

**THE EVERYDAY REPETITION
OF ACTIONS AND TRANSPARENCY
IN THE LASALLIAN MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION
(2/2)**

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**3. THE PITFALLS OF DAILY
REPEATED ACTIONS**

Routine and monotony are a risk when actions are repeated in an apparently identical manner over a long period of time. It is certain that De La Salle foresaw this pitfall and warned his Brothers about it by a variety of means, encouraging them always to provide high quality service. This is what he does when he urges them constantly to have an "ardent zeal" in the exercise of their ministry as teachers.

In his correspondence with his Brothers, he speaks to them of fervour, of fidelity:

"Be careful not to fall into negligence, for God gives few graces to those who are negligent. They have little success in what they do" (Letter 79 to a Brother Director, August 23rd).

"Nothing will draw down on you the blessings of God so much as fidelity in carrying out small matters" (Letter 4 to Br. Denis, July 8th 1708)

And here are some fine words straight from the heart:

"It is a great consolation to me, my very dear Brother, to know that you are wholeheartedly in love with your vocation. I bless God for this" (Letter 85 to a Brother).

He warned his Brothers of the low esteem in which teachers were held by the society of the time:

"We are poor Brothers, forgotten by the world and esteemed of no consequence. Only the poor come to us" (M 86, 2).

"Your work enjoys little consideration in the eyes of men, but in the eyes of God it does, for it contributes to extend his Kingdom" (M 143, 3).

"How often it happens that occupations that men consider lowly produce more fruit than those which are more exalted. Look upon your work as one of the most important and excellent in the Church" (M 155, 1).

The spirit of faith was the great spiritual means that De La Salle bequeathed to his Brothers and to his spiritual family as a spiritual incentive in order to overcome the danger of the shortsightedness of actions repeated daily, mechanically and without soul:

"Not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God, and to attribute all to God" (RC II, 2).

This is the "Lasallian magic wand" that can transform the Brothers' most ordinary actions. It has led many Brothers to high levels of anonymous heroism and sanctity recognised by the Church: "Do ordinary things with extraordinary fervour".

On numerous occasions in his writings, De La Salle shows his concern for the "daily fervour" of his Brothers. As an example of this we can quote the Collection:

- Collection of things about which the Brothers will converse during recreations:

- About daily actions and the fervour with which they should be done; about the ease with which one can save oneself in the Society by doing them with a spirit of faith and religion and without doing anything else (XX).

- About the failings against which they must most guard themselves, like...negligence in the house and school exercises (XXVI).

- About the obligation the Brothers of the Society have to acquit themselves well of their duty in school...and about the way to fulfil it well (XXVIII).

- With regard to the use of time:

- Do you do ordinary actions in a spiritual manner, only in view of God and his pleasure? (III).

- Do you do all your actions as perfectly as you know they ought to be done? (VIII).

- Be satisfied with what you can do, as God is satisfied with this. But do not spare yourself with regard to what you can do with grace. You must believe that, provided you are willing, you can do more with the grace of God than you think (X).

Not to be able to fathom out the mystery of his constantly repeated actions can be a source of great frustration and discouragement for a Lasallian educator. It can even lead him to mediocrity in his ministry

since he does not put all his heart and soul into what he does.

The Founder's advice is impressive:

"Never be sad with the bad kind of sadness to be found in the world which comes from a lack of mortification and from displeasure at having what one does not want, or not having what one would like to have" (Collection: With regard to the exercises and actions of the day, XIV).

4. THE EVERYDAY REPETITION OF ACTIONS AND ESCHATOLOGY

"By the words of salvation which (he must) address them each day" (M 39, 2), he has made the plan of salvation of Jesus Christ a reality for each of the children and has presented them thus redeemed to the Father:

"That perfect man who is Christ come to full stature...as part of the structure of the Church, built by your care into a temple to become the dwelling place for God in the Spirit" (MTR 205, 3)

He will have known "how to strengthen (his) disciples in the Christian spirit" (MTR 207, 3).

He will be able to say to the Lord that he has truly fulfilled his ministry (MTR 205, 3).

The conclusion of the Founder's theological considerations on the educational mission of the Brother

is really moving. Abandoning his austere style, he becomes lyrical:

"Oh, how fortunate you ought to consider yourselves, to be working in the field of the Lord!...Devote yourselves, then, with zeal and affection to your work" (MTR 207, 1).

"With joy, then, say as he (St. Paul) does, that the greatest cause of your consolation in this life is to announce the Gospel free of charge" (MTR 207, 2).

"Ah, what a thrill of joy you will get when you hear the voices of those whom you have led almost by the hand into heaven!" (MTR 208, 3).

CONCLUSION

"The Brother is invited to be open each day to the presence of the living God in such a way that he discovers it, and lives it in his mission, his consecration and his community life" (R 100).

"That by their very lives the Brothers give testimony to the presence of God among people, to the liberating force of his Spirit, and to the tenderness of his love" (R 85).

"The entire life of the Brothers is transformed by the presence of the Lord who calls, consecrates, sends and saves" (R 21).

"Our lives should speak 'God' to all we contact" (Br. John Johnston, Superior General, Pastoral Letter January 1st 1987, p. 31)