

★ *lasalliana*

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“LET THE GREATER AMONG YOU
BE AS THE YOUNGEST,
THE LEADER
AS THE ONE WHO SERVES”

(Luke 22:26)

Rule, Article 61.

As a religious superior, the Brother Director is at the service of his Brothers to help them in their spiritual growth and in accomplishing their vocation as persons and as a community. He himself strives to live and help others live in the spirit of the Rule.

Rule, Article 62.

As the person principally responsible for the community and its unity, the Brother Director fulfills his responsibilities with simplicity. He supports and stimulates the Brothers in their search for the common good. He listens to them but also keeps them informed. At the appropriate moment he intervenes to endorse decisions on which consensus seems to have been reached or to settle personally questions which cannot remain undecided.

I

“Authority is exercised with a sensitivity
to persons and with respect for subsidiarity”
(Rule, Article 102)

The Lasallian community is basically a group of people in a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. The Brother Director’s mission as a member of this group is to assist the community in making that dynamic relationship fruitful.

A relationship with the risen Lord is a call to continual conversion, continual growth. The Brother Director as the leader of a Lasallian community is one who has, himself, had the ongoing experience of conversion. He is one who has “fallen from his horse of security”. It is from this experience that he ministers to his Brothers.

Much could be written about the role of the Brother Director. The following lines are intended to assist him realize his role as spiritual animator and guide to his Brothers as they meet Jesus in the

events and people that constitute their everyday lives.

II

What is the Brother Director’s role?

The role of the Brother Director is basically one of **dialogue** – a dialogue that is based upon a sensitive listening to and total acceptance of the other person, as a means towards encouraging the other person’s growth. It is a dialogue carried out in openness to the Spirit and with the optic of the Gospel.

III

What does the role of the Brother Director involve?

The Brother Director is asked: *to listen accurately* to every other Brother, in such a way that he is able to discriminate between the feelings being expressed and the content of what is being said; *to communicate back* to the individual Brother or the community what is being said, separating the feelings from the content; *to accept others* as they are, without trying to see them as he thinks they ought to be; *to challenge and confront* when necessary; *to assist in clarifying* any lines of action or any decisions the individual or the community wishes to make.

Direction is a model for helping where both the Brother Director and the individual or community have a particular role to play. In order that his help be effective, the Brother Director will require certain skills. The effectiveness of these skills also depends upon the other person or the community playing a full, responsible part in the dialogue.

(1) The Brother Director must be fully present, not merely physically present. He must be psychologically attentive to the other. The other Brother is asked to be truly himself.

(2) The Brother Director responds to the other Brother’s frame of reference. He seeks to understand that frame of reference, attempting an accurate empathy for what the other Brother is saying and experiencing. He tentatively expresses what seems to be implied by what the Brother is saying. He identifies themes, helping the other person to draw the logical conclusions from his statements

or showing up the seeming contradictions in what is being said. He helps the other Brother to be specific in his communication. This quality of the Brother Director's response enables the other Brother to explore his own feelings and behaviors.

(3) The Brother Director stimulates the other Brother to look at other possible frames of reference, to see a broader vision, and to see possible leads for future movement and growth. This may involve the Brother Director confronting and challenging the other Brother.

What should one confront? He should confront (a) discrepancies between what is being said and the reality as he is able to perceive it or as revealed, for example, in the person's body language; (b) distortions, where the other person is only seeing one side of a position; (c) any "game", tricks or smoke-screens that he believes the other person is using and finally; (d) any attempts to evade the real issue.

What is more important, however, is *how* the Brother Director confronts: it must be done in a spirit of accurate empathic understanding, and always tentatively, since his judgment may not be accurate. It must be done with care for the other person as the motivation. The Brother Director would need to check his motivation as to why he is confronting. For whose good? And it should be done by working from the other person's strengths and not from his weakness.

(4) The Brother Director helps the other Brother or the group to come to a decision about necessary action. The other person is enabled to act upon

his self-understanding, working out a plan based on the dialogue and discernment carried out with the Brother Director.

IV

"I'm not well prepared!"

(A Note to the Brother Director)

It may be that your feelings on reading this outline leave you uncomfortably aware of your lack of preparedness for your role as Director. If that is true, it is a very positive sign. It indicates the need we all have for continuing formation.

To answer this need for continuing formation, it might help to have occasional gatherings of the Brothers Director of your area or District. There you can share your concerns and the mutual expertise you have for your mission. You might also seek more specialized help through workshops or courses.

What is certain is that being a Brother Director is a mission that you will carry out more effectively as you feel the need to develop certain skills and employ them in the service of your Brothers.

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