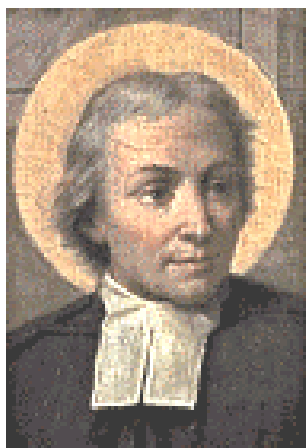


LASALLIAN EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT OF SAN FRANCISCO



A publication of the
District Office of Education
Brothers of the Christian Schools
De La Salle Institute
Napa, California
www.delasalle.org 707-252-0222

OUR MISSION



The mission of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, as affirmed in the words of their *Rule*, is *to give a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor, according to the ministry which the Church has entrusted to it.* This mission is carried out in schools as the preferred field of activity of the Brothers and their lay colleagues, or Partners, and in other educational works, adapted to the needs of the time and place in which they live.

THE DISTRICT OF SAN FRANCISCO AND THE LASALLIAN HERITAGE

The District of San Francisco is part of the International Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools – commonly known as the De La Salle Christian Brothers. The District, founded in San Francisco in 1868, shares in the Institute’s mission of conducting schools and cooperating in creating educational communities inspired by the vision and traditions of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Our schools are Catholic schools, based on core principles that characterize them as uniquely *Lasallian*. Their educational policies are centered on the young, designed to prepare them to take their place in society, and characterized by the determination to make the means of salvation available through a quality education and by an explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ.

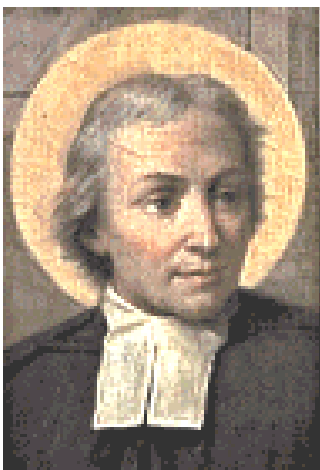
The District of San Francisco includes the entire West Coast of the United States. In the District, the Brothers conduct Saint Mary’s College of California, eleven high schools, one school serving grades four through eight, one community-based educational center for young people and adults, and a retreat and conference center. In the 2010-2011 school year, over 10,000 students, more than half of them Catholic, attended District schools (total includes only undergraduates at Saint Mary’s College). Recognizing an interdependence with other Districts and Regions of the Institute, the District has developed partnerships with Brothers and Lasallians in other parts of the world, particularly in Asia and Africa, through the assignment of Brothers to ministries outside the District, providing the services of Lasallian Partners, and sharing financial resources and expertise.

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

This document is in PDF format on www.delasalle.org
It is available in printed booklet form (5.5 x 8.5 inches)
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707-252-3721

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE AND THE DE LA SALLE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

The De La Salle Christian Brothers were founded by Saint John Baptist de La Salle in 1680 at Reims, France, in answer to the serious need for the Christian (specifically Catholic) education of the children of poor and working-class families. These children had nowhere to turn for knowledge, training in a trade, or a Christian upbringing. Saint La Salle was convinced that the *Christian Schools* were the solution. Born into a devout and influential family of Reims in 1651, and ordained a priest in 1678, De La Salle, almost by accident, gradually assumed the leadership of a small group of lay teachers in the schools.



Moved by the plight of the poor who seemed so “far from salvation” either in this world or the next, he determined to put his own talents, resources, and advanced education at the service of the children “often left to themselves and badly brought up.” To be still more effective, he abandoned his family home, moved into a residence together with the teachers, renounced his wealth and his position as Canon of the Reims Cathedral, and so formed the community that became known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

His enterprise met opposition from the ecclesiastical authorities who resisted the creation of a new form of religious life – “lay religious” Brothers, not clerics – a community of consecrated laymen to conduct gratuitous schools “together and by association”. The educational establishment resented his innovative methods and his insistence on free schools for all, regardless of whether they could afford to pay. With profound faith and trust in God, De La Salle acted, step by step, in response to the needs of the schools, the teachers, and the students as he perceived God wanted him to act.

De La Salle and his Brothers succeeded in creating a network of quality schools throughout France that featured instruction in the vernacular, rather than Latin, students grouped according to ability and achievement, integration of religious instruction with secular subjects, well-prepared teachers with a sense of vocation and mission, and the involvement of parents. In addition, De La Salle pioneered in programs for training lay teachers, Sunday courses for young working men, and one of the first institutions in France for the care of delinquents.

John Baptist de La Salle died at Saint Yon near Rouen early on Good Friday 1719, only weeks before his 68th birthday. He was canonized a Saint in the Catholic Church on May 24, 1900, and proclaimed Patron Saint of All Teachers of Youth on May 15, 1950.

“...one commitment led to another in a way that I did not foresee in the beginning.”
- De La Salle

LASALLIAN SCHOOLS TODAY

The De La Salle Christian Brothers (officially, the Brothers of the Christian Schools – Fratres Scholarum Christianarum – FSC) is the largest order of religious Brothers in the Roman Catholic Church, dedicated exclusively to education, particularly of the poor and disadvantaged. For years, dedicated lay women and men and other religious have worked alongside the Brothers in their schools and apostolic works. In this shared mission, Partners today participate in the work of the District of San Francisco at every level.

Today, more than 4,800 De La Salle Christian Brothers work with over 76,000 Partners and nearly 900,000 students in over 900 educational institutions in nearly 80 countries, from El Salvador to the Philippines, from France to South Africa. In the United States alone, there are approximately 700 Brothers. Of these, a total of 300 Brothers work with more than 10,000 Partners and 62,000 students in 100 educational institutions.

Lasallian schools – as they have come to be known – are Lasallian *because they are based on the teachings and vision of De La Salle*. They are transparently Catholic, in order to be, as the *Rule* of the Brothers states, signs of the kingdom and means of salvation. Their Christian identity involves more than courses of religious instruction and pastoral programs. The Christian dimension permeates and shapes every aspect of school life: tone, atmosphere, spirit, signs, symbols, relationships, curriculum, requirements, policies, regulations. As Catholic schools, they are called to propose – but in no way to impose – Jesus Christ, accepting with love and respect all the young people entrusted to their care, whatever their religious beliefs. An institution can legitimately call itself Lasallian only if it is unambiguously Christian. (*Lasallian Schools Today*, Brother John Johnston, FSC.)



HALLMARKS OF A LASALLIAN SCHOOL

Based upon an essay by Brother John Johnston, FSC

Lasallian schools are Christian schools, but schools in which a certain number of specific characteristics are given prominence. The Founder did not leave us a definite list of these characteristics, but the seven that follow correspond to the priorities which De La Salle considered essential to the early Christian Schools. In practice, these are interrelated. *It is the integration of these characteristics that gives the school its Lasallian identity.*



A school can be said to be Lasallian:

- when there is a profound respect for each student as a unique person,
- when there is a spirit of community,
- when the school offers quality education,
- when it really merits the adjective Christian,
- when it manifests solidarity with the poor and promotes the quest for justice and peace,
- when its administrators and teachers have made their own the characteristics of Lasallian education,
- and when the school community is formed in reference to the story of John Baptist de La Salle.

*Saint John Baptist de La Salle, pray for us!
Live, Jesus, in our hearts, forever!*

THE LASALLIAN TEACHER

At the heart of the spirit of Saint John Baptist de La Salle is the belief that in serving people, we become closer to God. In his *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, De La Salle wrote of the special work that an educator undertakes. “Since you are ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ in the work that you do, you must act as representing Jesus Christ himself. Your students must be convinced that the truth of Jesus Christ comes from your mouth, that it is only in His name that you teach.” *Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve* has become a familiar motto for Lasallian educational ministries around the world.



*“You,
too,
can*

*perform miracles
by touching the hearts of those entrusted to your care.”*

- De La Salle

DE LA SALLE'S VISION FOR THE TEACHER IN THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL

De La Salle named twelve qualities that every good teacher should possess:

<i>Dignity</i>	<i>Calmness</i>	<i>Humility</i>	<i>Prudence</i>
<i>Wisdom</i>	<i>Patience</i>	<i>Self-Control</i>	<i>Gentleness</i>
<i>Zeal</i>	<i>Vigilance</i>	<i>Prayerfulness</i>	<i>Generosity</i>

For De La Salle, education meant formation of the total person. He believed that the essential attitudes for becoming a good teacher were these:

◆ Knowing each student as an individual and being interested in their whole life. ◆ Trying to see in each student the image and likeness of God. ◆ Being willing to try to maintain an open and friendly relationship with each student. ◆ Being willing to teach by witnessing to the values taught. ◆ Being open to asking God’s help to overcome difficulties, misunderstandings, or lack of easy contact with some students. ◆ Being willing to recognize that close association with fellow teachers and sharing ideals with them is a way of being mutually supportive in the ministry of teaching.

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