

The Response of the Holy Spirit to Our Prayers for Vocations

IN THE 70TH YEAR OF HIS VOCATION, A DISTRICT BROTHER REFLECTS ON SHARED MISSION AND THE SPIRIT OF FAITH THAT IS OUR LEGACY

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It has long been the Brothers' tradition to make a novena for vocations from the 16th to the 25th of each month. Our daily liturgies and Community prayers include a petition for vocations, not limited to the Brothers' life only, but to the priesthood and all forms of religious life. Since its founding, our District has provided for the assignment of a Brother to the full-time position of Vocation Director. Since 1987, three Brothers have worked as a team in the promotion of vocations, and Vocation Coordinators are present and active in each District secondary school community and at Saint Mary's College. Still, in recent years the number of Brothers in the District has declined, and fewer young men have entered our Novitiate.


How do the Brothers interpret the response of the Holy Spirit to our prayers and to our efforts to attract young men to our way of life? A merely human interpretation might result in the conclusion that God is not listening to us. And yet, viewed with the Spirit of Faith that is our heritage from Saint John

Baptist de La Salle, we see God responding to the "needs of the times," evidenced in the Institute's efforts to further develop a Shared Mission among the Brothers and the lay men and women and other religious who work with us in our apostolate of Christian education.

We continue to witness the increasing response of our colleagues to the call to be Lasallian, obvious in all that has been developing within our educational apostolates. Lay men and women participate in the Buttimer Institute and Lasallian Leadership Institute; our colleagues actively engage in District Convocations, positively responding to the call to be a part of the District's future; for the first time, colleagues joined the Brothers as delegates to the District Chapter in Spring 1999; each District school has created or renewed its Mission Statement to assure its emphasis on the Lasallian traditions of the De La Salle Christian Brothers. Surely, this is evidence that the Holy Spirit is, indeed, responding to our prayers for vocations. While few young men have decided to enter fully into the consecrated life of the Brothers, many of those who are

associated with our apostolates have made a personal commitment to become more inspired by the Lasallian heritage of faith and zeal as they reach out to touch minds and hearts of the students in our schools and apostolic works. In a renewal of the heart of the Lasallian mission – Service of the Poor – Brothers and Partners are increasing their efforts to serve the educational needs of students from families with financial or personal hardships.

As the Brothers continue their prayers and their efforts to increase the numbers of men and women who will choose to consecrate themselves to the Institute and to those congregations of Sisters associated with the Institute, we will also offer our prayers and our encouragement for those who work with us, that they may be inspired by the Lasallian traditions of spirituality and service, as trustees, teachers, administrators, and staff of our educational institutions, as District administration, as volunteers, and as Lasallian Youth. Our Spirit of Faith, perhaps our greatest legacy, will continue to assure us that our prayers are not in vain. ✿



The prayer that follows was created for the Brothers' 43rd General Chapter held in Rome in the year 2000. It serves as evidence of the conviction that the Holy Spirit continues to inspire our concept for Shared Mission.

Holy Spirit, whose mission it is to direct and guide our lives, draw down upon us the wind and fire of a Pentecost for our times.

Spirit of God, help us to see the signs of the times, and open our hearts so that Brothers, Sisters, and lay Lasallians may all respond to the calls you make to us in the world of young people and, especially, of the poor. Help us to find the right guidelines to respond to these calls.

Spirit of love, renew our fidelity to the living charism of our Founder; teach us to find new vocations, and raise up new saints for the service of the young people of the new millennium now begun.

Strengthened by your support and bound together by ties of solidarity, may we use our talents and our resources in the service of a mission adapted to present-day conditions.

*We ask you this through Jesus, our brother and Lord.
Amen.*