



Memories For What Is Possible: Preparation Road

Chapter 2: POSSIBLE....

FAITH – FRATERNITY – SERVICE

"Traditionally, we have summed up our charism in three basic areas that should motivate our activities. First, we are called to deepen our **faith**, to see reality with the eyes of God and to discover that we are sons or daughters of a God who loves us freely and unconditionally. This experience should translate into **fraternity** or **community**, because being children of God should lead us to feel that we are brothers and sisters to others and that we should build a more just world. Finally, fraternity ought to culminate in **service** because life only has value if it is given for others, especially the poor, young people who are at risk, all those who have had fewer opportunities in life than we have had. (Letter to young Lasallians. Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, Superior General. Quebec, July 2002)

A. FAITH.

As we ask ourselves about faith, right away some words spring up in us such as fidelity, trust, having faith...What would it mean to say that a young Lasallian is someone who is guided by faith? Would it mean someone who is faithful, one who is faithful to another person? Would this boy or girl be someone who is trustworthy, someone who trusts another person? Probably the answer is somewhat along those lines...

Faith is that gift by which persons can tell that they are able to see the true dimension of things. If we were to read Saint-Éxupéry's "The Little Prince" we could define faith as the ability of persons to see with their heart. Only in that way can the really important things be seen.

In the Lasallian shield there is a star with the text "Signum Fidei," the Sign of Faith. The star and faith is the slogan for all things Lasallian and it is in first place.

John Baptist de La Salle, towards the end of his life, when he redid the Rule, that is to say, the norms by which they were to be guided, as charged by the other Brothers who were gathered together in Chapter (1717), added this: "The most important thing, and that to which a Community must pay special attention, is that the members who make it up must have the spirit which is proper to them...Because this spirit must animate all their work and their conduct..." How would one say that one is acting with the spirit appropriate to that person, that is to say, the spirit of faith? In the same cited text it states that this spirit is what moves hearts "to not look at anything except with the eyes of faith, to do nothing except when gazing upon God and attributing everything to God." Surely, these are very ideal words for our reality as young people in the 21st century. But, with these guidelines, isn't it about us making life judgments based on reading the Gospel, on an understanding of the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth? Isn't it about us studying, enjoying ourselves, committing ourselves knowing that in that way we please Jesus of Nazareth? Isn't it about making God more present in the daily events of our week? Isn't it about perceiving the "winks" that the Spirit of Jesus sends our way in all facets of our lives?



Probably, as in the Gospel, we need to say: "Lord, I believe, but increase my faith."

For you, as a young Lasallian, what does it mean to embrace the different aspects of your life (relationships, studies, fun, work....) with faith?



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B. FRATERNITY.

This word has its roots in the fraternal; that is to say, in what is related to living like brothers and sisters. It is about, then, trying hard to make real what John Baptist de La Salle dreamed about along with his first teachers for that society of Rheims, Paris, Rouen, and many other places in France at the end of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth century. It is interesting to note that the first biographer of John Baptist, Blain, was also a priest; he stressed the point that the name of Brothers came up immediately and the adoption of that name was a cause for profound joy. Furthermore, by means of this name, it was clear that the spirit of fraternity had to be maintained in the schools.

Fraternity has come to mean that we are all on the same level, that relationships are symmetrical...even though one may be older or wiser...The current Rule, the set of regulations that govern the De La Salle Brothers, says in article 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." This has a clear meaning for young Lasallians. It means that in current society we make the effort to be more in solidarity with persons so that people treat one another like brothers and sisters.

There was a time when the emphasis on fraternity had to do with meeting under the same roof and having the same mission, following the same schedules and rules...Today things are seen differently, although the fundamentals have not changed. In the reality of fraternity, the most important thing has to do with connections, relationships that are interwoven with one another, so that we don't feel like aliens or foreigners but that we are as important to one another and treat one another as if we were brothers and sisters.

For you, as a young Lasallian, what does it mean to embrace fraternity, to live like brothers and sisters?

C. SERVICE.

James the Apostle, when he was writing his letter in the New Testament, said that whoever says that he loves God, whom he cannot see, but does not love his brother, is a liar. Therefore, the criterion for God's love or for loving God makes reference to those we meet among ourselves. The practical side of faith, of love for God, is service to those around us. It is very clear that God does not love us because of what we say, but because of how we involve ourselves, how we "immerse" ourselves in situations that come up in family life, in school, in the University, in the world of work and in our times of leisure...

Christian service, the commitment of a young Lasallian, is not an activity that is based on a desire to complicate our lives, in the will to arrange things...Our commitment must be born of the realization that God cares for us and loves us.. And we return the favor. It is not about keeping commandments or laws. Our commitment is born out of a grateful heart.

Commitment, Lasallian style, has its origins in realizing that God is good and he wishes good for everyone, on the one hand, and in realizing that things do not arrange themselves, that needs are not satisfied without our attention. How well this is expressed in a prayer that says that we are the hands, the eyes, the feet of Jesus.





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This idea is explicit in the first meditation that John Baptist de La Salle wrote to the teachers for their retreat, after they took a break from their educational activity: "God is so good that he wants all men to come to the knowledge of truth and to be saved...that is why he has called you."

For you, as a young Lasallian, what does it mean to commit yourself to serve others?



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QUESTIONS:

1. Of the qualities mentioned in this document, which ones do you find to be strongly present in your life?

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2. Which qualities do you not find in your life? Or, which ones are present, but not very evident?

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3. Are you able to pass on those qualities in your daily life?

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4. Are you familiar with the situation of your District? Do you participate in District activities for young people? Which ones? Please summarize them and then share them.

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5. As a young Lasallian, are you a member of a social activity?

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GLOSSARY:

Adrien Nyel: A person from the time of Saint John Baptist de La Salle who was a founder of schools. He is the person who made Saint John Baptist de La Salle aware of the opportunity to found a school in RHEIMS.



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PRAYER

The Young Lasallian Identity cannot live aside from the vocational path followed by the Founder who left the Spirit act on .La Salle has demonstrated to us, with his life, that is possible to have a part in history through choices inspired by God's will.

+ First Step

Adrien Nyel asked La Salle to open the first people's school

"As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" He heard this and said, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

Mt 9, 9-13

Of encounters with persons that affect our projects. Think to a person that has affected your history. Do you let other help you in achieving you objectives?

+ Second Step

Crisis ad worry of the teachers because of the future

La Salle reads to his teachers a Gospel's passage invite them to no fear tomorrow ad to abandon themselves to providence and continue to believe to the chance of realizing their mission.

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat (or drink), or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? [...] Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil."

Mt 6, 25-34

For being faithful witness of his choice in front of his teachers De La Salle leaves the canonicate and gives all his properties to the.

Do you feel free of leaving all your personal certainties for...

How many times doubts where more prevalent than enthusiasm to get involved in a project?



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+ Third Step

People's school: mission possible!

God's want that every one be saved, he cares about children and about the poorest. La Salle answering to this call, gives life, together with the Brothers, to an educative Ministry that has, as its objective, the Salvation of the.

People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them, and when the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. Jesus, however, called the children to himself and said, "Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it."

Lk 18, 15-17

In which way the lasalian educational ministry does characterize your?

Answering to the signs sent to our time, how does the faith's creativity focus attention on the message of the Founder?



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+ Final Prayer:

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As believers...

We understand that we are living in a reality that is more and more multi-religious.
We believe in ourselves, in others, and in the will of the Creator to make a better world.
We promote acting in prayer and in faith with all cultures and religions.

With enthusiasm...

We understand that happiness in life is contagious and it permeates our daily life.
We believe that happiness exists on the journey, no matter how difficult it may be.
We promote acting impassionedly and tirelessly in order to pass on happiness.

Friendliness and Creativity...

We understand the need to be compassionate towards young people as they face their problems.
We believe that patience demonstrates love and creates bonds of peace.
We promote trust and hope by active listening and sharing.

As a Family...

We understand our need to participate in the Lasallian family. We believe that the growth in shared experience brings our mission closer to us. We promote the sharing of our experiences to understand each other better.

United...

We understand that together we can build a civilization of love.
We consider our call to unite ourselves as a way of building a better world.
We promote the strengthening of our communication.

Humbly...

We understand that De La Salle opened his heart and humbled himself before God.
We believe that only with a humble spirit can we share who we are.
We promote touching the hearts of others.

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Service:

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Responsibly...

We understand that commitment gives meaning to our lives.
We believe that providing opportunities is a special trait of our charism.
We promote activities that give courage to young people.

By example...

We understand that in this era of globalization there is a lack of credible witness.
We believe that actions speak louder than words.
We promote committing ourselves daily in the Lasallian charism.

With devotion...



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We understand that it is through small acts that we can make a difference.
We believe that each individual has value.
We promote working arduously for the young, especially the poor.

Live, Jesus, in our hearts! Forever!