction was that it looked like some kind of coat hanger. We later found out that it was called a continuous cross, as it portrays downward and upward movement. We thought of it as a pathways cross; the pathway of Jesus, who in becoming human, descends from his home with the Father and reaches out to all human beings, drawing them upward to himself and towards his heavenly Father, showing them the pathway to the Father and to eternal life.



Looking at this amazing cross we were contemplating the whole mystery of the incarnation and our redemption. The pathways cross represents the love, mercy and forgiveness of God reaching down to us to embrace us in a reconciliation that ushers us into a new way of living. This cross shows us that through his birth, death and resurrection Jesus has become a bridge between earth and heaven so that united with him, in him and through him, each one of us is enabled to pass over from life to eternal life. And what is more, this movement in Jesus towards eternal life has already begun and is happening now.



Collaborating

Mt 15:34-38

Jesus said to them, 'How many loaves have you?' They said, 'Seven, and a few small fish.' Then he instructed the crowd to sit down on the ground, and he took the seven loaves and the fish, and after giving thanks he broke them and began handing them to the disciples, who gave them to the crowds. They all ate as much as they wanted, and they collected what was left of the scraps, seven baskets full. Now four thousand men had eaten, to say nothing of the women and children.

Álvaro

Association is our current form of ensuring the mission of the Institute in the world today, that is to say, of placing the means of salvation within the reach of the poor and, based on them, within the reach of children and young people. Thanks to the living out of association, thanks to the different groups that continue to spring up within the charism of De La Salle, the Lasallian mission is being carried out more profoundly and widely.

Nick Green

In 1998, I was on a Lasallian Developing World Project (LDWP) at St Mary's Secondary School in Nyeri, Kenya and I and the other group members could not fail to notice the number of youngsters (5 years old and upwards) roaming the streets and sniffing incessantly at small pots of glue. They were scruffy, aggressive, threatening and thieving. This growing phenomenon had not escaped the notice of Brother Dominic, headmaster of St Mary's. Just before the end of that project he had received the inspiration he was praying for. Discussions with fellow Kenyan Brothers and teachers at the school resulted in the children being approached directly by two of them and inviting them to come to school! The result was definitely a home win!

Three years later I had the privilege of returning to St Mary's with eleven more LDWP volunteers. Already there were thirty street kids boarding at the school. There were others attending classes on a day basis. Our 'project' was to help build a dormitory and classroom to accommodate another eighty street children!



Br Dominic Jordan (1940 - 2012), St Mary's, Kenya

It was undoubtedly the first time in their lives that they had been given the opportunity to go to school. Also, it was probably the first time they had experienced someone showing an interest in them for what they were - simply children. And it was a clear human illustration of what happens when someone holds out a hand of love and the one who grasps the hand realises what it feels like to be loved.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Peacemaking



Jn 14:27

Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

MTR 57

You can expect another reward which God will give you in advance in this life if you devote yourselves generously to your duty and, if through zeal and the grace of your state, you know how to strengthen your disciples in the Christian spirit. This is the very special satisfaction you will experience when they grow up and you see them living honourably and reverently, far from any unjust association and performing good deeds.

For the teaching you give them is not a mere matter of words, but accompanied by a great abundance of grace for those who respond well, which will maintain them in the practice of good.

Young Lasallians Peace Prayer

We pray to you Lord,
God of life and God of those who hope!
Listen to our prayer for the whole world:
for peace among all peoples,
for prosperity in all lands.
We pray to You that evil may be overcome
and that all wars may end.

We pray to You especially for the members
of our Lasallian Family,
who suffer from war, injustice and intolerance,
and for the children
and young people
who are poor and neglected.

We pray too, God, for peace in our lives;
in our towns, in our schools,
in our families and in our own hearts.
We pray for a peace that the world cannot give us.
We pray for a peace that will make us whole
and transform us into ambassadors of justice for Your sake.

Lord, give us your peace!



Hungering for justice

Hos 11:1-4

When Israel was a child I loved him,
and I called my son out of Egypt.
But the more I called to them, the further they went from me;
they have offered sacrifice to the Baals
and set their offerings smoking before the idols.
I myself taught Ephraim to walk,
I took them in my arms;
yet they have not understood that I was the one looking after them.
I led them with reins of kindness,
with leading-strings of love.
I was like someone who lifts an infant close against his cheek;
stooping down to him I gave him his food.

Let 15

Give thought to what you must do and pray to God about it.

Paul VI

Conscience, a new conscience for our times, is calling each of us to self-review. Am I really doing all I can to help the poor and hungry? Am I prepared to pay more taxes in order that the government can do more for development? Am I prepared to pay more in the shops for goods imported from abroad so that people who produce these goods are paid a decent wage? Am I prepared to leave my country to help the younger nations?... It is still true, today, to say that charity begins at home. But home, today, is all the world.

*Home, today,
is all the world.*

Pope Paul VI



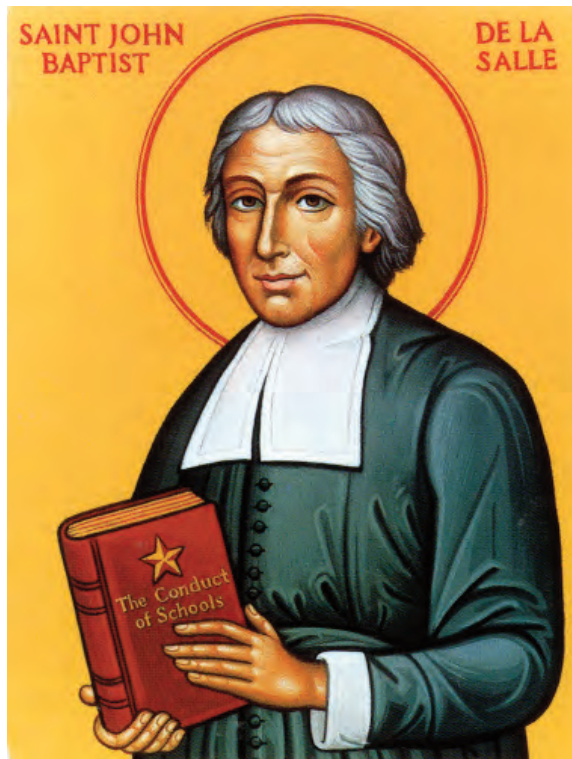
Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



Photo illustration by Al Cassidy provided courtesy of BrothersVocation.org

Theme 11

Being Educators, especially of youth



Contemporary icon of the St John Baptist De La Salle





Opening to God's word

Ep 6:14-17

So stand your ground, with truth buckled round your waist, and integrity for a breastplate, wearing for shoes on your feet the eagerness to spread the gospel of peace and always carrying the shield of faith so that you can use it to put out the burning arrows of the evil one. And then you must accept salvation from God to be your helmet and receive the word of God from the Spirit to use as a sword.

SAINT JOHN
BAPTIST

DE LA
SALLE

Med 171.3

Catechesis aims, therefore, at developing understanding of the mystery of Christ in the light of God's word so that the whole of a person's humanity is impregnated by that word. Changed by the working of grace into a new creature, the Christian thus sets himself to follow Christ and learns more and more within the Church to think like him, to judge like him, to act in conformity with his commandments, and to hope as he invites us to.

John Paul II

To put it more precisely: within the whole process of evangelisation, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavours to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know his 'mystery', the Kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and promises contained in his Gospel message, and the paths that he has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow him.

It is true that being a Christian means saying 'yes' to Jesus Christ, but let us remember that this 'yes' has two levels: it consists in surrendering to the word of God and relying on it, but it also means, at a later stage, endeavouring to know better and better the profound meaning of this word.



Acting in a Spirit of Faith

Allowing intimacy with God



Heb 1:1-4

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, has spoken to us through Jesus Christ, the Son appointed to inherit everything and through whom everything there is was made. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of God's nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty. So he is now as far above the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

Med 96.1

The star did not appear to the Magi in vain, for this sight caused them to receive the grace of God, and it made this day a day of salvation for them because they showed themselves most faithful to the divine inspiration. Are we attentive to the inspiration we receive from God?

A Lasallian Creed

I believe that one learns and discovers what it is to be an educator through contact with persons who are honest, generous and open.
I believe that one cannot be an educator without believing in humanity, personal needs, ethical responsibility.
I believe that educators who are no longer willing to be companions and friends, growing in knowledge and esteem, risk becoming incapable of fulfilling their mission.
I believe that it is a blessing to be allowed to collaborate with God so that students may discover the joy of being themselves.
I believe that the most beautiful thing the educator can do is to believe in the work of God and in the most beautiful creation from his hands, the humanity of students.
I believe that my performance and plans are rooted in Jesus who was the teacher.
I believe that being an educator gives my life meaning.
I believe and I hope.



Trusting

Ps 37:3-6, 23-24

Trust in Yahweh and do what is good,
make your home in the land and live in peace;
make Yahweh your only joy
and he will give you what your heart desires.

Commit your fate to Yahweh,
trust in him and he will act:
making your virtue clear as the light,
your integrity as bright as the noon.

Yahweh guides a man's steps,
they are sure, and he takes pleasure in his progress;
he may fall, but never fatally,
since Yahweh supports him by the hand.

George Van Grieken

The Lasallian spirituality of education calls forth ten basic operative commitments that are based on foundational Lasallian convictions rooted in the writings of St. John Baptist de La Salle, and they are manifested in consistent practices throughout the schools for the past 300+ years. One of those basic commitments is *Trusting Providence in Discerning God's Will*.

De La Salle confidently rested in a complete and radical trust in God's providential care for him, for the Institute, and for its work of education. Lasallian teachers share this radical trust by recognizing God's face in every school or classroom situation. In a Lasallian School self-sufficiency is not the final voice. The work is God's work, first and last.

Teresa of Avila

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Being a disciple



Heb 12:1-8, 11

With so many witnesses in a great cloud on every side of us, we too, then, should throw off everything that hinders us, especially the sin that clings so easily, and keep running steadily in the race we have started. Let us not lose sight of Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which was still in the future, he endured the cross, disregarding the shameful of it, and from now on has taken his place at the right of God's throne. Think of the way he stood such opposition from sinners and then you will not give up for want of courage. In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to keep fighting to the point of death.

Have you forgotten that encouraging text in which you are addressed as children? *My child, when the Lord corrects you, do not treat it lightly; but do not get discouraged when you are reprimanded. For the Lord trains the loved ones and punishes all those he acknowledges as children.* Suffering is part of your training; you are being treated as God's children. Has there ever been any child whose father did not train him? Of course, any punishment is most painful at the time, and far from pleasant; but later, in those on whom it has been used, it bears fruit in peace and goodness.

Med 87:2

It is your happiness to have been chosen by God to make known Jesus Christ and to announce His coming. This being so, admire the goodness of God, but remember "that you must be true to your faith, grounded in it, firmly established in it." (Col 1:22-23)

Deborah Sawyer

Discipleship, its meaning and challenge, is the central theme of each of the four gospels. The evangelists were prompted to produce their accounts in contexts of extreme persecution, which demanded faith of a kind that could face, and even embrace, martyrdom. The gospels, each theologically crafted to meet the needs of its own unique community, were produced to feed and nurture this radical faith. The disciples-as they are characterised in the gospels- present a mirror to their audiences, allowing them to see themselves in the reaction of the 12 to Jesus' ministry. They are weak, cowardly, guilt-ridden, and yet they can be transformed into the fearless, heroic and charismatic figures recounted in the Acts of the Apostles.





Receiving and responding

Pr 4:1-9

Listen, my children, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. When I was a child in my father's house, still tender; and an only child of my mother, he taught me and said, 'Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live. Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honour you. She will set a garland of grace on your head and present you with a crown of splendour.

Med 115.3

You must consider the obligation you have to win the hearts of the children as one of the principal means to lead them to live in a Christian manner. Often reflect that if you fail to use this means, you will drive them away from God instead of drawing them closer.

James Beattie

I agree with Rousseau, that the aim of education should be to teach us, rather, *how* to think, than *what* to think; rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with thoughts of other people. It is true, that a mind prepared by proper discipline for making discoveries of its own, is in a much higher state of cultivation than that of a mere student who knows nothing but what has been taught. The latter resembles a granary, which may be, indeed, filled with corn, but can yield no more than it has received; the former may be likened to a fruitful field, which is ever in a condition to bring riches and plenty, and multiplies an hundredfold every grain that has been committed to it.

You have to win the hearts of the children.

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Embracing uncertainty



Ps 124

If Yahweh had not been on our side — let Israel repeat it —
if Yahweh had not been on our side when they attacked us,
they would have swallowed us alive and burnt us to death in their rage.

The waters would have closed over us, the torrent have swept us away,
either would have drowned us in their turbulent waves.

Blessed be Yahweh who did not let us fall a victim to those teeth,
who let us escape like birds from the fowler's net.

The net was torn and we escaped;
our help is in the name of Yahweh, who made heaven and earth.

MEL 4

When an initiative becomes an innovation — something you can never predict — it always challenges without warning or wanting to, the educational and ecclesial scene and positions adopted by the District. It is always accompanied by argument and disturbance, because everyone's personal view of life is once again called into question. And the same old well-known pairs of words constantly return:

Persons/structures; rich/poor; create/administer; creation/heritage; raised hopes/means to be found; work with our own means/offer our services to other organisations; assume leadership/participate in a general project; have our own houses/work in other people's houses; organise the whole of the system/make available one or two of our skills...

Innovation always awakens good arguments but also old fears that have died out. Once again, people are called upon to assess their own values, to assess their human, Christian and religious lives and try, each one at his own level, to open themselves to something new, to new ways of being faithful.

Ronald Rolheiser

Nobody dies having had it all. In this life there is no finished symphony. We are built for the infinite and nobody, nor any achievement, can ever make us completely whole.

We will always be lonely, restless, incomplete, still waiting (as Plato says) for that great embrace, for that unique immortality, and for real contemplation of the divine.

Our Faith needs to give us the tools to handle that, namely, to help us come to grips with the fact that we live and die in incompleteness. Being lonely, having always to wait, and finding ourselves ultimately sleeping alone is our human lot. We have to make peace with that. If we do, we will be generous and happy. If we don't, we will be selfish and demanding.





Risking

Ps 16:1,5-8

Look after me, God, I take shelter in you.

Yahweh, my heritage, my cup,
you, and you only, hold my lot secure;
the measuring line marks out delightful places for me,
for me the heritage is superb indeed.
I bless Yahweh, who is my counsellor,
and in the night my inmost self instructs me
I keep Yahweh before me always,
for with Yahweh at my right hand nothing can shake me.

DE LA
SALLE

Med 113.1

It is your happiness to labour for the instruction of the poor, and to fulfil a ministry which is esteemed and honoured by those who truly have the Christian spirit. Thank God for having called you to such a state which is so sanctifying for yourself, and so beneficial to others, but which, at the same time, has nothing brilliant about it in the eyes of the world, and indeed is often humiliating for those who are in it.

Sean Sellors

In these times our need to protect and safeguard young people is recognised and understood. There are dangers, though, that we can become totally 'risk averse' as we profess to care for these same young people.

We have some powerful models to help us as we reflect upon our attitudes towards young people and the manner in which we should be prepared to reach out to them, sometimes in the face of opposition.

Jesus discouraged His followers from turning away children who wanted to approach Him. Children counted for little in the society of that time but Jesus gave an unmistakable message that "the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these". Indeed, he said that adults need to embrace a new way forward by becoming like little children."

John Baptist De La Salle surrendered his own security in the interests of young people who were suffering great deprivation. He risked all in giving away his own possessions and career advancement to take up their cause.

And, in our own day, as security guards and senior clergy worried over a youngster who wanted to remain with Pope Francis, to hold his hand, to sit on his special seat, it was the Pope himself who instructed that the youngster should be permitted to stay and share the moment with him.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Recognising a shared spirit and a shared humanity



Ps 8

Yahweh, our Lord,
how great your name throughout the earth!

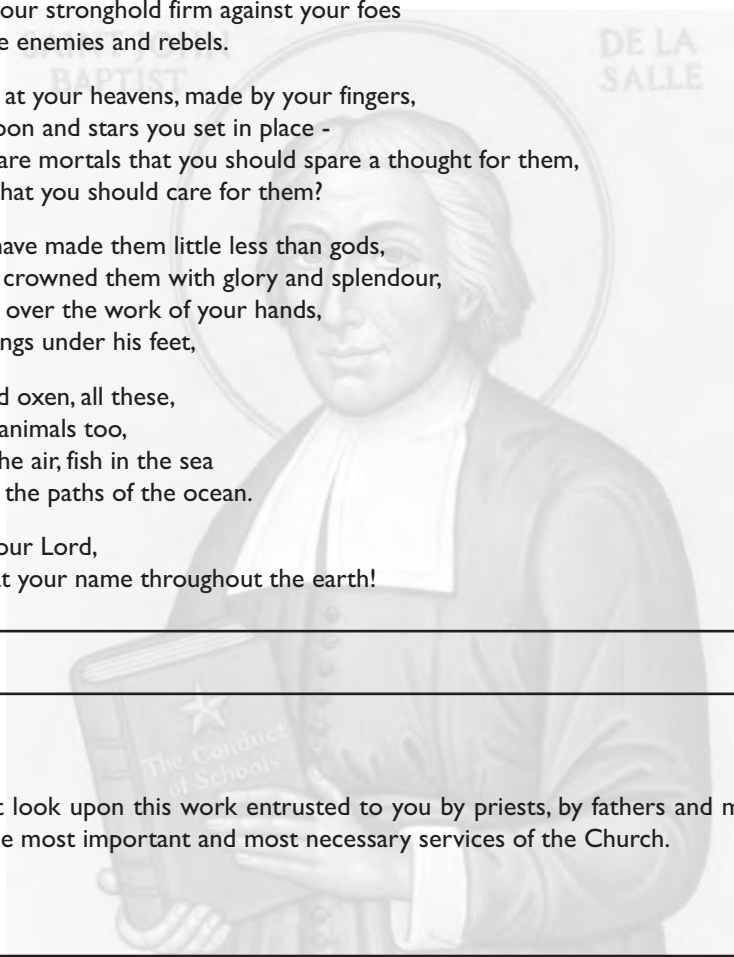
Above the heavens is your majesty
chanted by the mouths of children, babes in arms.
You set your stronghold firm against your foes
to subdue enemies and rebels.

I look up at your heavens, made by your fingers,
at the moon and stars you set in place -
ah, what are mortals that you should spare a thought for them,
humans that you should care for them?

Yet you have made them little less than gods,
you have crowned them with glory and splendour,
Set them over the work of your hands,
set all things under his feet,

sheep and oxen, all these,
yes, wild animals too,
birds in the air, fish in the sea
travelling the paths of the ocean.

Yahweh, our Lord,
how great your name throughout the earth!



Med 199.1

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

Joyce Rupp

I used to keep my spiritual life in a tight space and felt that my work, my relational joys and struggles actually kept me away from God rather than teaching me and being sources of personal transformation for me. Now I see all of this differently. I have come to believe that every part of my life affects or influences my life with God. The world I live in, with its beauty and tragedy, with its creatures of all forms and shapes, is constantly offering me messages about who I am and who God is. Everything and everyone teaches me about God, life and myself.

I try now to approach each person, event, creature with two questions: how are you my teacher? What am I meant to learn?



Living hopefully

I Kg 17:10-14

So he went off to Sidon. And when he reached the city gate, there was a widow gathering sticks; addressing her he said, 'Please bring a little water in a vessel for me to drink.' She was setting off to bring it when he called after her: 'Please,' he said, 'bring me a scrap of bread in your hand.' 'As Yahweh your God lives,' she replied, 'I have no baked bread, but only a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in a jug; I am just gathering a stick or two to go and prepare this for myself and my son to eat, and then we shall die.' But Elijah said to her, 'Do not be afraid, go and do as you have said; but first make a little scone of it for me and bring it to me, and then make some for yourself and for your son. For thus Yahweh speaks, the God of Israel: "Jar of meal shall not be spent, jug of oil shall not be emptied, before the day when Yahweh sends rain on the face of the earth".'

Med 34:3

...whereas servants of God, whose joy does not depend upon external circumstances but has its sources from within them, are not affected by what occurs, no matter how disagreeable it may be, for this does not penetrate deep down into the interior recesses of their hearts, except insofar as they allow their external senses to influence them. The happiness of the just flows from the love of God which fills their hearts.

St John Chrysostom

What is a greater work than to direct the minds and form the character of the young? I hold, with certainty, that no painter, no statuary, nor any other artist does such excellent work as the one who moulds the minds of the young.

What is a greater work than to direct the minds and form the character of the young?

St John Chrysostom



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Celebrating



Ps 128

Happy, all those who fear Yahweh and follow in Yahweh's paths.

You will eat what your hands have worked for, happiness and prosperity will be yours.
Your wife: a fruitful vine on the inner walls of your house.
Your sons: round your table like shoots round an olive tree.

Such are the blessings that fall on those who fear Yahweh.
May Yahweh bless you from Zion all the days of your life!
May you see Jerusalem prosperous and live to see your children's children!

Peace to Israel!

Med 134.2

Strive to manifest as much kindness and love for the children whom you instruct as St. Barnabas showed for those whom he sought to convert. The greater the tenderness you show for the members of Jesus Christ and of the Church, the more wonderful will be the effects of grace which God will produce in them.

John Johnston

As Brothers we accept our students and pupils 'where they are' - not where we think they should be, not where we were when we were their age, not where our past pupils were in the 60s, 70s and 80s. We welcome them with their questions, convictions, perplexities, concerns, hopes, fears, anger, frustrations. We respect them, accompany them, walk side by side with them. We share with them what we 'see', but in total respect for their liberty. We never try to impose our views upon them.

*Our students -
we respect them,
accompany them,
walk side by side with them.*

John Johnston



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

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

I Pt 1:22-25

You have been obedient to the truth and purified your souls until you can love like friends, in sincerity; let your love for each other be real and from the heart — your new birth was not from any mortal seed but from the everlasting word of the living and eternal God. All flesh is grass and its glory like the wild flower's. The grass withers, the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains for ever. What is this word? It is the Good News that has been brought to you.

MEL 7

[Lasallian] teachers anticipate student needs and act on them whether those needs are physical, intellectual, emotional, social or moral. The focus is looking for the good in all, nurturing it and rewarding it.

Parents are allies. Teachers should be available to parents and communication is balanced between the negatives and the positives. Parents should be encouraged to take an active role in their children's learning.

Teachers and administrators are empowered to make decisions at the school level and at the classroom level, but still working together to move forward.

Mary Lavin

The Christian Spirit is something so precious that if you knew what it was you'd give up everything else you ever knew, in order to give yourself to it completely. Perhaps we can never fully know what it is, instead it comes in tiny flashes of inspiration: in other people, in a piece of music or a poem we heard once and associate with good times. It's in the bravery, the kindness, and the selfless acts that stand out a mile amongst the journey we are continually making. It's even in the mistakes we make – in fact those cracks leave all the more room for it. It gives us signposts, landmarks. And though it may only appear as a ripple in the ocean, it can sometimes leave devastating effects, which change the way we think and act forever.

The focus is looking for the good in all, nurturing it and rewarding it.

Mel 7



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



Hos 6:1-6

'Come, let us return to Yahweh.
He has torn us to pieces, but will heal us;
Yahweh has struck us down, but will bandage our wounds;
after a day or two will bring us back to life,
on the third day will raise us
and we shall live in the presence of Yahweh.
Let us set ourselves to know Yahweh;
who will come as certain as the dawn,
whose judgement will rise like the light.
who will come to us as showers come,
like spring rains watering the earth.'

What am I to do with you, Ephraim?
What am I to do with you, Judah?
This love of yours is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that quickly disappears.
This is why I have torn them to pieces by the prophets,
why I slaughtered them with the words from my mouth,
since what I want is love, not sacrifice; knowledge of God, not holocausts.

Med 41.3

Strive to know God so well through reading and prayer that you may be able to make God known to and loved by others.

Teresa of Calcutta

If you really belong to the work that has been entrusted to you, then you must do it with your whole heart. And you can bring salvation only by being honest and really working with God. It is not how much we are doing but how much love, how much honesty, how much faith, is put into doing it. It makes no difference what we are doing. What you are doing, I cannot do, and what I am doing, you cannot do. But all of us are doing what God has given us to do. Only sometimes we forget and spend more time looking at somebody else and wishing we were doing something else.

We waste our time thinking of tomorrow and today we let the day pass and yesterday is gone.





Building community

Ps 133

How good, how delightful it is for all to live together as friends:

fine as oil on the head, running down the beard,
running down Aaron's beard to the collar of his robes;

copious as a Hermon dew falling on the heights of Zion,
where Yahweh confers blessing, and everlasting life.

Med 65.2

Never speak to anyone except with kindness, and if you fear to speak otherwise, keep silent.

Nicholas Henshall

Each time we have a parish retreat, I am struck in the first session by how many people just do not know each other, even though they are members of the same Christian community. Encounter has to be the key to building community, and resources in prayer and teaching can help us to interact.

A parish retreat weekend is always special, a unique experience of community and encounter. But it is a gift for sharing. The last word at the end of each retreat is always an invitation to go home to share this in a way that builds community there. That's why the Sunday Eucharist ends with a special dismissal from the deacon, quoting the words ascribed to Saint Augustine:

"You are to be taken, blessed, broken and distributed that the work of the Incarnation may go forward."

*Never speak to anyone
except with kindness.*

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Living our commitment



Ex 4:10-17

Moses said to Yahweh, 'But, my Lord, never in my life have I been a man of eloquence, either before or since you have spoken to your servant. I am a slow speaker and not able to speak well.' 'Who gave humans their mouths?' Yahweh answered him. 'Who makes them dumb or deaf, gives them sight or leaves him blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? Now go, I shall help you to speak and tell you what to say.'

'If it please you, my Lord,' Moses replied 'send anyone you will!' At this, the anger of Yahweh blazed out against Moses, and said to him, 'There is your brother Aaron the Levite, is there not? I know that he is a good speaker. Here he comes to meet you. When he sees you, his heart will be full of joy. You will speak to him and tell him what message to give. I shall help you to speak, and him too, and instruct you what to do. He himself is to speak to the people in your place; he will be your mouthpiece, and you will be as the god inspiring him. And take this staff into your hand; with this you will perform the signs.'

Letter 91

I do not fail, nor shall I fail, to pray to God for you, my very dear friend, that you may be kept faithful to your vocation. Indeed, you need God to sustain you in it.

Paul VI

Young people listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses.

Young people listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers.

Paul IV



Being a communion of saints

Ac 4:8-12

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, addressed them, 'Rulers of the people, and elders! If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple and asking us how we were healed, you must know, all of you, and the whole people of Israel, that it is by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, and God raised from the dead, by this name and by no other that this man stands before you cured. This is the stone which you, the builders, rejected but which has become the cornerstone. Only in him is there salvation; for of all the names in the world given to anyone, this is the only one by which we can be saved.'

Med 155.1

Look upon your work as one of the most important and most excellent in the Church, for it is one most able to strengthen it by giving it a solid foundation.

Thomas Groome

The most frequent title of address for Jesus in the Gospels is "teacher" (didaskalos in all four and also Rabbi in John). He frequently referred to himself as a teacher, and more than fifty times in the Gospels describes his work as teaching. Scripture scholars often summarize Jesus' life work - in word and deed - as one great act of teaching.

From his first appearance in public (see Mk 1.14-15), Jesus made clear that he intended to teach people how to live for the reign of God — with love and compassion, peace and justice, holiness and freedom. His ultimate intent was that all people might come to fullness of life — here and hereafter for eternity. 'I have come that you may have life and have it to the full.' (Jn 10.10). No educator ever had a more spiritual purpose than Jesus.

The final mandate of the risen Christ to the assembled community was 'go teach' how to live as people of God (Mt 28.16-20). It would seem that all disciples are educators to teach as Jesus did.

Many great educators of the contemporary era echo the ancient sentiment that education has an ultimate purpose, and should be for life for all. The great Italian reformer Maria Montessori (1870-1952), whose significance for early childhood education is unparalleled, described teaching as '*practicing the great art of companionship*' in order to draw out '*life already within*' the child. For Montessori, education should enable learners to grow in responsible freedom and boundless creativity.

With similar grandeur of purpose John Dewey (1859-1952) wrote in his Pedagogic Creed, 'I believe that the teacher always is the prophet of the true God, and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God.'



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Witnessing



Rm 8:14-17

All who are guided by the spirit of God are children of God; for what you received was not the spirit of slavery to bring you back into fear; you received the spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry out, 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit joins with our spirit to bear witness that we are the children of God. And if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, provided that we share his suffering, so as to share his glory.

MTR 1.1

Just as Jesus commanded light to shine out of darkness, so he himself kindles a light in the hearts of those destined to announce his word to children, so that they may be able to enlighten those children by unveiling for them the glory of God.

Pope Francis

We need saints without cassocks, without veils.
We need saints with jeans and tennis shoes.
We need saints that go to the movies,
that listen to music, that hang out with their friends.

We need saints that place God in first place
ahead of succeeding in any career.
We need saints that look for time to pray every day.

We need saints – saints for the twenty-first century
with a spirituality appropriate to our new time.
We need saints that have a commitment to helping the poor
and to make the needed social change.

We need saints to live in the world, to sanctify the world
and not be afraid of living in the world by their presence in it.
We need saints that drink Coca-Cola, that eat hot dogs,
that surf the Internet and listen to their iPods.

We need saints who are in this world
and who know how to enjoy the best of this world
without being callous or mundane.
We need saints.





Serving as mission

I Pet 4:10-11

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.

Álvaro Echeverría

The Founder often invites us, especially in the Meditations for the Time of Retreat, to consider ourselves as God's ministers and dispensers of his mysteries. This is one of the most wonderful dimensions of our mission. *You must not doubt that it is a great gift of God, this grace he has given to you to be entrusted with the instruction of children, to announce the Gospel to them and to bring them up in the spirit of religion*
(MTR 9.1)

Evangelii Gaudium

We are living in an information-driven society which bombards us indiscriminately with data - all treated as being of equal importance - and which leads to remarkable superficiality in the area of moral discernment. In response, we need to provide an education which teaches critical thinking and encourages the development of mature moral values.

A great gift
to be entrusted with
the instruction of children.

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Accompanying



Tb 11:1-14

They were nearly at Kaserin, opposite Nineveh, when Raphael said, 'You know the plight in which we left your father; let us go on ahead of your wife and prepare the house ourselves while she travels behind with the others.' They went on together (Raphael had warned Tobias to take the gall with him) and the dog followed them.

Anna was sitting, watching the road by which her son would come. She was sure at once it must be he and said to the father, 'Here comes your son, with his companion.'

Raphael said to Tobias before he reached his father, 'I give you my word that your father's eyes will open. You must put the fish's gall to his eyes; the medicine will smart and will draw a filmy white skin off his eyes. And your father will be able to see and look on the light.'

The mother ran forward and threw her arms round her son's neck. 'Now I can die,' she said. 'I have seen you again.' And she wept. Tobit rose to his feet and stumbled across the courtyard through the door. Tobias came on towards him (he had the fish's gall in his hand). He blew into his eyes and said, steadying him, 'Take courage, father!' With this he applied the medicine, left it there a while, then with both hands peeled away a filmy skin from the corners of his eyes. Then his father fell on his neck and wept. He exclaimed, 'I can see, my son, the light of my eyes!' And he said,

'Blessed be God!
Blessed be his great name!
Blessed be all his holy angels!
Blessed be his great name for evermore!'

J. Johnston

To be people of faith is to live a relationship with the Holy Spirit, who leads us as Jesus was led, as was our Founder; the Spirit whose gifts make it possible for us to manifest Christ to those confided to our care; the Spirit whose presence and gifts will enable us to touch hearts.

Gaudium et Spes

We may justly say that the future of humanity lies in the hands of those strong enough to provide future generations with reasons for living and hoping.



Being good shepherds

Ezk 34:7-16

Well then, shepherds, hear the word of Yahweh. As I live, I swear it — it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks — since my flock has been looted and for lack of a shepherd is now the prey of any wild animal, since my shepherds have stopped bothering about my flock, since my shepherds feed themselves rather than my flock, in view of all this, shepherds, hear the word of Yahweh. The Lord Yahweh says this: I am going to call the shepherds to account. I am going to take my flock back from them and I shall not allow them to feed my flock. In this way the shepherds will stop feeding themselves. I shall rescue my sheep from their mouths; they will not prey on them any more.

For the Lord Yahweh says this: I am going to look after my flock myself and keep all of it in view. As a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when he stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view. I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness. I shall bring them out of the countries where they are; I shall gather them together from foreign countries and bring them back to their own land. I shall pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in every inhabited place in the land. I shall feed them in good pasturage; the high mountains of Israel will be their grazing ground. There they will rest in good grazing ground; they will browse in rich pastures on the mountains of Israel. I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest - it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them.

Med 193:2

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.

John Wesley

Do all the good you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Honouring

Mc 18:5-6

Jesus said, 'Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith in me would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great millstone round their neck.'

MTR 9:2

Let your zeal give tangible proof that you love those whom God has entrusted to you just as Jesus Christ has loved his church. Help them enter truly into the structure of this building and be able one day to come before Jesus Christ full of glory, without stain, or wrinkle, or blemish. In this way God will be able to display to the ages that are to come the great wealth of his favour to them, which he accomplished by procuring for them the help of education. It is for you to give them this education and training, so that they may become heirs of the kingdom of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Pablo Casals

To be a teacher is to have a great responsibility. The teacher helps shape and give direction to the lives of other human beings. What is more important, graver, than that? Children and young people are our greatest treasure; when we think of them we think of the future of the world. Then consider the significance of nurturing their minds, of helping them form their outlook on the world, of training and preparing them for the work that they will do. I can think of no profession more important than that of teaching.

Children and young people are our greatest treasure; when we think of them we think of the future of the world.

Pablo Casals





Seeking wholeness

Rv 22:16-18

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to make these revelations to you for the sake of the churches. I am of David's line, the root of David and the bright star of the morning. The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come'. Let everyone who listens answer, 'Come'. Then let all who are thirsty come: all who want it may have the water of life, and have it free. This is my solemn warning to all who hear the prophecies in this book: if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him every plague mentioned in the book.

Med 50.2

It is incomprehensible that people who are born for heaven, who have promised in baptism to lead a holy life, should neglect the means furnished them by God to achieve holiness, and especially the chief one, the communion of the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Helder Camara

The important thing is to begin again, humbly and courageously, after every fall. When the not truly humble fall, they are crushed. "How could I possibly have fallen? It's unbelievable! How shameful! I cannot accept it!" The truly humble laugh at themselves without any bitterness. No surprise. No astonishment. The important thing is not to waste any time in standing up and beginning anew. At the great judgement the Lord may say to someone: "How horrible! You fell a million times!" But all is salvaged if that person can say: "Yes Lord, it really is frightful! But your grace helped me get back on my feet quickly a million and one times."

The important thing is to begin again, humbly and courageously, after every fall.

Helder Camara



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Reconciling



2 Cor 2:5-10

Someone has been the cause of pain; and the cause of pain not to me, but to some degree — not to overstate it — to all of you. The punishment already imposed by the majority on the person in question is enough; and the best thing now is to give them your forgiveness and encouragement, or they might break down from so much misery. So I am asking you to give some definite proof of your love for them. What I really wrote for, after all, was to test you and see whether you are completely obedient. Anybody that you forgive, I forgive; and as for my forgiving anything - if there has been anything to be forgiven, I have forgiven it for your sake in the presence of Christ.

Med 113.2

As Christ 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.

Eucharistic Prayer

Father, you never cease to call us to a new and more abundant life.
God of love and mercy, you are always ready to forgive;
we are sinners, and you invite us to trust in your mercy.

Time and time again we broke your covenant,
but you did not abandon us.
Instead, through your Son, Jesus our Lord,
you bound yourself even more closely to the human family
by a bond that can never be broken.

Now is the time for your people to turn back to you
and to be renewed in Christ your Son,
a time of grace and reconciliation.
You invite us to serve the family of mankind
by opening our hearts to the fullness of your Holy Spirit.



Collaborating

Rm 8:18-27

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God's children to be revealed. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free. For we must be content to hope that we shall be saved — our salvation is not in sight, we should not have to be hoping for it if it were — but, as I say, we must hope to be saved since we are not saved yet — it is something we must wait for with patience.

The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what the Spirit means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

Med 138.2

Though you do not have the grace of being the Precursor of Jesus Christ like St John the Baptist, you do possess the grace of being a successor in his ministry.

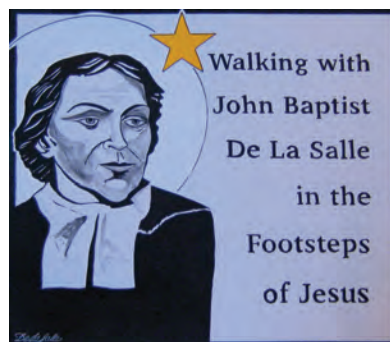
Michel Quoist

The bricklayer laid a brick on the bed of cement. Then with a precise stroke of his trowel spread another layer. And without a by-your-leave, laid on another brick. The foundations grew visibly. The building rose, tall and strong, to shelter people. I thought, Lord, of that brick buried in the darkness at the base of the big building. No one sees it but it accomplishes its task, and other bricks need it.

Lord, what difference if I am on the rooftop or in the foundations of your building, as long as I stand faithfully at the right place.

*You do possess the grace
of being a successor
in his ministry.*

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Peacemaking

Is 52:7-10

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

Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices, they shout for joy together, for they see Yahweh face to face, as Yahweh returns to Zion.

Break into shouts of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem; for Yahweh is consoling the people, redeeming Jerusalem.

The holy arm of Yahweh is bared in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Med 31.2

As interior peace proceeds from charity, nothing is more certain to destroy it than that which separates us from God. But 'who will separate us from the love of Christ?' asks St Paul. 'Will affliction?' that is to say, interior or exterior trials, 'or persecution', which may befall our community or ourselves in particular. Nothing of all this will disturb our interior peace if it is firmly established, because nothing herein can make us lose charity.

Charter of the United Nations

We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in greater freedom, and for those ends to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion and social advancement of all peoples, have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.





Hungering for justice

LK 17:7-10

Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to them when they returned from the fields, 'Come and have your meal immediately'? Would they not be more likely to say, 'Get my supper laid; make yourself tidy and wait on me while I eat and drink. You can eat and drink yourself afterwards'? Must you be grateful to the servant for doing what they were told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, 'We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty.'

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST

DE LA SALLE

V Kingston

I think it is essential to keep reminding ourselves of the basis of all our stirrings for Justice in our world and for the Peace that is the fruit of Justice, namely that every human person is made in the image and likeness of God, is a child of God, and therefore sacred and of infinite worth... Respect for the dignity of each human being, together with consideration of the corresponding responsibilities to these rights, are what Justice is about.

H Scott Holland

This is the poverty which is an outrage on man, and an insult to God. Far from accepting it as a preparation for the kingdom of Heaven we have, in the name of that kingdom, to demand that it may be swept off the face of the earth and be never again seen. For, indeed, it wars against the coming of that kingdom. It robs men and women, who fall under its degradation, of the power of leisure to exercise the faculties by which the kingdom can be recognised. It forbids them the opportunity of responding to its call. It keeps them down beyond the level of that spiritual growth, which would feel after the kingdom, and would foretell its arrival. It preoccupies the soul with the burden of physical necessities and with the terror of their failing. It means, so far as it can work its evil will, spiritual impotence: death.

And, therefore, we have but one duty towards it — to learn, by steady patient study, how best to do away with it — to cancel its right to exist — to sweep its place clean. It is a type of poverty which cannot be justified or tolerated by a society that names the name of Jesus Christ. For it wrecks the body, and lowers the life, and kills the soul. We may not rest, until we have found out how to heal and end it.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Theme 12

Touching and Inspiring hearts with the Christian spirit



John Baptist De La Salle

This painting was discovered in 1956; artist unknown.





Opening to God's word

Mt 13:44-46

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.

Med 67.1

The life of your soul should be the life of God's very self. Nourish yourself by thinking of the presence of God as often as you possibly can.

R S Thomas

The Bright Field

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
the treasure in it. I realise now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying

on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

*Nourish yourself by thinking of
the presence of God
as often as you possibly can.*

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Allowing intimacy with God



W's 3:1-9

But the souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God;
no torment shall ever touch them.
In the eyes of the unwise, they appeared to die,
their going looked like a disaster,
their leaving us like annihilation;
but they are in peace.
If they experienced punishment as others see it,
their hope was rich with immortality;
their affliction was slight, their blessings will be great.
They have been put to the test and found worthy to be with God.
They were tested like gold in a furnace, and accepted as a holocaust.
When the time comes for God's visitation they will shine out;
as sparks run through the stubble, so will they.
They shall judge nations, rule over peoples,
and the Lord will be their ruler for ever.
They who trust in God will understand the truth,
those who are faithful will live in love;
for grace and mercy await those who have been chosen.

Med 180.3

You can perform several miracles in regard both to yourselves and your work: in your own regard, by an entire fidelity to grace... and in regard to your work, by touching the hearts of the children entrusted to your care... Such are the miracles God gives you the power to perform, and which are asked of you.

Ann Lewin

He's grown, that Baby.
Not that many people have noticed.
He still looks the same,
Lying there in the straw, with
Animals and shepherds looking on.
He's safe there, locked in that moment
Where time met Eternity.

Reality of course is different,
He grew up, astonished people with his
Insight, disturbed them with
Ideas that stretched them into
New maturity.

Some found him
Much too difficult to cope with,
Nailed him down to fit their
Narrow minds.

We are more subtle,
Keep him helpless,
Refuse to let him be the Man he is,
Adore him as the Christmas Baby,
Eternally unable to grow up
Until we set him free.

By all means let us pause there
At the stable, and
Marvel at the miracle of birth.
But we'll never get to know
God with us, until we learn
To find him at the Inn,
A fellow guest who shares the joy and
sorrow,
The Host who is the life we celebrate.

He's grown, that Baby.





Trusting

Lk 7:1-10

When he had come to the end of all he wanted the people to hear, he went into Capernaum. A centurion there had a servant, a favourite of his, who was sick and near death. Having heard about Jesus he sent some Jewish elders to him to ask him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus they pleaded earnestly with him. 'He deserves this of you,' they said, 'because he is friendly towards our people; in fact, he is the one who built the synagogue.' So Jesus went with them, and was not very far from the house when the centurion sent word to him by some friends: 'Sir,' he said, 'do not put yourself to trouble; because I am not worthy to have you under my roof; and for this same reason I did not presume to come to you myself; but give the word and let my servant be cured. For I am under authority myself, and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man: Go, and he goes; to another: Come here, and he comes; to my servant: Do this, and he does it.' When Jesus heard these words he was astonished at him and, turning round, said to the crowd following him, 'I tell you, not even in Israel have I found faith like this.' And when the messengers got back to the house they found the servant in perfect health.

Let 14

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

Julian of Norwich

He said not: thou shalt not be tempted,
thou shalt not be travailed,
thou shalt not be afflicted;
but he said: thou shalt not be overcome.

*I tell you,
not even in Israel
have I found faith like this.*

Jesus



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Being a disciple

Jn 21:15-19

After the meal Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others do?' He answered, 'Yes Lord, you know I love you'. Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs'. A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He replied, 'Yes, Lord, you know I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Look after my sheep.' Then he said to him a third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was upset that he asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' and said, 'Lord, you know everything; you know I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. I tell you most solemnly, when you were young you put on your own belt and walked where you liked; but when you grow old you will stretch out your hands, and somebody else will put a belt round you and take you where you would rather not go.' In these words he indicated the kind of death by which Peter would give glory to God. After this he said, 'Follow me'.

Med 135.2

You are obliged in your work to teach the truths of faith to your disciples and to instruct them in their religion. In order to fulfil well this duty, you should consecrate yourself entirely and even, if necessary, give your life. Is this how you act? Do you have this generous disposition?

Raniero Contalmessa

The world has made it increasingly difficult to believe in love. Whoever has been betrayed or wounded once, is afraid to love or to be loved, because that person knows how much it can hurt to discover oneself betrayed again. So, the ranks of those who are unable to believe in the love of God increases more and more; indeed, to believe in any love. Disenchantment and cynicism are the hallmarks of our secularised culture. On a personal level, then, there is the experience of our poverty and misery which makes us say: "Yes, this love of God is beautiful, but it is not for me! I am not worthy ..."

Humanity needs to know that God loves humanity and no one is better suited than the disciples of Christ to bring them this good news. Others, in the world, share with Christians the fear of God, concern for social justice and respect for the person, the commitment to peace and tolerance; but no one – I repeat no one – except the Bible says to the human person that they are loved by God, first, and with merciful love and love of desire: with eros and agape.



Receiving and responding

Ps 131

My heart is not proud, O Yahweh,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.
But I have stilled and quietened my soul;
like a weaned child with its mother,
like a weaned child is my soul within me.

O Israel, put your hope in Yahweh.
both now and for evermore.

Med 110.3

You ought to have as great a care and affection for the children entrusted to you as St Joseph had for the welfare of the child Jesus, since you are commissioned by God to look after these children.

Syrian Liturgy

Strengthen for service Lord,
the hands that have taken holy things.
May the ears that have heard your word
be deaf to clamour and dispute.
May the eyes that have seen your great love
be bright with the light of hope.
May the tongues that have sung your praise
also speak your truth.
May the feet that have walked in your house
ever walk in the light.
May the bodies that have been fed by your living body
be restored to newness of life. Amen

*You are commissioned by God
to look after these children.*

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Embracing uncertainty

Ph 4:4-9

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. Finally, friends, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Let 102

Take care not to let yourself be discouraged by anxiety and ailments: life is full of them.

Anon.

You sing on
even if the voice is quiet.
If it is within,
it is heard.
You are known, sensed experienced,
a small wind
rippling the larger lake.
You, tiny
are immense.
Your breath alters the mist,
the pebble under your foot
adds to the universe of dust
whirling to meet cosmic need.
You, who have come from the before
are here in the now,
not by accident.





Risking

Mk 6:7-13

He made a tour around the villages, teaching. Then he summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs, giving them authority over the unclean spirits. And he insisted that they 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.' So they set off to preach repentance; and they cast out many devils, and anointed many sick people with oil and cured them.

Let 45

We must put our trust in God's grace.

Henri Nouwen

While realising that ten years ago I didn't have the faintest idea that I would end up where I now am, I still like to keep up the illusion that I am in control of my own life. I like to decide what I most need, what I will do next, what I want to accomplish, and how others will think of me. While being so busy running my own life, I become oblivious to the gentle movements of the Spirit of God within me, pointing me in directions quite different from my own.

It requires a lot of inner silence to become aware of these divine movements. God does not shout, scream, or push. The Spirit of God is soft and gentle like a small voice or a light breeze. It is the Spirit of love. Maybe we still do not fully believe that God's Spirit is, indeed, the Spirit of love, always leading us deeper into love. Maybe we still distrust the Spirit, afraid to be led to places where our freedom is taken away. Maybe we still think of God's Spirit as an enemy who wants something of us that is not good for us.

But God is love, only love, and God's Spirit is the Spirit of love longing to guide us to the place where the deepest desires of our heart can be fulfilled... The Spirit of love says: 'Don't be afraid to let go of your need to control your own life. Let me fulfil the true desire of your heart.'



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Recognising a shared spirit and a shared humanity



Rv 3:14-22

Write to the angel of the church in Laodicea and say, 'Here is the message of the Amen, the faithful, the true witness, the ultimate source of God's creation: I know all about you: how you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other, but since you are neither, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth. You say to yourself, "I am rich, I have made a fortune, and have everything I want", never realising that you are wretchedly and pitifully poor, and blind and naked too. I warn you, buy from me the gold that has been tested in the fire to make you really rich, and white robes to clothe you and cover your shameful nakedness, and eye ointment to put on your eyes so that you are able to see.' I am the one who reproveth and disciplines all the loved ones: so repent in real earnest. Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share your meal, side by side with you. Those who prove victorious I will allow to share my throne, just as I was victorious myself and took my place with my Father on his throne. If anyone has ears to hear, let them listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Med 86.3

Be convinced that so long as you remain bound in your heart to poverty and to everything that can humble you, you will do good for souls. The angels of God will make you known and will inspire fathers and mothers to send you their children to be instructed. You will touch the hearts of these poor children, and most of them will become true Christians. But if you do not resemble the newborn Jesus by these two outstanding qualities, you will be little known and little employed, nor will you be loved or appreciated by the poor, and you will never have for them the role of saviour, as is proper for you in your work, for you will draw them to God only insofar as you resemble them and Jesus at his birth.

Terry Collins

Compassion for young people entrapped by their circumstances is the key to the Lasallian understanding of education as a vocation and a mission. This point is well expressed by Herman Lombaerts in his book 'The management and Leadership of Christian Schools'. Speaking of Saint John Baptist de la Salle and the first Brothers, he says:

The source of their strength and their radical approach lay in the total concern they had for the needs of others, especially for those who were threatened with social, cultural and spiritual death. Their strength came from their compassion for others, for those who were in danger of losing control over the direction of their lives, which is fatal for a human person in every way.



Living hopefully

Ga 6:9-10

We must never get tired of doing good because if we don't give up the struggle we shall get our harvest at the proper time. While we have the chance, we must do good to all, and especially to our friends in the faith.

Med 80.3

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

Cardinal Suenens

Why I am a hopeful person.

Because I believe God is born anew each morning,
Because I believe that God is creating the world at this very moment.
God did not create it at a distant, long-forgotten, moment in time.

It is happening now:
we must therefore be ready to expect the unexpected from God.
The ways of Providence are, by nature, surprising.
God is here, near us, unforeseeable and loving.

I am a hopeful person, not for human reasons or from any natural optimism,
but because I believe the Holy Spirit is at work in the Church and in the world,
even where that name remains unheard.

To hope is a duty, not a luxury.
To hope is not to dream, but to turn dreams into reality.
Happy are those who dream dreams
And are ready to pay the price to make them come true.

*Your pupils are
the living images
of Jesus Christ.*

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Celebrating



Magnificat

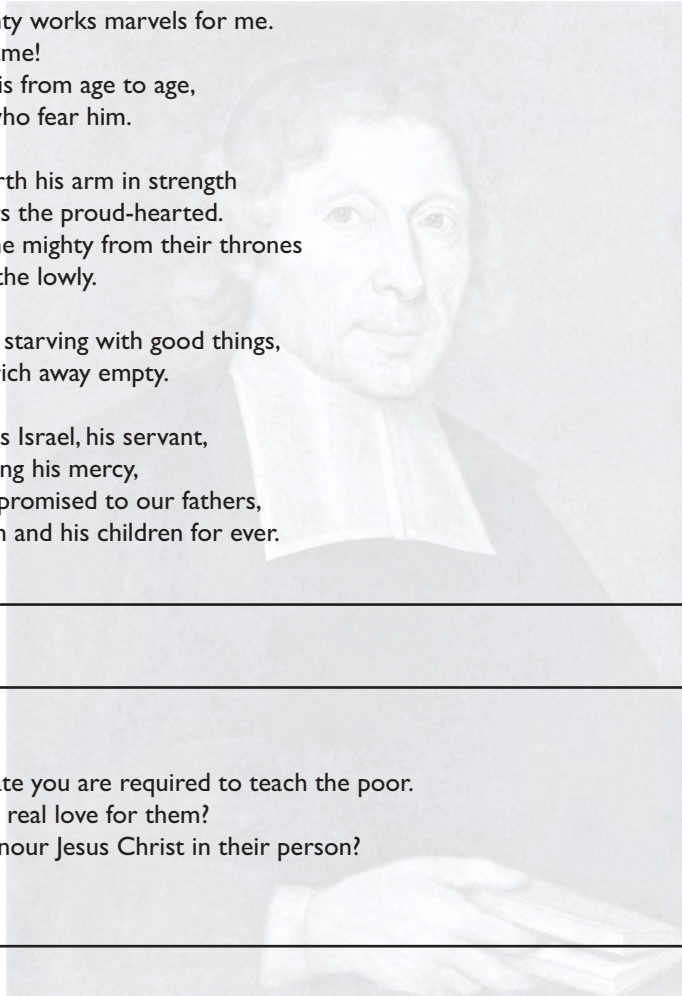
My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.



Med 133.3

By your state you are required to teach the poor.
Have you a real love for them?
Do you honour Jesus Christ in their person?

Paul Tillich

Where there is joy there is fulfilment.
Where there is fulfilment there is joy.





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

1 Co 1:4-9

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank God that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and God will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of Our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to the Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

Med 59.2

Admire the goodness of Jesus regarding the people who followed him. ‘I have compassion on these people,’ he said, and he performed a miracle to feed all of them.

Christie Nolan

Such were Joseph’s teachers and such was their imagination that the mute boy became constantly amazed at the almost telepathic degree of certainty with which they read his facial expression, eye movements and body language. Many a good laugh was had by teacher and pupil as they deciphered his code. It was at moments such as these that Joseph recognised the face of God in human form. It glimmered in their kindnesses to him, it glowed in their keenness, it hinted in their caring, indeed it caressed in their gaze.

I thank God that you have been enriched in so many ways.

St Paul



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Transforming



Ps 130

From the depths I call to you, Yahweh,
Lord, listen to my cry for help! Listen compassionately to my pleading!
If you never overlooked our sins, Yahweh, Lord, could anyone survive?
But you do forgive us: and for that we revere you.
My soul waits for Yahweh on whose promise I rely,
my soul relies on the Lord more than a watchman on the coming of dawn.
Let Israel rely on Yahweh as much as the watchman on the dawn!
For it is with Yahweh that mercy is to be found, and a generous redemption;
it is the Lord who redeems Israel from all their sins.

MTR 7.2

... this is why Jesus Christ has sent you and why the Church, whose ministers you are, employs you. Bring all the care needed to fulfil your role with as much zeal and success as the saints have had fulfilling theirs.

Pope Francis

Finding God in all things is not an 'empirical eureka.' When we desire to encounter God, we would like to verify him immediately by an empirical method. But you cannot meet God this way. God is found in the gentle breeze perceived by Elijah. The senses that find God are the ones St. Ignatius called spiritual senses. Ignatius asks us to open our spiritual sensitivity to encounter God beyond a purely empirical approach. A contemplative attitude is necessary: it is the feeling that you are moving along the good path of understanding and affection toward things and situations. Profound peace, spiritual consolation, love of God and love of all things in God—this is the sign that you are on this right path.

*Bring all the care needed
to fulfil your role
with as much zeal and success
as the saints have had
fulfilling theirs.*

De La Salle





Building community

Lk 17:1-4

He said to his disciples, 'Obstacles are sure to come, but alas for the one who provides them! It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone put round their neck than that he should lead astray a single one of these little ones. Watch yourselves! If your brother does something wrong, reprove him and, if he is sorry, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times a day and seven times comes back to you and says, "I am sorry", you must forgive him.'

Med 39.3

Since you are privileged to be called by God to live a community life, there is nothing you should pray for with greater insistence than union of heart and mind with your Brothers. Only by means of such harmony will you be able to maintain that peace which constitutes the whole happiness of your life. Ask, therefore, the Lord of all hearts to make yours one with those of others, in that of Jesus.

Robert A Dowd

Each of us is unique and free to make the most of our God-given potential for good. Yet without a connection to each other in community we may never discover that wonderful uniqueness and God-given potential...

Without community our work and our lives become directionless. We become isolated individuals, unable to recognise how God seeks to unite our gifts to our neighbours' in greater service of his kingdom. Whether in a religious community, or in any other community that unites people of faith, we are more effective in mission together than we are apart. So God builds us up into living walls, made of individual stones but bound up together into a spiritual house.

If your brother does something wrong, reprove him and, if he is sorry, forgive him.

Jesus



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Living our commitment

Mk 10:28-31

Peter took this up. 'What about us?' he asked him. 'We have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'I tell you solemnly, there is no one who has left house, brothers, sisters, father, children or land for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not be repaid a hundred times over, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and land - not without persecutions - now in this present time and, in the world to come, eternal life. Many who are first will be last, and the last first.'

Med 43.3

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

Hans Urs van Balthazar

This word has been written down, so that we may have something solid to support us. It is, however, not Christ's will that we read him like a book; he himself has written nothing: "My words are spirit and life." During the lifetime of the Apostles and immediately afterwards, there existed no "New Testament". The Apostles proclaimed the life of Christ, and they did this with their own lives. St Paul is not presumptuous when he says: "Observe me, Christ lives in me; imitate Christ the way I imitate him". And further: "You have accepted the Word for what it really is: not my Word, but the Word of Christ." The Word of God cannot be simply recited, but requires the testimony of a living Christian, because the Word has become flesh; and hence one has to demonstrate with one's flesh what the Word is.

*You carry out a work
that requires you to touch hearts,
but this you cannot do
except by the Spirit of God.*

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal





Being a communion of saints

Jn 14:2-4

There are many rooms in my Father's house;
if there were not, I should have told you.
I am going now to prepare a place for you,
and after I have gone and prepared you a place,
I shall return to take you with me;
so that where I am
you may be too.
You know the way to the place where I am going.'

MTR 16.2

What a special reunion, a great celebration, there will be among [your former students] in heaven: there in the presence of God, sharing together the blessings for which the call of God had given them hope, the wealth of the glorious heritage God has given them with all the saints.

U A Fanthorpe

BC - AD

This was the moment when Before
Turned into After, and the future's
Uninvented timekeepers presented arms.

This was the moment when nothing
Happened. Only a dull peace
Sprawled boringly over the earth.

This was the moment when even energetic Romans
Could find nothing better to do
Than counting heads in remote provinces.

And this was the moment
When a few farm workers and three
Members of an obscure Persian sect

Walked haphazard by starlight straight
Into the kingdom of heaven.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Witnessing



Jn 11:121-27

Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you'. 'Your brother,' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes, Lord,' she said, 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.'

Med 206.1

You have been called to your ministry in order to give God glory and to give children the spirit of wisdom, the insight to know God clearly, and light for the eyes of their hearts.

Henri Nouwen

Jesus reveals to us that we are called by God to be living witnesses to God's love. We become such witnesses by following Jesus and loving one another as he loves us. What does this say about marriage, friendship and community? It says that the source of the love that sustains these relationships is not the partners themselves but God who calls the partners together. Loving one another is not clinging to one another so as to be safe in a hostile world, but living together in such a way that everyone will recognise us as people who make God's love visible to the world.

*You have been called
to your ministry
in order to give God glory.*

De La Salle



Serving as mission

Jn 12: 1-8

Six days before the Passover, Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom he had raised from the dead. They gave a dinner for him there; Martha waited on them and Lazarus was among those at table. Mary brought in a pound of very costly ointment, pure nard, and with it anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair; the house was full of the scent of the ointment. Then Judas Iscariot — one of his disciples, the man who was to betray him — said, 'Why wasn't this ointment sold for three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor?' He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he was in charge of the common fund and used to help himself to the contributions. So Jesus said, 'Leave her alone; she had to keep this scent for the day of my burial. You have the poor with you always, you will not always have me.'

Med 9

You must not doubt that it is a great gift of God, this grace you have been given to be entrusted with the instruction of children, to announce the Gospel to them and to bring them up in the spirit of religion. But in calling you to this ministry, God demands that you fulfil it with an ardent zeal for their salvation, because this is the work of God, and the one who does this work carelessly is cursed. (Jr 48: 10)

Let it be clear then, in all your conduct towards the children who are entrusted to you, that you look upon yourselves as ministers of God, carrying out your ministry with love and a sincere and true zeal, accepting with much patience the difficulties you have to suffer, willing to be despised by men and to be persecuted, even to give your life for Jesus in the fulfilment of your ministry.

Bob Barrett

Lord, you said to your apostles,
'I have set you an example: you are to do as I have done for you.'

Make me an instrument of your service. Help me to see you in each person I meet, so that I may be a true neighbour to them – the young, the old, the disadvantaged, the lonely, the unwanted, or the marginalised people of our society. It is easy to reach out to those with whom I feel comfortable. I feel safe when I can place convenient limits to my commitment. There was no limit to your giving. Inspire me Lord, make me an instrument of your service.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Accompanying



Is 55:3-5

Pay attention, come to me;
listen, and your soul will live.
With you I will make an everlasting covenant
out of the favours promised to David.
See, I have made of you a witness to the peoples,
a leader and a master of the nations.
See, you will summon a nation you never knew,
those unknown will come hurrying to you,
for the sake of Yahweh your God,
of the Holy One of Israel who will glorify you.

Med 303.3

The disciples found their hearts 'burning within them', enflamed with the love of God, and animated with ardour for the practice of good... Our divine Saviour will take pleasure in being with you when you speak of him and of those things that can draw us to him... Jesus being in your midst will give himself to you, and will communicate to you his Spirit. The more you speak of him and of what relates to him, the more you will come to know and relish what is good.

St Patrick's Breastplate

I bind unto myself today
The strong Name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same,
The Three in One and One in Three

I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, His might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need.
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, His shield to ward,
The word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

Christ be with me,
Christ within me,
Christ behind me,
Christ before me,
Christ beside me,
Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ in quiet,
Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.





Being good shepherds

Is 5:1-7

Let me sing to my friend the song of their love for their vineyard.

My friend had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.
They dug the soil, cleared it of stones, and planted choice vines in it.

In the middle they built a tower, they dug a press there too.
He expected it to yield grapes, but sour grapes were all that it gave.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah,
I ask you to judge between my vineyard and me.
What could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done?
I expected it to yield grapes.
Why did it yield sour grapes instead?

Very well, I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard:
I will take away its hedge for it to be grazed on,
and knock down its wall for it to be trampled on.
I will lay it waste, unpruned, undug; overgrown by the briar and the thorn.
I will command the clouds to rain no rain on it.
Yes, the vineyard of Yahweh Sabaoth is the House of Israel,
and the people of Judah that chosen plant.
Yahweh expected justice, but found bloodshed,
integrity, but only a cry of distress.

MTR 11:2

It is for you who are teachers of those you guide to take all possible care to bring those under your guidance into the liberty of the children of God which Jesus Christ obtained by dying for us. To do this you need to have two qualities in your relationship with them. The first is gentleness and patience. The second is prudence in your reproofs and corrections.

J Chichester

It is not enough for our institutions to be viable; they must also be prophetic centres devoted to world peace, to equality, to social justice or none of them can be justified, no matter how financially sound they are... We must take our schools away from the secularism of professional preparation and return them to the challenge of the Gospel.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Honouring



Lk 9:18-21

Now one day when he was praying alone in the presence of his disciples he put this question to them, 'Who do the crowds say I am?' And they answered, 'John the Baptist; others Elijah; and others say one of the ancient prophets come back to life.' 'But you,' he said, 'who do you say I am?' It was Peter who spoke up. 'The Christ of God' he said. But he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone anything about this.

Med 80.3

Your students are living images of Jesus.

Ronald Rolheiser

The world is full of stories of people who have become successful artists, athletes, writers, politicians, ministers, business people and persons serving the poor, only because when they were young someone saw something special in them, somebody noticed them and believed in them when they were still too young and insecure to believe in themselves. Behind every grace-filled or saintly person there is someone who blessed them by perception.

James Hillman once said the gift of sight surpasses the gift of insight because, much more than insight, sight blesses and transforms those who receive it. It is this, blessing through perception, that we, the adults, owe it to the young. Our task is to see them and to see and admire in them what they do not yet see in themselves, namely, the full radiance of the beauty, talent, goodness and joy for life that God has given them. Our eyes must say this to them even when our words cannot.

Your students are living images of Jesus.

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Seeking wholeness

Ps 63:1-5

God, you are my God, I am seeking you,
my soul is thirsting for you,
my flesh is longing for you,
a land parched, weary and waterless;
I long to gaze on you in the Sanctuary,
and to see your power and glory.
Your love is better than life itself,
my lips will recite your praise;
all my life I will bless you,
in your name lift up my hands;
my soul will feast most richly,
on my lips a song of joy and, in my mouth, praise.

MEL 7

The connection of school to home is a vital component of the school model... Typically, a school building and the educated individuals in charge intimidate minimally educated parents of colour. To break down such barriers that might exist between school and home, the educational team... makes visits to the homes of their students. In addition a concerted effort is made to get the community involved so that the school is viewed as an extension of the community, and not as a separate entity. Counselling and family services are made available as well. A collaborative and thoughtful decision-making process is in operation and involves all members of the school community. Embedded in this process as a true sharing of power and respect for diversity.

Marcina Wiederkehr

Jesus, I come into the warmth of your presence
knowing that you are the very emptiness of God.
I come before you holding the water jar of my life.
Your eyes meet mine and I know what I'd rather not know.

I came to be filled, but I am already full.
I am too full.
This is my sickness.
I am full of things that crowd out your healing presence.
A *holy knowing* steals inside my heart and I see the painful truth.
I don't need more
I need less
I am too full.

I am full of things that block out your golden grace.
I am smothered by gods of my own creation
I am full of my own opinions and narrow attitudes
full of fear, resentments, control
full of self-pity, and arrogance.
Slowly this terrible truth pierces my heart
I am so full there is no room for you. *

* The complete prayer can be found on page 79

Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



Reconciling

Ep 4:2-4

Bear with one another charitably in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one body, one spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called.

Let 47.3

You should pay attention to your behaviour in what concerns not only yourself but others also. It is impossible to please God if you do not live on friendly terms with others, nor will you have peace of soul unless you show consideration for those whom you ought to be a source of guidance and inspiration.

Daniel O'Leary

The washing of the feet during the Maundy Thursday liturgy is an extraordinary gesture of tenderness and love. It is in fact a mini-sacrament much loved by Pope Francis and a powerful motif of his ministry and determination to imitate Christ. ...

I remember a Maundy Thursday foot washing at St Wilfred's Church in Ripon where I was pastor about ten years ago. Before the mass began I lost my temper with Joseph, an irregular visitor from the ranks of the marginalised. I even called him names and saw him off the premises. After the ceremony I came back to the presbytery kitchen with Fr Jim and realised what I had done.

Shocked and ashamed, I searched the places he used to frequent until I found him. We walked back to the house. I asked permission to wash his feet. He agreed. The task was not easy. Little was said. It was a strange and emotional kind of reconciliation that will always stay with me. I had forgotten that Joseph, too, was an alter Christus.

It is impossible to please God if you do not live on friendly terms with others.

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



Touching and inspiring hearts with the Christian spirit



Collaborating

1 S 3:8-9

Once again Yahweh called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' Eli then understood that it was Yahweh who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, "Speak, Yahweh, your servant is listening" '. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Yahweh then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel answered, 'Speak, Yahweh, your servant is listening.'

Gen. Chapter 2000

The Lasallian partners, who were such a significant part of this experience, permitted us to realise how far we have already come over the past seven years in sharing the Lasallian mission and in strengthening the bonds of association so necessary for its future. The admirable commitment, often at great personal and family sacrifice, of numerous men and women in this immensely challenging work on behalf of the young and the poor in the fields of education, evangelisation and child care work inspires us. The presence of a mother and her child (at our General Chapter) was a graced reminder of the many parents and guardians all around the world who have also forged with us a partnership on behalf of the education and formation of their children. To all of you who desire to identify yourselves more closely with Lasallian mission or spirituality we commit ourselves to take seriously your every effort at association.

Aesop

A blind man and a lame man happened to come at the same time to a piece of very bad road. The former begged the latter to guide him through his difficulties. "How can I do that", said the lame man, "as I am hardly able to drag myself along? But if you carry me I can warn you about anything in the way; my eyes will be your eyes and your feet will be mine." "With all my heart," replied the blind man. "Let us serve one another." So taking his lame companion on his back, they travelled in this way with safety and pleasure.

Let us serve one another.

Aesop



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

Peacemaking



Col 3:12-15

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

MTR 10.2

Help the young people put into practice what Our Lord says when he commands us to love our enemies, to do good to those who persecute us and speak unjustly against us. Help them avoid completely any rendering of evil for evil, injury for injury, and taking revenge.

Mark D Roberts

Peacemaking requires forgiveness. Over and over again, our Christian siblings will hurt us. That's too bad, but that's the way it is. If we hold onto the offence and the pain, if we formulate plans to get even, if we fail to forgive or pretend to forgive without actually doing so, then we will contribute to the demise of our Christian community just as much or more than the one who wronged us. When we do forgive, however, our relationships will be renewed and the body of Christ will be strengthened.

*Help the young people
put into practice
what Our Lord says
when he commands us
to love our enemies.*

De La Salle



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal



Hungering for justice

Is 60:1-5

Arise, shine out, for your light has come,
 the glory of Yahweh is rising on you,
 though night still covers the earth
 and darkness the peoples.
 Above you Yahweh now rises
 and above you the glory of Yahweh appears.
 The nations come to your light
 and kings to your dawning brightness.
 Lift up your eyes and look round:
 all are assembling and coming towards you,
 your sons from far away
 and your daughters being tenderly carried.
 At this sight you will grow radiant,
 your heart throbbing and full;
 since the riches of the sea will flow to you,
 the wealth of the nations come to you.

John Paul II

The twenty-six years spent in Rome by Brother Gabriel (Drolin), as the only representative of the [Lasallian] Institute, demonstrate a lesson in his total fidelity to his religious and educational vocation. Those years are an example of a deep religious spirit and a healthy realism in facing the unexpected difficulties in everyday life. Therefore, Brother Gabriel is a model that we should look upon today with admiration because fidelity to the Lasallian charism and mission always demands dauntless courage to face every trial. The Lasallian educational works continue to be a providential resource for the good of youth, the Church and society as a whole. Therefore, fidelity to the charism needs new inspiration and creativity more than ever in order to respond appropriately to the needs of today's world.

Bishops' Conference

The Catholic social vision has as its focal point the human person, the clearest reflection of God among us. Scripture tells us that every human being is made in the image of God. God became flesh when he entered the human race in the person of Jesus Christ, true God and true man. Christ challenges us to see His presence in our neighbour, especially in our neighbour who suffers or who lacks what is essential to human flourishing. In relieving our neighbour's suffering and meeting our neighbour's needs we are also serving Christ. For the Christian, therefore, there can be no higher privilege and duty.



Acting in a Spirit of Zeal

The Prayer of the Empty Water Jar

Jesus, I come into the warmth of your presence
knowing that you are the very emptiness of God.
I come before you holding the water jar of my life.
Your eyes meet mine
and I know what I'd rather not know.

I came to be filled,
but I am already full.
I am too full.
This is my sickness.
I am full of things that crowd out your healing presence.
A *holy knowing* steals inside my heart and I see the painful truth.
I don't need more
I need less
I am too full.

I am full of things that block out your golden grace.
I am smothered by gods of my own creation
I am full of my own opinions and narrow attitudes
full of fear, resentments, control
full of self-pity, and arrogance.
Slowly this terrible truth pierces my heart
I am so full there is no room for you.

Contemplatively, and with compassion
you ask me to reach into my water jar.
One by one, Jesus, you enable me to lift out the things
that are a hindrance to my wholeness.
I take each one to my heart and I hear you asking me,
'Why is this so important to you?'

Like a murmur of a gentle stream I hear you calling
Let go, let go, let go!

Finally
I sit with my *empty water jar*
I hear you whisper,
You have become a space for God.
Now there is hope
Now you are ready to be a channel of life.
You have given up your own agenda
There is nothing left but God.

inspired by John 4:28





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.

