

Message

from Br. Robert Schieler
Brother Superior F.S.C.



La  Salle

The Year of Lasallian Vocations and the 300th Anniversary of John Baptist de La Salle's Entry into Eternal Life

The celebration of both the Year of Lasallian Vocations and the 300th Anniversary of the Death of John Baptist de La Salle gives each of us an opportunity to pause and reflect on our association for human and Christian education, especially for the poor. With these two significant events in mind, I invite you to a quiet, contemplative consideration of your commitment to the Lasallian mission. For those of us who are Christian, our lives and ministry are founded on Jesus Christ and motivated by His desire that all people enjoy the fullness of life (the Reign of God). For those Lasallians of other religious traditions, you might consider integrating elements of the Christian and Lasallian perspective into your own understanding of God and the human family.



#300LaSalle

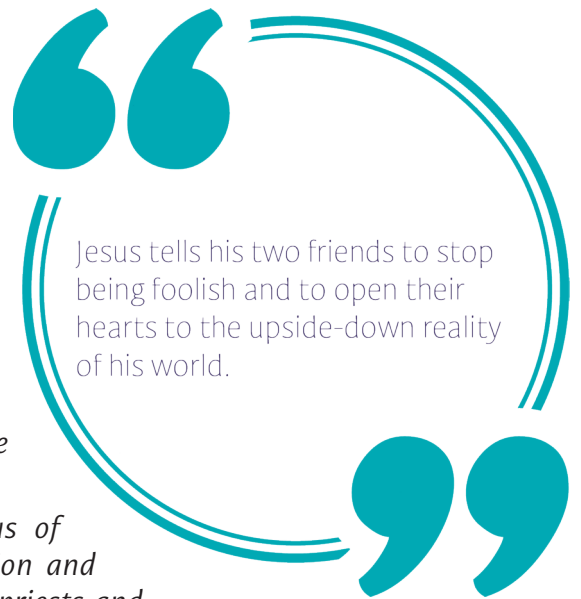


Pause: read/reflect Luke 24:13–35

Now that very same day, two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. And it happened that as they were talking together and discussing it, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but their eyes were prevented from recognising him. He said to them, 'What are all these things that you are discussing as you walk along?' They stopped, their faces downcast. Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.'

He asked, 'What things?' They answered, 'All about Jesus of Nazareth, who showed himself a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have now gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they could not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe all that the prophets have said! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer before entering into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself. When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them saying, 'It is nearly evening, and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them.



Jesus tells his two friends to stop being foolish and to open their hearts to the upside-down reality of his world.



Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'The Lord has indeed risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

The king? What kind of king is this? Where did he go? Where are his armies, servants, castles, slaves and subjects? Are there not any special privileges and benefits for those of the inner circle? We were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; however, it has been 3 days since they killed him and we are no better off. Have we been deceived? These are, I suppose, some of the questions the two disciples were pondering on the road to Emmaus. They were so upset and confused that they were unable to recognize Jesus.

Jesus tells his two friends to stop being foolish and to open their hearts to the upside-down reality of his world. And with that their eyes were opened and they recognized him. Later, they realized that all the while their hearts were burning within them as they slowly came to realize the Good News that the Reign of God indeed had come.

“ Our schools are called to be experiences of the Reign of God, places where the last indeed are first: welcoming, inclusive, joyful, challenging and responsive to the educational aspirations of the poor. ”



Which of these three, 'do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the bandits' hands?' He replied, 'The one who showed pity towards him.' Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself.'

The Gospel, our Founder's experiences and writings, and the practical demands inherent in a life motivated by Jesus' project for the Reign of God challenge us to create Christ-centered educational communities where our hearts are constantly nourished by the Word of God and through explicit responses to the practical needs of the poor.

The reason for being associated for the Lasallian mission is to sustain our one faith in Jesus Christ, our one commitment to discover the Reign of God, and our one life dedicated to procuring the glory of God. The intensity of the fire burning in our hearts depends on each Brother's and each Partner's intention, each decision, to realize, together our common mission.

We have to stop being foolish and open our hearts to the reality of God's plan for the human family. We must recognize that our educational communities are a prophetic but fragile sign of the Reign of God. We must guarantee times and places of quiet reflection so that together we can "...have one and the same convictions, the same will, the same affections, the same maxims and practices". (Cf M 93.3)

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their educational service as a means of revealing God's desire that all people be well, and invite our students to be attentive to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. Let us accompany one another as we discern God's vocational call and the path he is inviting us to follow.

The best way for us to celebrate the 300th anniversary of our Founder's death is by sharing the Jubilee Year with all whom we encounter. We have to follow Jesus' lead and upend the normal course of events in our communities and educational centers by bringing glad tidings to the poor. In our communities and schools the last should indeed be first, the refugee, the marginalized, unattractive and despised should be in the spotlight.

Pause: read/reflect Luke 19:1-10

He entered Jericho and was going through the town and suddenly a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man. He kept trying to see which Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd; so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way. When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I am to stay at your house today.'

And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully. They all complained when they saw what was happening. 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house,' they said. But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, 'Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham; for the Son of man has come to seek out and save what was lost.'

Many of us and many of our students are probably as disappointed as the two fellows on the road to Emmaus and those in the story of Zacchaeus who thought that they were the special ones: What king?

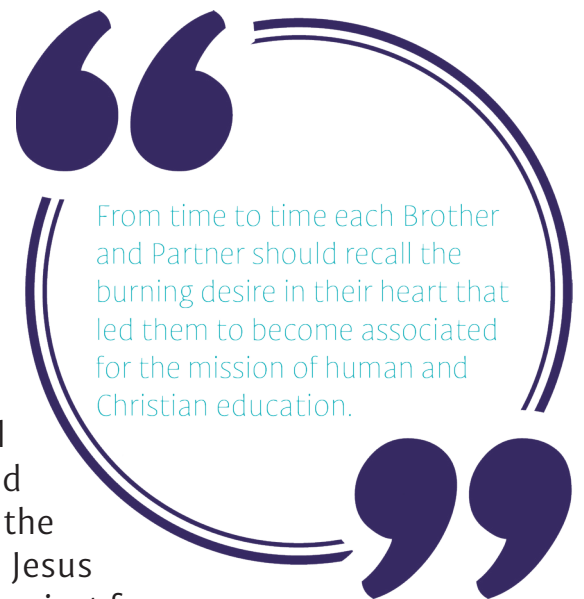


What privileges? What benefits? From time to time each Brother and Partner should recall the burning desire in their heart that led them to become associated for the mission of human and Christian education. We have to stop being foolish and open our hearts to Jesus and his already-present but not fully realized desire for humanity.

Brothers and Partners, let us celebrate the Year of Lasallian Vocations and the 300th Anniversary of the Death of the Founder by sharing initiatives and local projects, especially those which can have a profound and lasting impact on the lives and mission of Lasallians in the Districts and Delegations. Let us profess one faith in Jesus Christ, one commitment to collaborate with him in his project for the Reign of God and one life in association for the purpose of procuring the glory of God through the ministry of human and Christian education. Let us set out in haste to invite our students and indeed the entire Lasallian Family to join us in our Gospel adventure and together bring glad tidings to the poor.

Almost 300 years ago, John Baptist de La Salle wrote the following words which, I believe, apply to us today:

You are by your state obliged to instruct poor children. Do you love them? Do you honor Jesus Christ in their persons? With this in mind, do you prefer them to those who have a certain amount of material wealth? Do you have more concern for the former than for the latter? (M 133.3)





Through our educational mission, let us inspire each other and our students to be proactive in insuring that all people, especially young migrants, refugees and displaced families, experience the Reign of God through access to sufficient food, clean air and water, health care, education and contemporary means of communication. In this way – with one faith, one commitment, one life – we will be attractive witnesses to Lasallian vocations and faithful disciples of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

Bro. Robert

Brother Robert Schieler, F.S.C.
Brother Superior



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