



02-D-03

## MEETING OF YOUNG LASALLIANS MALTA AND CARACAS 1983

**BROTHER JOSE PABLO BASTERRECHEA, Superior General,  
to the Young Lasallians gathered in MALTA and CARACAS**

*Dear Lasallians,*

This time I am going to address you in the form of a meditation. What you have done in meeting here is of greater importance than a simple meeting and enters the domain of the Church's mission in the world today.

### **THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

This is the first condition for meditating on the Kingdom. So: "Let us remember that we are in the presence of God".

In De La Salle's spirituality, the PRESENCE OF GOD impregnates everything. God present at the centre of his life, such is the objective which every Brother who understands his mission proposes for himself. These are, therefore, the opening words to our meditation. "What place does God fill in my life? What role does his presence play in my daily activities? How does this presence enlighten my youth? Does God count above all the other values to which I am attached?"

### **1st POINT. FRATERNITY**

This is the basic charism of the Brothers since their first Assembly in 1684. And their pupils have inherited it. Brotherhood stands out as soon as there is a Lasallian meeting. But this friendship, this brotherhood, today has not as objective the meeting of friends or old school companions. It is rather a force and a responsibility. Like the Brothers, we form a whole and we are a force. It all depends on the REASONS for our meetings.

For the last 20 years, we, the Brothers, have accepted the need to, and, in fact, do transform internally, our spirit and objectives, in full agreement with what the Founder would do if he had to start all over again.

I believe that this transformation affects the Lasallian Associations in the same way and for the same reasons. But I think that this transformation is too slow, sometimes they hold back and do not always understand it.

We Brothers, perhaps more than anybody, should understand the importance of the Lasallian layman and encourage him intelligently.

### **Practical application of this first point**

Multiply these youth groups, starting with those in the last years at school. Meet often to discuss your experiences and to start initiatives. Seek objectives according to De La Salle's guidelines. And give the Associations that youthful look which is its special characteristic.

Then try to reinvigorate and rejuvenate the Associations. Give them a soul and make them joyfully alive. Propose high objectives to them and get to work yourselves with generosity so that the slogan you yourselves invented may be true: "TODAY WE ARE LA SALLE"

### **2nd POINT. FAITH**

Your course resembles that of the Brothers. It is therefore inevitable that you be concerned about their "spirit". The Brothers, you know, do not lead a life which is strictly speaking "contemplative". Their life requires them to be active. The Brother is "born to activity". Yet he is a religious, consecrated to God who is the "centre and end of his life".

The Founder was able to fuse the two extremes and the result is that he wants the Brothers to inspire this activity. Hence he gives the Brothers three indispensable axes: personal daily PRAYER by which "he goes up to God with his apostolic anxieties... and comes down to his pupils to communicate to them the divine

orders". And this, for the Brothers, is fundamental. The second is the PRESENCE OF GOD of which we have already spoken. God is with him the whole day long to be loved and served. The third is that of the GOSPEL, meditated profoundly to draw from it a way of life suitable for the Brothers.

It should be the same with the conscientious Lasallian. And let me say that something very similar should inspire your groups of young Lasallians who meet together to reflect, pray in community and sincerely seek the Kingdom. You act, you feel, you are seeking the same thing... The means should be the same.

FAITH consists not only in "believing in something". It is above all LIVING SOMEONE. FAITH means assimilating the Gospel which becomes a criterion. To succeed in this living faith, I put two means to you which are taken from the Founder himself:

The GOSPEL assimilated through quiet reading, meditation and prayer. Feel that your mission today is a real VOCATION very similar to that of John, Peter, Philip and James and that the Spirit confirms and makes the morning of pentecost definitive. Our Lord Jesus has not ceased to call us today and the Spirit is not yet exhausted so...

### **Practical applications of this second point**

See that those groups of young people you are going to multiply are Christian groups: groups of prayer, of the Gospel. That FAITH, which we are considering today, be the strength of this community.

### **3rd POINT. SERVICE**

Now we must turn to the Founder. We do not know whether it was because he gave himself completely to God that he devoted himself also to the poor... or whether, understanding the needs of the poor, he devoted himself to them and felt the need of God. What is certain is that John Baptist de La Salle, under the inspiration of the Spirit, tried to find a remedy for the poverty afflicting neglected children and young people far removed from salvation. It was they, the children and the young who caused the conversion of this noble bourgeois into an apostle and a saint.

Young Lasallians must learn this lesson, united in FRATERNITY, leading a life of profound FAITH, they must enroll themselves in the SERVICE of the poor. And here everything is possible except for the lack of spirit, irresponsibility, the incoherence in our life style. Children and young people suffering some deprivation and, especially those who do not benefit from education, the outcasts, are all objects of our Lasallian preoccupations.

Young Lasallians, this year which precedes Mexico must be a year of few words but of numerous Lasallian "facts". Come to Mexico with the assurance of having inaugurated a new style in the Lasallian Associations.

Here is the new objective I am putting to you: get in contact with some Lasallian missionary work. Let each group of young Lasallians try to find a Lasallian "mission" and get to know it. Let it try to help it by all the means suggested by your interest in a work which is really worth while.

Will the young Lasallians understand and accept this new sign of the Institute, and will they have the evangelical courage to follow this movement through their personal and communitarian devotedness?

If, when we come to Mexico, your actions express positively that you have understood me and that this year will have been a year of "signs", we can face the Congress with hope.

### **Practical application of this third point**

Do not go off in different directions. Determine WHAT you are going to do, WHEN and HOW you are going to do it... because it is you yourselves who have said it — following De La Salle is SERVICE, and today, WE ARE DE LA SALLE.

### **SPIRITUAL BOUQUET**

At the end of our life, we shall be judged on our LOVE. Our Lord says: "Then the Son of Man will say to those who will be on his right hand: 'Come you blessed of my Father, for I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me'... And they will say to Him When did we see you hungry or thirsty, or poor, or sick or in prison and we assisted you?" And He will answer them: "I tell you that every time you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me".

Dear young people, here we are at the end of this meditation. Now is the time to return to reality. Accentuate FRATERNITY, enlightened by FAITH, devote yourself to SERVICE. Then Malta and Caracas will be two lights on the Lasallian journey.

So be it.

**Brother Superior General**  
Rome, August 1983