

# BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

CIRCULAR 455  
September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007



## The Documents of the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter

“Being Brothers Today:  
Open Eyes, Burning Hearts”



**General Council**  
Via Aurelia – Rome, Italy

*September 2007*

**Brothers of the Christian Schools**

Generalate

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# Introduction

*“Being Brothers Today:  
Open Eyes, Burning Hearts”*

*“I Heard Their Cry – I Will Send You”*  
(Cf. Ex 3:7-10)

The biblical event of the Exodus provided the icon and inspiration for the work of the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. This led the Capitulants to consider what we as Brothers leave behind as we look toward the horizons before us. Also, based on the Exodus, we considered the various needs that are present in so many forms in our world today that we, as Brothers and with other Lasallians dedicated to the mission of education, are called to address so that the Reign of God proclaimed and realized in Jesus may transform the world into one of hope, justice, peace, and communion among people. The 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter calls for the Brothers and all who work in the Lasallian mission of education to “hear the cry” of the oppressed and to reflect on how we must prepare and renew ourselves for an Exodus at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century towards new horizons.

Our discussions during the Chapter, and the documents resulting from these exchanges, intend to assist us personally and communally to unleash “an unstoppable process of conversion” (Bro. Álvaro Rodríguez, Superior General) as we Brothers journey together and with others in realizing our educational mission.

For this the Capitulants studied in groups and discussed in General Assembly some important aspects of our life.

The necessity for authentic **Interior Life** and **Community Life** challenges us, in today’s world, to be men of faith and prayer, living our Brotherhood in the simplicity of the Gospel. We hear personally and in community the Gospel call to follow Jesus in his life and mission as a fraternal sign of hope in the world.



The growing movement centered on the **Association for the Educational Service of the Poor** challenges us to understand better the vow of Association as an expression of our consecration and the call to our educational mission in collaboration with our Lasallian partners.

The need for the **Educational Service of the Poor** challenges us through our educational and evangelizing work among the poor and with all of our students to create a world more just and caring, especially for the poor and those whose human rights are violated in many ways.

The importance of the **Pastoral Ministry of Brothers and Lasallian Vocations** challenges us to foster Lasallian vocations, especially Brothers' vocations, so that we can witness to and inspire in others the value of faith, fraternity, and service to assure the vitality of our educational mission.

The responsibility for **Accompanying Young Brothers in Community**, a concern born of a need that progressively emerged during the Chapter, challenges us to support and accompany the younger Brothers, and many others, especially in their spiritual growth, in their life in community, and in their ministry.

The young Brothers presented a document "**Young Brothers in the Institute**" expressing their hopes and fears and their desire to meet on a regular basis at the international level. This Document was approved by the Chapter Assembly.

The need to develop structures in a spirit of fraternity, service, and liberty at all levels of the Institute that support our mission and all who are dedicated to that mission prompted a serious discussion on **Government and Animation**.

As the God of the Exodus told Moses of those uttering a cry for life and hope, "I will rescue them," so too the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter sets this same horizon for the



Brothers and for all those working in the mission of the Institute. The 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter does this with the conviction that on this journey to that horizon what the God of the Exodus told Moses is told to us also: "I will be with you" (Ex 3:12).

The heading of this preface that encapsulates a recurring theme of the Chapter recalls the paschal mystery of the new Exodus of Jesus and our Exodus in and with him. He walked with two disciples on the road to Emmaus whose eyes were opened and hearts were burning while sharing a meal with him at the end of the day because then they realized he had been with them the whole time of their journey (Luke 24:31-32). We also need open eyes and burning hearts to make the presence of Jesus Christ a reality in our lives and in this world. And indeed, it is significant that the feast of Pentecost occurred during the time of the Chapter. We go forward in hope filled with the Spirit of the Risen Lord of life and peace who sends us to be his witnesses throughout the world.

Fraternally in St. John Baptist de La Salle

*Br. Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, Superior General*

And the members of the General Council:

*Br. Thomas Johnson, Vicar General*

*Br. Alberto Gómez Barruso*

*Br. Claude Reinhardt*

*Br. David Hawke*

*Br. Edgar Genuino Nicodem*

*Br. Gabriel Somé*

*Br. Jacques d'Huiteau*

*Br. Jorge Gallardo de Alba*

*Br. Robert Schieler*





# 1. Interior Life

## Being Brothers Today and Tomorrow, Interior Men in the simplicity of the Gospel

### Introduction

What we call the interior life is a fundamental aspect of the life of all men and women through which, conscious of their calling and mission in the world, they live, in a simple manner, a personal relationship with God. This relationship is a dialogue, founded on grace, that extends out in love to all peoples, all living beings, all things and to the world.

Our concerns about the interior life of the Brother and the difficulties we have in living our consecration in the contemporary world contexts have been brought together into one single challenge and one single horizon which invite us to work the of action in order to unleash unstoppable processes of conversion that will help us to respond to what God asks of us at personal, community, District, Regional and Institute levels.

What is essential is to keep alive the spirit that is special to us, the spirit of faith and zeal. We are being called to examine if we

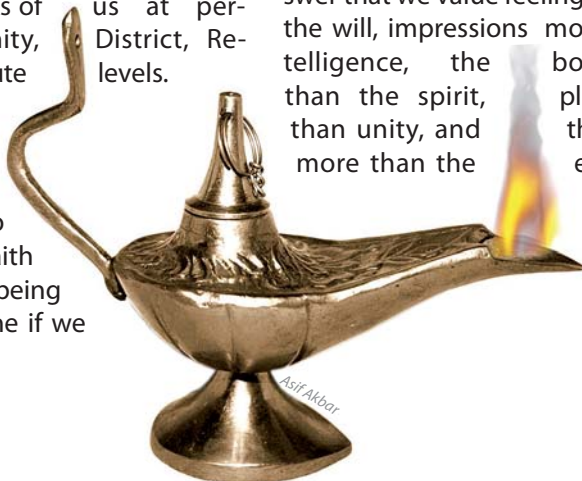
are truly living by the Spirit and if we are effectively motivated by the twofold passion for the God of salvation and for those to whom he sends us. The most important thing of all is that we be interior men.

### 1. Challenge: To live and offer spiritual depth

#### 1.1 Changing Times

We live in a globalized world that fosters interpersonal relationships, awareness of our smallness, interdependence, respect, and tolerance for diversity. It is also a world in which the general atmosphere and intellectual movements contradict the idea of a world which, in former days, we managed quite well: today we would answer that we value feelings more than the will, impressions more than intelligence, the body more than the spirit, plurality more than unity, and more than the temporal eternal.

It is a world in which we are passing



through a new secularism that displaces the last remaining religious meanings. Salvation, pardon for sin, redemption or sacrifice these are no longer words that have an historical resonance in society, but rather have completely lost their significance for the ordinary person.

This cultural logic has led us to live in a fragmented style, making us experience time and space in another way, as well as interpersonal relationships and, even the value we place on persons.

## 1.2 Reflection or prophecy?

We Brothers are persons of our times. Our God is the Lord of History and all cultures are also his Word. It is there where he speaks to us, there we look for Him and we find Him. But our presence as consecrated men wants to be in association so as to serve as a counter-cultural sign today. Nevertheless, we cannot avoid being influenced by the dominant values of our culture which can ensnare us in the dynamics of consumerism, superficiality, an existential vacuum and the unbelief of many of our contemporaries.

The disinterest of many Brothers in theological, religious and catechetical studies is an emerging danger owing to this situation. We are also aware of the tension created by the distance between what we say in our documents and what we are living. We have neg-

lected meditation and spiritual reading. Our retreats appear to be more like courses or workshops.

Many times, this giving in to the non-evangelical and dominant aspects of the cultural style of today's world are compounded by the many problems that have their roots in our affective life, such as addictions, the demand for recognition, feelings of omnipotence, messianic pretensions, overwork, the obsessions of perfectionism or narcissism.

It cannot be denied that this cultural ethos to which we belong makes demands on the apostolic dimension of our religious congregation and the style in which we are living our shared mission with other educational and pastoral agents.

## 1.3 A possible dream

We must face a serious process of spiritual renewal that will bring us, as persons and as communities, to reduce the distance between our documents and our life in order to live a spirituality that is visible, credible and prophetic:

- To strengthen the contemplative dimension of our life that will lead us to live a passion for God in the passion we have for this world.
- To promote a formation that is more in consonance with the life of the Districts, more personalized, in the

context of an ambience in which we live that is at once multi-religious and unbelieving.

- To work on our own way of living, personally and in community, in order to become the poor Brothers who are sought by the poor.
- To create communities that will serve as spiritual references for children, for youth and for adults.
- To create anew the means to strengthen our fraternal bonds.
- To unleash the processes of spiritual renewal in the whole Institute.

## 2. Horizon: Brothers spiritually significant in prophetic communities.

### 2.1 Eyes wide open

St. John Baptist de La Salle was a man who permitted himself to be touched and moved by the situation of abandonment of the children of the artisans and the poor when he contemplated God's plan of salvation (cf. *Rule* 11). It is this same spirituality of eyes open that our Institute needs to cultivate today at the beginning of the 21st century. It is a spirituality that understands that the world, all cultures, sciences and arts, the lives of nations and of persons, particularly if they are poor, are all words that God is using to call to us, to challenge us, to pursue us and

show himself to us.

### 2.2 Mystical realism



This is Lasallian mystical realism, as Brother Michel Sauvage described (CL 55, 105-125), and which so many Brothers have lived. It is a spirituality incarnated in the people of our countries at the present time. It is a way of feeling and seeing reality with the eyes of the believer which inspires us to work, together with our Brothers and other educators and pastoral agents, in such a way that we believe that what we do may be more pleasing to the God, who is present and active in history. It is a sensitivity that brings us to discover that the rights of all, and especially, the rights of the child, are rights that come from God.

### 2.3 Captivated

As in the life of De La Salle, the building up of this sensitivity and of this apostolic drive is not something that arises

spontaneously in us (cf. *Rule* 81). It requires a formation that deepens our love for Jesus, the Incarnation of God, the splendor of His saving grace in the Paschal Mystery. It is a personal, conscious and responsive love offered to the Spirit of Jesus Christ who lives in Church and in the World. It is a love that is always available and seeking. This quest requires a spirit of discernment, above all in times of perplexity and uncertainty, like our own. This deepening of love for Jesus opens up in a single movement into adoration of God and a love for humanity and all of creation.

## 2.4 Interior Prayer: the existential imperative

In this formation, interior prayer occupies a singular place, one that led our Founder to name it as the first and principal of the daily exercises (cf. *Rule* 69; 73). This interior prayer is not possible as a daily activity if we Brothers do not ask penetrating questions about the meaning of life linked with answers that speak of God through symbols or metaphors.

A life of daily prayer also requires us to be aware of our own tenuous attachment to the



good, the true and the beautiful. The Brother who prays every day needs control of the body and mind; a rooted sense of personal awareness; a healthy sense of his own worth; a progressive unification of the senses, the emotions, the affections, the ideas, the values and the decisions involved in living a life of faith; and a belief in Jesus Christ that opens itself to a personalized doctrinal development and a loving personal relationship. Only in this way will we live the existential imperative to pray always and not an immature dependence on timetables and exterior structures.

## 2.5 Communities of prayer

For this very reason we need communities in which the life of prayer is possible. These will be communities in which we can cultivate, together and by association, our relationship with the God of Jesus. The daily encounter with God, in Word and Bread, is the path to follow. The Word of God is not limited just to the Scriptures but it is free and active in the lives of nations and individuals.

Our daily prayer must be developed, then, as an exercise of a prayerful



reading of the Word of God. It must be a type of reading that leads us, on the one hand, to discover the religious relationship that exists between history and the economic and social situations in the simple life of the people with whom we live, and the Biblical narratives on the other. (MTR 193, 194, 198) We need to discover what relations both have with our own life as consecrated men who seek together the glory of God in the educational and evangelizing ministry. In this way, Scriptures will be, in a renewed manner, our first and principal Rule (cf. *Rule 6*).

## 2.6 To Be More and Have Less

We want to be men of contemplation, of a loving relationship with God, with others and with all of creation, because where our treasure is, there is our heart.

Therefore, we also need to review our lifestyle. Many communities and many Brothers in particular have too many things, are busy doing too much, and want too many things. Some of us Brothers look for too much power and are too full of ourselves.

This is why our life has become something foreign to the poor (cf. *Rule 32*) and too much like that of the rich. In this way our lives are not meaningful for either the poor or the rich.

Lasallian spirituality is one of simplicity.



Mystical realism means being conscious of the limits of possibility, a responsible awareness of the necessary, of the realizable, of the desirable. It is a humble, measured consciousness. We need to build up a perspective of communion and participation about material goods, a viewpoint that is consistent with the style of poverty that our Rule invites us to live.

## 2.7 Exodus and Resistance

It is a spirituality of exodus. We are the slaves who have to let ourselves be led to freedom by God. We are the slaves who must abandon our foolish securities in order to cross through the dangers of the desert, confident in

the Presence of the God of Promise and of the New Covenant calling us to be free.

We are not being freed to reproduce a new situation of slavery, but to be prophets of a new world. For this reason, ours is also a spirituality of resistance. Our communities, and each Brother, have to learn to say “no”, to say “enough”, to say, “that is not for us”, to say, “not in our name”, and to construct alternatives.

## 2.8 Alternative Communities

As communities of faith, we are called to collaborate in the construction of more communities of faith (cf. *Rule* 51a), new islands of hope and creativity; alternative communities, communities seeking to be similar to the first Christian community in Jerusalem and to that of our Lasallian origins.

Communities who would serve as a reference for other adults, for youth and for children, or groups of young people themselves who, because of the witness of their interior lives, serve as models for adults, other youngsters and children. They might even be groups of children who seek and offer alternative experiences of life within our Church and society; alternative communities, ecclesial groups with a human face so often missing in our society and our Church (cf. *Rule* 17c,d).

## 2.9 Called

We are called to build communities of Brothers where we look forward with joy to coming together for prayer. This has less to do with the novelty of styles than with the seriousness of the activity, even though it cannot be denied that we must take the time to revise what we have been doing at the time of building the community annual programs.

We are called to be the human face of God. The God of history calls us at this time to manifest to men and women, especially to the poor, His presence in this world through the work of education.

We are called to be companions for others along the pathway of their own spirituality. We need Brothers and communities that live the Gospel authentically. We need Brothers and communities that unleash an unstoppable process of conversion that will help us to respond to what God asks of us!

## 3. Lines of Action

**3.1** Strengthen the contemplative dimension of our life that will lead us to live the passion for God in the passion for this world. Some examples are:

- Be attentive in order to discover the religious meaning of the culture, especially initiating ourselves into the world of symbols and into symbolic thought that permits us to tran-

scend from mere experience into mystery.

- Be more creative in personal and community prayer; and in spiritual reading, in our community and sacramental celebrations in ways that are more affective, more festive.
- Prefer retreats that are more contemplative than instructive.
- Give new value to the spaces and times we dedicate for prayer, silence, and interior prayer.

**3.2** Promote a new formation, both initial and on-going, in the present multi-religious and non-believing context, in order to know how to live in times of uncertainty. Develop formation programs:

- that would be more personalized;
- that would be more linked to the life of the Districts;
- that would integrate the corporal, the affective, the cognitive, the ethical, the spiritual, the religious;
- that would unite with the reading of the bible an interpretation of reality and that of our community to discern the signs of the times;

- this would include in the personal projects the ways in which Lectio Divina, silence, self control and humility can nourish and help us to deepen the interior life of each Brother.

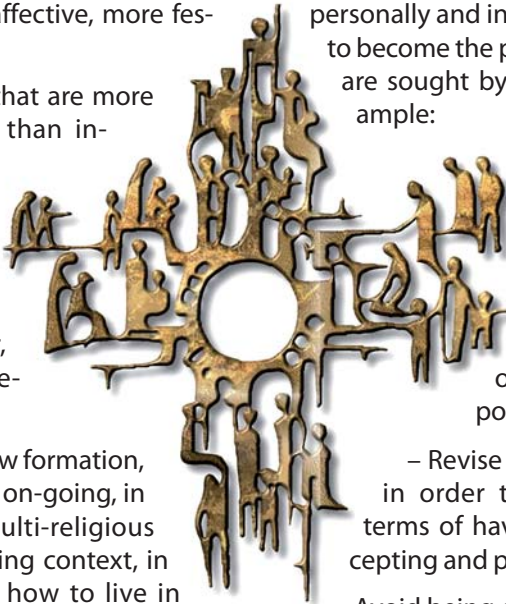
**3.3** Work on our own way of living personally and in community so as to become the poor Brothers who are sought by the poor, for example:

- Live among the poor.
- Have a formation program that integrates the experience of contact with the poor.
- Revise our style of living in order to live simply in terms of having, desiring, accepting and planning activities.
- Avoid being obsessed with the latest novelties and learning to say "enough".

- Look for new ways of sharing goods.

**3.4** Create communities that would be spiritual reference points for children, youth and adults; for this it would be necessary, among other things:

- To make our communities as places for spiritual discernment.
- To share our experience of God as a way of enriching the spiritual life of



each Brother and of the whole community. This must be a priority and must have its place in the community annual program.

- To open community spaces and times of prayer in order to share with others.
- To make our communities more visible to other groups.
- Animating groups of faith and reflection in which existential questions may be raised.
- Creating communities of faith of adult teachers with their own leadership and collaborating with those which already exist.

**3.5** Creating anew the means to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood, for example:

- Finding a spiritual companion with whom we can challenge one another mutually as we seek a more authentic interior life.
- Identifying and imitating Brothers who may serve as icons of Gospel authenticity.
- Foreseeing in the community an-

nual program the special occasions where we may affirm and express appreciation for our Brothers.

- Emphasizing the responsibility that each Brother has with respect to the demands of the ideals of the interior life for himself and for others.
- In community, looking for ways to re-discover the Rule in such a way that we will read it with new eyes and renewed interest, in order to pray with it and permit ourselves to be challenged by its life-giving insights.

**3.6** Unleashing processes of spiritual renewal at all levels of the Institute; this implies, among other initiatives:

- To organize in the Regions or the Districts, a colloquium/workshop on the interior life, before the next intercapitular meeting.
- To design resources on Lasallian Spirituality Brothers of all age groups. The Institute structures responsible for formation and Lasallian Studies should work on this.

- To put into motion a





process that will help the Brothers to re-discover the practice of Lasallian discernment in their



daily life. Brother Superior will invite Brothers who are experts in Lasallian Studies to collaborate on this.

## 2. Community Life

### Introduction

God is in front of us in the realities of the world and of the Church in which the Institute is present today.

**1.** Our post-modern world is very present in our personal lives and in our religious communities. It is marked in particular by a primacy of feeling over will, of impression over intelligence, of an arbitrary logic and seeking of pleasure over a morality of asceticism and prohibitions. It is a world in which primacy is given to sensitivity, emotion, and to the instantly present moment.

Human existence is often lived as a place where one experiments with a limitless freedom, where people exercise or believe they are able to exercise power and creativity without reference to God. And yet in this world we understand that everywhere there is a deep desire for recognition and for respect demanded by people, groups of humanity, the poor, the young: a desire for fraternity.

**2.** The Church changes slowly in front of our eyes: since the Second Vatican Council Christians express even more

their desire to become agents, of participating fully in a common mission, in a variety of ministries and by new ways of participating and decision-making. There is present an affirmation of the Church — the people of God who are together sent into the world. In this context the religious life is called to live *“the passion for Christ, the passion for humankind”*. A renewed fraternity is being created.

**3.** In our Institute we are living these same expectations, encouraged by our Lasallian partners, in all the situations where we are present; this has been quite evident these past thirty years. These partners are attentive to our way of being present and to the style of education that we are developing; they are discovering there the fraternity that attracts them and to which many wish to associate themselves in order to live their profession as a vocation.

Without any doubt and as the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Chapter declared to us we have “received the charism of fraternity” which, in our position as religious Brothers



Jean Scheijen

(Cf. V.C. 60), responds to the new expectations of the world and the Church in which God wants us to be witnesses and builders of the Kingdom.

The religious community is a sign of and a witness to the great Trinitarian “*Koinonia*”, in which God has willed that all persons have part in the life of the Son and The Holy Spirit. In its structures, motivations and distinguishing values, the religious community makes publicly visible and continually noticeable the gift of brotherhood given by God to the whole Church. It is for this reason that religious communities have their commitment to a mission to be living signs of intense brotherly communion (cf. *Fraternal life in community* 2e).

We remember with deep emotion the words of Blain of the origins of our name and our identity (cf. *Rule* 53)

*“In this way, the name Brothers of the Christian and Gratuitous Schools became henceforth the official name of the children of De La Salle. From now on, we shall call them by no other. This appellation is the correct one because it includes the definition of their state and indicates the mission proper to their vocation. This name reminds them that the charity which gave birth to their Institute must be its souls and life, that it should govern all their deliberations and animate all their projects... This name teaches them the excellence of the duty they have assumed, the dignity of their*

*state, and the holiness proper to their profession. It tells them as Brothers they owe each other mutual proofs of tender but spiritual friendship and that considering themselves as the elder brothers of the children who come to be taught by them, they should exercise this ministry of charity with truly loving hearts”* (Blain CL 7 p. 241).

4. Called together from our beginnings to live fraternity in community, we believe that this dimension of our identity calls us -

*“To be Brothers today”*

*men of fraternity,*

*According to the following promises:*

*Men of fraternity among ourselves,  
inspired by the prayer of Christ:*

*“Father, that they all may be one as you  
and I are one...”* (cf. R 48).

*Men of fraternity*

*with the educators who share the  
mission with us.*

*Men of fraternity*

*with the youth and the adults,  
especially the poor,*

*Men of fraternity in the Church.*

This world, the adults and the youth who are daily entrusted to us, and the Church put forward for us the challenge of fraternity and encourage us personally and in community to live more authentically.

Our answer to this challenge is the

Lasallian fraternity lived in a renewed way.

**Note:** The order of challenges responds to the plan of the Exodus (Ex 3:6-10). The community opens its eyes and ears to reality, and becomes the covenant people sent on mission.



## 1.1 Challenge: to respond as a community to the needs of our world

As witnesses of the suffering and injustice in the world, we are challenged to respond in community to the needs of the children and the young, especially those who are poor.

### 1.2 Horizons

**1.2.1** Being communities of discernment where brothers live a life of simplicity in solidarity with the poor.

**1.2.2** Go to new places as a Samaritan

of the Gospel where there is no basic education and where the word of God is less proclaimed.

### 1.3 Lines of action

**1.3.1** Place the poor, especially those who are young, at the center of our community and educational projects in order to better know the reality in which they live and in order to respond to the different local needs. For example: students who have difficulty with their studies, children of dysfunctional families; migrants, those on drugs, orphans, the right of the child to be born, and other new forms of poverty.

**1.3.2** Establish communities of Lasallians committed to the service of young people or adults in difficulty.

**1.3.3** Encourage Lasallian communities to be informed and formed together on social issues and to be engaged in the pastoral endeavors of the Church and/or in humanitarian initiatives.

## 2.1 Challenge: to be communities that encourage the following of Jesus

We are challenged to be welcoming communities, a leaven of fraternity in the world, offering a human face of the Church and inviting a creative and radical following of Jesus.

## 2.2 Horizons

Create Brothers' communities that are visible, credible and fraternal, where life and faith are shared with the young and with adults and can inspire the formation of Lasallian fraternities.

## 2.3 Lines of action

**2.3.1** That the Districts and Regions collaborate in forming international Lasallian Communities that are signs of fraternity and of the universal mission of the Church. (Cf. *The Educational Service of the Poor*, 6.3.1)

**2.3.2** That communities provide time for faith sharing among the Brothers as visible, living, and active witnesses of Jesus Christ. In this way they will be signs for the young who seek to deepen their spiritual lives and could invite them to choose the consecrated life (Cf. *Pastoral Ministry* 1.3.1).

**2.3.3** To open the community to Lasallians who seek to develop their faith and deepen their spirituality and understanding of the mission by their sharing with the Brothers

### 3.1 Challenge: to live the mission as a community

Consecrated to the Holy Trinity our challenge is to live in community "together and by association" for the mission (Cf. *Med.* 39.3)



## 3.2 Horizons

To live in community our vow of association to serve the poor, dedicated to a mission which is not limited to working only in solidarity but which arises from a life in community, enriched with the gifts and talents of all the Brothers.

## 3.3 Lines of action

**3.3.1** To welcome as a community those in need and freely give them of its time and energy,

**3.3.2** To encourage collaboration among different communities and works to reinforce the spirit of association and to respond better to the mission.

### 4.1 Challenge: building an authentic fraternity

In an age when so many are searching

for a spiritual life and a deeper sense of belonging, we are challenged to live an authentic life of brotherhood in community.

## 4.2 Horizons

We envision community as a place to share life and faith, where we come to know and appreciate one another's joyful presence, overcome individualism, continue our ongoing formation and experience the merciful love of God (cf. *Rule 50*).

## 4.3 Lines of action

- 4.3.1** To create an atmosphere in community that assists in building friendship, respect, tolerance and mutual support that fosters personal and communal time for prayer, rest and recreation, as well as fraternal correction. More importance should be given to the Brother personally than to structures and rules.
- 4.3.2** To fulfill his ministry as community animator the Brother Director participates in suitable formation programs provided either by the In-

stitute or other agencies.

- 4.3.3** To creatively construct the community annual program in a discerning manner, recognizing the importance of the presence of the Brother in community as an indispensable condition for community life. Each Brother likewise is expected to revitalize his personal annual program and shares his situation and personal journey with the community.

The Community Annual Program is an appropriate time to discuss the use of technology and other material items provided for our use taking care to prevent interference in community life.

- 4.3.4** To treat with special care and affection Brothers who are aged, ill, isolated, or dealing with personal addictions of various kinds.

To be creative in funding activities for the elderly Brothers based on their capabilities, to continue to develop the ministry of presence among the children and the young, especially the poor, and among Lascallian partners.

# 3. Association for the educational service of the poor

## Introduction

Inspired by the General Chapters that have taken place since 1966, the last 40 years have been a true Exodus experience for the Institute. Many Brothers, and with them many Lasallian partners, have lived this journey toward our origins in a spirit of joy, though for some, that journey has at times had its uncertainties. We have walked together sharing in the reflection of the post-Conciliar Church, which has also been searching for its foundational sources during this same period.

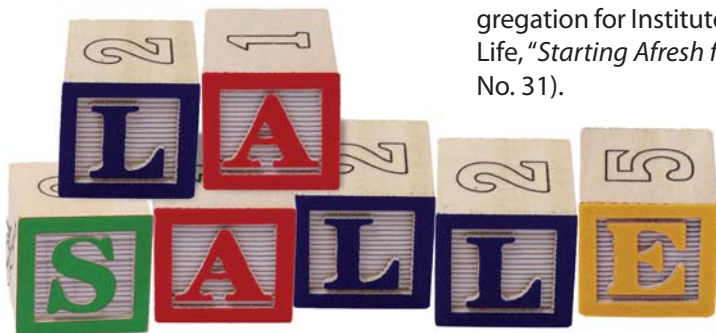
The Second Vatican Council, in the Constitution, *Lumen Gentium* (Chapter 2), uses the image “People of God” as the foundation for understanding the composition of the Church. From this image can be understood the concept of “Communion” developed by the ecclesial documents in the post-Conciliar period. “The ecclesiology of commun-

ion is the central and fundamental idea of the Documents of the Council” (*Christifideles laici*, 8).

From her Gospel roots, the Church today presents her identity as “mystery of communion” (*Christifideles laici*, 8) where “the communion is missionary and the mission is for communion” (*Christifideles laici*, 32; *Vita Consecrata*, 46).

The Church - People of God has recovered for all people the charisms that were traditionally considered reserved for religious institutes. “Given the new situations, a large number of Institutes have come to see that their charism can be shared by lay people. As a consequence, they are invited to participate, in a deeper way, in the spirituality and the mission of the Institute. One could say that a new chapter in the history of relationships between consecrated persons and the laity has begun that is rich in hope” (*Vita Consecrata*, 54, § 2. Cf. Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life, “Starting Afresh from Christ”, 2002, No. 31).

In the same way, based on our foundational roots,



we Brothers, have rediscovered our consecrated identity in light of our vow of Association for the educational service of the poor and it is through it that we attempt to “clarify our understanding of the other vows” (43rd General Chapter, Circular 447, *The Brothers, Identity and Formation*, Orientation 3).

In this way we express the consecration that we ourselves have professed to the Holy Trinity committing ourselves “together and by association” to the human and Christian education of children and youth, especially the poor.

We Brothers live out our consecration today in this new context of the “People of God”, together with many others who also participate in the Lasallian charism and who feel called to associate in the mission, although with different vocations or states of life (cf. *Rule*, 146).

The challenges to which we must respond today come not only from those for whom our mission is intended, poor children and youth, but also from those who share in this mission with us. Through them the Holy Spirit moves us to live the call of “*Being Brothers Today*”:

- The call to be Brothers with them and to live our fraternity as a sign for all Lasallian educators
- The call to be, for them and with them, mediators of the light with

which God “has illuminated the hearts of those he has chosen to announce his word to children” (MTR 193, 1)

- The call to be the heart, memory and guarantors of the Lasallian charism among them and for them and to foster new structures of communion for the mission that the International Assembly 2006 proposed in *Associated for the Lasallian Educational Mission*, (Main Orientation 8).

## 1.1 Challenge: the centrality of the vow of association in our identity as Brothers

The experience of lived association in the last few years, as well as our fuller understanding of the original vow of Association, challenge us to become more aware of the centrality of this vow and to give witness to it in our lives as Brothers and in our educational mission. We feel challenged, therefore, to live association according to the Gospel, first of all among ourselves.

## 1.2 Horizons

**1.2.1** We, as Brothers, recover the inspiration and the original motivation of the vow of Association for the educational service of the poor. We live our identity as consecrated people as a prophetic sign of the identity of the Church, a *mystery of communion*. The communion of the Brothers is *the source and fruit of the mission* that we



accomplish (cf. *Christifideles laici* 32.4).

Aware of the meaning of our consecration, we offer ourselves to the whole Lasallian Family as examples of communion and spirituality in order to give a Gospel foundation to the whole mission of Lasallian educators.

**1.2.2** The missionary communion that characterizes the Trinitarian life is the fountain of a fraternal ministry which characterizes the life of the Brothers. By our consecration to the glory of God, we Brothers are a constant reminder in the Lasallian Family of the love of God which unites us, and of his special interest for “the children of artisans and the poor”.

## 1.3 Lines of action

**1.3.1** Strongly encourage the Brothers to deepen their reflection on the studies carried out in the last few years concerning the vow of Association for the Educational Service of the Poor and continue fostering those studies. Most especially, take care during ini-

tial and continuing formation that the vow of association for the educational service of the poor be the central axis for understanding the identity of the Brother and the perspective by which the other vows of the Brother are viewed.

**1.3.2** With a view to expressing better the specific consecration of the Brother and the centrality of the vow of Association for the educational service of the poor, the Government of the Institute should take the necessary steps for the following modification in Chapter 3 of the Rule n. 25.

**1.3.2.1** In the 2nd part of the Vow formula, restore the words “and vow” that corresponded to the original formula of the Brothers:

“For this purpose I, . . . , promise *and* vow to unite myself . . . ”

**1.3.2.2** In the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of the Vow formula, that the vow of association for the educational service of the poor takes first place, thus beginning the list of the five vows.

“Wherefore, I promise *and* vow association for the service of the poor



through education, chastity, poverty, obedience, and stability in the Institute ...”

**1.3.3** Communities, Delegations, Districts and Regions are invited to deepen the understanding of the consequences of the centrality of our vow of Association for the Educational Service of the Poor at the personal, community, institutional levels, as well as in the way that we situate ourselves in the mission and in our inter-community relationships.

## 2.1 Challenge: the specific role of the Brothers in association with other Lasallians

Since the General Chapter of 1966-67 until the present day, the ecclesial and Lasallian context in which the Brothers are situated has changed substantially, thereby challenging us to adopt a new kind of presence: to live out and develop association for the educational service of the poor with men and women who participate in the Lasallian charism, spirituality and mission.

This new ecclesial and Lasallian context challenges us, as Brothers, to live

association for the educational service of the poor in a way that is open and integrated with our Lasallian partners, especially with those who wish to associate themselves with us, and to ask ourselves about the specific role that we, as consecrated persons, should accomplish to support the work of everyone in the Lasallian mission.

## 2.2 Horizons

**2.2.1** The Lasallian charism has become a focal point for many believing educators who discover the worth of their mission through the journey and spirituality of John Baptist de La Salle and who together, in this way, offer to the Church and the world, a living witness of the Gospel.

We see with joy that educators of other religions or without religious affiliation find in this charism an important source of inspiration that motivates them in their educational work.

**2.2.2** We, as Brothers today, situate ourselves within this common foundation of the Lasallian charism together with many other believers and non-believers. We discover new aspects of our identity as consecrated Christians as



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well as complementarity in our common mission with other different kinds of vocations. We have become more aware of our responsibility to be heart, memory and guarantors of the Lasallian charism for all Lasallians. At the same time, we rejoice when other Lasallians take on this responsibility.

Our work as mediators and as those who accompany our Lasallian partners in the mission, to help them on their journey as Lasallian educators takes on great value.

## 2.3 Lines of action

**2.3.1** The 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter makes its own the Areas of Emphasis of the International Assembly 2006, *Associated for the Lasallian Educational Mission* referring to the *discernment of diverse experiences of association* (6.1) and the promotion of the *community dimension* (Area of Emphasis 6.2). It is for the International Commission on Association, or whoever assumes these functions in the new administrative structure, to assure what happens next and to coordinate the recommendations.

Wherever possible, and with discernment beforehand in the District or in the Delegation, in order to better respond to the needs of the mission, foster the opening of communities of Brothers and other Lasallians involved in the mission.



**2.3.2** In line with Area of Emphasis 7.1.1 (The Report of the International Assembly 2006), that a Guide articulating the essential elements - biblical, theological, Lasallian and pedagogical - of Lasallian formation and accompaniment be created to orient joint formation programs for all members of the Lasallian family. Such a Guide would include the possible use of Web-based instruction.

**2.3.3** Incorporate and assure, in Lasallian formation programs, direct experiences of the educational service to the poor.

**2.3.4** With the goal of developing Lasallian research in the area of association for the educational service of the poor, broaden the role of services offered by Lasallian Studies for the formation of Brothers and Lasallian partners, organizing most especially between now and the next General Chapter one or two international sessions of Lasallian Studies for Brothers and Lasallian partners.

### 3.1 Challenge: new structures of association for the Lasallian mission

The current structures of association for the Lasallian mission should better reflect the variety and complementarity of identities of those participating today in the Lasallian charism and mission from diverse multi-religious and multi-cultural perspectives. The place of the Brother in these structures needs to correspond to what is being expected of him within the model of the Church-People of God and Church-Communion. Accordingly, it is urgent for us to renovate, adapt and create new structures in order to assure the best possible service for the mission and the proper development of association in the whole Lasallian family so that in this we Brothers might find our proper place.

### 3.2 Horizon

We are moving at different speeds towards a new model of the Lasallian family at the local, regional and global levels. At these different levels, co-responsibility, collegiality and shared decision-making for the mission and the

living out of our proper, interdependent identities are realities that are experienced with joy. We seek structures of animation and government where the mission is carried forth by all those associated for the mission, where the Lasallian spirituality is shared and enriched, and where the Brothers fulfill their proper role.

### 3.3 Line of action

The government of the Institute will take the initiative to construct, in the next two years, a possible model of the Lasallian family in line with the new forms of life present in the Church. For this, taking into account the Report of the International Assembly (Area of Emphasis 8.2.1) and establishing contact with those responsible for the other Lasallian institutes of consecrated life and lay Lasallian groups and movements in diverse contexts and in communion with them, develop structures that would be most adaptable in order to incarnate today, with a creative fidelity, the Lasallian charism within the Church-People of God and Church-Communion (Cf. *The Report of the Brother Superior General*, J 1 & 2, pgs. 21 – 22).

# 4. Educational Service of the Poor

## Introduction

*“John Baptist de La Salle was deeply moved by the way in which the children of the artisans and the poor were abandoned and left to themselves. As a practical response to his prayerful consideration of this fact in relation to God’s plan of salvation, he came to discern, in faith, what God wanted the mission of the Institute to be” ( Rule 11). God has been good to us, making this increasingly diverse work his own for the service of the children of the artisans and the poor.*



The Lasallian work has considerably increased throughout the world. Today we are 80,000 educators and more than 5,000 Brothers, and together we animate the Lasallian mission which reaches more than one million children, young people, and adults.

Historically the Lasallian mission was primarily addressed to the economically poor. Over time economic development has led us to address ourselves more to the middle classes. This reality invites us to intensify our efforts to promote education for justice and to strengthen our actions for the direct service of the poor.

We give thanks to God for those Brothers and Lasallians who, wherever they are working, put their whole heart into the option for the poor, attempting, through their educational and evangelizing action, to build a world with greater solidarity and justice.

This reality fills some Brothers with joy and raises questions in others about their specific role as Brothers within the Mission. The 42<sup>nd</sup> General Chapter has clarified that we are *“the heart, the memory, and the guarantors of the Lasallian charism”* (Circular 435, p.

43). We live as consecrated persons “together and by association for the educational service of the poor”, and we publicly profess it.

Our reflection follows the line of thinking of the 42nd and 43rd General Chapters as well as that of the 2004 Inter Capitular meeting and the 2006 International Assembly *Associated for the Lasallian Educational Mission*. Educational service of the poor continues to be relevant for our time and essential for the Brothers and Lasallians. The effort required of each one of us is one of conversion of the heart and of the mind (*Circular 412*, p. 49).

When writing this document for the Brothers, we are mindful of all those men and women with whom we are associated to enliven the one Lasallian Mission, whatever their social contexts and their forms of commitment.

We cannot help but remember the faces of so many children, young people and adults that we carry in our hearts. They are the justification of our life and our vocation. They are the image of God and a call to brotherhood and solidarity.

*“When we say: ‘Lord,*

*show us your face,’ the Lord answers us: ‘Look at the face of your poor brother, look at the reality that surrounds you, look at the images of your time’”* (*Being Brothers Today*, 2.2b).

## 1.1 Challenge: our conversion for the poor

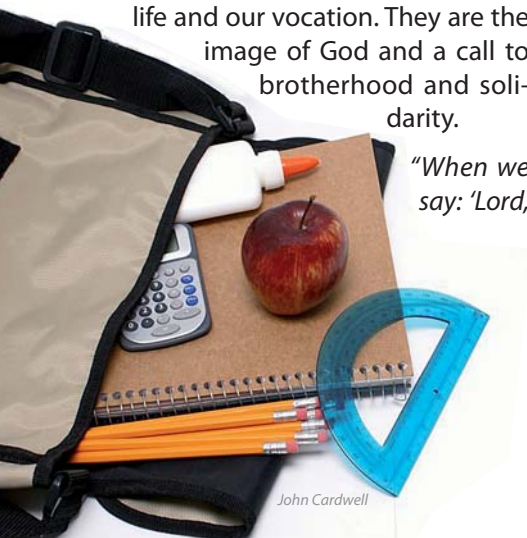
We are challenged as Brothers and communities by the reality that our lifestyle does not satisfy us since we run the risk of consumerism and accumulating goods. Our lifestyle could take us, little by little, away from the world of the poor.

In addition, an understanding of the realities of today’s world requires a formation that deals with the social, political, economic, religious areas, among others. Our limited formation in these areas holds us back when we want to make a decision to go to the poor, either as individuals or as a community.

Finally, in spite of all of the above we are challenged to be converted to the poor. Today this is a question of awareness and of personal, community and institutional decision.

## 1.2 Horizon

We dream of Brothers and communities who are living an experience of Exodus and who are united in heart and mind with Jesus and his Gospel, going out to meet the poor, wherever the Brothers are needed.



We dream of Brothers and communities that open their doors to welcome those who hunger for bread, friendship, spirituality, culture, consolation, and the experience of God. We dream of Brothers and communities, inserted in their environments, who live simply and are committed to combat human suffering.

## 1.3 Lines of action

**1.3.1** Include in the initial and continuing formation programs of the Brothers preparation for a greater understanding of and a stronger commitment to the educational service of the poor, including formation to better understand political and religious realities and unjust social structures. Programs of continuing formation should be included and evaluated in the Community Annual Plans.

**1.3.2** Promote the participation of the Brothers of all ages in voluntary activities that favor the education of the poor. For example, projects related to the poor; help for the marginalized, those who have been excluded by society, and the physically and mentally challenged.

**1.3.3** Promote a change of setting for some of our communities so that they live among people of modest means, as people of modest means (cf. *Rule* 32 and 60).



## 2.1 Challenge: renovation of our educational works

We Brothers and Lasallians are challenged to be truly convinced that the educational service of the poor is a constitutive part of our Lasallian identity, vocation and mission. The commitment to the transformation of our educational works as instruments of education for the poor, the defense of the rights of children and education for social justice still greatly concerns us (cf. Area of emphasis 5.1 of the IA 2006).

## 2.2 Horizons

We dream that the renewal of our existing educational works be done, not only with the criteria of success and social prestige, but with the idea of fidelity to our vocation and our identity as Ambassadors of Jesus Christ announcing the Gospel to the poor.



We dream, together with our Lasallian partners, of continuing to work for the education of the poor, the defense of the rights of children, and education for justice.

We dream of the renewal of our existing educational works so that they become islands of creativity and agents of social transformation.

## 2.3 Lines of action

**2.3.1** We assume and adopt as ours the call of the IA 2006 to renew our existing works (5.1.a) and create new ones (5.1.b) for the educational service of the poor.

**2.3.2** We encourage Lasallian universities to promote policies and actions

that are in the line with an effective option for the poor and for education for justice.

## 3.1 Challenge: Solidarity for equity

We recognize that in the Lasallian network our educational responses to the needs and necessary economic resources are unequal. We are challenged to find effective strategies of solidarity for equity and educational equality.

## 3.2 Horizons

**3.2.1** In a globalized world that accentuates injustice, we dream of being a prophetic sign to bring fraternal and equitable relationships among the different parts of the Lasallian network.

**3.2.2** We dream of a Lasallian network that can offer a service of integral education of the person to all.

## 3.3 Lines of action

**3.3.1** Promote the exchange of Brothers and Lasallian partners to take advantage of the educational experiences and formation programs of the different Regions and Districts.

**3.3.2** Develop the twinning of Regions, Districts and works of the Lasallian network. SECOLI could undertake the promotion and coordination for such twinings.



## 4.1 Challenge: the rights of children to receive an education

A great challenge for the Institute is the concern for the rights of children to receive an education, offering accessible and economically supported educational responses to all and supporting them economically. For this we need to find our own economic resources and to seek public and private assistance.

## 4.2 Horizons

**4.2.1** We dream of an Institute that upholds the dignity of the vocation of the educator and of the teaching profession, and that also speaks up in the public arena.

**4.2.2** We dream of an Institute that is capable of responding to the educational needs of children and youth of meager resources; of an Institute that establishes relationships and collaboration with other agencies (political, social, religious....) that work to resolve problems dealing with the education of the poor; of an Institute that recognizes as an integral part of its mission the fact that all should be aware that education is

the right of every child. It calls for the economic contribution of the State, which should guarantee to parents the free choice of an educational model.

**4.2.3** We dream of a network of educational works for the educational service of the poor, that shares teaching methods, seeks resources and allies itself with other educational movements, NGO's and institutions similar to us, in order to produce a greater impact on those societies in which we live and on those structures which generate poverty.

## 4.3 Lines of action

We assume and adopt as ours Orientation # 8.3.1 of the IA 2006.

*"The Assembly proposes that local, intermediate and international levels enhance and create structures to facilitate the global sharing of human and financial resources and knowledge, including but not limited to education, training, networking, fundraising, grant making and volunteer programs. This can happen between individuals, ministries, and educational institutions through informal net-*



works and relationships, as well as structures”.

## 5.1 Challenge: a commitment in solidarity

Looking at the world, we recognize that, without abandoning our attention to the economically poor, there are new realities and new kinds of poverty that challenge us. All these situations already pointed out by the IA 2006 in its Orientation N° 1 demand responses from us.

## 5.2 Horizons

We dream of Brothers and Lasallian partners who continue to take part in building a more just and sharing world. They support and participate in programs, movements, structures, and educational initiatives that respond effectively to all forms of poverty, new and old.

## 5.3 Lines of action

**5.3.1** We assume and adopt as ours, Orientation No. 1 of the International Assembly 2006.

Particularly, the Brothers:

– possibly in connection with Lasallian universities, take part in formation pro-

grams for the accompaniment of “children, youth and families in at-risk situations, especially those young people who are found in extreme situations” (Cf. IA 2006 #1.1.2).

– encourage teachers and young people to inform themselves about the issues of bioethics, the rights of the child, respect for life, and the integrity of creation...

**5.3.2** Promote in Districts and communities the welcoming, the commissioning and the accompanying of Lasallian volunteers.

**5.3.3** Establish, promote, adapt, or create pedagogical, pastoral and catechetical projects that are realistic responses to the situations of poverty today.

**5.3.4** Continue to sensitize and to commit themselves with the youth and adults who are part of Lasallian schools and universities in the promotion of justice (cf. *Rule 14*).

## 6.1 Challenge: the migratory movements

We recognize that, in looking at the world, an important challenge for our Institute and the Lasallian network today



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is to provide an answer to the problems which the migratory movements into and within countries are producing and their consequences for children, young people and families. For example, street children and orphans.

## 6.2 Horizons

We dream that, in order to show universal fraternity, the Institute and the Lasallian network provide adequate educational responses to problems related to migratory movements and their consequences.

We dream that the Institute and the Lasallian network give a public response of consciousness-raising and denunciation of this situation.

## 6.3 Lines of action

**6.3.1** Create and/or reinforce, in each concerned Region or District, at least 2 inter-District Lasallian communities (Brothers and Lasallian partners), to



respond to the questions raised by migratory movements, both in the countries of origin and in the countries of arrival. This process should be lived in a spirituality based on the Exodus (Cf. Community Life 2.3.1).

**6.3.2** That the communities and Lasallian works, especially those closest to the situations of the migratory movements, establish programs and educational responses in favor of the concerned groups.

# 5. Pastoral ministry of Brothers and Lasallian Vocations

## Introduction

Our commitment as Brothers to the life and vitality of the Institute and its mission moves us to be directly involved in the pastoral ministry of vocations. The “human and spiritual distress” of children of the poor in the world today, calls us to be acutely aware of the need for Brothers, whatever our age or condition may be, to respond to their educational needs. It is also necessary to find ways to awaken vocations and to accompany youth in their vocational discernment for service in the Church, whatever may be the orientation of God’s call within diverse cultural settings and conditions. We Brothers are called to be prophets and agents of hope in our educational and pastoral activities. We share our ministry of vocations with other Lasallians also engaged in our mission and responsible with us for the promotion and discernment of vocations.

There are many reasons why pastoral ministry of vocations is challeng-

ing. Challenges come from both outside ourselves, in families, society and the Church, and from the way we understand and live our lives as Brothers individually and in community. We must listen to God’s call to us to transform and adapt our lives to changing circumstances in our Institute, our Church and our world. The challenges we face in our vocation renew hope for the future and for the mission of the Institute. We express our confidence in God who continues to call men and women to live and serve as committed Lasallians. We believe that our vocation as Brothers of the Christian Schools is as relevant and vital today as it has been in any period in the history of our Institute.

### 1.1 Challenge: to make known who we are

The reality of the Church and of the world today challenges us to know and to make known the prophetic nature of our vocation as Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Lasallian charism.



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## 1.2 Horizons

**1.2.1** We envision an Institute of Brothers prepared for the modern world, with an awareness of our identity as consecrated religious faithful to our commitments.

**1.2.2** We envision Brothers and Lasallians living their baptismal call in the Church and in society, committed to the educational service of the poor.



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## 1.3 Lines of Action

**1.3.1** That we open our communities to young people who wish to deepen their spiritual life, discern their vocation and better understand our mission by offering them the opportunity to pursue this discernment and know better who we are as Brothers.

**1.3.2** That through participation in educational and pastoral activities, in association with our Lasallian partners, the Brothers make visible their distinctive vocation for service in the Church.

**1.3.3** That the Centre of the Institute make the pastoral ministry of youth and vocations a priority and set up appropriate gatherings and programs that develop and strengthen this ministry in the Young Lasallians movement.

**1.3.4** That those responsible for revising the Guide for Formation account for current experience in vocation

discernment and accompaniment through various stages of formation.

## 2.1 Challenge: awaken and accompany the Christian vocation

The reality of our society challenges us to work for the development of Christian values by proposing the Gospel as a way of following Jesus Christ. *“By evangelizing young people and educating them in the faith, the Brothers help them to find their vocation in the Church” (Rule 82).*

## 2.2 Horizons

**2.2.1** We envision groups of children, youth, young Lasallians, Volunteers and others who live values of faith, fraternity, and service with structures of accompaniment that are of sufficient duration.

**2.2.2** We envision families that help to



create an ambiance conducive to awakening Christian values that make invitations for vocations possible.

**2.2.3** We envision Brothers and Lasallians committed to accompanying youth in the pastoral ministry of vocations firmly rooted in the Lasallian charism.

## 2.3 Lines of Action

**2.3.1** Establish in the Regions and Districts “programs which help to understand and deepen our faith in the context of beliefs, values, texts and icons common to different religions, cultures and traditions” (AI 2006 4.1a).

**2.3.2** The Center of the Institute proposes ways which favour the accompaniment of the young who are discerning their vocation and ways in which parents can be involved in this discernment.

**2.3.3** The Center of the Institute encourages the making of concrete proposals to children and young

people to help them to develop their sense of solidarity and find means based on their experiences which can lead them to a deepening of their vocational discernment.

## 3.1 Challenge: high expectations for evangelical communities

We Brothers entertain high expectations for a community that radiates joy, hope and confidence in God’s providence, despite the realities of ageing and discouragement because of the lack of vocations in some sectors of the Institute.

## 3.2 Horizons

**3.2.1** We Brothers choose to live in fraternal communion as a sign of the presence of God.

**3.2.2** We Brothers enrich each other’s vocation by being models of fidelity and spiritual mentors to one another through our passion for and commitment to the consecrated life and the mission.

## 3.3 Lines of Action

**3.3.1** Each District, Sub-District and Delegation will establish a team of Brothers and Lasallian partners which will concern itself with awakening and accompanying vocations among the young.

**3.3.2** Each Region and District will es-

establish ways to assist Brothers and communities to enhance the quality of their lives and witness by means of accompaniment. Special attention will be given to Brothers in personal difficulty and who are discouraged.

## 4.1 Challenge: presence and witness in community among the young

We are challenged to improve the quality of our presence and witness in community among the young, especially the poor. This will lead us to live with authenticity and to revitalize our mission.

### 4.2 Horizons

**4.2.1** We envision Brothers who assume with eagerness the responsibility of promoting the vocation of the Brother and of other vocations in the Church and do not leave the responsibility exclusively to those di-

rectly charged with this ministry.

**4.2.2** We envision Brothers who, in association with Lasallian partners, bear witness to their fraternity by creating opportunities for the educational service of the poor.

### 4.3 Lines of Action

Communities, Brothers and Lasallians commit themselves to:

**4.3.1** pray for vocations so that all become involved in this ministry (Cf. *Rule 84*).

**4.3.2** invite and welcome young people into their communities to “come and see!” (Jn 1.39).

**4.3.3** use the appropriate means and language of the young today in vocation promotion such as DVD’s and web-sites.

**4.3.4** establish appropriate plans with other Lasallians to assist in the vocation discernment of children and the young.

**4.3.5** ensure accompaniment through all the stages of vocational discernment of the Brother.

**4.3.6** strengthen the bonds of esteem and affection that help the Brother mature as a person and as a religious.

**4.3.7** participate in and collaborate with the local Church in the pastoral ministry of vocations.



# 6. Accompaniment of Young Brothers in Community

## Introduction

In the course of our lives we Brothers all need to be accompanied and are called to accompany others. What is said here applies to all the Brothers although we are referring specifically to young Brothers. We are defining as young Brothers those between First Profession and the first years after Final Profession.

We understand accompaniment to be a means of personalizing the processes of formation. This accompaniment is complex and is carried out at different levels: personal, community, District. It includes all aspects from the interior life to the professional life.

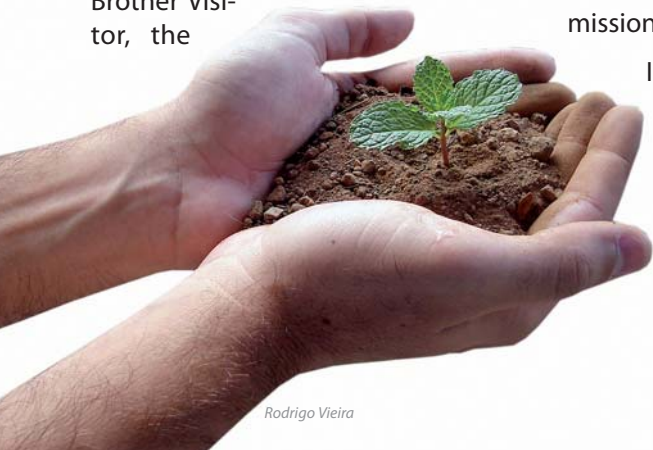
The Brothers' Rule reminds us that it is the whole community which must pay special attention to the needs of the young Brothers (cf. *Rule 54*), although it also specifies the part played by the Brother Visitor, the

Director of the Community and the Commission for Formation. (cf. *Rule 96a*).

## 1. Challenge: a developed awareness of the importance of accompaniment

The young Brothers have always been a hopeful sign as they constitute the new life blood, creative vitality and dynamism for our association in the light of the educational and evangelizing mission which has been entrusted to us. We can verify that, for the most part, these Brothers are open to accompaniment and to being challenged. They are Brothers who wish to take on life-giving attitudes amidst children and young people, especially the poor. We have full confidence in them and accept the invitations they address to us to renovate our community life and mission.

In community processes and in serving the mission, young Brothers, like all the others, experience the tensions experienced by anyone wishing to incarnate the ideals of the Institute's charism; at the same





time, they encounter difficulties that arise from vocational motivations which at times, are contradictory, or inadequately discerned at prior stages. At times these conflicts generate unhealthy behavior or attachments.

Besides this, the difficulties of being able to dream together and dialogue, individualism or lack of attention to others, causes young Brothers to experience loneliness, isolation, and disenchantment in their consecrated life, especially in this period in which affective integration is so important.

We are being challenged to become companions one to another and to take the responsibility for integrating within our own persons the constitutive elements that form the identity of a Brother (cf. *Rule 10*) by participating in the creative programs of our District or Delegation. From this arises the importance of District options being clear so that the young Brother can relate to them.

## 2. Horizon

We dream of young Brothers strengthening their desire to be accompanied and to take on their personal responsibility in the process of consolidating their Lasallian identity.

We wish to have a program of accompaniment which is both demanding and fraternal that guarantees the



growth and joyous gift of each Brother, that gives priority to the spiritual life, to the quality of community relationships and to the environment of affectivity that supports our vocation.

We dream of communities where we can grow in our mutual responsibility of looking after one another in our personal growth, linked to our role in building the Kingdom of God, and where we will feel inspired and determined to keep alive the joy of being Brothers in association for the educational service to the poor.

We dream of a District enriched by the quality of the bonds of friendship that results from a true culture of companionship. This favors our openness to accept the processes of accompaniment as something quite natural.

## 3. Lines of action

**3.1** That we train Brothers in our Regions, Districts and Delegations on how to accompany human and reli-

gious development so that they could assist the Brothers Visitor in the accompaniment of young Brothers.

**3.2** That we emphasize from the beginning of initial formation the contact with the reality of the District or Delegation, making certain that the young Brothers participate in the formulation and development of creative projects for the mission and communities. This is particularly important in those areas where the young Brothers are formed outside of their own countries.

**3.3** That we see to the quality of community life where the young Brothers are assigned in order to guarantee a proper diversity in the spread of ages and, at the same time, to enhance peer relationships and conversations.

**3.4** That we accompany, through the structures responsible for formation at all levels, the communities where there are young Brothers, in such a way as to promote in them formative experiences of identity and processes of discernment in order to effect a vital synthesis between consecration, community life and association for the service of the poor through education.

**3.5** That we encourage meetings of young Brothers in each Region, District or Delegation, and at the Institute level in order to give them the opportunity to share experiences and to help them strengthen their identity. These meetings should be systematic and at regular intervals and should be linked to projects of educational service.

**3.6** That we assist the young Brothers to be aware of their specific and personal responsibility for committing themselves in the community “through the joyous gift of themselves to the service of others” (*Rule* 49) as the path to the fullness of human and Christian life.

**3.7** That we pay attention to the environment in which the young Brothers live and work, being aware that institutional conditions, structures, even physical ones can be a determining factor for accompaniment and for helping to develop healthy relations in community and in the mission.

**3.8** That the Center of the Institute will see to it that more Brothers with perpetual vows accept the service of accompaniment in younger sectors.

# 7. Young Brothers in the Institute

## Introduction

With 774 Brothers under 40 years of age in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (2006), the opportunity offered to 13 young Brother Capitulants to participate in the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter is significant, not only for the young Brother Capitulants but for all the Brothers.

Thankful for this opportunity to participate in the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, as well as to unite ourselves with other young Brothers from all over the Institute, we, the young Brother Capitulants, have had a number of meetings to deal with various themes and to experience community among ourselves during the Chapter. As a result of these meetings, the most important themes that arose for us were Community Life, Consecrated and Spiritual Life, Pastoral Ministry of Vocations, Educational Service of the Poor, Association for the Educational Service of the Poor, the Identity of the Brother and Formation. Aware that we young Brothers are an active part of the

Chapter and its Thematic Groups, our intention has been to address these themes by means of our representation and participation in the Thematic Groups.

We young Brothers see the future of the Institute as something that involves us. We are passionate and hopeful about “dreaming” of something new. “What is to come” contains a collection of mysteries and feelings which invites us to live the future as an adventure and the taking on of risks. It is a future which spurs us on and calls upon us, draws us and motivates us. And not just because our lives are at stake but because we feel that also at stake are the lives of many children, young people and families that often live in oppressive situations. Our future and their future are interlinked in a time that is God’s.

The world of communications in which we live makes us see the Institute as something close to us. For this reason, we share the idea of Br. Alvaro of being “Brothers without borders”; Brothers





service of the poor, the needy and the marginalized of our societies.

## 1. Challenge: sharing life and mission

We see as positive that the Institute is more and more in favor of an opening up between the different Regions and Districts. We young Brothers appreciate this opening up because it is most important for us to share different experiences. This is positive for us and not just at a personal level. It will also be an enriching contribution in relation to various other aspects of life such as: community life, prayer life, association and the educational service of the poor. We want to establish bonds of unity among us within our diversity.

## 2. Horizon

Our dream is unity between ourselves with a view to walking together, as Brothers, towards the future. We understand that these mutual relations will be beneficial in regard to our ongoing formation.

## 3. Lines of action

**3.1** In each Region and every two years there should be a meeting set up among the young Brothers, which would include mission activities with respect to needy sectors. We would also like to see, a year before the next General Chapter, an in-

who are enthusiastic about being close to the poorest along with other Lasalians; Brothers who live in communities of meaningful fraternal relations; Brothers who support and give meaning to their lives through profound and intense prayer.

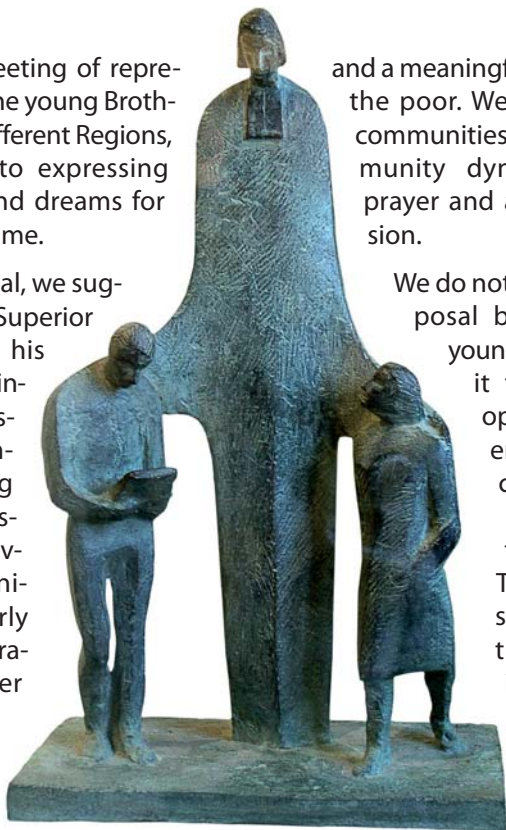
We wish to live all this "Together and by Association". We present our need for "joining together". We feel associated with each other from the visibility of "being together", from sharing our experiences, feelings, hopes and fears. From this sharing we wish to journey together in our Exodus towards the

ternational meeting of representatives of the young Brothers from the different Regions, with a view to expressing their hopes and dreams for the years to come.

**3.2** As a proposal, we suggest that the Superior General and his Council create international missionary communities along the lines of “islands of creativity”; communities that clearly have a life of fraternity, prayer

and a meaningful mission, close to the poor. We wish them to be communities for learning community dynamics, forms of prayer and a meaningful mission.

We do not wish that this proposal be limited to just young Brothers. We wish it to be a proposal open to all the Brothers of the Institute. It could be a place where one spends two or three years. These communities should be open to the pastoral ministry of vocations.



# 8. Government and Animation

## Introduction

One of the missions of the General Chapter is to take into account the needs of the Institute today with regard to its government and leadership, and for that, modify certain existing structures or change them radically.

Structures have no meaning unless they are at the service of the Brothers and the mission of the Institute. They will not be able to fulfill this role completely unless the persons having responsibility are animated by a spirit of fraternity, service and liberty.

Taking into account the documentation provided, particularly the Report of Brother Superior and Council, the report of the International Assembly 2006, notes of the Brothers and our own experience, we have identified forth areas requiring reflection and decisions:

- Structures of government of the General Council, Regions and Districts
- The economic management of the Institute

- The Lasallian educational mission that is taking new shapes, shared with diverse partners, and requiring new structures and relationships.
- The consideration of the proposed revision of the Rule.

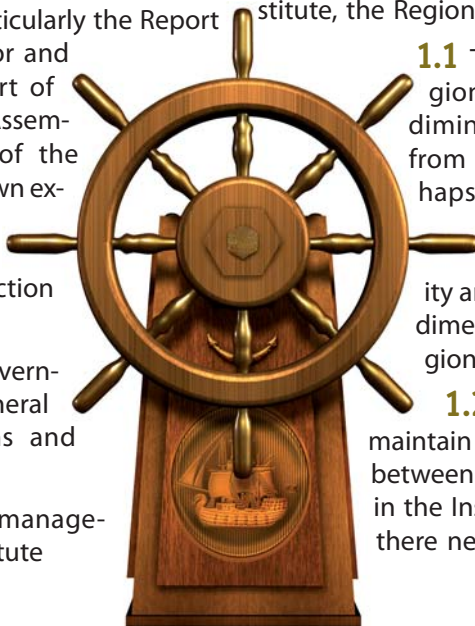
## I. Structures of Government

### 1. Challenge: An evolution calling for another model of government

Today we are confronted by both internal and external phenomena that have repercussions on the Centre of the Institute, the Regions and the Districts:

**1.1** The number of Regions has perceptibly diminished, declining from 11 to 6, and, perhaps, very soon, to 5. This results in growing complexity and more important dimensions for each Region.

**1.2** It is essential to maintain a dynamic balance between unity and diversity in the Institute. That is why there needs to be put into



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place a better communication between the Centre and the Regions as well as between the persons entrusted with looking after Regions. This appears to be indispensable in a rapidly changing world that requires response and flexibility.

### 1.3 The Chapter notes that in certain Districts there is:

- a rapid rate in the decline of the number of Brothers
- a lack of material and human resources
- a reduced number of Brothers, and hence sometimes difficulty in finding Brothers to take responsibility for government, administration, and animation services.

## 2. Horizon

It is our wish that the structures of government promote unity in the midst of the rich diversity that exists in the Lasallian world.

## 3. Lines of Action

### 3.1 Model of Government

#### 3.1.1 A new model for the General Council

The 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter has made significant changes in the shape and composition of the General Council.

The Council of the Superior General:

- A Vicar General
- Three General Councillors resident in Rome. They remain in Rome and constitute, along with the Vicar General a permanent community for the Superior General.
- Five General Councillors for the Regions. They are full-fledged General Councillors but usually reside in the Region with which they have been entrusted.

### 3.2 The General Councillor for a Region

It is clear that the General Councillor for a Region is a General Councillor elected by the Chapter. Because of this, he has as his mission “to assist the Superior General in the government and animation of the Institute” (*Rule* 120).

He carries out this office mainly by assuming what is foreseen for the Regional Coordinator in *Rule* 127 e: “He fosters communication among the Brothers Visitor of the Region and supports them in their mission. He ensures that the Region remains in contact with the Brother Superior General. He follows up the application of decisions and programs adopted for the Region as a whole. He also encourages cooperation and interdependence within the Region and between it and other Regions of the Institute”.

#### 3.2.1 Needs and Role of the General Councillor for a Region in Relation-

ship with the Centre of the Institute.

### **3.2.1.1 Needs**

- Communication within the Council and with the Regions
- Efficiency in work
- A clear presentation of the main directions of the Institute
- The ability to handle conflict
- The concern for human means available for the mission, especially the Brothers
- Maintaining the balance between the general good of the Institute and the well-being of the particular Region or District.

### **3.2.1.2 Role**

- To ensure the unity of the Institute
- To be a bridge between the Regions and the Centre of the Institute especially by assuring good communication
- To take on some of the responsibilities of a resident General Councillor
- To work at least twice a year in Rome with the complete Council

## **3.2.2 Needs and Role in Relationship with the Region**

### **3.2.2.1 Needs**

It would seem to be important for each Region to express itself on its



needs with regard to the function of the General Councillor for the Region. In fact, the Regions are different and each situation may raise different expectations with regard to the General Councillor for the Region, primarily with regard not to his person but to his function. A first opportunity of this expression of needs is provided at the time of the presentation by each Region during the Chapter of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 names for a possible General Councillor for the Region.

As quickly as possible there should be reflection and decisions appropriate for each Region on:



- the needs to which the General Councillor for the Region will have to respond
- the adaptation of the statutes for the Region because of the new situation
- the community of residence and other support requirements for his work
- All of this will be presented to the Superior General and his Council for their approval.

### **3.2.2.2 Role**

The following functions are common to all the General Councillors for a Region, no matter what the Region he is charged with:

- Assure respect for the principle of subsidiarity and concern for interdependence with regard to other Regions
- Respond to the particular needs of the Region
- Assist in the governance of a District if necessary
- Help the Districts in their choice of those who will assume leadership roles
- Assist the Districts, in collaboration with the Visitors, in implementing the orientations and lines of action of the General Chapter
- Accompany the Brothers Visitor of

the Region for which he is responsible and exercise authority by delegation of the Brother Superior in a case of necessity

If there is a Delegation, the General Councillor for the Region is the Delegate.

### **3.2.2.3 Profile**

- An ability to establish collaboration and synergy in the Region
- To be respectful of diversity and know how to promote unity
- Administrative and organizing talents
- Ability to communicate and work with a team
- Knowledge of the Region
- Knowledge of at least one other language
- Capacity to use mediation before authority.
- Ability to stand back so as to be informed, to discern, to decide
- Good health
- Some experience of government

## **3.3 Process for nomination of the new General Council**

This process envisages allowing discernment for setting up the future General Council.

After the election of the Superior General:

**3.3.1** The Chapter proceeds to have two straw votes to identify the names with regard to the General Council including the Vicar General:

– 1<sup>st</sup> straw vote: each Capitulant writes up to 10 names (maximum) including persons who are not necessarily Capitulants. The result of this straw vote is not immediately published.

– 2<sup>nd</sup> straw vote: each Region comes together to indicate a minimum of three and a maximum of 5 names of persons who could carry out the role of General Councillor for the Region. These Brothers may be from the Region or from outside of it. This meeting could also enable the Region to specify its needs with regard to the figure of the General Councillor for

the Region.

– The results of these straw votes are published simultaneously. The number of votes is not indicated but the names are published in the order of the number of votes received.

**3.3.2** After the publication of the straw votes, the Brothers whose names appear may express their reaction. Those who say nothing or those who declare themselves available prepare for the Capitulants a short summary of their previous experience (Curriculum Vitae) according to a formula yet to be determined. For the first straw vote if the names of Brothers not at the Chapter are among the top ten they will be contacted for their response and, depending on their response, they will furnish a C.V. For the straw vote done by Regions, if this happens, the Regions will see to it themselves if



the Brothers are available.

### 3.3.3 Article 112b of the Rule applies:

“To prepare for the election of the Brother Vicar and other members of the General Council, the newly elected Superior General gathers all the useful information and makes it known to the capitulants. If he judges it opportune, he may suggest that a straw vote be taken within the Chapter and then present to the electors the names of the Brothers whom he judges suitable for the role”.

### 3.3.4 The election of the Brother Vicar then takes place.

### 3.3.5 The election of the General Councillors for the Regions takes place, Region by Region. All Capitulants with right of vote take part in this election.

### 3.3.6 The election of the General Councillors who reside in Rome follows and will be done one after the other in order to take into account eventual complementarities.

## 3.4 Secretariats

Secretariats are organized to help Brother Superior General and his Council. It is for the Brother Superior and his Council to determine their

number and mission and to name those responsible for them.

As regards the Secretariats, the Chapter deems it preferable to maintain the distinction between the responsibility of government and that of reflection and organization. This allows the Secretaries more freedom to develop their reflection and their actions in such a way that they are not seen to be acting as government, and thus have a court of appeal when there are differences of opinion within a Secretariat or between Secretariats.



## 3.5 Intercapitular meeting

Brother Superior and his Council will organize an intercapitular meeting. The participants will be those in charge of administrative units in the Institute (District,

Region, Centre of the Institute) so they are able to exchange experiences and significant achievements linked with the work of the directions of the General Chapter and foresee the challenges to be confronted in the years to come.

## 3.6 Nomination of Brother Visitor

The Chapter requests that the liberty of

those concerned be respected (those nominated and the Superior). For this reason it asks that District Chapters take this point into account in the process of nomination that they determine (cf. *Rule 134a*). The prescribed method is that the final straw-vote for naming a Brother Visitor remain secret and be sent to Rome without being counted.

In the event that a District encounters difficulty in presenting three Brothers capable of being Visitor, the General Councillor for the Region will make sure that recommendations 32 and 33 from the 43rd General Chapter be observed.

## II. Economy and Finance

### 1. Challenge: Searching for self-sufficiency at all levels

The following matters need to be taken into consideration and require searching for solutions:

- 1.1** The lack of balance with regard to the financial resources between different Districts and Regions to advance the Lasallian mission and formation for mission.
- 1.2** Financing new structures for the Lasallian educational mission. By structures are understood permanent or one time instances in the service of a synergy between all

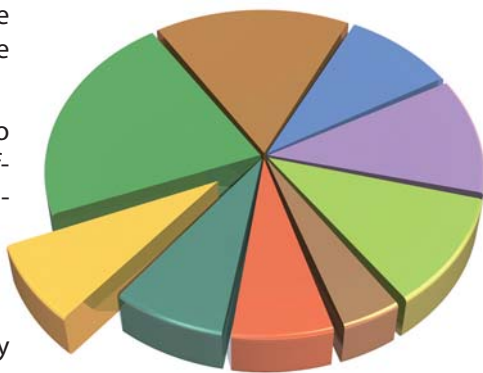
those engaged in the Lasallian educational mission.

- 1.3** The need to identify the necessary financial resources and have them circulate between Districts, taking into account conditions linked to the laws of the country
- 1.4** The absence of trained administrators, of administrative procedures and modern accounting systems in certain sectors of the Institute.

## 2. Horizon

The Chapter takes as objectives for the coming years research for:

- 2.1** Economic self-sufficiency at the Institute, Regional and District levels
- 2.2** Economic management in solidarity that avoids maintaining the dependence of certain sectors with regard to others



- 2.3** Research for and obtaining sources of finance external to the In-

stitute for works and structures at the service of the Mission.

### 3. Lines of Action

- 3.1** That the Bursar of the Institute and the Economic Council continue the policy of budget austerity and that the interest of the stable patrimony of the Institute continue to be reinvested to reach economic self-sufficiency.
- 3.2** That aid to Districts and sectors lacking sufficient resources be applied as a priority towards projects that lead to economic self-sufficiency.
- 3.3** To ensure that District clearly separate goods and resources belonging to the mission and those which belong to the patrimony of the District, such as a Brothers' community.
- 3.4** That the financing of every initiative and permanent or temporary structures in relation to the Lasallian educational mission be the object of reflection and prior decisions. This applies to every level of the Institute.
- 3.5** That in all the Districts and sectors where it is necessary, professional formation in administration, management and professional accountability be assured.
- 3.6** That at every level, external resources for the financing of the Institute's mission be sought.

## III. The Lasallian Educational Mission

### 1. Challenge: To go further in sharing the Mission

In 2006 there took place the International Assembly, of which the preparation and realization have been important moments in the development of sharing the mission.

The Chapter judges it necessary to take account the following obstacles:

- 1.1** The lack of any formal structure for lay people, especially at international level. From this fact, the question arises of the modes of representation and responsibilities.
- 1.2** For various reasons, some sectors of the Institute have neither programs for partners nor a Mission Council. Those already set up have limited experience.
- 1.3** Models of structures used in religious life are being used as models for the use of partners. Alternative models require consideration.
- 1.4** The source of funds to conduct local, regional, and international assemblies is not clear, nor is the authority of these assemblies clearly expressed or approved.

### 2. Horizon

It is important to have a form of asso-

ciation that is adequate and respectful of all Lasallians involved, Brothers and partners, so that they can live an intense and close union for the educational service of the poor, founded on the charisma of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

### 3. Lines of Action

**3.1** The 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter receives with enthusiasm the work done by the International Assembly 2006 presented in the document *“Associated for the Lasallian Educational Mission”* and asks that all levels of the Institute (international, regional, local) take into account the conclusions of that Assembly in planning for the next seven years.

**3.2** The 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter adopts the following lines of action:

**3.2.1** At the local level (sector/District) the movement towards the development of structures/councils with deliberative voice be supported and encouraged (IA-2006 8.1.1).

**3.2.2** That the Regions maintain and create (according to local possibilities) the structures/councils with deliberative voice between the local and international level (IA-2006 8.1.2).

**3.2.3** The Centre of the Institute will study the possibility of establishing a new International Council of Lasallian Association for Mission in con-



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formity with the proposition made by the International Assembly 2006 (IA-2006 8.2.1).

**3.2.4** That there be taken into account the request for a second International Assembly before the next General Chapter (IA-2006 8.2.2)

**3.2.5** That there be set up at the Centre of the Institute, in relation with the International Council of Lasallian Association for Mission, a working group who will do what follows to prepare the second International Assembly and present a Report to Brother Superior and Council with regard to:

**3.2.5.1** comparison and evaluation of the existing structures of Association for Mission at every level in order to set out recommendations for future development (IA-2006 8.2.1)

**3.2.5.2** a juridical and canonical research concerning questions relative

to the emergence of Lasallian structures with a view to making recommendations to guide this emergence (IA-2006 8.2.1).

## IV. Proposal with regard to the Rule

That under the authority of the Brother Superior General and his Council, a Commission should lead, in dialogue with the Institute, a revision of the Rule. If the Superior General and his Council see it as opportune, they should convene an Extraordinary General Chapter or a special session of the ordinary General Chapter in 2014 in order to submit for consideration the proposed revision of the Rule.

## Conclusion

Government, finance and the Lasallian educational mission may appear to be three distinct domains. They are indeed so, but distinction does not mean separation. That which unites the three is the concern to put all our human and material resources at the service of



those for whom the Lasallian adventure began in the 17th century and continues four centuries later: the young "far from salvation", whether envisaged from a temporal or eternal viewpoint.

What unites them as well is that they call for our commitment, imagination, tenacity and patience so that unity in diversity be not only a dream but a permanent path.



## 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter Message to the Brothers

Dear Brothers,

The 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter is drawing to a close and we Capitulants are eager to share with you the results of the intense weeks we have lived in community here at the Center of the Institute. The diversity of our origins, of our cultures, and of our situations, far from endangering our unity actually enriched it and invited us to listen attentively to one another. We hope that you can have a similar experience, in your own particular circumstances, so that you may discover the richness of those who live and work with us and recognize the help they bring as we seek together what God wants of us today.

The invitation of the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter that this 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter be an “alternative” one in style led us to enter into a process inspired by the biblical episodes of the Exodus and of Emmaus to discern in faith what God is asking of the Institute today. This challenges us to listen to the call of the world, the Church, of our consecrated life, and of our Institute engaged in human and Christian education, especially for the poor (cf. *Rule 3*).

Thank you for your prayers, your notes, the reflections you have shared with us, and your study of the preparatory documents. This helped us to engage in a fraternal effort at discovering the needs of our times. We want to continue with you this awareness of the signs of God in our lives, in our communities, in the changing cultural contexts, and in our association for the educational mission, especially for the poor (cf. *Rule 39*). The General Chapter is coming to a close, but this is only a beginning: Brothers, communities, Districts, Regions, the Center of the Institute, we all have to seek together how to renew our lives as did the Chapter in the light of Emmaus, “*Being Brothers Today: Open Eyes, Burning Hearts.*”

Some of what we say will be familiar and some of what we say may be disconcerting. However, we hope that you will see in the challenges that we have decided to face nothing less than a commitment to the spirit of Jesus urging us to thoughtful renewal to fulfill the mission confided to us in our world and in our own particular



situations today. This urgency led us to place the report on “Interior Life” at the beginning of the Acts of the Chapter.

We face a major challenge, namely, to deepen our interior life, one that is lived by the Spirit in fraternal communities, driven by a passion for Jesus Christ and for humanity and to act in conformity with our words. The importance of the Lasallian vocation for the world and the Church today, and the concern for the continuity of the Lasallian mission, requires Lasallian vocation ministry, especially vocations to the Brothers’ life. Are we willing, each of us, singly and together, to pray and have others pray for vocations, to teach about our life, to accompany those who show interest in being Brothers, to be open to new forms of association, to affirm our identity as Brothers?

The field for our shared mission is large. There are new challenges: the rights of children, respect for life from its inception to its end, problems created by migratory movements of people, the need for a true solidarity among nations... Along with other Lasallians engaged with us in the educational service and evangelization of many young people and others, especially the poor, let us face together the challenges we encounter. The international character of our Institute should facilitate the coordination of our efforts and motivate us to have our voice heard,

The consensus which we achieved aimed at taking into account both the unity of the Institute and its great diversity, identifying the “Horizons” toward which we journey together and the major “Lines of Action” we listed – taking into account the suggestion that they not be too general - rather than using the more familiar procedure of stating “Propositions”. Recommending flexibility in applying the “Lines of Action” to reach the “Horizons” does not detract from the fact that they are decisions taken by the General Chapter by a large majority, and thus engage all of us in their implementation.

We are called, each of us singly and together, to be Brothers today, associated together in community and in the body of the Institute and with many partners engaged in the educational service of the poor, children, the young, and adults, whom we encounter in our ministry.

Brothers, whatever your age, play your part for the vitality of the Institute (cf. *Rule* 145) in your own circumstances! When your heart is open to the call of the Lord, he will fill it with the gifts needed to respond (cf. *Rule* 35c). We Capitulants have tried to do this before inviting you to do the same. Be open today to the movement of the Spirit!



## 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter Message to the Lasallian Family

Dear members of the Lasallian family, we send you fraternal greetings from Rome!

The 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter is coming to a close and we, the 111 Capitulants gathered here from all parts of the world and ready to return to the different places where we share the Lasallian mission with many of you, want you to know the important place you have had in our hearts, our thoughts, our decisions. Our greeting is also to all who, in the diversity of their religious affiliation and humanistic convictions, find in St. John Baptist de La Salle a light and support in the commitment for a world in solidarity and peace where all can find a place, with their most fundamental rights respected, for all are sons and daughters of the same Father.

Our General Chapter focused particularly on what is more specific to our lives as Brothers, for that is the first responsibility of a General Chapter. Also, all the Capitulants of this 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter are Brothers, in contrast to the last two General Chapters. However, you were constantly present in our exchanges and in the decisions we made.

First of all, the Assemblies held over the past few years in the Districts and Regions led to the International Assembly 2006 *Associated for the Lasallian Mission of Education*. During our work at the Chapter three of the principal organizers of the Assembly presented the Report of the Assembly to us and in our discussions we referred often to this Report. And in addition to using the Report as a reference document, the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter accepted the Report for the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and appealed to the Center of the Institute and to all the sectors of the Institute to implement, each according to its own responsibilities, the principal orientations and areas of emphasis in the Report.

Also, your prayers and the obvious interest many of you expressed about the Chapter sustained us in our determination to honor your expectations.

Finally, and above all, we can testify that the life commitment of many among you is a strong witness to the dignity of the individual and of the individual's work, and in a special way this is the case for those engaged in the Lasallian mission. This is for the Brothers and for Brothers' communities an encouragement to live fully our own specific vocation.

In a particular way a biblical icon, that of Moses hearing God calling him by name and sending him to free his oppressed people telling him *"I heard their cry – I am sending you"* inspired us in our work. We Brothers also must live with a passion for Christ and for humanity. We must be, according to our specific vocations, in our lives as educators and motivators of faith of those confided to our care, especially children and the young whose fundamental rights are violated. As an international network we can do more than we are doing. *"The poor are our masters and will be our judges,"* wrote Brother Alvaro, Superior General.

The field of our shared mission is vast. In addition to the rights of children and respect for life, we have noted in a special way the problems posed by migratory movements, which affect many families, the need for a true solidarity among nations, people yearning for true hope in our world... We count on you to take up the challenge, each according to your age, state in life, and personal convictions. Do you hear the calls, loud or silent, of those for whom you are directly responsible, with their intellectual, moral, affective, and spiritual needs? We ask you to continue to respond to these calls with us. Lasallian vocations and vocations to the Brothers' life are indispensable for our common educational mission open to the transcendent; the Young Lasallians spoke of this during their second Symposium held in Rome in July 2006. We can all contribute by prayer and, according to our own circumstances, the cultivation and accompaniment of the vocations needed by the Church.

At the close of the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter we understand better what we must leave behind to raise our eyes to new horizons. And we ask you to continue on the journey with us, supported by the promise given to Moses: *"I will be with you"* (Exodus 3:12).

