



02-C-06

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER EDUCATES CHILDREN TO LIVE ACCORDING TO CHRISTIAN VALUES

1) FROM 6 TO 11 FEBRUARY, 1983

A meeting of Lasallian educators in Brazil was held at Florianopolis to discuss education in values. Ninety-two teachers from the Brothers' schools were present. The aims of the meeting were:

- a) Integration of Lasallian teachers, mostly lay teachers — in the mission of the Institute.
- b) Heightening among the teachers awareness of the importance of values in education.
- c) Study of the principal lines of action for education in values.

At the end of the meeting criteria for action were formulated and educative groups present were asked to draw up definite plans as a guide to future action:

- 1) Our mission as educators must first of all be one of evangelisation.
- 2) The principal characteristic of a Lasallian school should be its concern for the poor and the oppressed.
- 3) Education should form consciences critical of unjust conditions and willing to work for their amelioration.
- 4) An educative community should try to inculcate values of truth, justice, brotherhood, service and sharing.

Those who took part in the conference agreed that it was a very valuable experience. We hope that it will bear much fruit in the educative mission of those who participated in it.

2) FOR ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

The ultimate object of all educative action is God, revealed as Father by His Son, Jesus Christ — our Brother.

It is a source of joy for the disciples of St. J.B. de La Salle to teach the young to live their lives in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

"You will experience great satisfaction, when they have grown up, in seeing them live in justice and piety, far removed from evil company, and in the practice of good works. The instructions you will have given them will not have consisted solely of words but will have been accompanied by an abundance of grace in those who will have benefited by them." (*Meditations*, 207.3)

Other human and spiritual values inspired by Lasallian pedagogy and spirituality are instrumental values capable of leading young people to the absolute value — God.

"The mission of the Christian teacher aims at the creation of a society where God reigns through truth, justice and charity; a society where the weakest find social redemption. The Christian teacher will find means of forming the consciences of his students to be critical of their own society and confident of themselves. He will encourage them to participate in activities for the common good, warn them against manipulation by the means of social communication and encourage them to say what they think." (Cf. *O Carisma de La Salle*, RELAL)

3) THE SACRED CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in its document "Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to the Faith" speaks of the values and importance of the Christian teacher who witnesses by his attitude:

"Critical transmission also involves the presentation of a set of values and counter values. This must be judged within the context of an appropriate concept of life and of the human person.

The Catholic teacher, therefore, cannot be content simply to present Christian values as a set of abstract objectives to be admired, even if this be done positively and with imagination; they must be presented as values which generate human attitudes and these attitudes must be encouraged in the students. Examples of such attitudes would be these: a freedom which includes respect for others; conscientious responsibility; a sincere and constant search for truth; a calm and peaceful critical spirit; a spirit of solidarity with and service towards all other persons; a sensitivity for justice; a special awareness of being called to be positive agents of change in a society that is undergoing continuous transformation."

"Knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviour fully integrated with faith will result in the student's personal synthesis of life and faith. Very few Catholics, then, have the opportunity that the educator has to accomplish the very purpose of evangelisation: the incarnation of the Christian message in the lives of men and women." (Paragraphs 30 and 31)

4) FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP DISCUSSION?

a) What place do the Gospel and the Holy Scriptures, in general, have in our scale of educational values?

b) What attitudes does the teaching of Saint John Baptist inspire in our students and teachers so that Christian-human values permeate our educative community?

c) What injustices exist in our own educative community?

d) What can we do to ensure more awareness of liberty, justice and brotherhood and what action can we take to transform the relations and structures of the educational system?

e) How do the educational activities of our community show up when judged in the light of de La Salle's teaching on the educational service of the poor?

5) SUGGESTIONS

1) During Eucharistic celebrations use the penitential rite, the Offertory or Communion to:

a) ask pardon for our personal and community neglect of Christian values in our lives;

b) offer to the Father our resolution to live by and give witness to Christian values in our own lives;

c) thank God for the progress made and the good example given by Brothers and teachers from de La Salle's time to the present day.

2) Commentary followed by the Lord's Prayer.

3) Prayer: "Oh God, who hast manifested Thyself through the mouth of the prophets, send unto us Thy Spirit that, faithful to our Christian vocation, we may, like Mary, in her canticle, announce Thy message of liberation and renounce social and personal sin. We ask this through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen." (*"Spirituality of St. J.B. de La Salle: Here and Now"*, Review "Integracão" - Supplement No. 13, page 24)

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