

CHAPTER 2

THE MISSION OF THE INSTITUTE

Education and Evangelisation

Can. 675,3
Can. 677,1

11 . John Baptist de La Salle was deeply moved by the way in which “the children of the artisans and the poor” were abandoned and left to themselves. As a practical response to his prayerful consideration of this fact in relation to God’s plan of salvation, he came to discern, in faith, what God wanted the mission of the Institute to be.

In order to respond to this divine plan and also to situations of distress similar to those that the Founder knew, the Institute desires to be present to the world today as part of the Church’s work in spreading the Gospel.

The Institute is concerned above all for the educational needs of the poor as they strive to become aware of their dignity and to live and to be recognised as human beings and children of God. The Institute establishes, renews and diversifies its works according to what the kingdom of God requires.

D 40,2
D 52,1
MTR 3

12. As “ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ”, the Brothers participate in the Church’s mission by

consecrating their lives to God in order to bring the Gospel to the educational world .

In their educational activity the Brothers seek to integrate the effort for human advancement with the announcement of God's word. They are convinced that any education that respects the human person is a way to open people to God's grace and so dispose them to accept the faith.

Med. 160,3
MTR 1,1
D 48,7

13. By virtue of their mission, the Brothers establish schools and cooperate in creating educational communities inspired by the vision of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

The educational policies of Lasallian institutions are centred on the young, adapted to the times in which they live, and designed to prepare them to take their place in society. These institutions are characterised by the determination to make the means of salvation available to young people through a quality education and by an explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ.

When the Brothers work in the area of adult education, they put the same emphasis on the importance of persons, adapting their methods accordingly.

The Brothers consider their professional work as a ministry. They are attentive to each of their students and especially to those most in need. They make

art. 13a-13d - THE MISSION OF THE INSTITUTE

themselves available to all in an attitude of brotherly companionship, helping them to discover, appreciate and assimilate both human and gospel values. The Brothers help young people to grow as persons who are called to realise more and more that they are children of God.

13a. *In these educational communities all, both young and old, are called upon, with due respect for their freedom of conscience, to integrate their faith with their culture and so become available for the service of society and of the Church.*

D 46,3

13b. *In order to encourage their students to take in hand their own formation and so to develop a sense of social responsibility, the Brothers give them an active role in the total life of the educational institution, including leadership positions, and a part to play in its functioning and in its discipline.*

D 45,4
Can. 666

13c. *The Brothers train their students to adopt a critical stance towards contemporary society, particularly as regards the mass media and the many other technological resources that are part of today's world.*

13d. *In order to fulfil their mission, the Brothers, together with those who work with them, undertake a periodic evaluation and revision of their educational programmes. Both groups provide as*

well for their personal and continuing formation.

D 52,1

14. The Brothers are entrusted with their mission by the Institute, a mission especially to the poor. As a community they become increasingly conscious of the reasons for the poverty that surrounds them and so become earnestly involved in the promotion of justice and human dignity through the educational service they provide.

This concern of the Brothers for the poor serves also to motivate their activities when they deal with people in a more favourable social environment, urging these to become more sensitive to unjust situations of which the poor are so often the victims.

D 38,1
Med. 145,3

15. The Brothers make a genuine effort to understand the deeper aspirations of the people in the milieu in which they work by being actually involved in it. Thus they can take advantage of the right moment and use the appropriate language to speak of Jesus Christ to those to whom they bring their message. Reciprocally, they themselves are open to being evangelised.

The Brothers consider that their “principal function” consists in the work of evangelisation and catechesis whereby they contribute to growth in faith of those who have been baptised and to the building up of the ecclesial community. This conviction plays a dominant

role in the formation of the Brothers as well as in the choice of the assignments for which they will be prepared.

D 38,2-4

15a. *By its organisational structure and the climate that it engenders, the Christian school makes catechesis possible. This catechesis should be lively, centred on the person of the student, in touch with life as it is, based on Scripture and the liturgy, attentive to the teaching of the Church, and concerned with an integral presentation of the Christian message.*

In the conviction that it is their mission to bring the baptised to live as true Christians, the Brothers provide opportunities for their students to encounter God more frequently. They lead them along the way as they learn to pray, as they become spiritually enriched, as they receive the sacraments and take advantage of the many opportunities offered to be of service to others.

Catechesis is above all a form of witness. It springs from the depth of a community of faith that brings together Christians within whose hearts dwells the Holy Spirit, the teacher of all truth.

D 38, 3-5

15b. *The Brothers also take part in the pastoral programme of the local church, either as catechists themselves or as teachers or leaders*

of their fellow Christians who undertake the work of catechesis.

D 39,1
D 41,3

15c. *In countries that are non-Christian or markedly pluralistic, where it is very difficult or impossible to provide catechesis in the schools, the Brothers seek new ways of evangelising. To open young people to life, to a sense of their responsibilities, to knowledge and to love, is already a way of accomplishing God's work since his Kingdom is built both by the activity of the Church and by work in the world.*

A Community Mission

Form V
D 13,3

16. From the beginning of the Institute, the Brothers have fulfilled their mission “together and by association”. Each Brother exercises his apostolate as a member of a community by whom he knows he is accepted, supported and entrusted with his mission.

The Brothers are in solidarity with their community, with their District and with the Institute as a whole. In fulfilling their ministry, whatever their individual assignment may be, they are contributing, as a community, to the unique mission of the Institute within the Church.

Can. 671

16a. *The Brothers submit their plans for new*

forms of apostolate to the discernment of the community in communion with the superiors and the Brothers of the District, in order to be sure that these initiatives are in conformity with the purpose of the Institute.

16b. *If some Brothers are called upon to work outside the establishments conducted by the Institute, they do so in such a way as to be identified as Brothers wherever they carry out their work.*

16c. *When circumstances prevent the Brothers from responding in a direct way to the purpose of the Institute, they live out their vocation in other apostolic tasks, which are determined by a process of discernment undertaken with their superiors.*

16d. *Advancing age or infirmity can oblige the Brothers to lessen the pace of their active work. Motivated by faith and zeal, they search for new ways to exercise their ministry as a response to a new call from God.*

Accordingly, they are supported by the Brothers of the community and by the superiors as they seek to accomplish some apostolic task within their capacities and in keeping with the purpose of the Institute.

A Shared Mission

D 49,5 **17.** Ever since the time of their foundation, the Brothers have contributed to the promotion of the Christian laity, especially among those educators who want their professional work to be a form of gospel ministry.

The Brothers gladly associate lay persons with them in their educational mission. They provide, for those who so desire, the means to learn about the Founder and to live according to his spirit.

The Brothers cooperate in forming Christian teachers. They help them to develop their professional competence and also to become increasingly involved in the work of the Church and in the field of education.

D 46,3 **17a.** *The Brothers' community is ever mindful that its apostolic activity takes place within an educational community in which all the functions, including positions of responsibility, are shared.*

17b. *To achieve the purposes of a school, the Brothers foster a spirit of collaboration and mutual enrichment among all the members of the educational community. They, that is, students, parents, teachers, other religious, priests, former students and friends help one another to fulfil their specific roles.*

17c. *The Brothers make known to the rest of the educational community the essential elements of the Lasallian tradition. The Brothers offer to those who desire it, a more intensified sharing of Lasallian spirituality, encouraging such persons to make a more specific apostolic commitment. The Brothers join in the formation of faith communities which are witnessing to the truth of what the Brothers profess.*

17d. *In conformity with the spirit of the Institute, the Brothers cooperate closely with those in the Church or in society who are involved in education, ministry to the young, the cultivation of a sense of justice, the use of mass media, or the integration of young people into social and professional life.*

Inculturation

EN 20
AG 10

18. Every culture needs to be evangelised. The Brothers make every effort to get to know, to respect and to assimilate the positive values of the cultural heritage of the people where they are located and whom they are called to serve. With joy and hope the Brothers discover there the signs of the presence of the Spirit. They ensure that the ferment of the gospel renews and enriches this cultural heritage.

This effort at inculturation is equally necessary and applies as well to youth culture as to the rapidly evolving culture of contemporary society.

18a. *Every Lasallian foundation embodies itself together with the local church, in the culture, the language and the life-style of the place where it is located. Such embodiment ought to be accomplished in keeping with the charism proper to the Institute.*

18b. *The Brothers who belong to the country by birth are the ones principally in charge of inculturation into their own social milieu. The Brothers who come from other countries collaborate in this effort in a spirit of fraternal solidarity. In those areas where the latter are still numerous, they encourage their confreres gradually to assume complete charge.*

18c. *With an open mind and yet in a spirit of healthy criticism the Brothers study the various religions, ideologies, and cultural traditions of the areas in which they establish themselves. They will be able in this way to absorb the positive values therein and so to make a valuable contribution to the education of the people around them.*

The Young Churches

MTR 1
1 Tim 2,4

19. The Institute is particularly conscious of the great design of God who wills that all people should come to the knowledge of the truth. Thus the Institute participates in the missionary activity of the Church whose essential task is to announce the Gospel to everyone and to all cultures.

The concern to bring the Church into being among peoples, either unaware of the Good News of Jesus Christ or as yet little informed about it, as well as the evident shortage of people working for the spread of the gospel in certain areas, constitutes a continual challenge to the Institute to make its contribution through its specific ministry.

D 24
AG 40

19a. *As a response to this missionary call, the Brothers offer themselves to be sent by the Institute to places where there is a greater need for their services. In such cases it could even happen that a District would need to hand over to others some of its works in order to meet more urgent demands.*

In this missionary activity, the Brothers are deeply conscious of the need to cultivate local vocations in order to provide for the growth of the Church and of the Institute.

19b. *True to its founding spirit, the Institute also makes its presence felt in those areas where, humanly speaking, there is little or no possibility for it to develop.*

The work of the Brothers in such places becomes a presence of the Church, a witness to the charity of Christ, and a place for human and inter-religious dialogue and collaboration.

Through a spirit of faith and zeal

Form V
Mt 11,5
Med. 132,2
Med. 166,2

20. The Spirit of God has given to the Church, in the person of St. John Baptist de La Salle, a charism which even today inspires the Brothers and a great number of other educators.

The Brothers live their faith as a gift to be used for their ministry of Christian education. In faith they contemplate God as the one who chooses them to be workers bringing his salvation to the least and to the poorest.

“Together and by association” they labour to accomplish God’s saving work in a profession where “the poor have the gospel preached to them” and where young people grow as human persons and children of God. In faith, the Brothers praise God as they see his kingdom being extended.

art. 21 - THE MISSION OF THE INSTITUTE

RC 1718
ch. 2
D 38,4
D 40,4
Med. 43,3
MTR 9,2

21. As “ministers of God and of the Church”, desirous of “touching hearts”, the Brothers accomplish their mission with the “ardent zeal” that the work of the Lord requires.

Urged on by this zeal, and with the mind of Christ the servant of all, they generously place at the disposal of those whom God has entrusted to them, their time, their talents and their energy.

For this reason, they constantly seek to improve their competence, the quality of their relationships, the witness of their life, and the vigour of their faith.

The entire life of the Brothers is transformed by the presence of the Lord who calls, consecrates, sends, and saves.