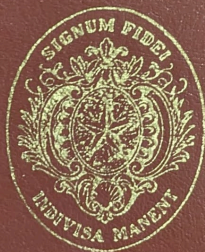


DE LA SALLE BROTHERS

THE RULE
AND
THE CONSTITUTIONS



GENERAL CHAPTER 1967-1968

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GENERAL CHAPTER 1967-1968

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

— Texts from the Rule of 1718 —

ON REGULARITY

“It is necessary that the Brothers apply to themselves, and take for the foundation and support of their regularity what St. Augustine says at the beginning of his Rule, that ‘those who live in community should, before all else, love God and next their neighbour’, since these are the principal Commandments given us by God, and because any regularity whatever, if separated from the observance of these two Commandments, is quite useless for salvation, because it is established in Communities only for the purpose of giving the members facility to observe the Commandments of God, with exactness, and for this cause most of the Rules are practices pertaining thereto.”

(Common Rules, Chapter 16)

THE SPIRIT OF THIS INSTITUTE

“That which is of the utmost importance, and to which the greatest attention should be given in an Institute is, that all who compose it possess the spirit peculiar to it; that the Novices apply themselves to acquire it; and that those who are already members, make it their first care to preserve and increase it in themselves; for, it is this spirit that should animate all their actions, be the motive of their whole conduct; and those who do not possess it and those who have lost it, should be looked upon as dead members, and they should look upon themselves as such; because they are deprived of the life and grace of their state; and they should be convinced that it will be very difficult for them to preserve the grace of God.

The spirit of this Institute is first, a spirit of FAITH, which should induce those who compose it 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, always entering into these sentiments of Job: ‘The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done’, and into other similar sentiments so often expressed in Holy Scripture and uttered by the Patriarchs of old.

In order to enter into this spirit and live up to it:

1. The Brothers of this Society shall have a most profound respect for the Holy Scriptures; and, in proof thereof, they shall always carry the New Testament about them, and pass no day without reading some of it, through a sentiment of faith, respect and veneration for the divine words therein contained, looking upon it as their first and principal rule.
2. The Brothers of this Society shall animate all their actions with sentiments of Faith; and, in performing them, they shall always have in view the orders and the will of God, which they shall adore in all things, and by which they shall be careful to regulate their conduct.

For this purpose they shall apply themselves to have great control over their senses and to use them only through necessity, not wishing to use them but according to the order and the will of God.

They shall make it their study to exercise continual watchfulness over themselves, so as not to perform, if possible, a single action from natural impulse, through custom or any human motive; but they shall act so as to perform them all by the guidance of God,

through the movement of His Spirit, and with the intention of pleasing Him.

They shall pay as much attention as they can to the holy presence of God, and take care to renew it from time to time; being well convinced that they should think only of Him and of what He ordains, that is, of what concerns their duty and employment.

They shall banish from their minds all vain ideas and thoughts that might withdraw them from these practices, which are very important for them, and without which they can neither acquire nor preserve the spirit of their state.

Secondly, the spirit of their Institute consists in an ardent ZEAL for the instruction of children, and for bringing them up in the fear of God, inducing them to preserve their innocence if they have not lost it, and inspiring them with a great aversion and horror for sin and whatever might cause them to lose purity.

In order to enter into this spirit, the Brothers of the Society shall strive by prayer, instruction, and by their vigilance and good conduct in school, to procure the salvation of the children confided to their care, bringing them up in piety and in a truly Christian spirit, that is, according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel.”

(Common Rules, Chapter 2)

Roma, Via Aurelia, 476

*The Superior General
of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*

declares that the English translation of THE RULES AND THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS is faithful in spirit and in meaning to the authentic French text voted by the General Chapter, and that it is the official version in English of that document.

17th December, 1967.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
St John Baptist de La Salle:	
Texts from the Rule of 1718	3
On Regularity ..	5
The Spirit of The Institute	6
Declaration re Translation	9
 Presentation:	
Letter of Brother Superior General	

THE RULE AND THE CONSTITUTIONS

1. Nature and End of the Institute ..	23
2. The Spirit of the Institute ..	26
3. Community	30
4. The Religious Consecration of the Brother	37
5. Chastity	41
6. Poverty	44
7. Obedience	48
8. Service of the Poor through Education Fidelity to the Institute ..	52
9. Apostolic Work	57
10. The Life of Prayer ..	65
11. The Vitality of the Institute	72

PRESENTATION

Rome, 17th December 1967

My dear Brothers,

The Rules that you are about to read for the first time are now the official Rules of the Institute. I believe that our Holy Founder would be pleased to consider them his own for they are derived from his spirit, and that from heaven he gives them his blessing. They are at the same time the work of all the Brothers. They have been in preparation for many years and have passed through several trial editions. The Seventh Commission of the 39th General Chapter, that was charged with the task of elaborating the text, had at its disposal a voluminous dossier, the fruit of community and District discussions on the trial editions, and the fruit of the personal reflections and criticisms of a great many individual Brothers.

A month before the opening of the second session of the Chapter, a group of general editors and a secretary assembled in Rome to do the composition of the Rule. They were chosen from six different countries, are all recognized scholars and literary men, experts in the principal languages spoken in the Institute. The first stage of their work was a thorough study of the dossier of suggestions and criticisms on the previous trial project, called Project Five. The desire of the Brothers of all

areas of the Institute was clearly seen: a short Rule, a Rule that is mainly spiritual in its outlook, a Rule that will give motivation to our spiritual life, derived from the inspiration of our Holy Founder, based firmly on scriptural and theological foundations.

The result of this preliminary study was presented to the Assembly by the Seventh Commission and was accepted as the basis for the work to be done. Then the Commission and the group of editors undertook the task of establishing a text. Discussions, research, draft texts of chapters and articles, criticism, re-drafts, consultations within the Chapter and with consultants of the Sacred Congregation, occupied the following two months, all this work directed at arriving at the text the Brothers had asked for and which would respond to their needs.

A first text was finally completed, the Rules properly so called carefully distinguished from the Constitutions or general application of the Rule. The Chapter in General Assembly studied the document article by article, discussed amendments to the text and sent the document back to the Commission with an approbation "in principle" but with numerous suggestions for improving the work. Experts in the languages had meanwhile made versions of the document in the principal languages for study in linguistic sessions of the Assembly, and the resultant suggestions were also referred to the Seventh Commission. The Commission and the editors reworked their text during ten days of incessant work, and presented the new document to the General Assembly for the

second round of study and discussion. The few amendments and suggestions that resulted were swiftly incorporated into the text, and on the 12th of December by an all but unanimous vote the Chapter adopted the new Rule and the Constitutions.

In addition, the Chapter also undertook the revision of the Rule of Government, which in its renewed form will soon be published. In succession and with as little delay as possible you will receive the other capitular documents which delineate the Brother of the Christian Schools.

The Rule, the Constitutions together with the Book of Government, approved by the special General Chapter of 1967, in accordance with the principles of Perfectae Caritatis and the norms of Ecclesiae Sanctae, constitute for the future the Rules of our Institute, and replace all previous legislation. In particular, they replace in their totality and until modified by a future General Chapter, the texts edited in 1947 under the titles, "Common Rules and Constitutions of the Brothers of the Christian Schools", and "Rule of Government of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools".

The General Chapter in the course of its sessions has given profound thought to the problems of our consecration and of the finality of our Institute, in the spirit of Vatican Council II. Each Brother and each community will have to engage in the same deep reflection, individually and in community dialogue.

The other capitular documents that will soon be published will aid you in these reflections. But it is this text of the Rule and the Constitutions that is the principal fruit of the Chapter. It is a text that is at once brief, condensed, rich, perhaps a bit difficult at the same time. I have thought it useful, in this letter of introduction, to present the spirit of the text, hoping in this way to assist you in your initial reading of it.

The Rule undertakes to present a description of the ideal Brother and of his activity under the movement of the Holy Spirit, according to the teachings of the Church and the decisions of Vatican Council II. I think we can indicate the main lines or the facets of special emphasis of this Rule in the following manner :

In its totality, it is a gift of God who speaks through it to the heart of the Brother. No law in itself is efficacious for the salvation of man. But God does speak through signs which one must know how to interpret and to live in inspired liberty.

The first sign is the Word of God which makes man free because it reveals God as a person and makes His love present to us in our Lord Jesus Christ our redemption and our salvation. The Brothers consecrate themselves to Him, in order to announce Him to men and to cultivate faith in Him, by their apostolate of education, especially the education of the poor. Vowed to God, dedicated to the welfare of man, contemplation and apostolate are inseparably united. Human education and culture

are an integral part of this apostolate and make it possible for the Brothers to bring by this means the light of Christ to all nations.

The second sign is the Church itself. The Brothers wish to be an integral and active part of the Church, participating in her liturgical and sacramental life as in her universal mission of salvation. They constitute in the Church a special community, totally at her service, ready to respond to her appeals. All their life has a community character. They live and pray in community, as a community they fulfil their ministry of education, and they witness, by their union and their love for all men, to the presence here below of the Kingdom of God.

Institutional signs are also a manifestation of God's presence. The hierarchy of the Church and the Superiors of the Institute are one of the principal means by which God communicates Himself to men. Authority both expresses and directs the community life in its profounder sense, giving it spiritual and apostolic orientation.

Finally, history and the people of God are signs by which God speaks to us. God teaches us to read His will in the signs of the times, and to see in natural and human events His constant call to conversion of heart, to renewal in the apostolate. It is in man, then, the neighbour, the poor, all those who know not God, that the Brothers daily hear the call of God to follow their vocation with openness to all.

Thus, fully giving himself to God in the religious life, but also fully a man among men, the Brother seeks with them, works with them, in order to guide the world towards its salvation, in the hope of the Resurrection.

I believe these are the essential points of the orientations of the Rule and the Constitutions that I am happy to offer to your meditation and to your observance. They are henceforth, with the Book of Government, the Rules of the Institute. I respectfully urge you to study them and to seek to penetrate their full sense in community discussions. Strive, also, to live by them. If we all do just that, I am convinced that the years ahead will witness a real renewal of the Institute.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Brother CHARLES HENRY, FSC
Superior General.

THE RULE AND THE CONSTITUTIONS

To facilitate reference to the text:

- The Rule is printed in ordinary type and the paragraphs numbered according to the letters of the alphabet.
- The Constitutions are in italics and numbered in the ordinary way.

1. Nature and End of the Institute

Foundation

- a **W**ith the intention of forming teachers animated by an apostolic spirit and dedicated totally to the instruction and Christian education of the children of the working class and the poor, St. John Baptist de La Salle founded the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.
- b The Church has approved this Institute and has given it a particular mission, thus recognizing the action of the Holy Spirit in its foundation. The Church therefore encourages the Brothers to keep alive the spirit of the Gospel and the special inspiration of their Founder, who had the wisdom to recognize the educational needs of his time and to respond by giving a new impetus to popular education, through the establishment of schools available to everyone.

Lay Religious

- c The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a Congregation of pontifical right composed entirely of lay religious consecrated to God in the apostolate of education. The Rule

and the Constitutions of the Institute provide the Brothers with a means of living fully the common priesthood given in baptism. In offering themselves to God, they put themselves entirely at the service of youth.

Apostolic Community

d Aware of God's plan to form one people out of all races and nations, the Brothers work to build a society animated by the love of Christ; at the same time they promote the growth of the Church. They do this by the witness of their community life, their teaching, and all the other educational work they do. Each Brother, whatever his particular assignment may be, contributes to this special mission that the Church has given to the Institute.

Educational Mission

e The Brothers teach young people to recognize the creative action of God in all the efforts of men and so dispose them to accept the revelation of salvation in Jesus Christ. Wherever possible, the Brothers make known the Gospel message and develop the faith in the hearts of those already baptized. At the same time, their apostolic spirit leads them to offer their willing service to those who are still separated from Christ.

f The school is the preferred field of action for the Brother's apostolate. However, the Institute is open to other possibilities for teaching and education that may be more adapted to the circumstances and needs of the times.

Service to the Poor

g The Institute is devoted to the poor in a special way, although it offers its apostolic and educational services to all young people who are able to profit from them. Every Brother is called upon to show special interest in those whose poverty is an obstacle to their personal development or to their ability to respond to the message of salvation revealed in Jesus Christ.

2. The Spirit of the Institute

The Spirit of Faith

- a **T**he characteristic spirit of a Brother of the Christian Schools is the spirit of faith, that attitude of faith which expresses itself in love and zeal for the salvation of the world.
- b Faith is the principle and source of all Christian life. The Brothers strive to live the life of faith to the full and to deepen it constantly in themselves. They work in this world to develop the faith of the baptized and to lead to Christ those who do not yet know Him.
- c The faith produced in each Brother by the Holy Spirit is expressed in a progressively more personal relationship with Christ as Saviour. It presupposes a continual conversion of heart and mind, a turning towards God with confidence and love. Faith includes the acceptance of truth and so speaks to the mind; it implies trust and confidence in the ability of our spirit, motivated by intense love, to attain to the truth of divine revelation.
- d The spirit of faith activates and renews the apostolic engagement of the Brother. It makes

it possible for him to meet God in a life totally dedicated to children and to the young.

Effects of this Spirit

- e Faith enables the Brothers to evaluate everything in this world in the light of the Gospel. They see that the totality of creation, with Christ as its centre, is ordered to God and destined through His love for the happiness and salvation of all mankind.

- f Faith leads the Brothers to dedicate their whole lives to the service of youth for the sake of the kingdom of God. They exert every effort to transform human society so as to prepare it for the reign of justice and truth which the Lord will present to the Father on the last day.

- g Faith teaches the Brothers to realize that God is supporting them in their work; in life's joys or sorrows, He is always present since He has called them to help realize His loving plan to save mankind. Faith makes it possible for the Brothers, little by little, to see in everything that happens, in every person they meet, especially the poor, the unwanted and the persecuted, a sign and an invitation of the Holy Spirit.

Sources of this Spirit

- h To be authentic witnesses to the living faith that should give meaning to all their teaching, the Brothers rely constantly on the Word of God. The Word of God is the call to salvation; it is the message the Brothers bring to those they teach in order to share it with them.
- 1 Meditation on Holy Scripture, the study of sacred doctrine, active participation in the liturgy, the spirit of mental prayer and attention to the presence of God are the means the Brothers use to remain sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In this way He leads them to an ever deeper appreciation of the realities of the faith. But faith also requires that the Brothers, for their part, strive continually to purify their motivation, achieve a measure of self-mastery, and respond to the will of God.
- j The Holy Spirit, master of all hearts, breathes life into the Brothers' zeal, whether it is expressed in prayer for the apostolate, in the teaching of religion, or in the simple concern to be present among the young in an active and fraternal spirit.

CONSTITUTIONS

The Spirit of the Institute

- 1 *The most important end to be achieved in the formation of the young Brothers is that they know and acquire the spirit of the Institute.*
- 2 *The Brothers cultivate a deeper knowledge of the teachings of the Church and of the sacred sciences in order to increase their faith, to strengthen it, and to satisfy the need to search unceasingly for a better understanding of its meaning.*
- 3 *The Brothers continue to bring their general education and their pedagogical training up to date, particularly in catechetical methods and developments in the apostolate. In this way their zeal can achieve better results.*
- 4 *Each Brother should have a copy of Holy Scripture for which he has a deep respect, as the Founder recommended, and he makes frequent use of it.*

3. Community

Foundation

- a **C**hrist prayed: "Father, may they all be one even as you and I are one." This prayer is the inspiration for the whole life of the Brothers. They make every personal effort to model their community life as Brothers on the personal relations of knowledge and love that constitute the life of the Holy Trinity.

Vitality in Unity

- b The Brothers create community by giving themselves with joy to the service of others. Together they share the responsibility for the life of the community and the efficacy of its witness. The unity of the Brothers in community is itself a sign of the presence of Christ in this world and the source of their power and dynamism in the apostolate.

Community for the Religious Life

- c The bond between God and the individual Brother is strengthened in community by the

life and practice of the vows. Chastity widens the scope of the Brother's love and makes it possible for him to love all his Brothers with the love of Christ Himself. Poverty puts at the disposal of all whatever goods, talents or special gifts each Brother may have, thus enabling everyone to share in the same life. Obedience brings about unity in the common life enabling the Brothers to discover the will of God and follow it together; this guarantees a united effort in the work of Christian education.

- d The spirit of love as a living reality in each Brother is the force that unites the community. In this spirit the community organizes and gives meaning to its life of prayer. The Brothers pray together, hear and meditate on the Word of God together, and together participate in the same Eucharist. They seek God together and it is together they find Him.

Community for Persons

- e The community is for the Brothers their home. It fosters the development of the special talents of each and is receptive to the diversified wishes of all, with full respect for the spiritual development each one has attained. The community favours initiative within the framework of a common purpose; it gives comfort and support to its younger members and to those undergoing trials; it sustains the generosity of all the members when they

make the sacrifices necessary to reach agreement for the common good.

- f Dialogue provides an opportunity for everyone to state his thoughts openly and to profit from the frank expression of the differences of opinion or conviction that lead to a union of attitude and action. The Brother Director is the mainstay of union in community and the one who is primarily responsible for its life and work.

Community for the Apostolate

- g The community is aware that the full potential of the educational apostolate needs constantly to be explored. By its nature, a community contributes to the reappraisal of apostolic goals and the adaptation of educational methods, always with a view to coming closer to the spirit of the Gospel and to re-examine before God the impact of its activity. The community of Brothers gives life to its schools and institutions, helps them to become communities in the true sense of the word and imbues them with the Christian spirit. The Brothers engaged in other educational work receive encouragement from the community enabling them to bring an apostolic spirit to their special assignment.

- h The community is open and generous to others.

It co-operates with other congregations and organizations dedicated to education; it integrates itself in the total pastoral effort of the Church; it is involved in cultural organizations and social movements.

- 1 Thus the community is at the service of men through the education of youth; it reveals the understanding that the Christian has of the world and it conveys a message of peace and love.

CONSTITUTIONS

Community

- 1 *To foster community life, each Brother considers himself responsible for all his Brothers and for the good order of the house.*
- 2 *By their active presence and their fervent participation in the community exercises, and by thoughtfulness for one another, the Brothers assure the solidarity of the community.*
- 3 *The community thrives in a spirit of friendship and mutual help and so fosters both human development and the spiritual life; it derives strength from friendly exchanges of points of view in regard to apostolic work.*
- 4 *The Brothers accept and love one another in their differences as well as in their similarities. They live in mutual confidence and respect. They try to be open towards everyone and to be a burden to none. In conversation they avoid anything that could cause pain.*
- 5 *Each Brother, with tact, charity and a great respect for persons, knows how to point out to others what in their manner could disturb the unity of the group.*

- 6 *Out of regard for the work of the Brothers and their periods of rest, all are careful to respect the need for silence.*
- 7 *The community is particularly attentive to the young Brothers. It also shows great care for the Brothers who are aged, sick, discouraged, or undergoing trials, so that all may feel that they are supported by Christ's love.*
- 8 *The community readily extends hospitality giving a special welcome to those Brothers who are travelling.*
- 9 *The communities maintain a cordial and generous relationship with the Brothers in the missions. They do what they can to become familiar with their work and to foster it.*
- 10 *The community spirit of the Brothers extends to the entire Institute. In a wholehearted spirit of service they participate in elections, Councils, Chapters and other occasions organized for an exchange of ideas. In this way they contribute to the development of their religious family.*
- 11 *The Brothers' house should be planned in a way that favours work, prayer and a family spirit.*
- 12 *To nourish the life of faith and to encourage the spiritual union of the community, a conference in the form of a presentation or of an exchange of views takes place at least every two weeks.*

- 13 *A self-appraisal made from time to time by the community in the light of the Gospel can help the Brothers to increase the impact of their witness, their apostolic activity, and the quality of their religious life.*
- 14 *A fraternal atmosphere during meals favours union in the community. Feastdays, leisure, and periods of relaxation together are occasions to foster and to manifest the joy to be found in community life.*
- 15 *Communities balance the various activities of prayer, work and leisure. Personal work and community service are assigned in such a way as to favour the spiritual life and the development of the individual.*

4. The Religious Consecration of the Brother

Nature

- a **T**he Brothers respond to the love of God the Father Who invites them to consecrate themselves entirely to Him to procure His glory in the work of education. They place themselves totally under the guidance of His Spirit in order to follow Christ with greater freedom and to imitate Him with greater fidelity.

Continuation of Baptism

- b By reason of their incorporation into Christ at baptism, the Brothers are already consecrated to the glory of God. Religious profession strengthens their baptismal consecration and gives it a fuller expression.

New Elements

- c The Brothers live their consecration in a community within the Church. Such a community is a special sign to all Christians that God has made a covenant with men. It constitutes an

affirmation that the world can and ought to be transformed by the spirit of the Gospel. It is a reminder that everything in the world must pass through the experience of death in order to come to this ultimate transformation. By their union with one another the Brothers give witness to the truth and power of the Word they announce.

d Their own consecration makes it possible for the Brothers to participate more profoundly in the consecration of Christ: as the King of the world which He restores; as the Priest who sanctifies the world; as the Prophet who announces the realization of God's eternal plan.

e The Brothers engage themselves to live the spirit of the Beatitudes in accordance with the Rule and the Constitutions of their Institute. They adopt as their own the manner of life chosen by Christ himself when He was here on earth, so that Christ becomes a living reality for men today. In the same spirit the Brothers strive for greater facility in the practice of charity and greater interior freedom for their apostolate.

Consecration and Vows

f A life of chastity in the celibate state is an expression of undivided love for God that leads the Brothers to love all men with the love of Christ Himself. Poverty frees them completely for the

ministry of the Word of God and makes them sensitive to the needs of those who are weak and abandoned. Obedience unites them to the will of the Father, even until death, in fidelity to the Institute and in the service of youth and of the poor through education.

g Religious consecration establishes an intimate bond between the person of each Brother and the person of Christ. The Brothers surrender their whole existence to Christ without any thought of turning back. They renew their commitment by a continual offering of themselves in union with the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ, living in the hope that they will one day possess Him in a vision and a love that surpasses all their experience and all their desires.

CONSTITUTIONS

Religious Consecration

- 1 *The Brothers make simple and perpetual vows of chastity, poverty, obedience, service of the poor through education and fidelity to the Institute.*
- 2 *The Brothers make their religious profession according to the traditional formula.*
- 3 *They often renew in private their commitment to God and to their mission and they do so once a year in community on the feast of the Holy Trinity.*

5. Chastity

Motivation

- a **B**y their voluntary celibacy the Brothers consecrate themselves entirely to God for the sake of His kingdom, following the example of Christ and His Mother.

Values

- b Love is always a choice. Chastity is the special love for the person of Jesus Christ inspired by God in the heart of the Brother. It leads him to live in a constant encounter with Christ and to be guided entirely by Him.
- c In giving up the deep joy of having a family of his own, the Brother wishes to share more completely in the death of Jesus Christ as the guarantee that his apostolate will be fruitful.
- d Chastity frees the Brothers for the service of men. It leads the Brothers to purify their love and disposes them to love each person individually strengthening their influence as educators. It fosters in them a relation of friendship with everyone, opening their hearts to the sufferings

of the whole world and to the universal responsibilities of the Church. Each Brother shares more intimately in the very fatherhood of God.

Meaning of Chastity

e By their religious celibacy the Brothers show the world the value of a life whose love is placed at the service of all men. A mystery of death and new life, of denial and of productivity, the Brothers' chastity anticipates the eternal communion of saints in the immeasurable love and joy of the Lord.

CONSTITUTIONS

Chastity

- 1 *By their vow of chastity the Brothers give up marriage and consecrate themselves, their love, their word and their work, to the exclusive service of God.*
- 2 *They foster in community the fraternal friendships that contribute to emotional maturity.*
- 3 *The Brothers find in their chastity the strength to educate their pupils with unselfish respect and affection.*
- 4 *They control their senses and their passions by a voluntary life of austerity. They are reserved and prudent, as necessity obliges, whenever they are outside the community.*
- 5 *They make judicious use of the natural means to maintain physical health and emotional stability.*
- 6 *They have confidence in grace and are sustained by the thought of God; Mary, the Mother of Jesus and of men is their model and their help. Finally, they offer themselves for the salvation of their pupils and the world in union with the redemptive prayer of Christ in the sacred liturgy.*

6. Poverty

Motivation

- a **T**he Brothers choose to be poor because Christ was poor. They choose poverty in order to understand and practice Christ's teaching more completely and to serve men as their brothers, especially those most in need. They strive to keep free from possessiveness, so as to be at the disposal of God; they do not seek wealth, that they may seek the poor effectively and be accepted by them.

Community Practice

- b The Brothers live as persons of ordinary means, working for the livelihood of their community, sharing their goods and planning together the best use of their resources.
- c To avoid corporate wealth they share the fruits of their labours with their Brothers, with the poor and with the Church of God. From time to time they deprive themselves in order to help those suffering from poverty.
- d They maintain and develop schools of their

own for the service of youth, but they are ready as individuals and as a community to give up certain work in order to respond to more urgent problems of the world or the Church in the field of education.

Personal Practice

- e The poverty of the Brothers preserves a proper respect for human values; they strive to develop their own natural talents, cultivating an appreciation for what is good and noble in arts and science, that by their labours they may help those most in need to enjoy these benefits.
- f They use money and the goods of the community as responsible men accountable to God, to their Brothers and to the poor.
- g The Brothers preserve an interior freedom regarding the things they use, their work, their talents and even the spiritual qualities or gifts they may possess.
- h When something useful or necessary is unavoidably lacking, the Brothers willingly share the lot of the poor, inspired by the example of Christ and the promise of joy and peace of heart which is given in the First Beatitude.

CONSTITUTIONS

Poverty

- 1 *By the vow of poverty the Brothers forego the independent disposition of goods or objects with monetary value. They retain only the radical ownership of their patrimony and give to someone else its administration and usufruct. If God so inspires them, they may give up their patrimony completely with the consent of their Superiors.*
- 2 *The community readily provides for the needs of each Brother. It takes particular care of the sick and the aged.*
- 3 *The Brothers in charge of the administration of material goods are attentive to the needs of their Brothers.*
- 4 *The Brothers assist in establishing the community budget so that all may be responsible for the poverty of the community.*
- 5 *When the Brothers receive money from the community for their personal needs or for the things required by their assignment, they use it for the purpose indicated. The details of their purchases may be left to their discretion, but they manifest dependence*

on the community by giving an account of their transactions to the Brother Director.

6 *The residence of the community is always modest with furnishings that are simple and in good taste.*

7 *The clothes of the Brothers should be simple without being affected or untidy.*

8 *District Councils should see to it that all the communities have a suitable standard of living and encourage those that are better off to share with those that have less. They extend their help to those in need, remembering the directives of the Church concerning the missions and peoples in developing countries.*

7. Obedience

Communion with the Spirit

- a **O**bedience is communion with the Holy Spirit who unites the will of the Brother to that of Christ. The Spirit manifests His intentions through the whole society of the Church and its hierarchy, through the body of the Institute, its Superiors, the communities of the Brothers, and in all the events that take place from day to day. By obedience the Brother offers his liberty to God with full knowledge and love in order to give himself more completely to His service.

Role of the Community

- b The ordinary way in which the Spirit reveals Himself is through a community working together to discover the divine will in the needs of the world and of the Church. Each member of the community ought to be heard, since the Spirit speaks and acts in every Brother. Differences of age, of viewpoint and of formation, provide a rich source from which to form policies and come to decisions. It is the responsibility of the Brother Director to make final judgment concerning them.

Role of the Brother Director

- c The Brother Director, following the example of Christ whose representative he is, makes himself one with the community he serves. He helps the Brothers discover the will of God in their regard. He is the bond of union that holds the community together. He takes every opportunity he can to be in personal contact with his Brothers. He listens to them, studies the currents of thought that become evident in the community and tries to discover in them the movement of the Holy Spirit. He takes charge of those affairs that are his responsibility, having always in view the principle of subsidiarity. He governs the community in a spirit of charity and shows great confidence in his Brothers, leading them to co-operate willingly in free and loyal obedience. He knows how to issue a command when it becomes necessary, but his authority derives more from his attitude of service than from domination and power.

Role of the Brothers

- d The Brothers comply with the policies of the community and obey the Brother Director and any others who have a special charge in the community or school. They show confidence, devotedness and love towards those who exercise authority, helping them to fulfil their responsibilities. They respect decisions and give honest, intelligent

co-operation, even when they personally consider another course of action to be better. The Brothers make every effort to appreciate the Superiors' point of view in the light of faith, uniting with them in the common search to accomplish the will of God. In their own work they give evidence of responsibility and initiative.

e Obedience will sometimes be difficult and can often go contrary to perfectly legitimate personal convictions. The Brothers are encouraged to make these problems known to the Superiors. If it happens that the Brothers do not find a solution in consultation with them, they accept the final decision in the spirit of sacrifice and prayer, trusting that the will of God for them will become more clear.

f Obedience roots the Brothers in truth. It unites them to the mystery of Christ who became obedient unto death. It was for this reason that God exalted Him.

CONSTITUTIONS

Obedience

- 1 *By the vow of obedience the Brothers express and consecrate their will to obey lawful Superiors in everything they command according to the Rule and the Constitutions as related directly or indirectly to the end of the Institute.*
- 2 *They bind themselves in conscience to obey the orders given them by their Superiors in the name of obedience.*
- 3 *In community meetings, each Brother listens attentively and respectfully to the others and expresses his own ideas without trying to impose them on others. These gatherings are held in an atmosphere of freedom, openness and trust.*
- 4 *At least once a month, each Brother has a personal interview with the Brother Director concerning observance, community life and professional duties. He may, if he wishes, speak confidentially on personal matters in order to receive guidance in regard to his spiritual life.*
- 5 *The Brother Director gladly receives any Brother or group of Brothers wishing to speak with him.*
- 6 *The respective role of each of the Superiors is described in detail in the Book of Government.*

8. Service of The Poor Through Education.

Fidelity to The Institute

Vocation of the Brother

- a **T**he vocation of the Brother is a total commitment directed to the service of the poor through education. The Brothers assume a personal responsibility to further this mission of their Institute. They consecrate to God their love for youth, uniting themselves to Jesus Christ Who teaches men the way of salvation. They share in the educational work of the Church to make their presence felt among the poor.

Service of the Poor

- b The Brothers declare their intention to consecrate their energy, their time and their persons to the accomplishment of their mission; they want only to be generous and unselfish in teaching the truths of the Gospel.
- c In their educational activity the Brothers have always in mind the service of the poor. They show a special concern for those who lack material goods, personal talent, or human affection; this is the essential part of their mission. When obedience

requires, they serve the youth of families that are better off, because they also are poor before God, and because those who learn this truth merit the kingdom. The Brothers teach all their students that they have a responsibility for universal justice and charity.

Renewal

d Throughout their lives the Brothers maintain a special affection for this purpose of the Institute. They help to maintain the Christian orientation of its institutions and they evaluate their own attitude from time to time in order to strengthen and purify their determination to prepare the way of the Lord.

Fidelity

e In their desire to remain faithful to their vocation to the end of their lives the Brothers rely on God's fidelity and respond with a fidelity of their own.

f Their will strengthens the movement of love which first led them to embrace the apostolate of education; their fidelity gives unity to their whole existence. They desire to remain forever bound to their Institute, their Brothers, and their students.

- g The Brothers know well that difficulties lie before them. Nevertheless, they give themselves to the Institute in all their uniqueness as persons, convinced that in its life and work they will find deep fulfilment. With a mature awareness of what is involved they engage themselves for the whole of their lives to remain in the fraternal community of the Institute, prepared to respond to the successive calls of God in the various stages of their lives.
- h The Brothers find a model for their whole life in St. Joseph: he responded in confidence and faith to the fidelity God showed towards his people; he devoted his life to helping Mary, who was herself the infant Church; he participated in the work of salvation by bringing Jesus to human maturity; he was faithful until death in his humble role as father.

CONSTITUTIONS

Service of The Poor Through Education.

Fidelity to The Institute.

- 1 *In vowing themselves to the service of the poor through education, the Brothers affirm the responsibility that each has in union with the others for realizing the purpose of the Institute in the choice and orientation of its apostolic work.*
- 2 *Personally and in community, they examine themselves often on their fidelity to the spirit and practice of the service of the poor through education.*
- 3 *Their educational activity has in view the betterment of the poor. They participate in the attempts that are being made to bring the advantages of education to everyone.*
- 4 *The Brothers are particularly attentive to those pupils who find it difficult to adapt themselves to a normal course of studies or to family and social life.*
- 5 *Through a teaching inspired by the social doctrine of the Church, the Brothers prepare their students to play an effective part in the help given to developing countries and to movements for justice and peace.*

- 6 *Regional Chapters, District Chapters and District Councils are careful to define a common policy which, while taking into account local economic situations, makes effective provision for the care of the poor.*
- 7 *The Brothers pronounce the vow of fidelity to the Institute when they make perpetual profession. By this vow they promise to live in the community of Brothers which is the Institute, for their whole life, no matter what the future might hold.*
- 8 *The period of temporary vows is considered as a time of education to fidelity. The vow of fidelity pronounced at final profession is the act of a fully mature religious.*
- 9 *Prayer, devotion to St. John Baptist de La Salle, love for the community, and dedication to the work of the apostolate are the means indicated in the Rule as most effective to assure fidelity to the Institute.*

9. Apostolic Work

Witnesses

- a **T**he Brothers are sent to prepare the way of the Lord in much the same manner as St. John the Baptist. Their consecration constitutes them as messengers to the young to declare the truth that makes men free. It disposes them to diffuse the light of Christ in others and to communicate to them the personal, infinite love of the Father.
- b By their vows the Brothers become totally free to love the young in the way that Christ loved them and to go anywhere in order to spread the message of the Gospel.

Community Witness

- c This ideal becomes a reality when the Brothers as a community create an atmosphere which makes a truly Christian education possible. The community is not closed in upon itself but extends its services to all students and to the whole field of education; it helps to free the young from their self-centredness and encourages them to give of themselves generously. The witness given by

the members of the community to the love they have one for another is itself a lesson in the faith, calling to mind the words of the Lord: "That they all may be one so that the world may believe."

Personal Influence

d The Brothers influence the young by the depth of their knowledge, by the witness of their lives and, especially, by the vigour of their faith. All of their educational activity is based on the respect they have for each student in view of his personal dignity as a human being and the fact that he has been called to communion with God. Young people can develop as persons only in an environment where affection is freely given, where person-to-person relationships thrive, and where open dialogue is encouraged. The Brothers want very much to promote self-awareness, to lead the young to take charge of their own development, and to instil in them a sense of personal responsibility.

Instruction

e The Brothers regard professional competence as a duty that they owe in justice to their students. It is through their teachers that young people encounter the values which civilization and culture have to offer. The instruction the Brothers give makes

it possible for their students to become useful members of society. Education of this sort is an integral part of the Brothers' apostolate.

Catechesis

f The Brothers are entrusted with the great mission of fostering the growth of the seed of faith planted in the child at baptism. The teaching of religion thus occupies the first place in the total ministry of the Institute. The catechesis that the Brother gives should be full of life, student-centred, relevant to the world, based on Scripture and Liturgy and consonant with the teaching of the Church. For catechesis to have any effect, it must spring from deep convictions that are clearly in harmony with the Brother's whole way of life. It should flow from the depths of a heart completely possessed by the Spirit of God, the Teacher of truth.

Social Awareness

g By a practical introduction into the experience of living with others, the Brothers lead the young to become active members of the various groups that make up the total human community and to take part in the united efforts of organizations founded for progress in social justice and for the development of peoples.

Apostolic Action

- h** In their apostolic activities the Brothers take into consideration the potential that each person has. They are well disposed to all their students and they open to all the challenge of the apostolate; the more generous are directed to movements fostering a deeper Christian life. They advise and encourage those who show signs of being attracted to the priesthood or to the religious life.
- i** Following the lead of the Church, the Brothers invite the young to help those who are struggling to free themselves from misery and hunger. They encourage their students to become aware of the great part of humanity that still has no knowledge of the faith and is waiting to hear the good news of salvation. In such an atmosphere of generosity the seeds of vocations will grow under the ever-present impulse of the Holy Spirit.
- j** To accomplish their mission the Brothers constantly adapt their educational activities to the needs of the Church and the world.
- k** They co-operate closely with the lay teachers and others responsible for the education of the young, joining their labours with all those who promote the cause of justice and unity among men.

CONSTITUTIONS

Apostolic Work

- 1 *The schools of the Brothers ought to be characterized by the quality of their courses, the thoroughness of their teaching and the constant care to evaluate objectives. They revise programmes and methods to meet the needs of the times and the progress made in the field of education.*
- 2 *Their apostolic activity ought to be adapted to the purposes of Christian education and the specific end of the Institute. Their objectives include a concern for the general education of the person integrated with the teaching of the Word of God.*
- 3 *The school facilitates the explicit teaching of religion. This includes giving students an experience of life in a social group, the practice of prayer, the meaning of the Liturgy and the apostolic responsibilities of the baptised Christian. In a world growing progressively more secularized the teaching of religion, united with a general education, contributes to the necessary purification of religious sentiment.*
- 4 *Educational work with the non-Christian is a suitable opportunity for dialogue and co-operation with those who profess other religions. The apostolate of the Brothers for people who have not yet heard*

the Gospel message is a testimony to the charity and the kindness of Christ.

- 5 *The Brothers make every attempt to educate their students to liberty and responsibility by leading them to play an active role in the life of the school, its work and its discipline. They teach them how to develop concentration, to form their will and judgment, and to maintain an interior liberty in their evaluation and use of the media of information.*
- 6 *The Brothers regard the priests and chaplains of the school as counsellors on the educational staff responsible for formation in the faith. The Brothers help them create enthusiasm for apostolic activities and facilitate their function in the Liturgy and spiritual direction.*
- 7 *The Brothers consider the lay teachers as their collaborators. Laymen bring to the educational community their knowledge of the world and their experience in family, social and professional life. They participate in the whole life of the school, including if possible the responsibilities of administration.*
- 8 *The Brothers work in close co-operation with parents and other educators, particularly those who manage cultural and recreation centres for the young. They co-operate also with those responsible for apostolic and professional organizations and those concerned with family life.*

- 9 *The Brothers maintain an interest in the human and spiritual concerns of their former students and keep in contact with them through friendship and prayer. They profit from the experience and assistance of their alumni in order to adapt their educational work to the requirements of modern life. They assist the alumni associations to promote among their members a deeper Christian life and an active social apostolate.*

- 10 *The Brothers, faithful to a major preoccupation of their Founder and the traditions of the Institute, regard the training of teachers as a very effective way to assure the expansion of their educational mission.*

- 11 *The Brothers see to it that the extension of their educational activity into work other than the school corresponds to the end of the Institute.*

- 12 *The Brothers teaching outside the schools of the Institute, or in educational work not specifically connected with the schools, do so as members of a community. They should be regarded as such by their Brothers and as far as possible by those among whom they work.*

- 13 *The Brothers may make their schools available as centres for evening courses, cultural activities, and social gatherings or conferences.*

14 *Districts and communities are responsible for adapting the forms of their apostolate and the manner of their collaboration with others to the needs of time and place.*

10. The Life of Prayer

Baptismal Foundation

- a **T**he consecration received at baptism and confirmation transforms sinful man by uniting him to Christ, according to the text from St. Peter, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation." Prayer is necessary for the Brothers if they are to enter into this transformation more fully and to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit.

Biblical and Liturgical Basis

- b The Brothers find in Holy Scripture and in the Liturgy the principal basis for their prayer and the means of filling their hearts with the Spirit of God and His love.
- c The Eucharist permeates the whole life of the Brothers. In this mystery they become a part of the sacrifice of redemption and thanksgiving, finding in it the strength to work for the salvation of their Brothers, confidence in the ultimate success of their apostolate, and hope for the coming of the kingdom of God. Communion with the Body of Christ makes their hearts one in the same Spirit.

d In the sacrament of Penance and in the other sacramental rites they see the means to turn ever more towards God, to strengthen their love, and to obtain help from Him in their efforts to respond to His call.

Union with God

e In prayer and in their apostolate the Brothers live their union with God. They deepen this union by frequently recalling the presence of God, by bringing the spirit of faith to the events of their lives, and by a deep simplicity of purpose in their daily labours. Each day they set aside some time for renewing themselves in their faith.

f The Brothers value particularly the practice of mental prayer, in which God makes His presence known in the quiet of their hearts. Seeking Him in mental prayer, the Brothers unite themselves to the Person of Jesus Christ in His teachings, His virtues and His mysteries. They discover the light to place their own lives in the history of salvation, uniting themselves to Christ's spirit as one sent by the Father, praying for those whom God has entrusted to their zeal. They trust that Christ will give them the freedom of heart and discernment of mind that their apostolate requires.

g Each Brother unites his prayer to the prayer of his Brothers gathered together with him, to the

prayer of the Church, and to the prayer of Jesus Christ Who never ceases to make intercession before the Father.

Life of Prayer

- h The Brothers bring recollection to the whole of their lives so that they may foster their union with God in the midst of their activities. The Lord is present in their speech as well as in their silence.
- i A life of prayer is not possible without the practice of virtue and self-denial for the love of Christ. It leads the Brothers to accept the fatigues of work and the requirements of community life as an offering to the Father in union with the sacrifice of the Cross.
- j The Brothers have a strong devotion to the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ and of the Church. They see the model of their own consecration in the total "yes" that she spoke to God, in her acceptance of His plan of salvation, and in her perfect co-operation to bring it about. In her they perceive spiritual maturity giving of itself in a filial spirit. They learn from her to unite themselves in faith, hope and love to the Holy Trinity, the object of their contemplation and source of their apostolate. Her intercession helps them to bring Christ to maturity in their

own hearts and in the hearts of those to whom they teach the Gospel. She sustains their hope of entering one day, with all whom they love, into the kingdom of God.

CONSTITUTIONS

Life of Prayer

- 1 *The Brothers as a community regulate the order and the times for the various exercises which they perform together each day: Lauds, morning mental prayer, Mass, Vespers and evening mental prayer. When possible, Sext and Compline, or the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, are recited in community or in private.*
- 2 *Morning mental prayer lasts half an hour; evening mental prayer with Vespers lasts half an hour.*
- 3 *The Brothers regard mental prayer as the first and principal exercise of the day and the one most capable of bringing the blessing of God on all the others.*
- 4 *To strengthen their life of faith the Brothers make spiritual reading either for two hours a week as a minimum, or for half an hour daily.*
- 5 *Attentive to the recommendations of the Church and faithful to the traditions of the Institute, the Brothers honour the Blessed Virgin Mary each day by the Rosary or by some other practice of devotion to her in accord with the spirit of the Liturgy. This may be in private or in community.*

- 6 *Occasionally the communities organize a special service in honour of Mary, during which the Brothers may meditate on the mysteries of salvation in a more profound way.*
- 7 *The Brothers remember that St. John Baptist de La Salle entrusted the Institute to the protection of St. Joseph and they remain faithful to this devotion of the Founder.*
- 8 *In special prayers or devotions, whether practised in private or decided by the community, the Brothers join themselves to the great and continual prayer of the Church in union with Christ who never ceases to intercede for men. Thus they give full meaning to these devotions and preserve unity in their spiritual life.*
- 9 *The Brothers unite themselves to the spirit of the Church during the days and seasons of penance by exterior, and especially interior, practices of mortification, as recommended by St. John Baptist de La Salle.*
- 10 *Each year they make a spiritual retreat to renew their life of union with God and their zeal in the apostolate. Periodically they spend some time in recollection for the same purpose. The Districts and communities determine how these periods of renewal are to be organized.*
- 11 *The Brothers are particularly careful to show*

fraternal friendship for those who are suffering illness, or whom the Lord is preparing to call to Himself. They help them receive the sacraments of the sick when their condition warrants these, and they assist them by their prayers and encouragement.

12 *The remembrance of the deceased Brothers, especially those whom they have known and loved, is dear to them. Prayers and suffrages for the dead unite those still on earth with those already in the peace of Christ. The Book of Government indicates these suffrages.*

13 *The salutation; "Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever", is the signal of the community.*

11. The Vitality of The Institute

Grace

- a **T**he vitality and growth of the Institute depend primarily on the mystery and the power of grace. By the gift of freedom, however, the Lord places the destiny of men in their own hands.

Fidelity

- b Each Brother is responsible for the development of the Institute; its vitality depends on the competence and fidelity of every one of its members.

Formation

- c The formation of the young Brothers is one of the principal concerns of the Institute. This responsibility is entrusted to Brothers who are personally qualified and experienced in community life and apostolic work.
- d Formation integrates the desire for self-fulfilment with the requirements of living and working together in community; it fosters unity in a life directed at once towards God and towards an apostolate for others.

Collaboration

- e All the Brothers maintain an interest in the studies and spiritual life of the houses of formation, willingly assisting those directly responsible. They help the young Brothers during their first years in community by an example of prayerfulness, a spirit of service to others and by their exercise of fraternal dialogue.

Continual Formation

- f The apostolic religious continually deepens and progressively adapts his own spiritual, theological, professional and apostolic formation. The Superiors and the communities provide the conditions and equipment suitable for developing both religious and professional competence; each Brother responds by his progress towards mature manhood, to the measure of the fullness of Christ.

Rules

- g Fidelity to the Institute means fidelity to its spirit. The Rule translates into modern terms this spirit which St. John Baptist de La Salle set forth in the original Rule. It reaffirms his intention to base observance on the love of God and neighbour and to offer the New Testament as the first and principal Rule of the Brothers. It is above all

to Jesus Christ, to His Gospel and to Charity that the Brothers direct their fidelity.

Vocations

- h The Rule defines the meaning of the Brothers' life. They observe it with the joy of a mature gift of self constantly renewed. A spirit of union in community strengthens this fidelity to the religious and apostolic life; in this atmosphere vocations grow strong and flourish. Moreover, the union of the Brothers in their communities is a sign of the Church and attracts other vocations, a need that the community remembers in its prayer and in its activity.

The Founder

- i The Brothers honour St. John Baptist de La Salle as their Founder, studying and meditating on his life and writings, imitating his confidence in God, his loyalty to the Church and his dedication to youth. Inspired by his ideals, they strive to carry out his intentions by fostering the continual growth and development of his spirit in the Institute. In this way, they are spurred on daily to procure the greater glory of God by their increasingly generous response to the invitations of grace, the appeals of the Church and the needs of the world.