

CHAPTER 6

FORMATION

D 14,3
CL 7,325
CL 8,28-29
Can. 661

81. In response to the design of God in his regard, St. John Baptist de La Salle transformed his entire life into a spiritual journey of ever increasing faith. He was concerned to offer to the young men who joined him the best possible spiritual guidance.

Following his example, the Brothers are invited to involve themselves over the course of their entire lives in the process of growing towards human, spiritual and apostolic maturity. They are available and ready to act as intermediaries of the Lord to invite and accompany the young men who wish to join them.

Each vocation arises from the mystery of the unique encounter between God and the person who is called. It is developed and sustained in turn by the pastoral ministry of vocations, initial formation, and continuing formation extending onward to advanced age.

D 13,1

81a. *The effort to unify the elements that constitute the life of the Brother ought to be begun during initial formation and followed through as part of continuing formation. The Rule and the capitular Declaration “The Brother of the Christian Schools*

in the World Today” explain what these elements are, why they are necessary, and how they are to be integrated.

The pastoral ministry of vocations

LG 11, 32, 39 **82.** The Brothers are conscious of the fact that all people are called to holiness. By evangelising young people and educating them in the faith, the Brothers help them to find their vocation in the Church. The Brothers witness by their personal and community life that their vocation has significance as a way of salvation for themselves and for those to whom they are sent. They are happy to promote vocations to their Institute.

Can. 233 **83.** The entire people of God has the responsibility for awakening, discerning and developing vocations in the Church. The Brothers share in this work with the rest of the Christian community, especially the parents, priests, religious and lay teachers. They invite in a special way the most committed members of the educational community to join with them in the pastoral ministry of vocations.

Mt 9,37
MTR 15,3 **84.** “Pray that the Master of the harvest send workers into his vineyard”. These words of Christ lead the Brothers to realise that prayer is fundamental in order to initiate and to develop a pastoral ministry for

vocations. The Founder gives this recommendation “Ask God that he will be pleased to make your Institute grow and bear fruit day by day”. This stimulates the Brothers to organise prayers for vocations in their communities, in their apostolic centres, among the parents of the students, the teachers, friends, and the young people themselves.

Jn 1,39
Heb 13; 1,2
Can. 673

85. For a pastoral ministry of vocations to become an effective invitation to share the life of the Brothers of the Christian Schools it is necessary:

- that by their very lives the Brothers give testimony to the presence of God among people, to the liberating force of his Spirit, and to the tenderness of his love;

- that in a fraternal and apostolic spirit, the Brothers' communities live the gospel saying: “Come and see”. They do this by the sincerity of the welcome they extend;

- that the Institute work effectively for its own renewal by responding to the most urgent needs of young people who are waiting to hear the word of the gospel.

85a. *Each community has the first responsibility for awakening vocations and helping them to develop. The annual community programme provides for one or more occasions during the year when the community examines the quality of its*

witness to the gospel, and its capacity to stimulate, to welcome and to accompany vocations in their early stages.

85b. *In their schools and in other centres where they exercise their apostolate the Brothers help young people to think about their future and to take steps to prepare for it. They present in a clear way the vocational possibilities to be found in the various ministries, in the life of a Brother, and in other forms of the consecrated life. They do not hesitate to extend an explicit invitation for this purpose. They are aware that every vocation requires human intermediaries to be able to recognize the call of God and to respond to it.*

85c. *In his own District, the Brother Visitor is the principal person responsible for the pastoral ministry of vocations. When he visits the communities, he evaluates with the whole community and with each of the Brothers what are their concerns and what initiatives they have taken in this matter. He appoints one or more Brothers of his District to take charge, on a full time basis if possible, of animating the pastoral ministry of vocations, and especially of vocations to our Institute.*

85d. *Each District organises a Vocation Commission. This group stimulates the initiative*

of the Brothers, supports community action and furnishes vocational information to those who are in charge of religious education. In a desire to be as open as possible, this Commission organises meetings for people interested in the pastoral ministry of vocations.

85e. *The communities, the Districts and the Regions designate personnel and devise the structures that will favour the awakening and development of vocations in a concerted manner and with due follow-up.*

In some countries, the juniorate, organised as a centre for the pastoral ministry of vocations, remains one means of achieving this object. Such a centre offers young people the opportunity to live in a way that suits their age and their mentality, while introducing them to some extent to the Brothers' way of life.

Whatever structure is decided upon, it is the person of the young man that has first importance. The choice of educational methods is made with a view to his development as a person.

Initial formation

D 14, 1-5

86. Initial formation begins with a period of preparation before the novitiate and continues until perpetual profession. Its aim is to help the candidates to follow Christ according to the teaching of the gospel and to meet him in their everyday lives. The process of formation introduces them progressively to the spirit of the Institute .

***86a.** Throughout the process of initial formation, the candidate is sustained by the helpful atmosphere of the community, the shared experience of the Brothers' life, the demands of the gospel and the community's regular self-evaluation. At the same time he has the opportunity to participate actively in the formation process.*

D 15, 1-2
Can. 652,3

***86b.** During the various stages of initial formation it is necessary to educate the candidates to accept responsibility for their own formation, to mature emotionally, to make a positive choice for the values expressed in the vows, to begin to experience the service of the poor through education, and to assume a spiritual outlook rooted in the life of faith.*

***86c.** The successive stages of initial formation respect the rhythm proper to each of the*

candidates. The personal interview is essential in helping them to develop their vocation and in evaluating the progress each one is making as he grows to maturity.

D 48,5

86d. *Each District ensures that every stage of its initial formation programme is long enough and not curtailed under pressure from more immediate needs.*

87. The formation of candidates is one of the Institute's major preoccupations. In consultation with the Centre of the Institute, each District or Region draws up a coherent plan for all the stages of formation. The plan in its totality comprises a proper balance between spirituality and theoretical studies on the one hand and, on the other, some practical experience of the life and ministry of the Brothers.

D 15,1

87a. *Under the authority of the Brother Superior and the Brother Visitors, commissions are set up at different levels to animate and to evaluate periodically the progress of the formation programme.*

87b. *Each District takes particular care in choosing the leaders who will be directly in charge of the formation of the candidates. With the aid of the Region and the Centre of the Institute, the District prepares leaders for this task and establishes*

time-tables for this matter of such high priority. The Brother Superior and his Council are careful to provide qualified formation personnel for the sectors of the Institute that cannot do so for themselves.

Can. 660,1

87c. *The programmes of study for the candidates should be established in accordance with those recognised by the academic and ecclesiastical authorities as the case may be. These studies, which aim to provide the competence necessary for religious educators, help the Brothers to have a better sense of their identity in relation to their vocation. These studies are directed towards the purpose of the Institute and the knowledge of young people and of the world.*

Studies in theology, catechetics and pedagogy are indispensable to help the candidate or the young Brother consolidate the foundations of his faith. They allow him to make a regular evaluation of his progress.

87d. *As far as possible, the initial formation of the Brothers takes place in their native country or region, with their own culture as its starting point. This will help them to express the fundamental elements of the Brothers' vocation in the context where they will be exercising their ministry.*

88. When it accepts a candidate, the Institute commits itself to supplying him with the means needed to achieve his goal in life and to fulfil his vocation, as well as to assist him in the process of his personal growth as a Christian.

The high quality of the community life of the Brothers in charge of formation is a sign of the authentic religious life for which they are preparing the candidates and an effective means for helping them to attain it.

***88a.** All the Brothers of a District are in some way responsible for the formation of those who seek to share their life. It is above all by the dynamic quality of their witness that they translate this responsibility into action.*

***88b.** Both initial and continuing formation are related to the overall programme of the District, thereby favouring the unity of the Brothers.*

The postulancy

Can. 597,2

89. The postulancy is that stage in initial formation which precedes and prepares for entry into the novitiate. It has its own organisation, distinct from that of the juniorate and that of the novitiate.

The postulancy offers the candidate the means to

continue to mature as a person and to enrich his faith, so that he can discern how authentic is his vocation to the Brothers' life. It brings to maturity his decision to enter the novitiate by allowing him to experience for the first time the Institute's religious, community and apostolic life.

89a. *On the recommendation of the Commission for Formation, the Brother Visitor and his Council determine the procedure for admission to the postulancy, its minimum duration, and the general norms concerning its operation and the programme of studies.*

89b. *To be admitted to the postulancy the candidate must make an explicit request. There must be assurance as to his physical health, his psychological and emotional balance, his aptitude for apostolic work, the quality of his Christian commitment, a sufficient awareness of the realities of life, and his freedom from any kind of impediment.*

The novitiate

Can. 646

90. The novitiate is a unique and important experience in the process of being initiated into the religious life of the Brother. With great respect for the personal progress of each of the novices, those

in charge of the formation will urge them to enter progressively into the fundamental spiritual outlook of a disciple of Saint John Baptist de La Salle: abandonment to God as a follower of Christ for a community service of evangelisation and education available to all but with a preference for the disadvantaged.

Can. 641-
645

91. To be validly admitted to the novitiate, the candidate must have completed his seventeenth year of age and be free of any canonical impediment.

To be admitted licitly, he must satisfy the other conditions required by canon law.

Admission to the novitiate is the responsibility of the Brother Visitor of the District into which the candidate asks to be received.

Can. 641

91a. *The candidate expresses his reasons for wanting to enter the Institute both in written form and in the course of dialogue with those in charge. This written request is submitted to the Brother Visitor who makes the decision after receiving the advice of his Council.*

91b. *The beginning of the novitiate is marked by a special ceremony during which the candidate receives some symbols of his entry into the Institute such as the religious habit, the Rule, or a Bible.*

art. 91c-91e - FORMATION

This ceremony ought to give special emphasis to the determination on the part of the candidate to follow Christ in the Brother's way of life. It also provides the occasion for the Institute to welcome a new member into its community of brotherhood.

91c. *The novitiate is organised in such a way as to create an atmosphere conducive to spiritual recollection and "the experience of God."*

Ho 2,16
Can. 652

91d. *To achieve the purposes of the novitiate it is necessary that extended periods be devoted to prayer, reflection, the assimilation of what has been taught, some practical introduction into community life, plus a reasonable amount of apostolic work.*

91e. *The novitiate programme, which must have the approval of the Brother Superior General, is based on the needs of the novices and requires their active and continuing participation. It should also help them to get to know themselves better and to understand more fully the contemporary world in order to adjust better to their own culture.*

Thus the novice undertakes to do the following:
1° *to integrate well the unique character of the Brother's vocation into the history of salvation and the service of the Church;*

2° *to begin to experience a more personal*

encounter with the person of Christ;

3° *to train himself in prayer, asceticism and the apostolate on the basis of biblical, liturgical, theological and pastoral sources;*

4° *to get to know the Brother's way of life by learning about the Institute and its mission, by studying the Institute texts and especially by assimilating the fundamental inspiration of Saint John Baptist de La Salle;*

5° *to search for the means to keep this inspiration alive.*

Can. 648,2

91f. *Formation should take into account the Brother's mission. The novices are progressively offered the opportunity to engage in apostolic work adapted to the capacities of each. These apostolic experiences are evaluated regularly with those who guide the novices in their vocation.*

Can. 650

91g. *Personal spiritual direction is a fundamental element in the initiation into the consecrated life. The Director of novices explains the importance of spiritual direction. He has the primary responsibility for it, but this does not prevent the novices from being able freely to approach some other qualified person.*

art. 92-94 - FORMATION

Can. 650
Can. 651

92. The post of Director of novices is normally confided to a Brother who has at least five years of perpetual vows and is completely free to do this work full-time. As far as possible, one or more collaborators are appointed to work with him.

Can. 653,1

92a. *In his work of discernment, the Brother Director of novices may decide that a novice should be dismissed. Whenever he has to make such a decision, he should do so only after discussing it with the novice, seeking the advice of his collaborators, and contacting the Brother Visitor.*

Can. 647,2
Can. 648
Can. 649,1

93. To be valid, the novitiate must be made in a house designated for the purpose and must last for a minimum of twelve months, spread over a period of not more than two years. An absence from the novitiate house, lasting more than three months, continuous or otherwise, renders the novitiate invalid. An absence of more than fifteen days must be made good.

Can. 647,1

93a. *To open or to transfer a novitiate house always requires the written approval of the Brother Superior General with the consent of his Council.*

Can. 647

94. The Brother Superior, again with the consent of his Council, may permit a candidate to make his novitiate validly in another community of the Institute under the authority of a professed Brother explicitly

appointed for that purpose.

The Brother Visitor may authorise the group of novices to live for specific periods of time in another house designated by him.

Making vows

Can. 653,2
Can. 656

95. At the completion of the novitiate, provided the conditions required by canon law have been fulfilled, the novice, if he is judged suitable, is admitted to temporary profession; otherwise he is to be dismissed. If any doubt remains about the suitability of the novice, the Brother Visitor may prolong the time of probation for a further period fixed by him which may not exceed six months.

Can. 653,2
Can. 656,3

95a. *Not later than two months before the end of the novitiate, the novices freely make a request in writing to their own Brother Visitor stating their desire to make their first vows. The Brother Director provides the Brother Visitor with such information as may be useful concerning the external conduct of these novices.*

Can. 656-658
Can. 689

95b. *Vows are made according to the norms of canon law and the following prescriptions:*

1° *Admission to vows is decided by Brother Visitor.*

2° *The request of the candidate is examined by a Chapter of admission, made up solely of finally professed brothers, and whose composition is determined by the District Chapter. When first profession is involved, at least one member of the novitiate staff is invited to take part. When final profession is involved, the Chapter of admission must include the members of the District Council with perpetual vows. The vote of the Chapter is consultative, except in the case of perpetual profession, when it is deliberative.*

3° *The Brother Visitor invites the candidate to come in person to speak to the members of the Chapter of admission so as to inform them more fully of the reasons for his decision. If he prefers, the candidate is free to explain his reasons in a letter addressed to the Brother Visitor or to the members of the Chapter of admission.*

4° *In the case of special difficulties concerning the proceedings of a Chapter of admission to vows, or the non-admission of a candidate, the latter or the Brother Visitor can refer the case to Brother Superior General.*

5° *When perpetual profession is involved:*
- If the majority vote of the Chapter of vows is negative, the Brother Visitor cannot admit the candidate to vows. Either he himself or the candidate can always refer the case to Brother

Superior General.

- The minutes of the Chapter of admission must be sent to the Brother Superior General, together with Brother Visitor's decision for or against the admission. The Brother Superior confirms or sets aside the decision of the Brother Visitor. The ratification of Brother Superior General is indispensable for the validity of perpetual vows.

6° Vows are received in any part of the Institute, by Brother Superior General or his delegate, by the Brother Vicar General or by one of the General Councillors; and in a District, by the Brother Visitor or his delegate

The period of temporary vows

96. The period of temporary vows has for its purpose to maintain a steady growth in commitment to the vocation, to continue the formation begun in the novitiate, to give the Brother his first experience in continuing formation, and to prepare him for perpetual profession.

Canon 659
Can. 660

96a. *The period of temporary vows must be closely supervised by the Brother Visitor and the Commission for Formation. Three stages merit special attention:*

1° the time immediately after the novitiate when the Brother is preparing to exercise his mission as a teacher and an educator;

2° the first years in an active community, when there should be a plan designed either by the District or by the community to guide and accompany the Brother as he tries to become responsible for his own formation;

3° the time immediately leading up to perpetual profession.

96b. *Scholasticates, or other communities suited to the purpose, are established in each District or Region to cater for the particular needs of the student Brothers. These should offer programmes that will ensure a balance between serious secular studies and a development of the religious and theological training received in the novitiate.*

96c. *The community is for the Brother a place where his formation continues. The good example that comes from a community that has a suitable prayer life, a sense of service, and where fraternal dialogue takes place, is a great help to Brothers in the adjustments they must make during their first years in community.*

96d. *In all that concerns their choice of studies*

the Brothers bear in mind the goals set by the District for its pastoral service. Their choice in this matter results from a dialogue with those in charge of the District.

96e. *To make it possible for the Brothers in temporary vows to share more actively in the life of the Institute, those in charge of the District shall ensure that these Brothers are represented when reflection and decision making take place at District level as in Chapters, Councils and Commissions.*

Perpetual profession

97. The nature and importance of the definitive commitment presuppose that the Brother in preparing for it, has acquired a spiritual maturity, growth in faith, ability to assume personal responsibility for his progress and to internalise the values that motivate him.

97a. *The Brother Visitor and the Commission for Formation organise, if necessary in cooperation with other Districts, suitable programmes for the period that immediately precedes the making of perpetual vows.*

97b. *Once the novitiate is over and by way of preparing for perpetual profession the Brothers*

art. 97c-99 - FORMATION

commit themselves by periods of temporary vows. The duration of these periods may vary from one to three years. The decision is made by those in charge of the District in agreement with the Brother who requests to make the vows.

Can. 607,2
Can. 657,1

97c. *At the end of each period of temporary vows, the Brothers request to renew them unless they are eligible and desire to ask for admission to perpetual vows, or prefer to leave the Institute of their own accord.*

Can. 655
Can. 657,2
Can. 658,2

98. The Brothers may be admitted to pronounce their perpetual vows when they have fulfilled the following conditions: they are at least twenty five years of age with at least five years of temporary vows in the Institute; they have lived for three years in a community doing apostolic work.

The period of temporary vows may not exceed eight years. However, if it seems appropriate, the Brother Superior General may permit the Brother to prolong this period but not beyond a ninth year with temporary vows.

Can. 690,1

99. Readmission of a Brother who has lawfully left the Institute is a matter for the Brother Superior General who decides only with the consent of his Council.

A candidate for readmission need not repeat the

novitiate but it belongs to the Brother Superior to determine an appropriate probation prior to temporary profession, and the length of time in vows before making perpetual profession.

Continuing formation

CL 15,6
PC 18

100. By faith the Brother recognises that his life consists in a succession of calls from God to which he continues to respond. This dialogue between God and each Brother permits the Brother to grow continuously in fidelity.

For this reason the Brother is invited to be open each day to the presence of the living God in such a way that he discovers it, and lives it in his mission, his consecration and his community life.

D 4
Can. 659

101. Superiors and communities strive to provide each Brother with the conditions and the means most suitable to develop his spiritual, theological and professional formation.

Can. 661

101a. *Each Brother is invited to develop a personal formation programme. He has the primary responsibility for his own formation; thus he will live out more fully his vocation with his Brothers to the benefit of the educational mission he shares with them.*

art. 101b-101d - FORMATION

The need for continuing formation extends throughout the entire lifetime and to every aspect of the life of the Brother.

101b. *The community is responsible for establishing an effective and ongoing plan for its own formation as a group. The evaluation of this plan forms part of the community's annual programme.*

101c. *The Brothers take advantage of the formation programmes organised by the local church or other institutions. They take special care to maintain their professional competence at a high level.*

101d. *The Brother Visitor and his Council establish a comprehensive plan of continuing formation which caters for the particular needs of specific groups of Brothers within the District. They provide the Brothers who are reaching retiring age with the means to investigate new possibilities and acquire new skills. In this way, these Brothers are helped to continue doing apostolic work in a way that is consistent with their vocation.*

The superiors take the necessary means to ensure that competent Brothers are put in charge of continuing formation in the District.

The Brothers in charge periodically evaluate the

programmes and other projects established in the communities of the District. They ascertain as well the extent of active participation of each Brother in the work of renewal.

101e. *Those in charge of a District provide pastoral formation for Brother Directors and for any other Brothers who might eventually be called to fill this office.*

101f. *Regional Lasallian Centres, staffed by well chosen teams, are established on a permanent or short-term basis by those in charge of the Regions to meet the needs of Brothers who have reached a mature age.*

101g. *The Brother Superior General and his Council are careful to promote programmes of continuing formation in the Institute, especially those designed to prepare Brothers for work in formation.*

They ensure that the Brothers from the poorest Districts are enabled to participate regularly in the programmes of renewal established in the Institute.

101h. *The Centre of the Institute organises and promotes research projects on the person of the Founder and his thought, the development over*

the years of the work which he started, and the educational practice and spirituality of the contemporary Institute.

It furnishes financial aid for this research and for the translation and diffusion of the Lasallian message.

101i. *A specific form of this service of the Centre of the Institute is provided by The International Lasallian Centre (CIL) which aims to contribute to the living unity and revitalisation of the Institute in the various cultures of the world. It promotes the spiritual renewal of the Brothers who take part in it and helps to prepare those who will be called upon to fill leadership roles in the Institute.*