



Lasallian Reflections

No. 16

Brothers of the Christian Schools

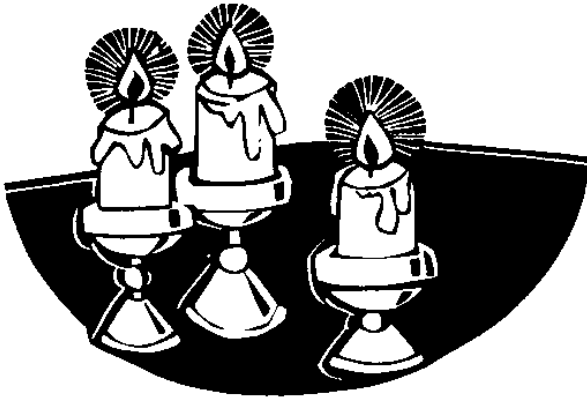
October 2004

A Pastoral Plan for the Awakening of Vocations to the Brothers of the Christian Schools



1. Every District, Sub-District, and Delegation should have a pastoral plan for the awakening of Lasallian vocations.
2. The plan of action should be comprehensive and include in its details all who make up the membership of the District, Sub-District, or Delegation.
 - 2.1. Each Lasallian community has its role to play, and this role and the manner in which it will be carried out should be specified.
 - 2.2. Each Lasallian ministry has its role to play, and this role and the manner in which it will be carried out should be specified.
 - 2.3. Each Lasallian Associate should be invited to play a role in awakening vocations so as to insure a vibrant Lasallian partnership into the future.
 - 2.4. Each Lasallian Brother should be invited to play his role in insuring the future of our vocation in the Church.
3. Within the plan of action should be identified a means for evaluating its effectiveness as well as adherence to it on the part of all involved.
4. Be sure that the pastoral plan for the awakening of Lasallian vocations is adapted to the culture in which we live.
5. Concentrate on what can be done rather than spending time lamenting things we cannot change.





6. Every District, Sub-District, or Delegation should have at least one full-time vocation promoter whose only job is the promotion of vocations.

7. Everyone needs to be helped to understand that vocation promotion is not the responsibility solely of the appointed "vocation promoter." Rather, the job of the "vocation promoter" is to help others do what they need to do to awaken vocations to our life and ministry.

8. Communities and individuals need to invite young men to our way of life and ministry once again. Open our hearts and our communities to them.

8.1. Prayer must be a part of any community's overall plan for vocations.

8.2. A community might - three or four times a year - agree to invite in different groups of young people who have some interest in religious life. (They can be drawn from the schools or other places where the members of the community minister.)

8.3. Consider inviting in a group of parishioners of all



ages for a time of prayer, followed by refreshments and a time to talk (not forgetting to include the topic of the promotion of vocations).

8.4. The local parish is a good place to become involved, especially if it has an active youth ministry program. Visibility is important.

8.5. A community might arrange to print a pamphlet describing our life and mission and place it in the vestibule of the local parish Church or in other places where similar materials appear.

8.6. Do not forget to extend a personal invitation to young persons. (A personal invitation on the part of a Brother is the single most often mentioned factor that has caused a young person to take a serious look at the life and ministry of a Brother.)

8.7. Do not overlook those with whom we share ministry and the young people who attend the schools or participate in the apostolic and social service projects in which we are involved or that we co-sponsor.

9. Design an educational program about contemporary religious life aimed at lay men and women.

9.1. Identify occasions to use this program to help young people, their parents, and their families - as well as the Church at large - to understand the good things that have happened in religious life and our Institute during the almost forty years that have passed since the close of Vatican Council II. (Many people today are confused about religious life, its nature and purpose, and the way in which it is being lived out. We need to invite others to be our allies in the important work of awakening vocations.)

9.2. Some occasions to use this program might include offering it as an adult education course in a local parish, or using sections of it at school as an in-service with faculties or other groups at work or as part of a parent-teacher conference, or as an Advent or Lenten series offered by a local Church group.

9.3. Everyone in the Church community has a responsibility for awakening vocations to religious congregations; and so let us be creative in finding ways to invite the collaboration of bishops, priests, other religious, and the laity.

10. Find ways of communicating the important message that our life and mission as Brothers is alive and well and ready to receive new members.

10.1. Posters and pamphlets can help make the message visible to a wider population.

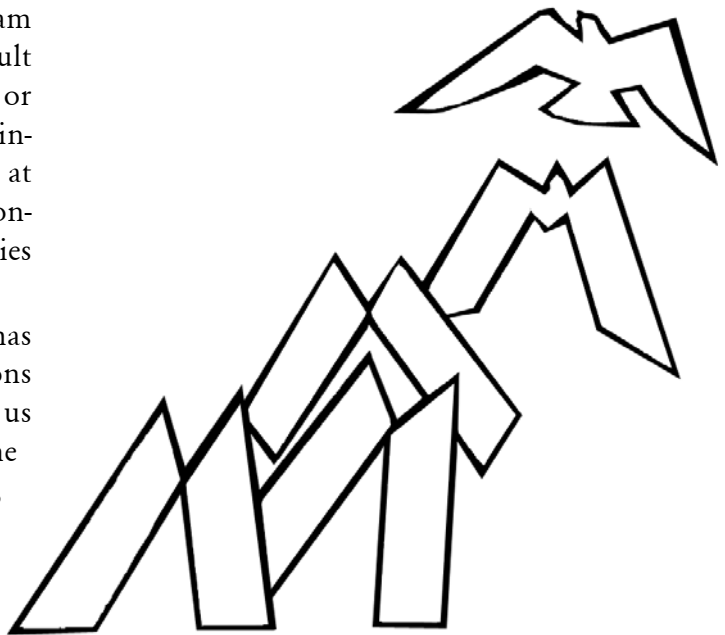
10.2. Encourage some people to write an article about our way of life for a parish bulletin or a diocesan newspaper.

10.3. Where local newspapers or television stations do human interest pieces, write an article or participate in an interview about our life and ministry.

10.4. Encourage some people to offer to say a few words at the end of Mass in a parish on one Sunday.

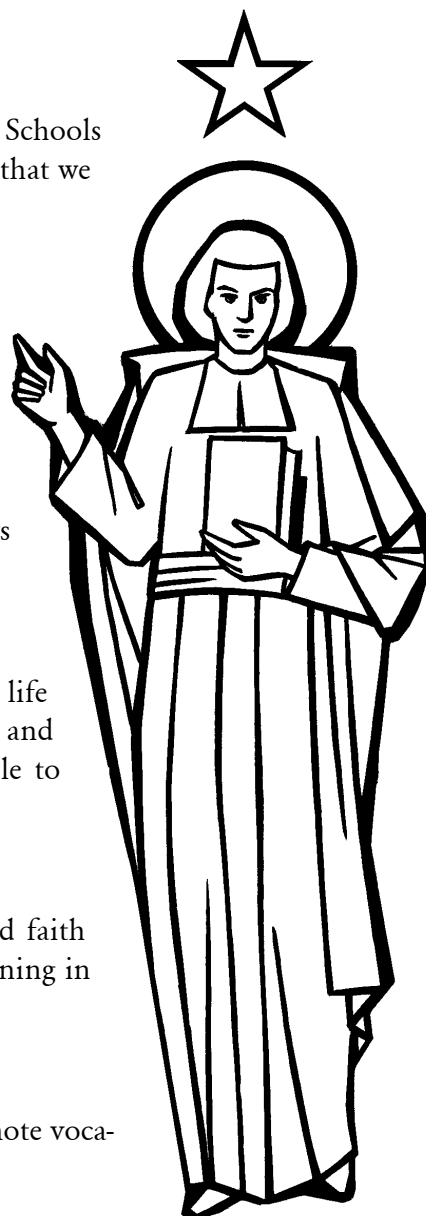
10.5. Make sure that the topic of vocations is included regularly on the web pages of Lasallian ministries and of Districts, Sub-Districts, and Delegations.

11. Let us not forget that it is when the fire of the dream of St. John Baptist de La Salle and his first Brother teachers is evident at the heart of our way of life and ministry that it has the capacity to attract generous and motivated young men.



Reflection Questions #1

1. Do we believe that vocations to the Brothers of the Christian Schools exist today and that with God's grace and our human efforts that we can find and cultivate them?
2. Does the fire of the dream of St. John Baptist de La Salle and his first Brother teachers burn as brightly in me and in us as it did in them?
3. Do others see in us a love for Jesus Christ and his Good News and for those entrusted to our care?
4. Are we perceived as obviously religious people whose prayer life and community living are the foundation of our ministry and who are delighted to work together in helping young people to grow up and to grow closer to God?
5. How might we better share our spirituality, Jesus, prayer, and faith with the young and with those who are seeking religious meaning in their lives?
6. How might we use some of our God given skills to help promote vocations to our way of life and our mission?
7. Are we ready to rearrange our other commitments so as to free up some of our best time - perhaps even as much as twenty percent - to devote directly to the promotion of Brother vocations?
8. Are we ready to invite our lay partners to join us as we work to educate parents, the young people entrusted to their care and ours, and the Church at large about who we are as Brothers as well as about the nature of our life and our ministry at the dawn of the 21st century?
9. What might be done to foster a culture of vocations and to assure that young Catholics not lack knowledge of their faith and that they receive in school a good knowledge and understanding of our longstanding Catholic traditions?



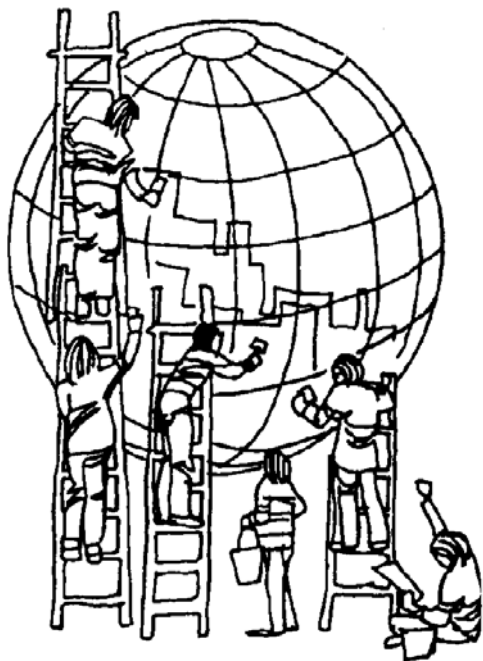
Reflection Questions #2

Take a few moments for quiet reflection to collect your thoughts and turn your attention to the questions below. You might want to jot down a few notes in response to each question. They will come in handy should you choose to share your reflections with others.

1. What was it that first attracted you to our Lasallian life and mission, and what keeps you here? Please explain.
2. Do you believe that our Lasallian mission is as needed today as it was in the time of De La Salle? If so, why; if not, why not?
3. What do you think about putting aside twenty percent of your best time this coming year and using it to awaken vocations to our Lasallian life and ministry?

Reflection Questions #3

Spend some time thinking about young people that you know. They might be members of your family, the children of friends, students, those with whom you work in ministry, young people in the parish, or elsewhere. Once you have spent some time thinking about the young people in your life, please turn your attention to the questions below.



1. What is it that you most admire about the emerging generation? Take a moment to explain your answer more fully.
2. What is it about the young people you know that most baffles you? Once again, please take a moment to explain.
3. What qualities do you look for in a young man today when considering candidates for our Lasallian brotherhood?

Reflection Questions #4

Spend some time thinking about what you might do individually to awaken vocations during the year ahead. What skills can you bring to the task? What will be helpful to young people, particularly those with an interest in our Institute? How can you best convey the many dimensions of our life rather than only one or another (ministry, community, spirituality...)?

Yes, take some time to pray. Seek to understand what God is asking of you this year in terms of awakening vocations; and, then, turn your attention to the questions below.

1. As you look ahead to this year, what steps will you take personally to promote and awaken vocations to our Lasallian way of life?
2. What will you do during the first month, during the first three months, during the first half of the year...?
3. Is there a way you can combine your efforts with those of others to have an even greater influence in awakening vocations? Please explain.