

LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (7)

**4 - ON BEING A LASALLIAN NOWADAYS:  
A FEW PRACTICAL GUIDELINES (2)**

**4. EVANGELISE CULTURE**

The question of the inculturation of the faith is becoming more and more important in the Christian world, and the Magisterium of the Church has begun to lay stress on it, especially since Vatican II (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 53-62). Our own Institute, which has spread to all corners of the globe to proclaim the Gospel to the poor through education, now spearheads the Church's response to the challenge posed by the evangelisation of cultures.

«The recent synod of bishops devoted to the vocation and mission of lay people in the Church and the world, twenty years after the Vatican II Council, stressed the importance of training lay people to make the Gospel come more alive in the living fabric of culture, in social circles which will influence thinking and behaviour, in *the family, work, school, university, social communications*.

...In order that the Gospel can inspire the various ever-changing cultures of this world, there has to be a new powerful effort from each element of the Church, as well as from the various organisations of the Holy See, Bishops' Conferences, international Catholic organisations, religious communities, secular institutes, lay people committed to one or other of the many apostolic movements, and from civic bodies. (*Pope John Paul II, Speech to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture, Jan. 15th 1988*)

«Every culture needs to be evangelised. The Brothers make every effort to get to know, to respect and to assimilate the positive values of the cultural heritage of the people where they are located and whom they are called to serve. With joy and hope the Brothers discover there the signs of the presence of the Spirit. They ensure that the ferment of the Gospel renews and enriches this cultural heritage.

This effort at inculturation is equally necessary and applies as well to youth culture as to the rapidly evolving culture of contemporary society.» (*Rule 18*)

«Every Lasallian foundation is embodied, together with the local Church, in the culture, the language and the life-style of the place where it is located. Such embodiment ought to be accomplished in keeping with the charism proper to the Institute.» (*Rule 18a*)

**5. CATECHISE AND ENGAGE IN PASTORAL WORK**

According to the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle, Christian education is an essential part of the educational ministry of the Brothers. That is why «The Brothers make known the divine mysteries by exercising the ministry of the Word of God. The Brothers are catechists by vocation; this is their "principal function." (Declaration, 38, 1)

Catechesis, as a process which must first and foremost make possible a life-giving encounter with the person of Christ through faith, involves in a special way the teaching of the doctrine of Christ, so as to initiate its listeners—children, young people and adults—into the life of a Christian, and to its riches. If it is true that to be a Christian means saying "yes" to Jesus Christ, we must point out that this "yes" has two levels: it consists in abandoning oneself to the Word of God by basing oneself on it. But it also means, in addition, trying to fathom more deeply the profound meaning of this Word. Catechesis is necessary, as much for the growth of faith among Christians as for their witness to it in the world.» (*Pope John Paul II, Letter to the faithful in Hungary, April 6th 1980*)

«From the beginning, the Institute recognised the central place that catechesis has in the apostolate of the Brother. However, this never led the Institute either to dissociate the teaching of religion from the rest of education, or to devote itself to catechesis alone. Almost by instinct, the living tradition of the Institute has integrated faith in Jesus Christ into the daily lives of the students. There has always been this concern to tie together the work of evangelisation with growth in education and culture.» (*Declaration 40, 2*)

«By its organisational structure and the climate that it engenders, the Christian school makes catechesis possible. This catechesis should be lively, centred on the person of the student, in touch with life as it is, based on Scripture and the liturgy, attentive to the teaching of the Church, and concerned with an integral presentation of the Christian message.» (*Rule 15 a*)

## 6. FORM COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

All Lasallian groups should aim to form communities of faith – communities where one's experience of God is shared, where there grows brotherhood "through the joyful gift of oneself to others", and where one's apostolic commitment to the Church is rekindled.

«The educational community must aim at becoming a Christian community within the Catholic school, that is to say, a real community of faith. This cannot happen, and cannot even begin to happen, if Christian commitment is not shared by at least some of the main sections, that is, parents, teachers and pupils, of the educational community. It is most desirable that Catholic lay people, and especially teachers, should be prepared to make this commitment, by taking part in pastoral care groups or others capable of promoting Gospel values.» (*The Catholic Lay Person, Witness to the Faith in School, 41*)

The Brothers' community makes known to the rest of the educational community the essential elements of the Lasallian tradition. The Brothers offer to those who desire it, a more intensified sharing of Lasallian spirituality, encouraging such persons to make a more specific apostolic commitment. The Brothers join in the formation of faith communities which are witnessing to the truth of what the Brothers profess.» (*Rule 17 c*)

## THE METHOD TO FOLLOW FOR GROUP WORK

This 4th article (sections 6 and 7) is meant to help you think about the 6 measures mentioned in the Letter, either by yourself or as part of a group. It attempts to do this by providing you with some extracts from texts found in papal pronouncements or Institute documents.

You can, for example:

1. Choose a text and read it by yourself or with the group.
2. Have a discussion about what you have read, saying:
  - what struck you most forcibly
  - what you think is most important
  - what is most relevant to local problems
3. To end with, suggest something specific as a way or doing something practical about what you have discussed.

**Brother Hernando Sebá López**