



RELICS
SAINT JOHN BAPTIST
DE LA SALLE
PRAYER BOOK

RELIQS

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

PRAYER BOOK

PREPARED BY

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NOTES TO THE CELEBRATION

1. The prayers are a celebration of the Lasallian educational communities in the last 100 years. As such, all Biblical texts chosen have as central image, God bringing together a community of persons who will bring Good News to the world. Beginning with Abraham and his clan, to the multitudes Jesus “organized”, to the disciples sent on a mission on the day of Pentecost. It may be important to accentuate in the celebration that the last 100 years were not simply about establishing schools but educational communities.
2. Veneration of the relics may be done as part of the brief reflection. At least three to five minutes of silence may be observed by the groups. More mature groups may be led into longer periods of silence and reflection.
3. It is suggested that on the day of the arrival of the relics, a short procession to the place of worship be organized. The invitation to worship may be done prior to the procession. The suggested opening hymn may be sung during the procession.
4. The prayer service section on **INVITATION TO WORSHIP** is not meant simply to be read. It would be ideal if the prayer leader could use the passage to briefly introduce the theme of the celebrations to the congregation.



Praying with John Baptist De La Salle

A JOURNEY FROM COMMITMENT TO COMMITMENT

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

Associated for the Lasallian Mission – an Act of Hope, Circular 461

The image of a God who walks alongside of us, who asks us to trust in the unimaginable, is the daily act of faith that has sustained the Lasallian community for more than three centuries. This image also symbolizes the vocational call of all Lasallians to confide in a God who calls “in a quiet imperceptible way...so that one commitment leads into another without having foreseen it in the beginning.” This was De La Salle’s miraculous adventure with a God who welcomed him. All you who serve the Lasallian Mission remember what God has promised to us when he spoke to the prophet Jeremiah : “I know what my plans are for you, plans to save you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future and to give you hope...When you call on me I will listen...I will gather you up from among all the nations...and I will bring you home.”

OPENING HYMN

Yahweh the Faithful One

Yahweh’s love will last forever

His faithfulness till the end of time

Yahweh, is a loving God

Yahweh, the faithful One

Have no fear for I am with you, I will be your shield

Go now and leave your homeland for I will give you a home

You shall be My chosen people and I will be your God

I will bless your name forever and keep you from all harm

Look up and see the heavens and count the stars if you can

Your name will be even greater, greater than all these stars

See now the land before you, rich with food and rain

No longer must you wander, for this will be your home



PSALM 84

(ANT.) Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord, God of hosts.

My soul is yearning,
is yearning for the courts of the Lord.
My heart and my soul ring out their joy
to God the living God.

The sparrow herself finds a home
and the swallow a nest for her brood;
she lays her young by your altars,
Lord of hosts, my king and my God.

They are happy, who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.
They are happy, whose strength is in you,
in whose hearts are the roads to Zion.

As they go through the bitter valley,
they make it a place of springs,
the autumn rain covers it with blessings.
They walk with ever growing strength,
they will see the God of gods in Zion.

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer,
give ear O God of Jacob.
Turn your eyes, O God our shield,
look on the face of your anointed.

One day within your courts
is better than a thousand elsewhere.
The threshold of the house of God
I prefer to the dwellings of the wicked.

For the Lord God is a rampart, a shield;
he will give us his favor and glory.
The Lord will not refuse any good
to those who walk without blame.

Lord God of hosts,
happy the man who trusts in you! Glory....

Psalm Prayer

God of Abraham and God of De La Salle, bless us who have set out on the road together this day. We recognize ourselves as pilgrims on our way to Your eternal home. We go on our way singing – a song of hope on our lips. We follow you now on this way as we are being sown in the darkness of the earth. When the day comes, we hope to grow in the light and warmth of Your eternity. Walk with us Lord and may your peace be with us. AMEN.

READING

Genesis 12:1-9

The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you;
I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
And whoever curses you I will curse;
And all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you.”

So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him., Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him.

From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

REFLECTION

De La Salle, *Memoirs on the Beginnings*

Previously I had given no thought at all to the matter, though this was not for lack of people putting the idea to me...But the possibility had not gained entry into my mind, and I had never entertained the thought of doing anything of the kind. If in fact I had ever thought that the obligation of charity which prompted my concern for the welfare of the teachers would lead me to feel it a duty to live with them, I should have given it up...The mere thought that I might have to live with them would have been unbearable. I experienced, in fact, a very great distress when I first brought them into my house, and it lasted two years.

It was apparently for this reason that God, who guides all things with wisdom and

gentleness, and is not in the habit of forcing the inclinations of men, wishing to encourage me to take full responsibility for the schools, did so in a most imperceptible manner and over a period of time; so that one commitment led me into another, without my having foreseen it in the beginning.

I pause to consider the new dreams that are being born in me today. I reflect on the new commitments that my involvement in the Lasallian Family invite me to.

RESPONSE

Psalm 40

(ANT.) I adore in all things, your will O God, in my regard

I waited patiently for you O God
and you stooped down to me;
and heard my cry.

You drew me out from the desolate pit,
out of the miry clay,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.

You put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to you.
Many shall see and fear
and place their trust in you.

Happy are we who have placed
our trust in you, O God,
who do not turn to the proud,
to those who follow false gods!

For us you have multiplied, O God, my Creator,
your wondrous deeds and plans;
none can compare with you!
Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they are more than can be numbered.

Sacrifice and offering you do not desire;
but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

Therefore, I said, "Here I am;
In the scroll of the book it is written of me :
my delight is to do your will;
your law is within my heart." Glory..

PRAYERS OF PETITION

N. Hutchinson, FSC

One person to address John Baptist De La Salle and a second person to address the Lord in prayer. All join in the response.

John Baptist De La Salle, you saw the suffering of the poor, and you heard the call of the Gospel. You allowed yourself to be open to what God wanted of you, and you led teachers to be responsible for the young people God was entrusting to them.

Lord, open our minds and touch our hearts, that we may perceive your invitation of love in our lives.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

John Baptist De La Salle, you saw the living conditions of many people in the cities : lack of food, little work, unhealthy surroundings. You saw that the children needed to be cared for and educated.

Lord, give us eyes to see the needs of others. Help us to be generous in expressing care and concern for individuals we will meet today.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

John Baptist De La Salle, you lived at a time of war and famine and human suffering, a time when many considered themselves superior to others.

Lord, help us to value and treasure one another as individuals made in your image and likeness.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

John Baptist De La Salle, you could see the poverty and injustice and suffering in the daily lives of people. God called you to help them to help themselves through gaining a good education.

Lord, we ask that we may never turn away from injustice and suffering. Help us to create a society where people accept their responsibility for one another and where people can live full lives and be at peace with others.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

John Baptist De La Salle, others felt called by God to work alongside you and bring a Christian education to young people.

Lord, we ask you to call people today to commit themselves to the education of young

people so that your Church can experience the fullness of life that you offer.

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John Baptist De La Salle, you led young people to grow and take responsibility for their own lives.

Lord, we ask you to inspire us to look to the best in others, so that they, in turn, may offer strength and love to others.

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John Baptist De La Salle, you traveled many miles – very often by foot – visiting the Brothers and the young people in the schools. Always you offered encouragement and support.

Lord, empower us with your Spirit that we may build people up and be instruments of peace and friendship.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

John Baptist De La Salle, with your hands you blessed people, you fed others in time of famine, taught young people in school, and wrote books for them. You shared with them the Good News of God's love.

Lord, lead us to use our hands to help and not to hurt; to show friendship and not create division; to be generous and open. Empower us to live in such a way so as to bring life and blessing to others.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

John Baptist De La Salle, you helped young people and teachers to become more aware that they live in God's presence.

Lord, touch us each day with glimpses of your presence in our midst and so lead us to become more like you.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

OUR FATHER

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord,
You led John Baptist De La Salle
Down a path he did not choose,

And brought him to a place he did not seek.
We ask you to send upon us, Your Spirit
So that we too may follow your will
In the events of our lives;
May we see with the eyes of faith;
And come to realize the fullness of our mission
In today's world.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Your Son, who lives and reigns with you
And the Holy Spirit,
One God, forever and ever. AMEN.

CLOSING HYMN

Live Jesus in our Hearts

Glory to you, O St. De La Salle
We lift our voice we sing our praise to you
Apostle of Christ. Guardian of youth. Teacher and Brother of the poor.
With you we are moved to pray.

Teach us Lord, we implore.
To touch the hearts of those confided to our care.
Empowered by Your love, in faith and zeal
Our lives we entrust to Your will
Live Jesus in our hearts.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS IN AID OF REFLECTION FOR DAY 1

REFLECTION

Sarah Cabugnason

Lasallian Volunteer, Langilanon, Iligan

In the last two years that I have been here, I have been disturbed to see little children hoping for one miracle to quench their thirst. I've seen and felt the poverty in their eyes begging for only one hope. I have tried to share my time and giftedness in teaching these children. In my own limited experience of living and working with the poor, I realize that it is not enough to teach their minds. The real challenge of this commitment is to love and respect them unconditionally. I have realized what it truly means to be of service and to be in true communion with the poor. To be of service is giving up all of our self unselfishly without expecting anything in return or without having any hesitation or mental reservation. In a more profound way to be in communion with the poor is to continue to love – to continue to bring God's love into the lives of these children. Volunteering requires endurance and patience especially when unexpected things happen or life does not seem to cooperate with your plans. When such situations and testing come in my life, I've learned to trust in God's saving grace. My personal relationship with Him is the very foundation which sustains me and allows me to persevere. I know that I am deeply happy about my volunteer experience this year.

I believe it is neither an accident nor a coincidence that I am here. It is God's plan. He is our great architect who willed and brought me to this ministry. I am convinced that my call is to love more and to bring God's love to the heart of every person.

Josie Burgos

Campus Minister, La Salle Green Hills

A Recollection Reflection, 03 May 1997

Never before have I felt so much oneness – so much loved by God who has always been faithful to me.

It was on this warm afternoon that I remember making a personal covenant with a God who has called me to minister to those at risk. On this special day, I vividly remember the intense longing – the thirst in my heart to feel God's presence. I recall that gentle assurance that I was not alone. I understood what I am meant to be to

those He puts my way.

Amidst my self-doubts, apprehensions and fears, the work I embraced a year ago took a different meaning. It was at that blessed moment when the job became a mission. Difficulties are viewed as God's way of strengthening my faith. Failures become opportunities to do better. Accomplishments are more easily attributed to God's own power rather than mine. It was in that strengthening, assuring gift of God's presence that the words of De La Salle "as far as I shall be able and as God will require of me" became for me, a new way of life.

Br. Ceci Hojilla FSC

The Best of Times

Video Presentation

Praying with John Baptist De La Salle

A JOURNEY MADE TOGETHER AND BY ASSOCIATION

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

42nd General Chapter Message

Shared Mission

Today, God is calling each one according to his or her own vocation, to accomplish together the mission confided to St. John Baptist de La Salle and to the Institute he founded.

We re-affirm the irreplaceable role of those men and women who carry out this mission. The Institute brings them together to work in association to procure a human and Christian education for young people and especially the poor.

Aware of the dignity of each person, we rejoice in the rich diversity of our respective vocations and the responsibilities these imply. What unites us is our continuing reference to St. John Baptist De La Salle and a continuous striving to enter more fully into his spirit. Belonging to the Lasallian Family commits us to work together to respond to the educational needs of the young.

OPENING HYMN

One Bread, One Body

One bread, one body, One Lord of all,
One cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many, throughout the earth,
We are one body in this one Lord.

Gentile or Jew, Servant or free,
Woman or man, No more.

Many the gifts, Many the works,
One in the Lord, Of all.

Grain for the fields, Scattered and grown,
Gathered to one, For all.



PSALM 133

(ANT.) Lord, may your love dwell among us.

How good and how pleasant it is,
when brothers live in unity!

It is like precious oil upon the head
running down upon the beard,
running down upon Aaron's beard,
upon the collar of his robes.

It is like the dew of Hermon which falls
on the heights of Zion.
For there the Lord gives his blessing,
life for ever. Glory...

Psalm Prayer

Lord, we have come together to find you; to find ourselves and to find each other. We have come together to create meaning in our lives by sharing our love. Teach us to share and teach us to receive the gifts others bring to our community. Following John Baptist De La Salle, we are happy to place our lives wherever your providence points, and to follow the truth as it becomes apparent to us through the people and events that grace our lives. AMEN.

READING

Mark 6:35-44

By this time, it was late in the day, so Jesus' disciples came to him. "This is a remote place and it is already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and buy themselves something to eat." But Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

"How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five – and two fish."

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.

REFLECTION

The Heroic Vow, Lasalliana

The year is 1691. After 13 years, the enterprise of the Christian Schools to which St. John Baptist De La Salle had devoted so much energy, seemed in dire straits. Much of what he had accomplished in Rheims had collapsed while he was trying to get established in Paris. Of the 16 Brothers he had left behind in Rheims, half remained and only one new candidate had entered in three years.

And so De La Salle chose two Brothers in whom he had much confidence – Gabriel Drolin and Nicholas Vuyart – and the three of them agreed to make a private vow together as an act of hope in God who is faithful. On 21 November 1691, the three gathered in a chapel and pronounced their commitment together in these words :

...And for this purpose, I, John Baptist De La Salle, priest; I, Nicholas Vuyart; and I, Gabriel Drolin, from this moment and for always until the last survivor, or till the establishment of the Society of the Christian Schools was been completely achieved, make the vow of association and union to bring it about and maintain the said establishment, without our being able to abandon it, even if we were to remain just we three in the said Society, and that we were obliged to beg for alms and live on bread alone.

I pause to recall the persons whose lives have touched mine in the course of my involvement in the Lasallian mission. I pause in gratitude for the gifts they have shared with me.

RESPONSE

1 Peter 2:9,17; 3:8-9, 4:8-11; 5:2-9

(In two choirs, with all joining together to pray the italicized words.)

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God
who called you out of darkness
into his wonderful light.

Lord, it is together that we seek and find you (R50).

Have respect for everyone and love for our community.
Agree among yourselves and be sympathetic;
love the brothers, have compassion and be self-effacing.
Never pay back one wrong with another,
or an angry word with another one;
instead, pay back with a blessing.

Lord, may your spirit of love dwell in each of us (R49).

Never let your love for each other grow insincere,
since love covers over many sins.
Welcome each other into your houses without grumbling.

Each one of you has received a special grace,
so like good stewards
responsible for all these different graces of God,
put yourselves at the service of others.

Lord, may we be joyful in giving ourselves for the service of others (R49).

If you are a speaker,
speak in words which seem to come from God;
if you are a helper,
help as though every action was done at God's orders.

Lord, may our life be rooted in you(R48).

To the elders,
be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care,
serving as overseers – not because you must,
but because you are willing, as God wants you to be.
Do not be greedy for privileges, but eager to serve;
not lording it over those entrusted to you,
but being examples to the flock.

Lord, may we be concerned about persons in their deepest hopes and desires (R53).

Young men,
clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.
Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand
so that he may lift you up in due time.
Be self-controlled and alert.
Resist what is not good and stand firm in your faith.
Lord, it is together that we seek and find you (R50).

PRAYERS OF PETITION

N. Hutchinson, FSC

One person to address John Baptist De La Salle and a second person to address the Lord in prayer. All join in the response.

John Baptist De La Salle, you saw the suffering of the poor, and you heard the call of the Gospel. You allowed yourself to be open to what God wanted of you, and you led teachers to be responsible for the young people God was entrusting to them.

Lord, open our minds and touch our hearts, that we may perceive your invitation of love in our lives.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

John Baptist De La Salle, you saw the living conditions of many people in the cities : lack of food, little work, unhealthy surroundings. You saw that the children needed to be cared for and educated.

Lord, give us eyes to see the needs of others. Help us to be generous in expressing care and concern for individuals we will meet today.

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John Baptist De La Salle, you lived at a time of war and famine and human suffering, a time when many considered themselves superior to others.

Lord, help us to value and treasure one another as individuals made in your image and likeness.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

John Baptist De La Salle, you could see the poverty and injustice and suffering in the daily lives of people. God called you to help them to help themselves through gaining a good education.

Lord, we ask that we may never turn away from injustice and suffering. Help us to create a society where people accept their responsibility for one another and where people can live full lives and be at peace with others.

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John Baptist De La Salle, others felt called by God to work alongside you and bring a Christian education to young people.

Lord, we ask you to call people today to commit themselves to the education of young people so that your Church can experience the fullness of life that you offer.

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Lord, we ask you to inspire us to look to the best in others, so that they, in turn, may offer strength and love to others.

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ment and support.

Lord, empower us with your Spirit that we may build people up and be instruments of peace and friendship.

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Lord, lead us to use our hands to help and not to hurt; to show friendship and not create division; to be generous and open. Empower us to live in such a way so as to bring life and blessing to others.

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John Baptist De La Salle, you helped young people and teachers to become more aware that they live in God's presence.

Lord, touch us each day with glimpses of your presence in our midst and so lead us to become more like you.

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OUR FATHER

CLOSING PRAYER

Adapted from Philippians 1

Lord,

We come before you filled with gratitude
as we remember our brothers and sisters.

We are thankful for the partnership that we have
in bringing Good News to the world.

We ask that you, who began this good work among us,
will see it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

May our concern for each other abound more and more
in knowledge and depth of insight
so that each of us may be able to discern what is best.

May all of us be filled with the fruit of righteousness
that comes through Christ our Lord. AMEN.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS IN AID OF REFLECTION FOR DAY 2

1. Names of deceased members of the educational community.

Praying with John Baptist De La Salle

ON A JOURNEY TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

Gaudium et Spes 1

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.

OPENING HYMN

Servant Song

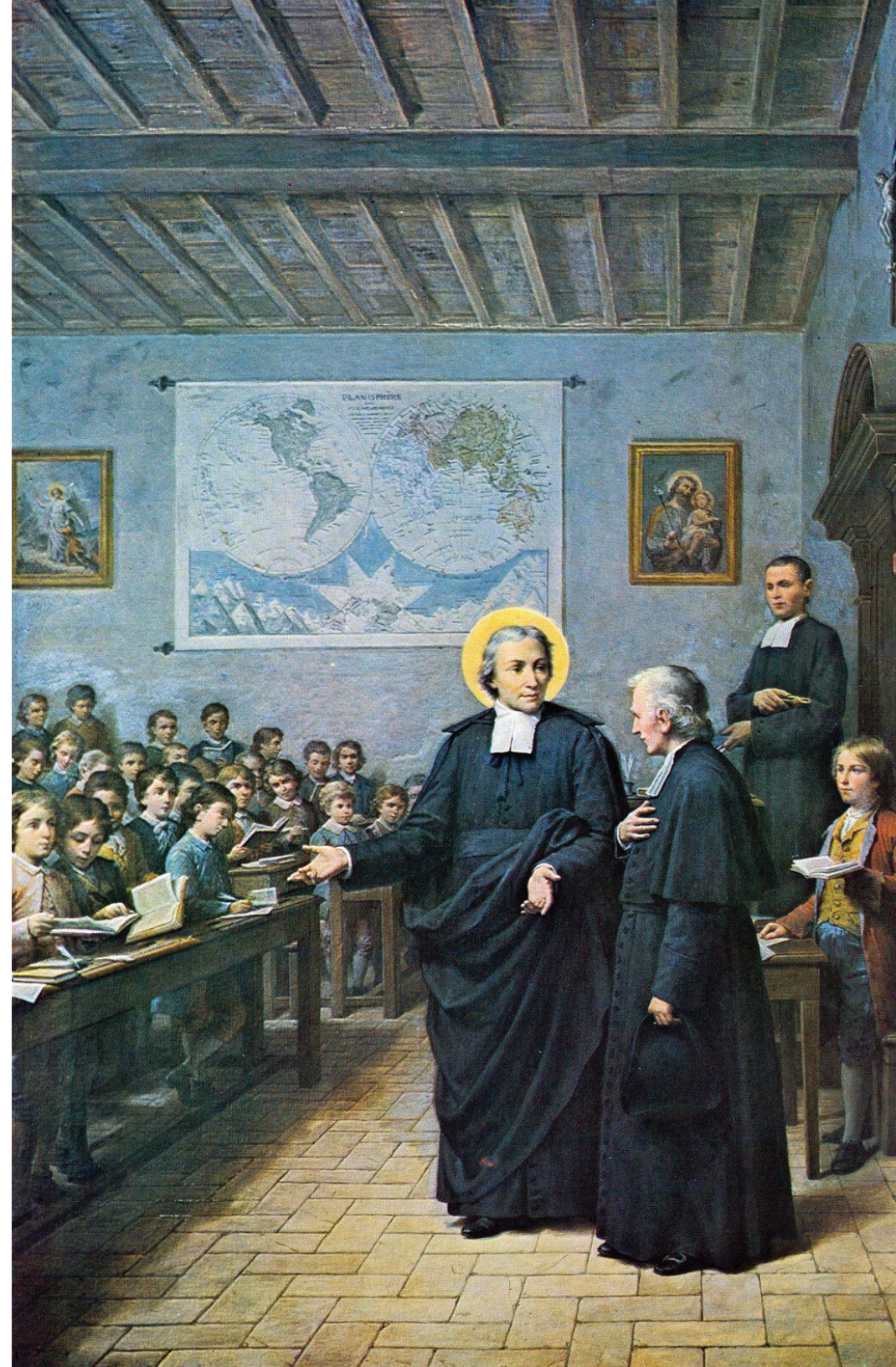
Will you let me be your servant
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant too

We are pilgrims on a journey
We are travelers on the road
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load

I will hold the Christ-light for you
As you teach those far and near
I will hold my hand out to you
Speak of God to all who hear

I will pray when you are praying
When you work I'll work with you
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through

We may look to what awaits us
In that heaven far away
Better now the child before us
Heaven found on earth this day



PSALM 23

(ANT.) Lord, we remember that you are good.

The Lord is my shepherd there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures where he give me repose
Near restful waters he leads me to refresh my drooping spirit

He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name
If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear
You are there with your crook and your staff; with these you give me comfort.

You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil; my cup overflowing.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever.

Glory..

Psalm Prayer

O God, you are full of love to all who call to you. May we leave the imprint of your goodness throughout the world today. Grant this in the name of Jesus, our brother.
AMEN.

READING

Jesus Appears to His Disciples
John 20:19-23

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

REFLECTION

De La Salle, Meditations

God is so good that He not only bring us into existence but also desires that all of us come to the knowledge of truth. This truth is God Himself,... God desires all of us to be taught this knowledge.

I pause to consider the needs of young people. I reflect on how I can help young people today experience the Good News that God is so good.

RESPONSE

Adapted from Evangelii Nuntiandi, **Pope Paul VI**

In two choirs, with all joining in the italicized words

Brothers and sisters, let us therefore preserve our fervor of spirit. Let us preserve the delightful and comforting joy of being God's presence in the world.

Let us do this, even when it is in tears that we must sow.

May our lives - like the lives of John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul and the multitude of witnesses in the Church's history - possess an interior enthusiasm that nobody and nothing can quench.

May this be the one joy of our life together.

May the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be truly blessed not by a community of dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious persons.

Let us be instead ministers of Good News.

May we willingly risk our lives so that God's promise of life may be proclaimed well.
Through our life together, may His Kingdom be established in the midst of the world.

PRAYERS OF PETITION

N. Hutchinson, FSC

One person to address John Baptist De La Salle and a second person to address the Lord in prayer. All join in the response.

John Baptist De La Salle, you saw the suffering of the poor, and you heard the call of the Gospel. You allowed yourself to be open to what God wanted of you, and you led teachers to be responsible for the young people God was entrusting to them.

Lord, open our minds and touch our hearts, that we may perceive your invitation of love in our lives.

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John Baptist De La Salle, you led young people to grow and take responsibility for their own lives.

Lord, we ask you to inspire us to look to the best in others, so that they, in turn, may offer strength and love to others.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

John Baptist De La Salle, you traveled many miles – very often by foot – visiting the Brothers and the young people in the schools. Always you offered encouragement and support.

Lord, empower us with your Spirit that we may build people up and be instruments of peace and friendship.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

John Baptist De La Salle, with your hands you blessed people, you fed others in time of famine, taught young people in school, and wrote books for them. You

shared with them the Good News of God's love.

Lord, lead us to use our hands to help and not to hurt; to show friendship and not create division; to be generous and open. Empower us to live in such a way so as to bring life and blessing to others.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

John Baptist De La Salle, you helped young people and teachers to become more aware that they live in God's presence.

Lord, touch us each day with glimpses of your presence in our midst and so lead us to become more like you.

Father, may your kingdom come among us.

OUR FATHER

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy Spirit,

God's own fire, burn away what is not holy in us: all pride and fear and vain self-seeking, all attachments that may hinder us from heeding your call. Be light to our eyes that we may see your design for us; be courage in our hearts, that we may not shrink from any necessary sacrifice; be truth on our lips, that we may speak as you bid us; be strength in our hands, that we may serve you in our working. Grant us the gifts of humility and discernment that our Lasallian family may be led to a new Pentecost. Inspire us to greater unity and zeal so that we may be for Filipino youth, a message of hope. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. AMEN.

LIVING RELICS: FROM OBJECT TO BEING

by Br. Richie P. Yap FSC

Relics in Human History

From time immemorial, human beings have treasured various kinds of objects as reminders of persons and events possessing a deep personal and/or historical significance. The propensity to hold on to reminders of those we love or revere is a distinctively human inclination transcending culture and religion. Witness for example our desire for keepsakes or heirlooms belonging to those who are dear to us. These tokens, often enshrined in special places in homes or even worn on one's person, inevitably come to partake of the significance and power of the person or event with which they are associated. They seem to make present to us what is no longer accessible in time.

Among the different classes of such objects, relics, that is, the corporeal remains of revered personages, have always exerted a deep fascination. Ancient Greeks and the first Buddhists, for example, preserved and distributed relics of the bodies of their heroes and avatars. Christianity, especially Catholicism, places a premium on venerating persons whose words, deeds and influence exude and inspire sanctity, hence the veneration of saints and their sacred relics.

Veneration of Holy Relics

Relics have been treasured and venerated in every corner of the world. This practice is deeply rooted in an instinctive desire to connect with historical persons whose extraordinary lives became inspiring templates for ordinary individuals to imitate. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "The word 'relics' comes from the Latin *reliquiae* (the counterpart of the Greek *leipsana*), which already before the propagation of Christianity, was used in its modern sense, viz., of some object, notably part of the body or clothes, remaining as a memorial of a departed saint." The Roman Catholic Church further classifies these relics into three classes:





First Class:

Anything belonging to the body of the venerated person such as bone, hair, or blood.

Second Class:

Any object touched by the venerated person or touched directly to a part of his or her body such as clothing, personal possessions, or rosary.

Third Class:

Any object touched to a first or second - class relic such as pieces of cloth, the tomb, or original home.

For Catholics, any relic of a saint, regardless of its class, deserves some degree of veneration because of what it represents in their faith. In his article, "Church Teaching on Relics" in the 2003 issue of the Arlington Catholic Herald, Rev. William Saunders says, "To venerate the relics of the saints is a profession of belief in several doctrines of the Catholic faith:

1. the belief in everlasting life for those who have obediently witnessed to Christ and His Holy Gospel here on earth;
2. the truth of the resurrection of the body for all persons on the last day;
3. the doctrine of the splendour of the human body and the respect which all should show toward the bodies of both the living and the deceased;
4. the belief in the special intercessory power which the saints enjoy in heaven because of their intimate relationship with Christ the King; and
5. the truth of our closeness to the saints because of our connection in the communion of saints — we as members of the Church militant or pilgrim Church, they as members of the Church triumphant."

To be clear, veneration is profoundly different from the adoration and worship that are reserved for God alone. The Merriam – Webster Online Dictionary defines veneration as "respect or awe inspired by the dignity, wisdom, dedication, or talent of a person." Hence, the Roman Catholic Church teaches in its Catechism of the Catholic Church that "besides sacramental liturgy and sacramentals, catechesis must take into account the forms of piety and popular devotions among the faithful. The religious sense of the Christian people has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the Church's sacramental life, such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the stations of the cross, religious dances, the rosary, medals..." (CCC 1674).

Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, perhaps articulated every Catholic believer's desire in venerating saints and their relics when it said, "It is supremely fitting, therefore, that we love those friends and coheirs of Jesus Christ, who are also our brothers and extraordinary benefactors, that we render due thanks to God for them and 'suppliantly invoke them and have recourse to their prayers, their power and help in obtaining benefits from God through His Son, Jesus Christ, who is our Redeemer and Saviour.'" (LG 50). In other words, the Catholic faithful give credence to and are inspired to sanctity by the words, maxims and actions of the venerated person, and therefore, solicit his or her assistance in prayer and their communion with God.

The Journey of the Holy Relics

Saint John Baptist de La Salle, Patron of Teachers, was born in Rheims, France on 30 April 1651. He grew up and responded to the special invitation of God during the Golden Age of France in the 17th Century. In the midst of the lavish lifestyle of the monarchy and aristocracy, he was seized by the plight of the youth who were poor, abandoned, and left in the streets to fend for themselves. By 1684, he was an ordained priest who renounced his wealth, lifestyle and stature in society in order to organize a group of schoolmasters, who later became the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

De La Salle and the first Brothers took up the cause of providing the human and Christian educational needs of the youth, especially the poor, to the point that they vowed to be faithful to their mission for the rest of their lives, even if they had to beg and live on bread alone. Aside from his effective and innovative contributions to the field of education, perhaps his greatest gift to the Church and to humanity is a practical spirituality for all ordinary educators whose often-unappreciated ministry is further challenged by the daily grind of effectively facilitating and evaluating the learning processes of differently-gifted individuals. De La Salle reminded educators that everyone, especially the youth, have an inherent dignity, which comes from their being created in the image of God. Therefore, education is a means of holistically developing this dignity for the well-being of each learner as well as for the well-being of every society.

Such was his reputation for sanctity during his lifetime that we are told that almost the whole city of Rouen, where he spent his final years, mourned his death on 30 April 1719. According to Br. Luke Salm FSC in his book, "The Work Is Yours,"

the day after de La Salle's death, his remains were buried inside the Church of St. Sever in Rouen due to the lack of facilities for burial in St. Yon, where the Brothers of Rouen were staying at that time. Desirous to keep the Founder's remains physically close, the Brothers made a solemn transfer of the relics when most of the work on the chapel of St. Yon was finished in 1734. "The mortal remains of the Founder remained there for a long time until they suffered the invasion of anti-religious gangs during the French Revolution in 1792. For 42 years, the mortal remains of the Founder were left in a recess in the cellar of the chapel and were eventually rediscovered and properly identified in 1835. The relics were then moved to the Brothers' normal school in Rouen along Rue Saint Lo.

After John Baptist de La Salle was proclaimed Saint by the Church under Pope Leo XIII in 1900, his relics were moved to a large chapel inside a new school along Rue Saint Gervais in Rouen. But when the religious teaching congregations in France were suppressed, the relics had to be moved again to the relocated Generalate in Lembecq-les-Hals, Belgium in 1906. Then from Belgium they were transported in solemn procession to Rome, where they arrived on January 26, 1937, the same date as the promulgation in 1725 of the Bull of Approbation of the Institute of the Brothers of Christian Schools."

Today the earthly remains of de La Salle are venerated in the Sanctuary of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the main chapel of the Generalate, or Casa Generalizia, of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane) located in 476 Via Aurelia, Rome, Italy. While several of the second and third class relics of the Founder are spread all across the world, the bulk of the first class relics remain in Rome.

Founder's Relics: A Gift to the Filipino People

In the years leading to the Centennial Year of the Lasallian Presence in the Philippines, the De La Salle Brothers of the Philippine District requested their Superior General, Brother Alvaro Rodriguez for permission to bring some of the Founder's first class relics to the seventeen (17) District schools all over the country as a means of promoting spiritual renewal on the occasion of the Centennial. Br. Alvaro did more than approve this endeavor. In a magnanimous gesture, he gifted the Philippine Lasallian Family with a sizeable bone fragment of Saint John Baptist de La Salle not only for the intended pilgrimage to the country's schools but also for permanent enshrinement in the country.

While every Filipino Lasallian takes joy and pride in this gift, this first class relic of St. La Salle is likewise a gift to every Filipino educator and, in fact, to all Filipinos as well. As we celebrate the 100 years of Lasallian Presence in the Philippines, de La Salle's relic connects us to a historical man who lived more than 300 years ago in France and to his legacy, a legacy that has enriched the minds, touched the hearts, and transformed the lives of many young people since then in over 80 countries around the world.

Like all holy relics of the Catholic tradition, the Founder's relics are to be venerated. Veneration is due because of what they symbolize. As Saunders says, "In all, relics remind us of the holiness of a saint and his cooperation in God's work; at the



same time, relics inspire us to ask for the prayers of that saint and to beg the grace of God to live the same kind a faith-filled life." These relics then remind us that de La Salle was a real person with both gifts and frailties who became holy by choosing to cooperate with the work of God in his life. They remind us that the work of education carried out in a spirit of faith as a participation in God's saving plan, is itself a way to holiness in the world.

For every Filipino Lasallian, however, this relic signifies something more. While it is an object of our veneration, it should remind us of our calling to follow in the footsteps of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. Being Lasallian means making him real and alive in our midst, linking others, especially the youth-at-risk, to the historical person, to his values, to his dreams for young people, and to his God. Perhaps, the challenge

now for each Filipino Lasallian is to be "living relics" of prayer and cooperation with God's work and grace and, ultimately, of holiness through a life of faith, zeal for service, and communion in mission.

May we always remember that we are in the holy presence of God. May we always do all our actions for the love of God. May Jesus live in our hearts forever. *Mabuhay si San Juan Bautista de La Salle! Mabuhay ang tunay na Lasalyano!*

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A Teacher's Prayer

*You, O Lord
are my strength, my patience,
my light, and my counsel.
It is you who touch the hearts
of the children entrusted to my care.
Abandon me not to myself for one moment.*

*For my own guidance
and that of my students,
grant me the spirit of wisdom
and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and fortitude,
the spirit of knowledge and piety,
the spirit of a holy fear of You
and an ardent zeal to procure Your glory.*

*I unite my efforts to those of Jesus Christ,
and I beg the Most Blessed Virgin,
Saint Joseph, the Guardian Angels,
and Saint John Baptist de La Salle
to protect me this day
in the performance of my duties.*

Amen.

This is a modernization of the prayer that the Christian Brothers prayed before school each day for some time after 1850. Although some mistakenly attribute the origin of the prayer to St. La Salle, Brother Gerard Rummery FSC, a Lasallian scholar, notes it has its genesis in the eighteenth century *Traité des Études* by Charles Rollin. The prayer echoes the spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle, who was proclaimed Patron Saint of Teachers by the Catholic Church on May 15, 1950.

