



THE LASALLIAN LEADER

05-D-10

In our associations, the leader — the person among us who accepts with generosity and a sense of responsibility the task of animating our groups — possesses, as a Lasallian, certain traits and characteristics which are easily recognisable. This is true in almost every case.

VOCATION

Our leader (this is his first characteristic) is certain that he has been called to the work of de La Salle, which is God's work. The holy Founder, the history of the Institute, the living witness of the Brothers urge him towards his specific vocation: the work of evangelization of youth in the family and in the school.

SHARED FAITH

His second characteristic, faith, is the base and foundation of his vocation. It was, perhaps, the Brothers who taught him to live the faith, not as a treasure to be kept to himself but as wealth to be shared joyfully with others. He did this as a child at home and at school and he does so now in his fraternal relations within the Association.

AVAILABILITY AND ZEAL

This is the third characteristic. Loving deeply the task for which he has assumed responsibility he fulfills it with a constant zeal and complete availability, surrendering himself humbly to the movement of the Spirit. "I trust you, Lord", "I adore in all things the will of God in my regard".

STYLE

All this presupposes, without any doubt, a style, a manner of acting, a way of understanding things, a manner of being. Our leader is or, at least tries to be, simple in his relations with others. He is at ease with their culture; he is guided by faith; he is tenacious in his efforts; prepared for all occasions and situations; he is not easily discouraged; he seeks out those in need and offers a brotherly hand. He offers, he gives, he accepts, he shares, he understands, he hopes.....

HE IS AIDED BY GRACE

But, you will say, if we could find such a person, gifted with so many admirable qualities, should we not put him in a glass case? No. I assure you. There are thousands like him, full of Lasallian charism, generous, available, faithful, devoted to the Lasallian cause in which they remain united. And what of their ability, aptitudes, effectiveness? "Chosen by God they act according to the graces received from Him". Open to the Spirit, "the Spirit himself inspires them what to say" and enriches them with gifts and abilities. I know such a leader, with his personal limitations and lack of time and means. Completely dedicated, he felt forced to act, trusting that God would make up for his deficiencies. The result was a work of high quality accomplished with utter disinterestedness.

SERVICE

What are the fields of action and practical aims of the Lasallian leader and who are the beneficiaries of his services? The Lasallian world provides many outlets for such energy and good will once they have been accepted and canalized. These outlets are to be found in education centres, the Associations and all concerned with them, schools, youth, family, teachers, social work, missions, vocations, etc. There are different tasks and diverse ministries which all have their source in the common evangelizing mission which unites the members to the Institute.

INTEGRATION IN THE INSTITUTE

This must be regarded as fundamental. In effect, the activities of our leaders as well as all individual and group activity undertaken can only be justified if they are — at their own level — connected with the work of the Institute, in intention and in fact. As for the Associations connected with scholastic centres, we could make a long repetitive list of frustrations, wasted efforts, unfinished projects or projects which were badly carried out because the plans were not integrated in the overall programme of the centre and because there was neither understanding nor agreement with the Directors and Communities of the establishments concerned.

MATURITY AND DISCERNMENT

We must demand these qualities from our leaders and ourselves. Older groups, filled with nostalgia and memories and acting under the guidance of the Brother "in charge", have now reached maturity in associative and apostolic action. Their energies must be integrated into the general programme of the educative communities. If not, we shall again experience frustrating difficulties and misunderstandings.

The same mission unites us all in de La Salle: work for the Brothers, with the Brothers, inspired by them and, needless to say, counting on them.

Mixed commissions are today a source of considerable value which we must use and whose great possibilities we must put to work. Thanks to them and, perhaps to them alone, will it be possible to set up and co-ordinate programmes, projects and responsibilities accepted by our leaders. These latter have made clear their availability, no longer for random and occasional roles as in former times but for formal and permanent engagements in the service of the apostolate. Today more than ever we need the concentrated efforts of all. From those responsible we expect attentive consideration and judicious discernment so as to integrate and profit from their availability.

FULLNESS AND CONSECRATION

Besides the educative community there is the religious Community which guides it and infuses it with Lasallian life. Over and above maturity there is fullness. This is the process which urges our leaders to aspire to something more: to live to the full the spirituality of de La Salle. They love the apostolate and, in their desire to identify with it, seek to go beyond their own vocation by imitating the Brothers in their religious fidelity.

These are the "Signum Fidei". They respond to God's call "by a full acceptance" and "by consecrating themselves to Him in the accomplishment of their mission". They draw courage from prayer and "by making no distinction between the duties of their state and the affair of their salvation". They live the apostolic project they have adopted and offer us the witness of their lives for they are firmly convinced that they must "render an account of those who have been entrusted to them".

Symbols of faith, bearers of new hope.....

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