

Brothers of the Christian Schools

# The Rule

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Brothers of the Christian Schools

The Rule

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40th General Chapter 1976

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## PRESENTATION

Dear Brothers,

Ten years ago, at the invitation of the Church and in the spirit of Vatican II, our Special Chapter of Renewal proposed a new formulation of our Rule and Constitutions as well as of the Book of Government.

When he presented these texts to you on December 16, 1967, Brother Charles Henry, Superior General, recalled the lengthy preparation which had preceded the General Chapter, then the detailed and prolonged work done during the twenty months of sessions and intersessions. He paid homage particularly to the spirit in which the work had been done: fidelity to the Founder, concern for transcribing in today's language the message which the Founder left us by his life and his writings, attention to retain throughout the texts his insistence on making the Gospel the first and principal Rule.

In contrast with what was done in 1966-1967, no Commission was appointed in 1976 to devote itself to the special task of revising the Rule. First the whole Institute in the preparatory phase, and then all the Brother Capitulants were asked to contribute to a prudent evaluation of the experience of the last ten years.

The various Commissions of the General Chapter, each in its proper domain — Mission, Consecration, Formation,

Young Churches, Government — contributed to this same evaluation and, where proper, made proposals for amending the normative texts.

The 1976 Chapter decided to confide all this material to the Post-capitular Commission, entrusting to it the responsibility of making the best use of this material for an improved edition of the Rule and Constitutions as well as of the Book of Government.

The result of this work was sent to the Brothers who had taken part in the General Chapter for a preliminary study. Then, having taken note of their observations, the Commission produced a second text which was submitted to these same Brothers for a final study and to obtain their votes. Brother Superior was asked to promulgate these texts once they had been revised and approved by the majority of the members of the Chapter.

Because it was recognized as fully valid by the 1976 General Chapter, the text of the Rule has not been changed. Before reading this text, we could usefully give attention once again to these lines written ten years ago in order to understand its meaning and spirit.

*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 fulfill 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 neighbor, 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.*

Rome: September 8, 1977

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "José Pablo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Brother José Pablo  
(Superior General)

TWO TEXTS OF THE HOLY FOUNDER

extracts from

the

*Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian  
Schools*

manuscript copy, 1718.

ON FIDELITY TO THE RULE

"It is necessary that the Brothers apply to themselves, and take for the foundation and support of their fidelity to the Rule 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 neighbor,' since these are the principal commandments given us by God, and because any fidelity to the Rule, 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 with exactness the commandments of God."

(Extract from 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 has taken away; as it has 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."

(Complete text of Chapter 2)

# The Rule

## 1 — NATURE AND END OF THE INSTITUTE

- a With 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, Saint 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 live in fidelity to the spirit of the Gospel and the charism 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, establishing schools available to everyone.
- c The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a congregation of pontifical right composed exclusively of lay religious consecrated to God in order to carry out their apostolic ministry of education. The Rule and the Constitutions of the Institute provide the Brothers with a means of living fully their baptismal priesthood. In offering themselves to God they put themselves entirely at the service of youth.
- 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 their other educational work. Each Brother, whatever his particular as-

ignment may be, contributes to this special mission that the Church has given to the Institute.

- e The Brothers teach young people to recognize the creative action of God in all human endeavors and so prepare them to accept the revelation of 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 Brothers' 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.
- 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 by 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 revealed in Jesus Christ.

## 2 — THE SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE

- a The 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 whole world.
- b Faith is the source and foundation 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 Savior. It presupposes a continual conversion of heart and mind, a turning towards God with confidence and love. Faith also includes knowledge of divine truth and so speaks to the mind; it implies trust and confidence in the ability of our spirit, motivated by intense love, to respond to the truth of divine revelation.

d The spirit of faith continually 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 the young.

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 center, is ordered to God and destined through his love for the happiness and salvation of all people.

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 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 collaborating with 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.

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.

i 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 the Spirit 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 and to achieve a measure of self-mastery.

j The Holy Spirit, Teacher of all hearts, breathes life into the Brothers' zeal, whether it is expressed in the apostolic focus of their prayer, in the teaching of religion or in the simple concern to be present among the young in an active spirit of brotherhood.

### 3 — COMMUNITY

a Christ 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 effort to model their community life as Brothers on the personal relations of knowledge and love that constitute the life of the Holy Trinity.

b The Brothers create community by giving themselves with joy to the service of others. Together they are responsible for the life of the community and the power of its witness. The union of the Brothers in community is itself a

sign of the presence of Christ in this world and the source of the effectiveness and dynamism of their apostolate.

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 everyone can share in the same life-style. Obedience strengthens the union of the Brothers in their attempt 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. It is in this Spirit that 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.

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 favors 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 whenever they make the sacrifices necessary to reach agreement for the common good.

f Dialogue encourages everyone to state his thoughts openly in order to arrive at a union of attitude and action. This in no way excludes constructive confrontation. The Brother Director is the mainstay of union in community

and the one who is primarily responsible for its life and work.

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, with a view to coming closer to the spirit of the Gospel and re-examining the religious influence of its activity. The community of Brothers gives life to its schools and institutions, helps them 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 to become leaders in their special apostolates.

h The community is open and generous to others. It cooperates with other congregations and organizations dedicated to education; it integrates itself into the total pastoral effort of the local Church; it is involved in civic organizations of a cultural and social nature.

i Thus the community is at the service of the whole world 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.

#### 4 — THE RELIGIOUS CONSECRATION OF THE BROTHER

a The 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 the Holy Spirit in order to follow Christ with greater freedom and to imitate him with greater fidelity.

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 fuller expression.

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 his people. 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 people today. In the same spirit the Brothers strive for greater facility in the practice of charity and greater interior freedom for their apostolate.

f A life of chastity in the celibate state is an expression of undivided love for God that leads the Brothers to love everyone with the love Jesus himself has for them. 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 hope that they will one day possess him in vision and love that will surpass all their experience and desires.

## 5 — CHASTITY

a By their voluntary celibacy the Brothers consecrate themselves entirely to God for the sake of his kingdom, following the example of Christ and his mother.

b Love is always a choice. Chastity is a distinctive love for the person of Jesus Christ inspired by God in the heart of the Brother. It leads him to live in a constant relationship 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 others. It leads the Brothers to purify their love and disposes them to live united together in community. It strengthens their influence as educators by bringing them to love each person individually. 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. In this way each Brother shares more intimately in the very fatherhood of God.

- e By their religious celibacy the Brothers show the world the value of a life whose love is placed at the service of the whole world. 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.

## 6 — POVERTY

- a The 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 all persons as their Brothers, especially those most in need. If they were to fill their hearts with the goods of this earth, they would leave no room for God. Those who seek after riches can never hope to win the love of the poor but will always remain as strangers to them.
- b The Brothers live simply, 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 labors with their Brothers, with the poor and with the Church of God. From time to time they deprive themselves voluntarily in order to help those suffering from poverty.
- d They maintain and develop institutions of their own for the sole purpose of serving youth, but they are ready as individuals and as a community to give up any enterprise in order to respond to more urgent demands in the field of

education or new needs in the world, interpreting such opportunities as a call from the Church.

- 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 art and science, that by their dedication 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 do not become so preoccupied with their work that they lose all interior freedom. They are careful not to become all absorbed with the things they use or their personal talents. Even the spiritual qualities or gifts they may possess are ordered only to charity and not considered as ends in themselves.
- h When something useful or necessary is unavoidably lacking, the Brothers willingly share the lot of the poor, inspired by the example of their Master and Lord and the promise of joy and peace of heart which is given in the first Beatitude.

## 7 — OBEDIENCE

- a Obedience 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 freedom to God with full knowledge and love in order to give himself more completely to his service.

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 the final judgment concerning them.

c The Brother Director, following the example of Christ whose representative he is, makes himself one with the community he serves. 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 helps the Brothers to discover God's will for them. 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 cooperate willingly in free and loyal obedience. He knows how to issue a command when it becomes necessary, but his influence comes more from his attitude of service than from domination and power.

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 its apostolic work. They show confidence, devotedness and love towards those who exercise authority, helping them to fulfill their responsibilities. They respect decisions and give honest, intelligent cooperation, 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 know and 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 legitimate personal conviction. 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 what God expects of them will become more clear.

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

## 8 — SERVICE OF THE POOR THROUGH EDUCATION

### FIDELITY TO THE INSTITUTE

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

b Each Brother declares his intention to consecrate his energy, time and his whole being to the accomplishment of his mission in the Church. His only interest is to be generous and unselfish in proclaiming the true Gospel message.

c In this educational activity the Brother has always in mind the service of the poor. He shows a special concern for those who lack material goods, personal talent or human affection; this is the essential part of his mission. When obedience requires, he works with the children of families that are better off. They also are poor before God and those who learn this truth merit the kingdom. The Brother teaches all his students that they have a responsibility to bring the reign of justice and charity to all the world.

d Throughout his life the Brother maintains a special affection for this goal of the Institute. He helps to maintain the Christian orientation of its institutions; he evaluates his own attitude from time to time in order to strengthen and purify his dedication in preparing the way of the Lord.

e In the 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 bound forever 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 fulfillment. With a mature awareness of what is involved, they engage themselves for the whole of their lives to remain in the community of brotherhood in 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 Saint

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 his responsibility for the education of Jesus; he was faithful until death in his humble role as father.

## 9 — APOSTOLIC WORK

a The Brothers are sent to prepare the way of the Lord in much the same manner as Saint John the Baptist. Their consecration constitutes them as messengers to the young to declare the truth that makes them free. It disposes the Brothers to diffuse the light of Christ and to proclaim the personal, infinite love of the Father.

b By their vows the Brothers become totally free to love young people in the way that Christ loved them and to go anywhere in order to spread the message of the Gospel.

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 the students and to those associated with it in any way; it helps to free the young from their self-centeredness 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."

d The Brothers influence the young by the depth of their knowledge, by the witness of their lives and especially by the vigor of their faith. All of their educational activity is

based on the respect they have for each student in view of the personal dignity of each as a human being and the fact that each one 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 instill in them a sense of personal responsibility.

e The Brothers regard professional competence as a duty that they owe in justice to their students. The instruction the Brothers give makes it possible for their students to become useful members of society. It is through their teachers that young people encounter the values civilization and culture have to offer. Education of this sort is an integral part of the Brothers' apostolate.

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 Brothers. The catechesis that the Brothers give should be full of life, student-centered, 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, who teaches all truth.

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.

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 cooperate closely with the lay teachers and others responsible for the education of the young, joining their labors with all those who promote the cause of justice and unity among all peoples.

## 10 — THE LIFE OF PRAYER

a The consecration received at baptism and confirmation transforms sinful humanity by uniting persons 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.

b The Brothers find in Holy Scripture and in the liturgy the indispensable source 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 reconciliation 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.

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 great simplicity of purpose in their daily labors. 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 consciousness of his mission as one sent by the Father, praying for those whom God has entrusted to their zeal. They trust that the Lord 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.

h The Brothers bring prayerfulness 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 and also in their silence.

i A life of prayer is not possible without the practice of virtue and self-mastery for the love of Christ. It leads the Brothers to accept the fatigue 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 cooperation 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.

## 11 — THE VITALITY OF THE INSTITUTE

a The vitality and growth of the Institute depend primar-

ily on the mystery and the power of divine grace. By the gift of freedom, however, the Lord places the destiny of people in their own hands.

b Consequently the Brothers are collectively and individually responsible for the development of the Institute. They realize that its vitality depends on the competence and fidelity of every one of its members.

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 is a total experience that integrates a life centered on God with apostolic work, the need for self-fulfillment with the demands of living in community and working as a team.

e All the Brothers maintain an interest in the organization of the course of studies and the spiritual life in formation centers, willingly assisting those directly responsible. They help the young Brothers during their first years in community by an example of prayerfulness, of availability to others and a spirit of brotherhood.

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 means 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.

g Fidelity to the Institute means fidelity to its spirit. The Rule translates into modern terms this spirit which Saint John Baptist de La Salle set forth in the original Rule. It

reaffirms his intention to base observance on the love of God and neighbor 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.

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 the vocation of the Brother grows strong and flourishes. Moreover, the union of the Brothers in their communities is a sign of the Church and attracts others to their vocation, a need that the community remembers in its prayers and in its activity.

i The Brothers honor Saint 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. Penetrated with his spirit which he left as a legacy to his Brothers, they carry forward his ideals within the living tradition of the Institute. Their daily effort to procure the glory of God becomes a life like his of increasingly generous response to the gift of grace, the appeals of the Church and the needs of the world.

## FORMULA OF VOWS

Most holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with profound reverence before your infinite majesty I consecrate myself entirely to you to procure your glory as far as I shall be able and as you will require of me.

For this purpose I, Brother \_\_\_\_\_, promise to unite myself and to live in community with the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who are associated together to engage in educational work for the service of the poor. I promise to go wherever I may be sent and to do whatever I may be assigned by the body of this Institute or by its superiors.

Wherefore, I promise and vow chastity, poverty, obedience, service of the poor through education, and fidelity to the Institute, as approved by the Church and according to the Rule and the Constitutions of this Institute.

I promise to keep these vows faithfully all my life.

Done at \_\_\_\_\_

on \_\_\_\_\_

in the year of our Lord \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: Brother \_\_\_\_\_

Attested: Brother \_\_\_\_\_