

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITY LIFE

D 7,1
MTR 1,3

47. John Baptist de La Salle was led to found a community of men who were enlightened by God to have a share in his plan of salvation. They associated together to respond to the needs of young people who were poor and far from salvation. Even today, each of the Brothers' communities finds in this historical event a fundamental source of inspiration.

A community of faith

Jn 17,21-22

48. The distinctive character of the Brothers' community is to be a community of faith where the experience of God is shared.

The Brothers find inspiration in this prayer of Christ: "Father, that they all may be one as You and I are one so that the world may believe that You have sent Me".

In their relations with one another, the Brothers make every effort to model their community life on the relations of knowledge and love that constitute the life of the Holy Trinity.

49. The Spirit of love who dwells within each of the Brothers is what creates the unity in their community. Animated by the Spirit, the Brothers build community by the joyful gift of themselves for the service of others.

***49a.** Each Brother considers himself responsible, in union with all the others, for the life of the community, the power of its witness, and for its pastoral commitment.*

***49b.** For the Brothers, the Rule is a programme of life which every community should strive to translate into practice. The Brothers make it their duty to read it often, both privately and in community. They look upon the Rule as an expression of the will of God.*

D 20,9

50. The Brothers' community is a community of prayer. The Brothers pray together. Together they hear the word of God and meditate on it. Together they recognise that they are sinners before God and they participate in the same Eucharist. Together they seek God and it is together that they find him.

***50a.** The community sees to it that each Brother has sufficient time and the conditions that are needed for reflection and personal prayer*

An apostolic community

51. Dedicated as it is to the apostolic ministry of education, the community realises that its mission needs constantly to be discovered. Accordingly, the community reappraises its goals and methods with a view to coming closer to the spirit of the gospel. It does this by reexamining the pastoral effectiveness of its activity.

D 46,3

51a. *The Brothers' community shares in the animation of the institutions in which it is involved. It develops therein an atmosphere of brotherhood rooted in mutual respect and freedom. Its action to promote the gospel aims to bring into being a community of faith in the midst of the educational community.*

51b. *In their educational institutions, even where the Brothers are in the minority, the visibility of their community ought to constitute one aspect of their witness to the gospel.*

52. The community forms an integral part of the pastoral activity of the local church. Within the limits of its resources it cooperates with civic organisations of a social or cultural nature. The community manifests the same concern and open spirit with regard to the institutions for which it is responsible.

The community participates in the missionary effort of the local church and of the Institute.

52a. *The community maintains cordial relations with the Brothers on the missions and is generous in responding to their needs. It does all it can to learn about their work and to foster it.*

A fraternal community

CL 7
240-241

53. The Brothers are determined with one spirit to be brothers among themselves, brothers to the adults they deal with, and older brothers to the young people confided to their care. In all their relationships they are concerned about persons in their deepest hopes and desires.

54. The community is for the Brothers their home. It is there that they live together. It is there that they experience each day anew the friendship, the esteem, the trust and the respect that they have for one another. They pay special attention to the needs of the young Brothers.

They enjoy sharing their meals, their periods of recreation, and the various services that are called for by a life together. By their active presence and by their sensitivity to one another, the Brothers assure the solidarity of the community.

To ensure its unity the community reinforces the generous gift each Brother makes of himself in the sacrifices necessary for the common good.

The community recognises and welcomes the grace-filled occasions for pardon and reconciliation among its members.

54a. *Community life cannot be maintained without self-denial. The Brothers accept and love one another in their differences as well as in their similarities. They try to be friendly to everyone and a burden to none. In their conversation they stress what is positive and avoid anything that could cause pain.*

54b. *With tact and charity each member of the community knows how to point out to his Brothers whatever it is in their attitude that is the source of difficulty and conflict either for themselves or for the community. In certain cases the community as a whole might be called upon to render this service for one of its members. In such a situation it is the Brother Director who has the ultimate responsibility to safeguard the fraternal unity of the community.*

Can. 666

54c. *The community organises its periods of recreation and vacation. Out of concern for others in their work, prayer or need for rest, the Brothers*

determine and respect appropriate times of silence. They exercise discretion in their use of the means of social communication.

Can. 608
Can. 665,1
Can. 667,1

55. The Brothers' residence should be simple and planned in a way that fosters family spirit, work and prayer. It is established canonically and includes certain areas reserved to the Brothers. They make it a duty to reside there habitually and not to absent themselves except by permission of the Brother Director or the Brother Visitor. For a prolonged absence the canonical prescriptions are to be observed.

Can. 921-
922
Can. 998-
1004
SC 73

56. The community shows affectionate concern for the Brothers who are elderly, sick or discouraged, or undergoing trials, so that all may feel supported by the love of Christ.

The Brothers, in a fraternal and friendly way, are especially attentive to those members of their community who are suffering the trials of illness or whom the Lord is preparing to call to himself.

At the appropriate time, they invite them to ask for the sacraments of the sick. They help them with their prayers and encourage them to unite themselves to the Paschal mystery of Christ and to offer their sufferings for the Institute, the Church and the salvation of the world.

57. The community generously opens itself to others. Such openness, however, respects the requirements of privacy and those of community life.

***57a.** The community extends a special welcome to close relatives of its members and to Brothers who are travelling. To young men trying to discover their vocation, the community is a particularly suitable place for dialogue and sharing.*

Organisation of the life of the community

58. 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.

***58a.** At the beginning of each year and in a spirit of discernment, the Brothers establish or revise their annual community programme.*

Everything that forms part of the life of the community is taken into account in making up this

programme: its life of prayer and its apostolic commitments, its brotherhood, its relationships with outsiders and its internal organisation, its provision for continuing formation and its recreational activities.

This community programme takes into account the guidelines and directives already laid down by the District Chapter.

Once the programme is agreed upon and submitted to the Brother Visitor for approval, the Brothers are then committed to it. It serves during the year as the basis for both personal and community evaluation, especially on the occasion of the Brother Visitor's official visit to the community.

58b. *In order to respond in faith to the successive calls from God, an invitation is offered to each Brother to develop a personal programme of his own. Such a programme engages the Brother in a process of ongoing conversion that will give unity and direction to his life.*

In the development and evaluation of this programme, the Brother takes into consideration his own spiritual growth, as well as the needs of the community and the programmes of the District.

If he so desires, a Brother may share his personal programme with the rest of the community.

Can. 627,1

59. As a rule, the entire community constitutes the Council of the Brother Director.

In communities where the number of Brothers, or some other reason, requires it, a Council of fewer members may be constituted by agreement with the Brother Visitor.

In such a case the community delegates a certain number of its members to represent it and deliberate in its name.

D 20,8

59a. *Community meetings constitute a significant occasion for the Brothers to reflect together, in the light of the gospel, on the way they actually live. The Brothers realise that community meetings are necessary for the life of the community and they take part in them willingly. They make use of these opportunities to express their opinions, to put forward suggestions, and to share their experience and their knowledge.*

Can. 627

59b. *There will be occasions when the community will have to deliberate formally before certain important decisions can be made.*

Minutes should be taken of such deliberations and decisions, and should include a special mention of any requests to be forwarded to the Brother Visitor or the Brother Superior.

Brothers who do not take part in the meetings of

the Council will be duly informed of the topics treated, or scheduled to be treated, and also of any decisions taken

59c. *All the Brothers support the decisions arrived at by the community and approved by the Brother Director. Each Brother takes to heart his responsibility for implementing them.*

60. The community administers its material goods in the spirit of the gospel and in accordance with the demands of religious poverty.

60a. *Each community has a financial administration, a budget and accounts separate from those of the educational establishment or establishments of which it has charge. The community renders account of the administration of its temporal goods to the Brother Visitor and the Bursar of the District.*

60b. *The Brothers of the community participate in establishing its budget and in putting it into operation. In this matter they are always careful to maintain a simple lifestyle such as that of people of modest means.*

60c. *With regard to its employees and auxiliary personnel, the community observes both the obligations of social justice and the demands of*

Christian charity.

60d. *In fidelity to the spirit of the Founder and conforming in every respect to the cultural traditions of the locality where it is active, the community is always careful to witness to the spirit of gratuity and gospel detachment in all that concerns gifts from the students or their families.*

The Brother Director

61. As a religious superior, the Brother Director is at the service of his Brothers to help them in their spiritual growth and in accomplishing their vocation as persons and as a community. He offers them the support of his advice and his authority. He himself strives to live and help others live in the spirit of the Rule.

61a. *The responsibility for arranging the personal interview belongs both to the Brother concerned and the Brother Director of the community. This is one of the matters to be determined in establishing the annual programme of the community. Each Brother arranges with the Brother Director when and how these meetings are to take place.*

62. As the person principally responsible for the community and its unity, the Brother Director fulfils his responsibilities with simplicity. He supports and stimulates the Brothers in their search for the common good. He listens to them but also keeps them informed. At the appropriate moment he intervenes to endorse decisions on which consensus seems to have been reached or to settle personally questions which cannot remain undecided.

Can. 624

63. The Brother Director is appointed by the Brother Visitor following the procedures established by the District Chapter. His mandate runs for three or for four years and may be renewed once or even twice.

Can. 623

63a. *At his first appointment the Brother Director must have had at least one year of perpetual profession in the Institute.*

63b. *The Brother Director is the usual channel of communication between the community and the District.*

63c. *Where it is considered useful, a Brother sub-Director may be appointed to assist, or if need be, to substitute for the Brother Director of a community. Such an appointment is made in accordance with the norms adopted by the District Chapter.*

Can. 636

63d. *The Brother Director, with the assistance if possible of a community bursar, supervises the maintenance of the movable and immovable property, the administration of material goods and the proper functioning of the common services. He sees to the preservation and classification of the documents for the archives and sends at the proper time the information requested by the District Secretary and the Secretary General.*

A community within the Institute

PC 13

64. Each local community is conscious of its solidarity with the other communities of the District and those of the Institute as a whole. It maintains a cordial relationship with the Brothers of other communities and expresses this by fraternal help whenever this is called for. The community also extends a welcome to members of the Lasallian Family.

64a. *The Brothers participate, personally and as a community, in the life and in the events of the whole District. They translate into action the directives and the guidelines set forth by the District Chapter and those holding positions of responsibility at the District level.*

64b. *The official visit of the Brother Visitor is the principal occasion to evaluate the internal life of*

the community and its apostolic commitments. It is also an opportunity for the community to deepen its relationship with the District and the Institute.

64c. *The community shows a special interest in the circular letters and other documents that are sent out from the District, the Region, or the Centre of the Institute. The Brothers willingly use these for personal reflection, for community exchanges, and in their prayer.*