

**THE LASALLIAN SENSE
IN MY ACTIVITIES
IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL (2)**

Scene 3: meeting the children in class

On glancing on my years as animator in the schools, I ascertain that I have put the accent on two essential aspects of the local belief in man: fraternal relationships and the search for truth.

To make fraternal relationships live in the classes and to make them be practices by the teacher, nothing made me understand myself so much as my joining in with groups of children. "Whatever absolutely directs personal human existence is good... the relationship of love with another: to be is to be in a relationship..." (Jean Kamp, "Le Dieu de ma nuit", Casterman, 1977, p. 124). To work such a thing in a Christian school, is to wish to constitute small cells of "the kingdom of fraternity according to God".

To make the children discover the truth in themselves and to help the teachers in this mission there is nothing like participating myself in Catechesis incarnated as described above.

Lasallian Filigree: It is necessary to read anew St. John Baptist de La Salle and commentaries on his writings.

"God has made you ministers... He has destined you to announce to these young plants the truths of the Gospel and to procure for them the means of salvation which will be brought to them. (MTR. 1.3).

There you have the theme which runs throughout all of these contacts. With Brother Jean Pungier, one could say regarding this text. "It is the very condition of salvation of the young. And it is the responsibility of their educators. This is what gives dynamism to the existence of the Christian educator, renders him attentive to the true needs of the young and their milieu, and invites him to the pedagogical creation on two plains: scholastic and catechetical" (Spirituality for teachers and instructors, p. 38).

Is this not just a summary of the entire life of de La Salle?

Search for the truth starting from the very bosom of fraternal relationships: it is the entire vocation of the educator marching as a minister of Christ and following in his footsteps! Enthusiastically!

But that takes a lot of time and humility. That is why the Founder invites us to make ourselves "small" before God and to make the youth "our brothers":

"...being obliged to regard themselves as the older brothers of those who come to receive their lessons, they ought to exercise this ministry of charity with a loving heart". (Blain, C.L. 7, p. 241).

"The smaller you make yourself... the more you will touch the hearts of those whom you instruct". (M.F. 79, 2).

There once again is one of the keys which opens the door to "salvation!".

Let us finish by looking at the third tableau:

Lasallian Sharing

This is the last born child. What is it all about?

It is at the same time a composite of meetings of Brothers and laymen on the Primary level and the name of the periodical which is being prepared for them.

Lasallian Sharing wishes to provide the occasion to teachers who wish to more deeply discover John Baptist de La Salle so as to be able better to follow him in his passion for the young, in his wish to make them free ('salvation') in the educative style which he created (more fraternal than magisterial) in the pedagogical innovation leading youth more easily to a profession, in the challenge he issues: no education is possible without an association of educators.

Open to 400 teachers, of whom 21 are Brothers, the Lasallian Sharing does not yet see any congestion at its doors; in the course of the first three meetings, we had 15, 19 and 9 respectively.

If this tableau conceals also the Lasallian Filigree, it is easy for you to discover it. Without forgetting this: to abandon one's self to God, all the while safe-guarding one's interior peace and to continue to follow the road on which you started no matter what the number of marchers may be.

Let us now look at the complete tapestry

Let us go back a few steps to cast a slow and deep glance at the Lasallian tapestry: there remains in fact a final discovery to make, that of a current which passes through all the different tapestries considered. This current is to me, certainly, personal, but at least in my eyes, it is the thread of my life as a Brother.

I should like to speak of this desire to liberate the person. And there at certain moments of my life, I find myself following Christ:

"Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind see, the lame walk..." (Luke 7).

And I find myself following John Baptist de La Salle who affirms:

"You can work many miracles in your own regard and in your employment...; in your employment, by touching the hearts of the rowdy children who are confided to your care..." (MF. 180,3).

To touch the hearts to make the child capable of speaking, expressing himself, believing, listening, sharing, interiorising, growing... to become himself, progressively, a son of God, in the image of Jesus.

"These are the miracles which God will give you the power to work and which He will require of you!" (MF. 180,3).

This is the current which can live and which more than one Brother discovers in his own life: the minister of God to make possible the "mirabilia Dei" today and thus open the Paschal mystery of man.

A last word

To be conscious of the Lasallian activity in my life as a Brother today does not require me only to "retrace the sources" and thus to mention Saint John Baptist de La Salle, situated in Reims in the seventeenth century.

It is the wish also to draw the light of life with regard to the "Brothers" disciples of the Founder in this very twentieth century, from Brothers who for me bear a name and a face: Vincent Aysel, Joseph Famrée, Maurice-Auguste Hermans, Jean Pungier, Genaro Saenz de Ugarte, Michel Sauvage, Joseph Verdeur and the International Group of Brothers at CIL 79/2. Each one in his own way was for me a light — indispensable to a tapestry! — to progressively make a catechetical mission more precise, in drawing from the true life experience of the children, in view of "procuring for them the salvation of Jesus Christ" in the living present of their development.

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P.S. I forgot to tell you that the tapestry is not yet finished!