

My very dear Brothers.

The ardent zeal which you have hitherto manifested in the exercise of the ministry with which God has honored you impels me to exhort you to continue to perfect yourselves in an occupation so holy and useful to the Church as yours. There is nothing greater, my dear Brothers, than to dedicate yourself to giving to children a Christian education and to inspiring them with the fear and love of God. It is for this purpose that you have consecrated yourselves to His service--a blessed consecration which will make you great in the Kingdom of Heaven, according to the promise of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is what our venerable Founder never ceased to bring to your attention during his lifetime. Ah! what did he not do to this end? With what care and solicitude did he not seek to provide you with the means of fulfilling your duties with as much prudence as charity? You can bear witness, and God knows it, with what attention and what charity he sought, together with the principal and most experienced Brothers of the Institute, suitable means of maintaining among you a holy uniformity in your manner of educating youth. He drew up in writing all that he believed to be expedient for this purpose, and he prepared this *Conducting the Christian Schools*. He exhorted you to read it again and again, in order to learn from it what would be most useful to you. Your conformity with his desire and the care which you still take to put into practice what he taught you show clearly enough your zeal and your veneration of so worthy a father.

This guide, my very dear Brothers, was soon introduced into all of the houses of the Institute; and everyone gloried in conforming to it. However, as there were several things in it that could not be put into practice, the Brothers of the Assembly which was held for the purpose of electing the first Brother Superior represented to M. De La Salle that it would be expedient to make some corrections. He approved their proposition, and thus it was put into better order than before.

You indicated clearly, my very dear Brothers, by the eagerness with which you requested that this corrected work should be sent to all of your Communities, the extent of your approval of what the Brothers of this Assembly had done, and repeated demands which you still make for copies of this work prove sufficiently your desire for uniformity of method. Lack of leisure has always prevented the preparation of a sufficient number of copies to satisfy your just desires. Furthermore, because of the lack of accuracy on the part of copyists, there are numerous errors which often change the sense.

At length, some of the most zealous Brothers, sympathizing with the difficulty which you experience in being thus deprived of something so necessary, have entreated our very honored Brother Superior to allow the work to be printed. He has consented, all the more willingly because he himself has desired for a long time to afford you this satisfaction. He has read the again with great attention and has had it carefully examined in order to eliminate all that might be useless.

Accept, then, my very dear Brothers, the offer which I make to you of a book to which you are already entitled. Seek therein the prudence and wisdom that are so necessary if you are to establish the reign of God in the souls which are confided to you. Be sure that, if you persevere in so holy a work, you will save yourselves and you will save many others as well. Amen.

(Brother Timothy, 1720)