



# De La Salle University

## PRINCIPLES OF LASALLIAN EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

St. John Baptist de La Salle and his companions discerned God's call to service in the human and spiritual distress of the poor and abandoned children. As a concrete response to this divine call, they associated together to conduct schools that would make the benefits of a quality human and Christian education<sup>1</sup> accessible to the poor. By giving visible and effective expression to the creative and redemptive love of God for young people, such schools became "signs of God's Kingdom and instruments of salvation."<sup>2</sup>

Today, the mission of human and Christian education is a wide ranging collaborative effort<sup>3</sup> entrusted to men and women of diverse backgrounds and gifts, who, in creative fidelity to De La Salle's vision, commit themselves to making the benefits of a transformative human and Christian education available to all, most especially to the poor.<sup>4</sup> Each member of the Lasallian Family lives out this commitment through association<sup>5</sup> in a Lasallian educational project according to his or her particular role and area of competence. By our efforts to ensure the vitality, relevance and effectiveness of the educational project, all who participate in and support such work act as partners in the educational process.

**As inheritors of De La Salle's legacy and collaborators in the Lasallian Mission,<sup>6</sup> we are convinced that:**

- Lasallian education is a *mission and ministry*<sup>7</sup> at the service of God, the Church and society, and directed towards *integral human and Christian development and liberation*.<sup>8</sup>
- Lasallian education is imbued with a spirit of faith,<sup>9</sup> which enables persons to interpret, judge and evaluate realities in the light of the Gospel, to unite one's actions and intentions with God's, and to rely on God's providence in acting and discerning God's will.
- Lasallian education is marked by zeal:<sup>10</sup> the whole-hearted giving of oneself to the service of others, in gratuity and generosity,<sup>11</sup> in creativity and fortitude,<sup>12</sup> in compassion and commitment.<sup>13</sup>
- Lasallian education is exercised as a communion in mission<sup>14</sup> marked by a fraternal spirit<sup>15</sup> which enables all sectors of the school community and all those who support its work to collaborate in educating towards a world that is more humane, more just and more fraternal, a world where no one is excluded from the banquet of life.
- Lasallian education forms disciples and citizens, prophets and professionals,<sup>16</sup> who bring the transforming power of the Gospel to bear on culture and on every human endeavor in order to realize God's kingdom<sup>17</sup> of truth, justice, love and peace.



# De La Salle University

## **Guided by these principles, we believe that...Lasallian schools are educational communities where all sectors. . .<sup>18</sup>**

- participate in the Church's mission and are committed to easing the plight of the vulnerable and marginalized sectors<sup>19</sup> of Philippine society;
- are committed to assuring the integral human and Christian development of learners in all their uniqueness and diversity;
- are co-responsible for creating a culture and climate<sup>20</sup> conducive to genuine learning and character formation;<sup>21</sup>
- are stakeholders who work in association with one another in a strong spirit of fraternal solidarity;<sup>22</sup> and
- are committed to continuous renewal and transformation in collaboration with others to accomplish their common mission.

## **Lasallian learners are unique and gifted individuals who...**

- strive to integrate Gospel perspectives and values in the conduct of their daily lives;<sup>23</sup>
- are committed to excellence in order to be of greater service to God and country;
- take progressive responsibility for their own learning and development;
- express concern and compassion for the plight of the vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society and respond to their needs; and
- work together creatively, constructively, and enthusiastically to support the Lasallian Mission.<sup>24</sup>

## **Lasallian educators are service-oriented professionals who. . .**



## De La Salle University

- are genuinely committed to the integral human and Christian development of diverse types of learners through personal witness and service;
- are attentive to learners in their uniqueness<sup>25</sup> and seek to build appropriate relationships<sup>26</sup> that promote total human formation;
- are committed to life-long personal and professional improvement and service;
- work together creatively, constructively and enthusiastically both to realize the Lasallian Mission and to assure the effectiveness and vitality of the institutions to which they belong; and
- serve as resources for the renewal of the Church and for the integral development of society.

### **Lasallian educational experiences are dynamic processes that...**

- challenge learners to realize their full potential by promoting critical and creative thinking, self-knowledge and self-mastery;
- bring Christian perspectives and values to bear on human knowledge and culture;<sup>27</sup>
- encourage synergy, collaboration and dialogue in an environment that is fraternal, hospitable and laden with mutual respect;
- impel learners to translate their knowledge into actual practice for the betterment of society; and
- prepare learners for responsible participation in the world of work, the family, the community, the wider society and the local Church.

Guided by these principles and together in faith and zeal, we aspire to create educational works of quality that will be “signs of God’s Kingdom and instruments of salvation” for the various individuals and groups who seek to realize the fullness of their dignity and humanity through education.



# De La Salle University

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> A human and Christian education takes the whole life of the learner into account and presupposes an anthropology where the human and the Christian are not dissociated. In this vision, Christ is recognized as the very definition of what it means to be fully human. Thus, a Christian intentionality underlies all formative efforts even on those occasions when Christ is not explicitly mentioned. In this perspective, whatever contributes to human excellence, to making one more appreciative of truth and beauty, more alert, more responsible, more loving, more competent, more virtuous, in short, more truly human and capable of dealing with life's various challenges, contributes to growth in Christ's likeness "for it is with a view to Christ and to his Body that God created human nature as well as the entire universe. Opening people to life, to knowledge, and to love is already doing God's work, whose kingdom is not built by the Church alone but also by work in the world..." (Declaration 41.2,3). This view of education, far from being narrow or parochial, suggests an openness to all genuine truth and value, no matter its origin, for from a Christian perspective, all truth and value ultimately find their source and fulfillment in the God who draws near to us in Jesus Christ. Within this educational vision, the Word of God has a privileged place as that which illumines the human search for truth and reveals the ultimate meaning of life (Declaration 42.1).

<sup>2</sup> *Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*. 3. The Lasallian school is a sign because it strives to embody in its life the new reality made possible by Christ's inauguration of the Kingdom. By its way of life and through the service it offers, it is a sign to students and to the wider society of God's gracious care and fidelity towards youth and the poor. Through its efforts on behalf of those it serves, the school mediates the creative and redemptive love of God in the world of education.

<sup>3</sup> Education is viewed here as a collaborative effort that involves teachers, administrators, students, auxiliary staff, alumni, parents and supporters committed to furthering the Lasallian Mission. Collaborating together in a spirit of fraternal solidarity, these groups constitute a community that incarnates and expresses human and Christian values, particularly those of faith, zeal for service and communion. Such a community educates and forms both by way of its curricular offerings and by the quality of its communal life.

<sup>4</sup> In keeping with the redemptive thrust of De La Salle's educational effort, Lasallian works whatever their nature, ultimately aim to make a difference in the lives of those who are powerless, oppressed, marginalized and deprived of dignity. While works in direct service to the poor are to be preferred, educational works that cater to other social classes contribute to this effort by instilling in learners a concern for justice and peace, and a commitment to active solidarity with the poor. <sup>5</sup> *Association*- This Lasallian expression approximates the term "communion in mission." In its fullest sense, this suggests that participants in the mission collaborate together united by a common vision, values and spirit. However, it must be acknowledged that there are *different degrees and levels of collaboration and association* for mission. Association is to be interpreted in an inclusive sense to embrace even those who through goodwill collaborate in the Lasallian educational project without sharing all the Lasallian values and commitments.

<sup>6</sup> *Lasallian Mission* – This is expressed today in these terms: "To give a human and Christian education to the young, especially in schools, with the service of the poor as a priority, in order to evangelize and catechize, to promote peace and justice, accomplished together as a shared mission." (42nd General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools)



# De La Salle University

<sup>7</sup> *Mission and ministry* - Mission is a free response to the graciousness of God who desires the salvation of all. The fundamental idea behind the term *mission* is the understanding that one is called and sent by God to accomplish God's saving designs. Jesus was sent by the Father to carry out a mission of integral salvation, a mission that is now entrusted to the Church. Thus, for baptized Christians, mission takes the form of active participation in the mission of the Church as she proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word, witness, sacrament and service. To say that Lasallian education is a *mission* means that it is a way of participating in the broader mission of the Church.

*Ministry* is a particular public activity undertaken on behalf of the Church in order to witness to, serve and realize God's saving designs. The term ministry applied to education specifies that it is the service of human and Christian education directed especially towards the poor and undertaken in a spirit of faith and zeal that is the concrete form or expression which Lasallian participation in the Church's mission takes.

<sup>8</sup> *Integral human and Christian development and liberation* - Integral human development refers to the development of the whole person in communion with others and with the whole of creation. This development embraces the physical, intellectual, affective, imaginative, moral-spiritual and social-relational dimensions of human existence. From a Christian perspective, the person of Jesus Christ who gave his life in loving service to others reveals what it means to be "fully human and fully alive." Thus, to speak of *integral human and Christian development* speaks of the development of the whole person in view of enabling one to conform to Christ in the pattern of one's convictions, character and operative commitments.

*Liberation* that is integral has four aspects: *personal liberation* is freedom from human ignorance, immaturity and psychological impediments for mature self-possession, self-commitment and self-giving; *spiritual liberation* is freedom from the alienation of sin and religious ignorance for the life of virtue in communion with God and others; *social-political liberation* refers to freedom from unjust and dehumanizing structures and social arrangements for participation in social arrangements that facilitate respect for human dignity and solidarity; *cosmic liberation* refers to freedom from destructive ways of relating to creation for modes of relationship that respect the harmony and integrity of all created things.

<sup>9</sup> *The spirit of faith* – The spirit of faith is a disposition of the mind and heart that (1) allows believers to interpret, judge and evaluate reality in the light of the Gospel; (2) moves and motivates them to contribute actively to the fulfillment of God's saving plan; (3) enables them to take necessary risks and act with boldness in accomplishing what is demanded by each situation, placing their trust in God's providence to guide, sustain and make fruitful their efforts.

<sup>10</sup> *Zeal* – A passionate commitment to realize God's will which in Lasallian terms is the integral liberation and salvation of all especially youth and the poor. In De La Salle's thinking, faith and zeal are inseparable, two dimensions of one spirit. Zeal is the expression of faith in service to human need.

<sup>11</sup> *Gratuity and generosity* - These are qualities that mirror the graciousness of God. These traits are expressed in the willingness to "go the extra mile," to do more than is strictly required without regard for remuneration, and in efforts to extend one's services to the poor and the marginalized who are often unable to repay one's efforts.

<sup>12</sup> *Creativity and fortitude* – Zeal is expressed through a willingness to adapt and diversify the educational project in order to respond more adequately to the needs of learners. This creativity needs to be matched by a corresponding courage and persistence to see the changes through.



# De La Salle University

<sup>13</sup> *Compassion and commitment* – Zeal is fuelled by compassion for those whose need is great and sustained by a commitment to transform their situation for the better.

<sup>14</sup> *Communion in mission* – Solidarity, co-responsibility and collaboration directed towards the fulfillment of a common mission. In a Christian perspective, communion in mission is rooted in communion with God, which leads to communion with others in the mission of building communion in the world.

<sup>15</sup> *Fraternal spirit* – A sense of genuine concern and responsibility for another; a fidelity to persons that manifests itself in expressions of friendship and care.

<sup>16</sup> *Disciples and citizens, prophets and professionals* – These expressions suggest that learners come to integrate the demands of faith and zeal with their personal, professional and political lives.

<sup>17</sup> *God's Kingdom* – The ultimate goal of creation, which corresponds to the human desire for happiness and fullness of life for all.

<sup>18</sup> The sectors of the school community include teachers, administrators, directors, board members, support staff, students, alumni and parents.

<sup>19</sup> *Vulnerable and marginalized sectors* – The term refers in the first place to the economically poor and to all those deprived of the means to realize their dignity as persons. In a broader sense, these are men, women and children who suffer from various forms of “poverty as frustration,” the impoverishment born of injustice, physical and social evils, personal insufficiency and failure.

<sup>20</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 24-26. The climate of a school is “the sum total of the different components at work in the school which interact with one another in such a way as to create favorable conditions for a formation process . . . the elements to be considered in developing an organic vision of a school climate are: persons, space, time, relationships, teaching, study and various other activities. . . . From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith and having its own unique characteristics. The Council summed this up by speaking of an environment permeated by the Gospel spirit of love and freedom.”

<sup>21</sup> Lasallian tradition has always acknowledged that it is *the entire school viewed as a fraternal community organized around Gospel values* that by its very way of life serves as the agent for human and Christian formation and transformation. Collaborative participation in human and Christian formation is thus the responsibility of each member and of the school community; it is not the exclusive domain of any single individual, group or department.

<sup>22</sup> *Solidarity* – Concern for the common good and for the good of each individual in a community.

<sup>23</sup> “Almost by instinct, the living tradition of the Institute has been careful to integrate faith in Jesus Christ with the way young people live their daily lives. There has always been this determination to tie together the work of evangelization with the effort to develop good citizens and to give them access to a good human education.” (*Declaration 40.2*)

<sup>24</sup> Students are regarded as potential partners in either the wider evangelical mission of the Church or the more specific mission of the Lasallian Family. This suggests that efforts must be made to encourage the formation of Lasallian communities and networks of faith and service among both students and alumni.



# De La Salle University

<sup>25</sup> *Attentive to students in their uniqueness*– Educators make an effort to know the learners, their character, their interests, their family situation and social background, their abilities and limitations in order to discern the best ways to help them. They monitor the learners’ progress, diversifying their approaches to meet their needs.

<sup>26</sup> *Appropriate relationships* – Relationships that are respectful of the dignity and individuality of persons and express a real concern and sense of accountability for the learner and his or her future.

<sup>27</sup> The fundamental task of a Catholic school is the integration of faith and culture, religion and life. (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, n. 44)