

## CHAPTER 1

# THE PURPOSE AND THE SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE

Rc  
B  
D 7,1  
D 28,1  
D 52

**1.** As he became aware, by God's grace, of the human and spiritual distress of "the children of the artisans and the poor", John Baptist de La Salle devoted himself to forming schoolmasters totally dedicated to teaching and to Christian education. He brought these teachers together in a community and subsequently founded with them the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

D 5-7  
PC 2  
B  
Can. 607,2

**2.** The Brothers, in fidelity to the call of the Spirit and the charism of their Founder, consecrate themselves to God in order to exercise, by association, their apostolic ministry of education.

The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools has been approved by Pope Benedict XIII in the Bull "In apostolicae dignitatis solio". It is an Institute of pontifical right, composed exclusively of lay religious men.

D 22  
D 28

**3.** The purpose of this Institute is to provide a human and Christian education to the young, especially the

*art. 4-5 - THE PURPOSE AND THE SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE*

D 32  
D 44,1  
D 51

poor, according to the ministry which the Church has entrusted to it.

John Baptist de La Salle gave a new meaning to the school by making it accessible to the poor and offering it to all as a sign of the Kingdom and as a means of salvation.

The Christian school, which has always to be given new vitality, is the preferred means of the activity of the Brothers. The Institute is also open to other forms of teaching and education more adapted to the needs of time and place.

D 5-6

**4.** The Brothers are convinced that the Holy Spirit was manifested in a special way in the life, work and writings of St. John Baptist de La Salle, their Father, and subsequently in the living tradition of the Institute. They draw from these sources the inspiration required by their mission and its fulfilment. For this reason they strive constantly to deepen their knowledge of the Founder and of the history of the Institute.

RC ch. 2  
D 22,1  
PC 2,2  
GS 4,1  
MTR 6

**5.** "The spirit of this Institute is a spirit of faith" which leads the Brothers to look upon everything with the eyes of faith, to do everything in view of God and to attribute all to God.

It is by faith that the Brothers judge all earthly realities in the light of the Gospel.

It is by faith that the Brothers, “cooperators with Jesus Christ”, consecrate their whole existence to the building up of the kingdom of God through the service of education.

It is by faith that the Brothers are aware of God’s presence in their undertakings, their cares and their joys.

It is by faith that the Brothers learn to see in every happening and in every person, especially in the poor, a sign and a call of the Spirit.

RC ch.2  
D 38,5  
Can. 662  
Jn 16,13

**6.** To acquire and live by the spirit of their Institute, the Brothers find endless sustenance in studying, meditating and sharing among themselves the word of God. They have a profound respect for Holy Scripture, especially the Gospel, “their first and principal Rule”.

By a spirit of prayer and an attentiveness to the presence of God, the Brothers remain sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who leads them to an ever deeper appreciation of the realities of faith.

The Brothers nourish and strengthen their faith by biblical and theological studies.

They strive continually to purify their interior motives and to achieve a measure of self-mastery so that

*art. 7-9 - THE PURPOSE AND THE SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE*

they may accomplish all their actions by “the guidance of God, by the movement of his Spirit and with the intention of pleasing him”.

RC ch. 2  
MTR 9  
GS 39  
PC 13  
LG 8

**7.** The spirit of faith kindles in the Brothers an ardent zeal for those confided to their care in order to open their hearts to receive the salvation revealed in Jesus Christ. This zeal, enlivened by the Holy Spirit, inspires their apostolic prayer and all the activities of their educational ministry. In this way they participate in the gospel mission of the Church. Through the promotion of justice and peace they cooperate in the building up of the kingdom of God.

Commitment to the apostolate is an integral part of the consecration of the Brother to God. The spirit of the Institute implies therefore that all of its members are penetrated with the spirit of zeal in the light of the Founder’s life and teaching. Thus the Brother is enabled to go out to others with the heart of a poor person.

RC ch. 2

**8.** The most important objective in the initial formation of the Brothers is that they understand and make their own the spirit of the Institute. Growth in this spirit continues during the entire life of the Brothers and extends to every dimension of their lives.

RC ch. 1

**9.** The members of this Institute are called by the name of Brother. By the fraternal character of their

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community life and their active and selfless presence among those they serve, the Brothers witness to the possibility of creating true brotherhood among people and nations.

D 25  
PC 8  
GS 11

**10.** Each Brother takes upon himself the responsibility for integrating within his own person these constitutive dimensions of his vocation: consecration to God as a lay religious, apostolic ministry of education, especially of the poor, and community life.