



Lasallian Reflections

No. 13

Brothers of the Christian Schools

March 2004

The Community Annual Program

In working out the Community Annual Program our Brothers use many different models and follow many processes. We present to you here some examples and especially, the processes used in their elaboration as a contribution to all the members of the community with a view to improve all that which may serve the mission of the Institute.

The framework within which a Community Annual Program is built is the Rule; but in order for it to be alive, it needs to have an existential character for each Brother and for each community. If this is not so, it is simply a dead letter.

1. Ask each Brother and the community as a whole how they feel at the time the Community Annual Program is being worked on. This is the program's starting point.
2. Based on these feelings as regards the Program, the community will discover the climate in which it lives and can take note of the differences that exist between the community's thinking and what is required by various declarations on which it is founded: the original act of association (which is our inspiration), the Rule, and the vow formula. (We are associated together for the educational service of the poor, we consecrate ourselves to God, and we are connected to the Brothers and to all those partners who share the Lasallian charism with us.)
3. This first look at reality will allow us to see where we are starting from and where community life is headed over a certain period of time (one year, for example) in the following areas:

3.1. On what foundations is the community based and what are its criteria: founded in God and called "to be one, like the Trinity, only one God"; to be holy like "your heavenly Father."

3.2. The community as a faith-enlightened space where persons live together: experts in communion.

3.3. Where people "together" look at the world, people, needs: experts in discernment.

3.4. Where "answers to the needs of young people who are poor and far from salvation are given": builders of the kingdom.

3.5. The community is a sign of God's presence among his people: witnesses.

3.6. The community that accompanies the process of continuing formation of each of its members: a community that forms.



4. Then, the community lays out the basic and complementary structures of its process of accompaniment: to educate and to form.

4.1. To educate in the truth: the conversion of its behavior, attitudes, motivation, to the basic motivation in God, to Gospel attitudes, to behavior that will be the expression of God's love among humankind.

4.1.1 Our life is centered in God.

4.1.2 We are truly a community, in relationship for the mission.

4.1.3 We are a community that, in the light of faith, discerns the will of God in faith, facilitates the service of discernment for the Church.

4.1.4 We are community that has received from the Church, through John Baptist de La Salle, the charism of giving a Christian education to the young people who are poor, and therefore we feel that we are called and sent to that mission.

4.2. To train, based on the cross, in Christian identity and in identity as Lasallian religious.

4.2.1 The community that expresses "only God is enough" in its living together.

4.2.2 The community that facilitates the revitalization of the spirit of the Institute.

4.2.3 The community that teaches mutual respect, service, freedom, participation, collaboration, responsibility, happiness, sensitivity, understanding, forgiveness.

4.2.4 The community that grows in its attitude of seeking God's will for itself and for each of the Brothers.

4.2.5 The community that is attentive to the needs of the Christian education of the poor, of a specific mission that it has received and, also, open to new needs and new calls.

4.2.6 The community that makes visible the Lord's presence in the context in which it finds itself.

5. The community defines its lifestyle, community activities, work conditions, structures of social security and especially, the structures of relationships, participation, interdependence, dialogue and discernment.

6. The community represents a source for the vocational call for everyone it meets along the journey: It feels called and it calls in the name of God for which it was founded.



HOW TO CONDUCT THE COMMUNITY ANNUAL PROGRAM According to the previous approach

Introduction:

"The community provides the time and the means necessary to study how to apply the Rule to the actual circumstances in which it lives. It determines the decisions to be taken in response to questions concerning either the life of the community or its mission.

Exchanging views on these matters gives everyone the opportunity to express his thoughts and so to arrive at a unity of viewpoint and action" (*Rule 58*).

Questions to facilitate the drawing up of the community annual program:

1. Who are the members of the community? Their personal stories.
2. What is the frame of mind of each Brother at the beginning of the process to draw up the Community Annual Program?
3. After having listened to all the Brothers, what is the general viewpoint of the community?
4. What areas of interest were expressed by the Brothers? Which areas were not mentioned?
5. What is the community “inventory” in the following areas: its foundation, its communion, its discernment process, its Church mission, its sign, and its responsibility towards its members?
6. Two processes must always be kept in mind: asceticism and mysticism; cross and resurrection; education and formation; a deeper understanding of the truth concerning the community itself and the growth of its identity. Is the community willing to accompany this process? What are the minimum structures that it will use?
7. What are the criteria to be followed as a framework to animate community life?
 - 7.1. If we are associated with the God of life.
 - 7.2. If we live in a community that is rooted in the primary association desired by John Baptist de La Salle.
 - 7.3. If we have the mission of being a faith-enlightened place of discernment.
 - 7.4. If we have been called for the mission of the Christian education of the poor.
 - 7.5. If we are witnesses of the presence of the Kingdom among people.
 - 7.6. If we have opted for continuing formation.
8. For a community that has opted for “continuing formation,” everything is an opportunity and a challenge to grow in faith in the Lord God who has called us and summoned us to a personal encounter with HIM. Therefore, in order to “be attentive” to the signs the Lord sends us, it is important to define “what life experiences will facilitate God’s call” and “what response will we give to his call based on our mission, based on the charism that we have received from HIM.”
 - 8.1. Experiences as regards the “God of life”: The word, the sacraments, history, one’s personal life.
 - 8.2. Experiences as regards the Brothers close to us: community encounters, sharing at table, living under the same roof, as a community enjoying leisure and relaxation times, responsible for our support, being Samaritans for those who are suffering, accompanying others.
 - 8.3. Experiences as regards our mission: the Christian education of young people and the poor, the formation of Church-communion, the international character of the Institute, international solidarity with the poor.
 - 8.4. Experiences of living a universal fraternity: feeling that we are God’s people, Brothers for others, responsible for others on the planet, in solidarity with those who are suffering.
 - 8.5. Experiences of having a vocation and being responsible to call others by name and involve them in the universal story of salvation.