



05-D-08

SIGNUM FIDEI (2) LIFE STYLE OF THE FRATERNITY

I. EVANGELIC VOCATION

a. The Holy Spirit has called us to be ambassadors of Christ and dispensers of His Word according to the charism of St. J-B. de La Salle.

Our mission is to reveal to the world the love of Christ for the poor and especially for the young by means of evangelization founded on the person of Jesus Christ and on the response to the Good News which He has announced.

This presupposes a close intimacy with Christ our Saviour which Signum Fidei members will try to acquire and develop.

b. Attentive to His call we offer ourselves to the Church for its "edification". We are "infinitely" attentive to all that comes to us from her through our Holy Father, the Pope, and our bishops. This sense of the Church strengthens our faith and informs the apostolic project which we wish to carry out in full ecclesial communion.

II. THE SPIRIT OF OUR FRATERNITY - SIGNUM FIDEI

a. The spirit of our fraternity, inherited from our Holy Founder, is the spirit of faith and of zeal.

b. The spirit of community throws into relief our resemblance to the Brothers of the Christian Schools with whom we feel fraternally united.

III. THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

a. Faith makes us live the love of the Father revealed in Jesus Christ, dead and risen again, and instilled into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Faith gives us a new perspective. We see men and events in their reality: men in order to help them to realise their vocation as sons of God; events as sent by God Himself.

Faith helps us to discern how we act in prayer, in the choosing of our apostolic project, in our search for God's will in our Signum Fidei fraternity.

Faith stimulates us in the evangelical service which Christ inspires us to undertake. Through faith we know that He lives in our hearts and is present amongst those who gather together in His name.

b. As Signum Fidei members we animate our lives and our activities with the spirit of faith, we seek God in all things; we regard everything with the eyes of faith; in our actions we turn to God and finally we attribute all to Him.

c. Each day we set aside a fixed time for prayer and meditation on the Gospel in order to meet Christ and to accept with docility what He communicates to us in the silence of the heart. Through the Gospel, read, meditated on, prayed, Christ communicates his personal message to us to make us understand our vocation and to help us to fulfil our commitments. Exchanges of experience with our fellow members of Signum Fidei assure coherence.

d. The life of the Presence of God directs and fills our day. We try to put God at the centre of our lives. With this living, loving presence which radiates through our work, our rest and our family life, we "make no distinction between the duties of our state and the matter of our sanctification" because we do all to please Him.

e. We live this Presence in a particularly intense way and in intimate union with Christ in liturgical and sacramental liturgies. We share daily in the Eucharist Sacrifice and in the liturgical prayer of the Church, if possible in community, in the spirit of the liturgical seasons which we are careful to celebrate.

f. Our Lady is for us, members of Signum Fidei, our Queen and Our Mother. We worship her with filial devotion. Every day we pay her special homage: the rosary and the angelus. Her total "Yes" to God inspires our total giving of ourselves so that He may live in our hearts as He lived in that of His mother.

g. St. J. B. de La Salle is our Father and model. We all want to acquire his spirit, to study his life and his writings, to share his charism and his spirituality. That is why we are anxious to find all the documents which could help us and why we appeal to the Brothers to assist us in our Lasallian path.

h. Each evening, members of our fraternity spend some time in the presence of Our Lord to evaluate their day and to examine their fidelity to their vocation. That is when they recite this "simple prayer" and ask the Lord to send his Spirit on them and on their brothers and sisters in Signum Fidei.

IV. THE SPIRIT OF ZEAL

a. The love of Christ which urges us on is expressed by our zeal to evangelize and this desire makes of each of us a sign of faith; a Signum Fidei in the midst of the world.

God has need of us as signs of faith, capable of revealing to all, and particularly to young people, His love and His message. It is in Him that they will find their happiness, their Christian fulfilment and the motives for trying to create a society more just and more humane.

b. We wish to manifest and to share the riches of Christian life with which God has gifted us, through evangelizing activities, an "apostolic project" in our own area, thus making concrete our collaboration in God's creative and saving work.

c. It is of the highest importance that each member define his "apostolic project" in conformity with possibilities, that he cooperate practically in the work of the Redeemer and that he devote himself constantly and creatively to his "project" while seeking the help of other people in its realization. The realization of the "apostolic project" is a witness to our faith and zeal for the service of the poor and the marginalized — those dear to our Founder and to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

d. The Signum Fidei apostolate is clearly Lasallian: we all try to exercise an educative influence in the widest sense of the word i.e. in the sense of evangelization. All of us, whoever we may be, wish to be "signs" for our own milieu.

e. When it concerns the interests of the Gospel the members form a team or the nucleus of a larger group to carry out a major project or to animate in a Christian spirit other activities.

f. These are the attitudes that our zeal inspires, making of each of us a messenger or, in a manner of speaking, the message itself — joyful and simple:

- total availability to announce Jesus Christ directly,
- love for all, especially the poor and the young,
- desire to help others — groups or individuals — to live as Christians,
- friendly acceptance of assistance to our brothers in Signum Fidei to discern the will of God in their lives and in their "projects",
- a positive and encouraging attitude to the young, to parents, to teachers and to co-workers to whom we offer our help and our faith.

On hearing this message, people — especially the young — will understand and accept the wealth that the Holy Spirit brings to all who believe in Him.

V. THE SIGNUM FIDEI COMMUNITY

a. In the Lasallian tradition each Signum Fidei member will seek to join with other members to form little communities where they will meet regularly to live their faith and to share their successes and difficulties.

Together in community we escape from ourselves to throw ourselves into the work of establishing the kingdom of God in our area: in the district, in the parish and preferably in a Lasallian enterprise.

b. All the members of the same region or country form a fraternity at regional and national level. We like to meet regularly in a spirit of joyful brotherhood to rejoice together at God's presence amongst us and to exchange views, reflect and pray as a community. Here we plan our common apostolic project while mutually enriching and encouraging each other and discerning, with the help of the members, the best means of advancing in the spirit of faith and zeal.

c. Each year we make a few days' retreat, in community if possible, to deepen our understanding of the meaning and requirements of our vocation and to reaffirm our gift of ourselves to God and our zeal for the success of our "apostolic project" whether personal or community.

d. At the beginning of the different liturgical seasons we try to find time for reflection and reading so as to enter, with the Church, into the spirit of the mysteries commemorated.

e. Our community greeting, after invocation of St. J. B. de La Salle is: "Live Jesus in our hearts. For ever!"

VI. SIGNUM FIDEI CONSECRATION

a. The members do not make vows properly so called. Instead the Consecration binds us to live according to the precepts of the Gospel. Our poverty consists in moderation and simplicity after the example of Christ; our chastity, in the care we have to live strictly according to our state, and in the dedication of our affective life to the love of God; obedience in the acceptance and fulfilment of the "Life Style" we have embraced and in the willingness to follow the advice of our brothers in Signum Fidei, in mutual love, while striving for evangelical perfection.

b. Following a period of preparation we make our Consecration in response to the call of God. It is, at the same time, the starting point of our new life, dedicated to His service in the edification of the Church, according to the charism of St. J. B. de La Salle.

We call it "Consecration" because it is for us the confirmation of our consecration in baptism and because it fully expresses the meaning of our giving ourselves to the Blessed Trinity. We like its resemblance to the Brothers' formula of vows which was composed by the Founder himself. And we look on it as a prayer, perfectly suited to the beginning and ending of our day, and one which renews daily our membership of the Signum Fidei fraternity.

c. Each year we renew our Consecration either privately or in community. There is nothing, however, to prevent a member, after several years in the fraternity, from making his consecration for three years or for life, after careful reflection and on the advice of his spiritual director.