



RELICS
SAINT JOHN BAPTIST
DE LA SALLE
PRAYER BOOK
YOUNGSTER'S EDITION

RELIQS

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DE LA SALLE

PRAYER BOOK
YOUNGSTER'S EDITION

PREPARED BY

BR. JOSE MARI L. JIMENEZ FSC

BR. RICHIE P. YAP FSC



PRAYERS FOR THE VENERATION OF THE RELICS OF DE LA SALLE

Youth Prayer Service

Adapted from
I, John Baptist De La Salle
by Br. Leo Kirby FSC



1. De La Salle is born to a loving family.

READING

I, John Baptist De La Salle, was born on April 30, 1651 in Rheims, the famous city in the wine country of northern France. I had a great family, loving parents and grandparents, loving brothers and sisters. My father was a judge, full of compassion for the people who stood before him. My grandfather and I often visited the vineyards he owned and he loved to teach me to recite my prayers. My grandmother used to read the lives of the saints to me. Those saints were our heroes and heroines.

Illustrations by Dominique Bach
From the book *Saint John Baptist de La Salle:
Along the paths of the Gospel*

I belonged to a wealthy family but my parents never looked down on the poor. Instead, they took life seriously and lived it generously and lovingly.

PRAYER

Dear God,
Thank you for the people who continue to love me – my family, teachers and friends. Through each of them, I learn how good and loving you are. Help me to be good and loving also. AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..

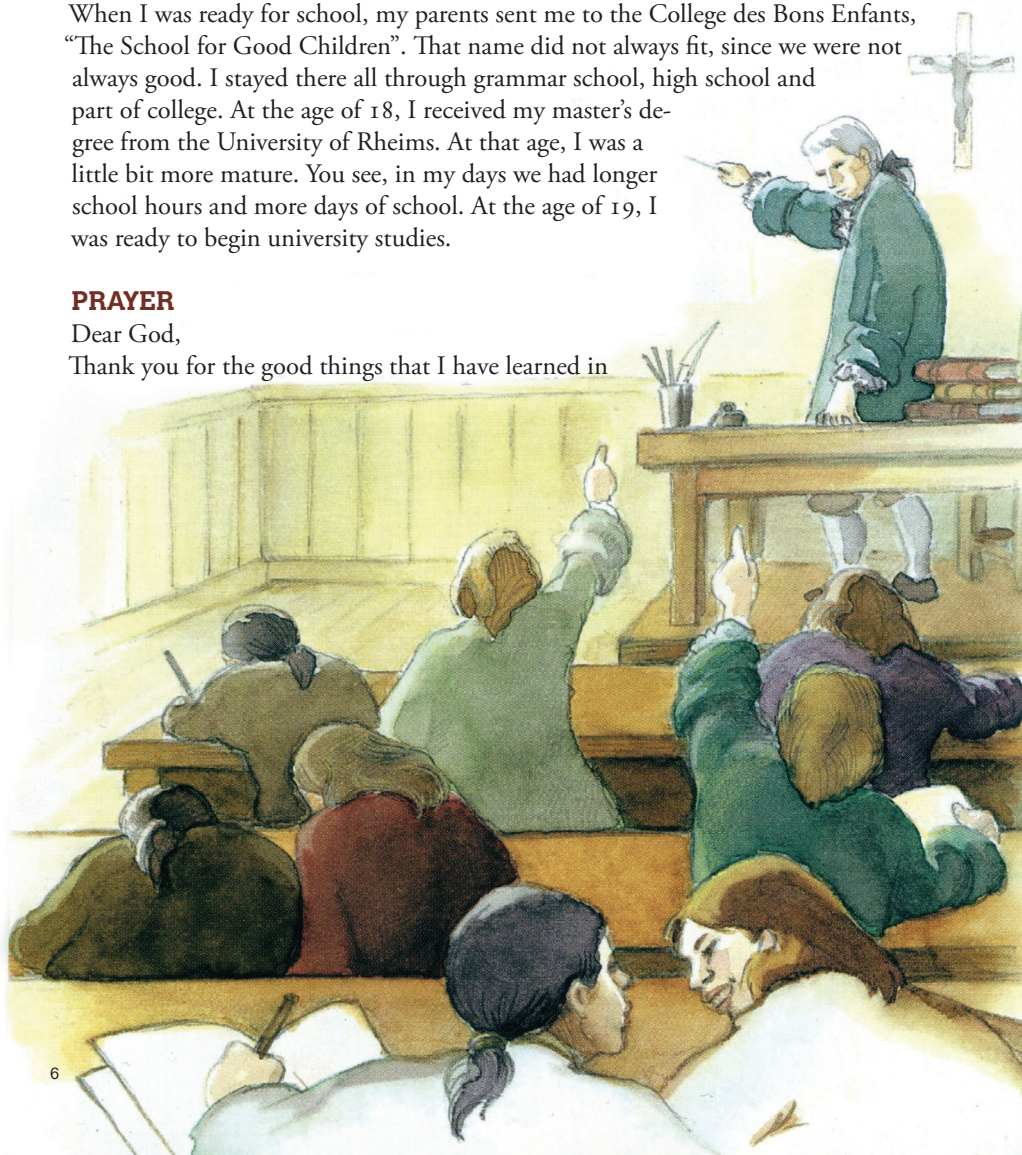
2. De La Salle devotes himself to a life of study.

READING

When I was ready for school, my parents sent me to the College des Bons Enfants, "The School for Good Children". That name did not always fit, since we were not always good. I stayed there all through grammar school, high school and part of college. At the age of 18, I received my master's degree from the University of Rheims. At that age, I was a little bit more mature. You see, in my days we had longer school hours and more days of school. At the age of 19, I was ready to begin university studies.

PRAYER

Dear God,
Thank you for the good things that I have learned in



school. Please help me when the lessons are difficult. Please be at my side when I am tempted not to give my best. AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..

3. De La Salle Chooses the Vocation of Priesthood

READING

I decided that I wanted to study to become a priest. At first thought of becoming a judge like my father, but at this time, I felt a stronger urge to become a priest. I guess you could say it was a call, but it was a silent one. When I turned 20, my mother died at the age of 36 and the very next year my father died at the age of 47. I don't like to talk too much about that time since it was one of the saddest times in my life. With my parents' death, I left Paris and returned to Rheims to take care of my brothers and sisters.

PRAYER

Dear God,
There are times in my life when I feel sad. Please continue to send good teachers to our school so that I can be guided and led to the right path.

AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..

4. De La Salle Meets Adrien Nyel.

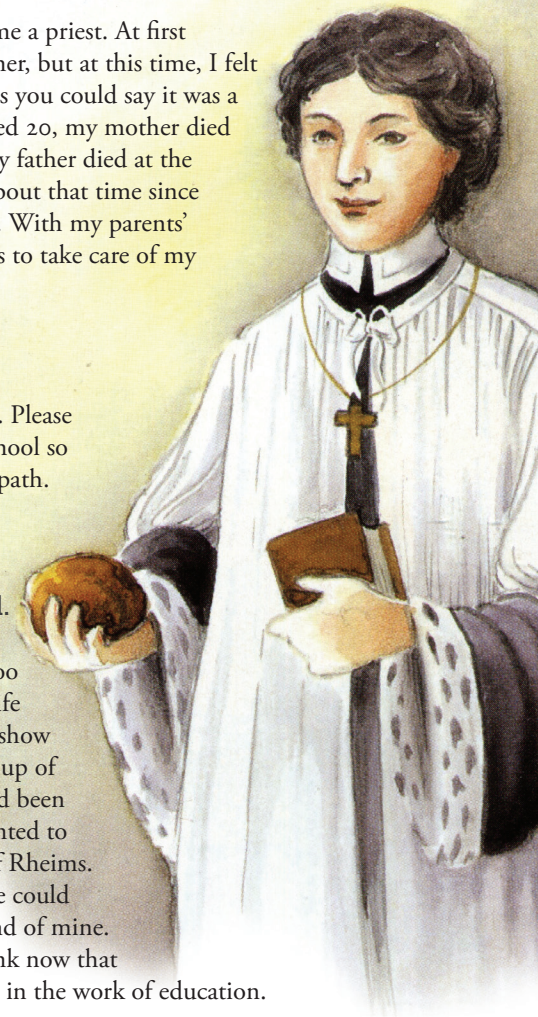
READING

After my ordination in 1678, I was not too sure of what I was going to do with my life as a priest. God did not take too long to show me the way. One day, while visiting a group of Sisters, I met a man, Adrien Nyel. He had been sent as a messenger by a woman who wanted to open a school for poor boys in the city of Rheims. I invited him to stay in my home until he could get settled. Mr. Nyel became a good friend of mine. I helped him get the school started. I think now that God made use of him to get me involved in the work of education.

PRAYER

Dear God,
I know now that you are a God who loves surprises. Make me ready always to welcome the new challenges that I encounter. I hope they will help me become a better person. AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..





5. De La Salle Moves in with the Teachers.

READING

A number of schools began to open in Rheims. I considered these schools my responsibility since I hired the teachers for it and helped raise the money for their salaries. The next thing I knew, I was a sort of leader with these men : praying with them and giving them advise with their class work and personal problems. Before I knew it, I was renting a house for them. I even invited all the teachers to live in my own home so I could supervise them better. This move did not sit too well with my relatives. Much later, I made an even bigger move. I left my position of privilege and gave my money to the poor and I lived with the poor teachers.

PRAYER

Dear God,

It is not always easy to become a responsible person. I would rather play and have fun all the time. I am trying my best to do my duties at home and in school. Please be patient with me. AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..

6. De La Salle Oversees the Growth of the Schools

READING

The teachers and I truly became Brothers to each others. This was how we wanted to call ourselves – Brothers instead of school teachers. We became known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools. We decided to wear a type of clothing which distinguished us from the priests and ordinary people. Our name and clothing gave us an identity and we felt proud of ourselves in spite of the fact that some people poked fun at us in the streets. The name, the uniform and the hardships all served to unit us all the more. Slowly I was being drawn into the work of the school first by the teachers themselves, and then by the poor children they taught – and especially by God Himself.

PRAYER

Dear God,

Thank you for the Brothers, teachers and staff who help in building up our school. Bless them with courage when their work becomes difficult. May they continue to make our school a happy and joyful place to go to. AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..

7. De La Salle Moves to other Cities

READING

With the schools now situated in several cities of France, I made sure that the schools were firmly established. I think what attracted both the parents and students to our schools was the teachers – honest men, full of love and enthusiasm for the work; with a good grasp of the subjects they taught; and with practical knowledge of running a class.



PRAYER

Dear God,
I pray that there will be more people who will want to become teachers. Make our teachers always joyful in their work. May they be patient in teaching children like us. AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..

8. De La Salle Encounters Challenges

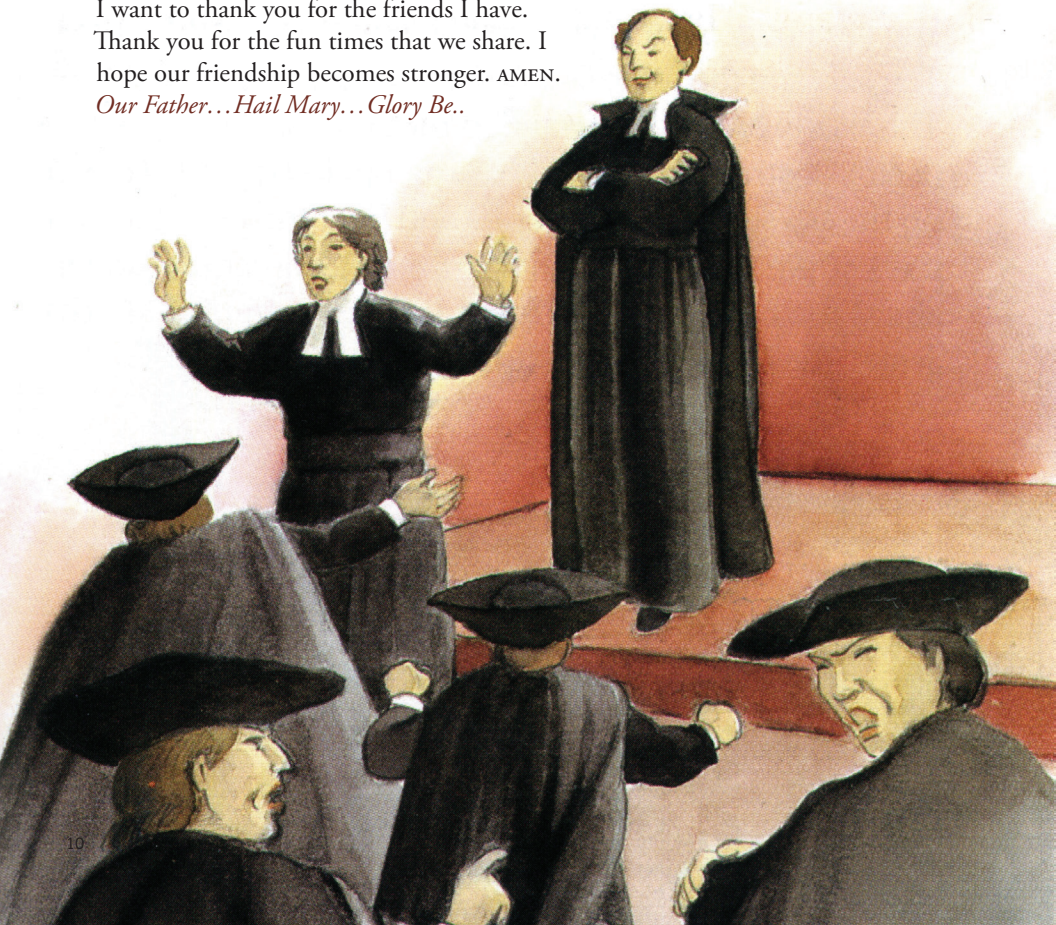
READING

Difficulties began to appear on the horizon in the form of troubles with priests; troubles with an older group of teachers who unlike us, charged tuition; and some brothers leaving because they found the life too difficult. To make things worse, my own health began to decline. At the height of all these troubles, three of us Brothers actually made a vow for life to keep the schools alive, to beg for alms, and to live on bread and water alone if that was what was needed to make the schools prosper. I was now forty years old.

PRAYER

Dear God,
I want to thank you for the friends I have.
Thank you for the fun times that we share. I
hope our friendship becomes stronger. AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..



9. De La Salle in the South of France.

READING

At the age of 60, I was tired and feeling worn out. After a lifetime of hectic activity and after most of the big goals had been achieved, I had this feeling that my work was done and that I needed to step back - for my own good and the good of the Brothers. And so I decided to visit our Brothers in the south of France. I stayed there for more than two years not only visiting the Brothers but spending much time in monasteries to pray to God for guidance.

PRAYER

Dear God,
There are days when I am too busy or too tired to pray to you. On those days, I hope you will understand that I still love you. Please do not grow tired of listening to me. AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..

10. De La Salle Returns to Paris

READING

The year was 1714 and I was already 63 years old. I received a letter from the Brothers ordering me to return from the South of France to resume my responsibilities as head of the Brothers. I had given my word to them before to obey, and so I returned. I took this as a good sign felt that the time was ripe to hand over the leadership of the Institute of the Brothers to a new and more vigorous leadership. The schools and the Institute were now firmly established and my own health was failing. By 1717, I had successfully persuaded the Brothers to elect a new leader.

PRAYER

Dear God,

I pray for the grown-ups who run our school. Grown-ups need prayers too. Make them wise and loving. Help them listen to each other. I hope they listen to us also.

AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..

11. The Death of De La Salle

READING

For two years, I enjoyed my leisure and my retirement, but I knew that I was on my way to another place. It was now 1719 and I was 68. I died in the presence of the Brothers whom I loved and cared for very much. I left this world feeling confident that they would continue the good work we had started together.



PRAYER

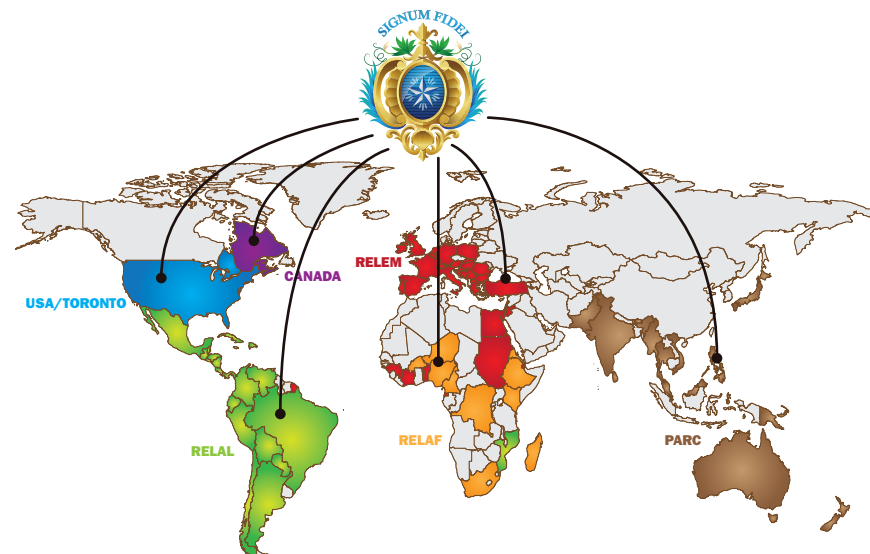
Dear God,

When I grow old, I just want to be a happy person. Please teach me how to be happy. Help me how to find happiness today in the simple things of life.

AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..

12. The work of De La Salle spreads Far and Wide.



READING

I would not have imagined that the good things we had begun in France would some day reach many young people in the Philippines. After 100 years, many more teachers and Brothers and young people are discovering how good God is as they reach out to teach young people, especially the poor. I hope that you will continue to find the school to be a happy and welcoming place. I hope that your school continues to bring you closer to God and help you to develop your gifts and abilities.

PRAYER

Dear God,

Children like us need a good place to learn and to study. I want to pray for other kids who cannot go to school or who have no teachers to teach them. I hope that I can help them to know that you care for them and their future.

AMEN.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be..

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 Ap-
pro-

bation of the Institute of the Brothers of Christian Schools."

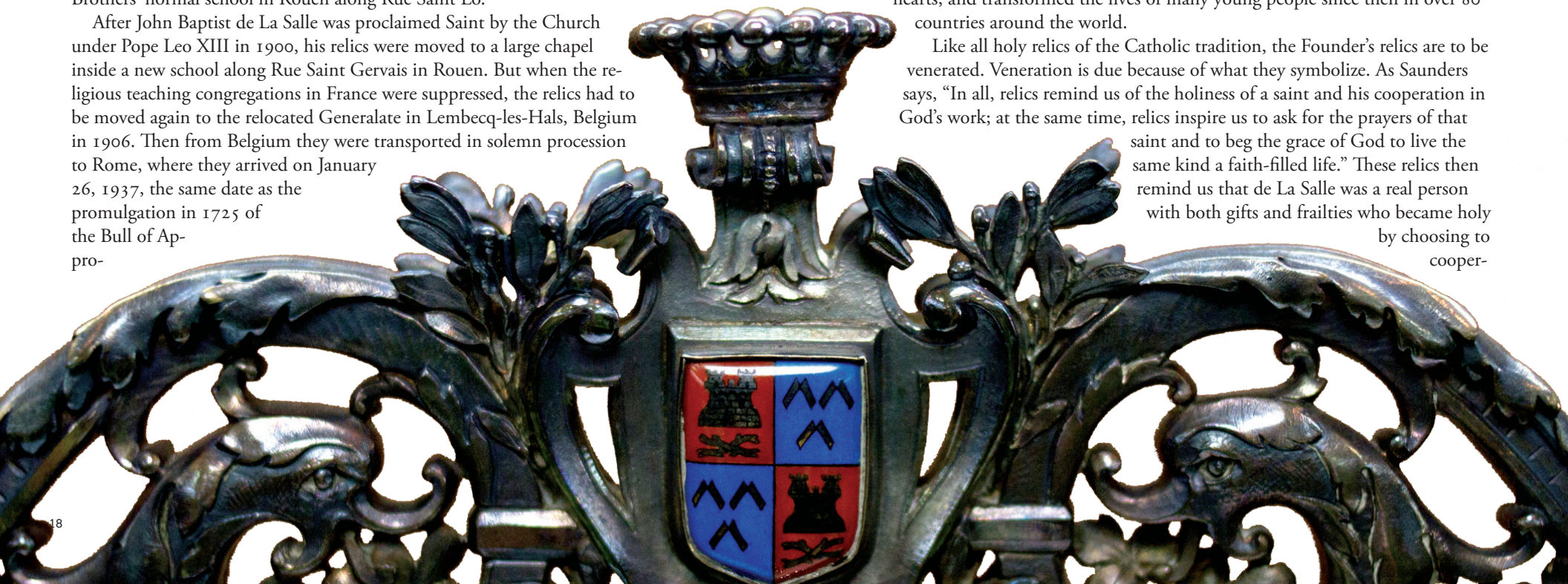
Today the earthly remains of de La Salle are venerated in the Sanctuary of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the main chapel of the Generalate, or Casa Generalizia, of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane) located in 476 Via Aurelia, Rome, Italy. While several of the second 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 cooper-



ate 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 Rummary 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.

