

# By Way of Preparation



"Mission Possible: A Shared  
Dream"



### *Chapter 4: Shared...*

#### *Introduction*

God's dream is to share His life with everybody, a life in abundance, and it is possible only with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. His gift is something wide and calls us to live in His spaciousness which is communion.

Communion is not only the sharing of time, service, prayers, community, spaces but "it represents the fruit and the source of Mission" (Christifideles Laici, 32).

Communion, for us, is sharing La Salle's charism, that is to say, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit among us, yesterday, today and, we hope, tomorrow.

In our communion, we can find Brothers, Sisters, priests, married or single women and men, young and old, Catholics, Christians from different churches, non-Christian believers: all of them are one and want to enter into a process to deepen communion and to strengthen mission.

The Lasallian Family is our common home. One of the biggest challenges is building a shared consciousness of Association as the place where we all belong. To be at home means that one does not have to justify being there, that one is at ease. One is accepted just as one is. Of course each community needs its own times and its own space.

One of the most important things is to discover which is the particular place of the Young Lasallians and the gifts we can offer to all the other members of our "solar system".

Youth is not a life option. It is just an incredible moment where each of us starts to build, with more and more consciousness, commitment and trust, his or her being and identity. It is the time when we take life options, rooted in our beliefs and hopes, passing through questioning and crisis, taking mid or long term resolutions and commitments.



In his latest letter to us, Bro. Alvaro said six times: "**Young Lasallians, we count on you to...**"; he recognized our place among Lasallians in many ways but he stressed two:

"You are the best evangelisers of other young people. You are on the same wavelength and you can understand better their deficiencies, their projects and their ideals. In consequence, I invite you to be witnesses of the Beatitudes helping other young people to recognise that they are loved, valued and blessed. In a society in which everything has a price, I invite you to be witnesses of gratuity that enables us to develop the capacity to contemplate, to thank, to be enthralled in the face of mystery and beauty. I invite you to make visible through your lives the invisible God whom we can know better through human love";

"You have less prejudice than adults. You have to help the other Lasallians, through your free, open and tolerant way of dealing with differences, to always have an open heart and to look for the best solutions".

According to Bro. Antonio Botana the tendencies that are acting within the Lasallian project are:

- A way of living in solidarity and in fraternity;
- A global view of education, with special concern for justice education;
- Community monitoring of the calls of the poor and, based on them, of children and young people;
- Participation in solidarity with responsibility for the mission;



## Memories For What Is Possible: Preparation Road

- Availability to serve in the Lasallian mission wherever we are required, based on our own possibilities and life options;
- The acceptance of John Baptist de La Salle as a teacher of life;
- Participation in a universal Lasallian culture, which plays out especially in many expressions of spirituality and pedagogy.

All these forces are God's gift for the entire Lasallian Family and God is the source of all of them in our inner spaces as in our communities. We have to share and follow these forces to answer to the common Lasallian call. In our world where there is a major upheaval in family life and we are looking for people and places where Love is lived and shared because we trust that Love is risky. We have to remind all the members of the Lasallian Family of the beauty of this love and commitment full of risks; we have to find out new ways to live Communion among people of different ages, sex, life options, *not simply repeating what has existed in the past, but creating with our own freshness and with no fear of diversity and novelty.*

*In the following pages, you will find quotations that want to help you to reflect on the special gifts some of the others members of the Lasallian Family have, to appreciate theirs and to deepen yours.*

*In "The Conducts of Schools" the keeper of the school key was one of the pupils; if we, as the younger part of the Lasallian Family, are the keepers of today's key, our presence and commitment is necessary and we need to be in the front row.*

### **A Shared Mission**

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.

*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.*

**(The Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools)**



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We have heard of numerous successful examples in various places, of our partners and Associates assuming leadership roles and contributing to the vitality of the Lasallian mission. In many places, precisely because of this vitality and commitment, we have given our partners and Associates the right to speak and vote when decisions are made regarding the mission and the running of establishments. But the situations in which this participation takes place are quite diverse (*The Documents of the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter*, page 13).

At the end of our last General Chapter we said that we are counting on you, with your creativity, drive, and enthusiasm in our world today to achieve the Lasallian ideals of faith, fraternity, and service (Message to Young Lasallians, 2003, Brother Superior General).

The Institute shares the mission and the Lasallian charism with other associates and partners. Participation in the mission involves the development of structures of participation in leadership, co-responsibility, orientation of the ministries, a search for responses to new needs... Simultaneously, participation in the same charism gives rise to structures and new forms of communion among the diverse identities that embrace that charism (Lasallian Fraternity: the New Reality of Lasallian Associates. Brother Botana). Consequently, we consider it necessary for the Institute to allow a period of freedom for the promotion and the accompaniment of structures and forms of association (*The Documents of the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter*, page 9).

This new configuration ought to allow for the living out of the charism in communion with other believers who are recognized "Lasallians" and vice-versa. The interpretation and updating charism is not just the responsibility of the Brothers, but of the new Lasallian Fraternity (Lasallian Fraternity: the New Reality of Lasallian Associates. Brother Botana).





***Lasallian Identity and Belonging***



Lasallian collective identity has a foundation history that allows us to understand it and to make it understood. Within that history there is an event that functions as the "center of gravity" because of its special importance: the heroic vow (MEL Bulletin 2, page 23).

The collective identity of a group then, is supported by a sense of co-responsibility, which assures the fidelity of the group to the purpose or mission for which it came into being (MEL Bulletin 2, page 14).

Today, therefore, just as three centuries ago, our community needs to live, animated by faith, that is to say, by responsible attention to the meaning of the signs of the times. Understood in that way, faith or the spirit of faith shows us that the fundamental criteria during all times of historic change is fidelity. This is our great priority (Lasallian Identity, Notes for a Workshop, page 22).

***Commitment***

The formula of consecration or gesture of commitment of John Baptist de La Salle and his Brothers expresses on the whole the bond established between the two dimensions: "community" ("together") and "association for the mission." (MEL Bulletin 2, page 26).

Therefore the gesture of commitment is usually expressed as a feeling of offering: in the form of a vow, promise, sign of availability, etc., and it marks out the three recipients of the offering: God - as origin and end of our offering - the other partners of the Association as mediators of the offering, and those who have motivated this Association, the children and the young in need of education (MEL Bulletin 2, page 44).



***Church-Communion***



Nowadays our Church defines itself as "Church-Communion," and its mission, its reason for being, is evangelization. For today's Church, *"the mission affects all Christians"* (*Redemptoris Missio* 2) and it must be fulfilled in *communion* with each other, but also in *cooperation* with all men and women of good will (cf. *Gaudium et Spes* 43) (MEL Bulletin 2, page 47).



### *Comparison of the Planetary Solar System*

The new "planetary solar system" can serve us as a model to apply the previous criteria to the new Lasallian Association (of sharing the mission). In the center of the system is the sun, the Lasallian *star*, that is to say, *the mission that calls us all* and around which we move. The charism is something like the force of gravity with which the mission attracts us and the dynamism which moves us around it to give the appropriate response. We associates and partners form the planetary system, which surrounds the Lasallian mission (MEL Bulletin 2, page 49).

### Activities

How is the mission shared in your District? Question, discover, dialogue...with different Lasallian members (Brothers, teachers, young people, the laity in general...) about what structures exist for sharing the Lasallian educational mission.

How can we continue to advance in the process of shared mission? What role can we young people play on this journey?



## CELEBRATION: SHARING...

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### Opening Song

#### *Reading*

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, prostrate with the most profound respect before your infinite and adorable Majesty, we consecrate ourselves to you to procure, with all our powers and with all our endeavors, the establishment of the Society of the Christian Schools, in the manner which shall seem to us to be most pleasing to you, and most advantageous to the said Society.

And for this purpose, I, John Baptist de La Salle, priest, I, Nicolas Vuyart, and I, Gabriel Drolin, as from now and for always, until the death of the last survivor among us, or until the establishment of the said Society is finally assured, bind ourselves by a vow of association and union to effect and maintain the said act of establishment, without power to abandon the task, even should we remain the only three members of the said Society, and should we be obliged to beg for alms and live on bread only. Wherefore, we promise to carry out unanimously and by common consent all that we shall deem, in conscience and without human consideration, to be for the greater good of the said Society. Done this twenty-first day of November, feast of the Presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin, in the year 1691.

John Baptist de La Salle  
Nicolas Vuyart  
Gabriel Drolin

#### **A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke:**

Journeying along the road, one of them said to him: "Lord, I will follow you wherever you go."

Jesus said to him: "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head."

And to another he said, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, let me go first and bury my father."

But he answered him, "Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

And another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to my family at home." To him Jesus said, "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God."

Time for Silence and Sharing.

Singing of the Our Father

Concluding Song

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