

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE PHILIPPINE LASALLIAN FAMILY

S E C O N D • E D I T I O N

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF LASALLIAN FORMATION
PRINCIPLES OF LASALLIAN EDUCATION IN THE PHILIPPINES
PRINCIPLES OF LASALLIAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
LASALLIAN ASSOCIATIONS, ASSOCIATES AND OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

Foreword

Since the First Lasallian District Synod in 1999, two questions have constantly arisen in respect to the burgeoning Lasallian Family in the Philippines. These questions are: *Who are we as Lasallians?* and *What are we about?* These are important questions. We believe that we can innovate and respond creatively to the needs of our times more effectively if we are clear about our *center*—the principles and non-negotiables that form the template of our apostolic activity.

This collection of four documents represents nearly 10 years of local reflection on the subject of Lasallian identity and mission. While these documents have been published separately in the past, we thought it might prove more useful for Lasallian partners to come up with a kind of compendium of key documents for quick and easy reference. These documents are meant to be used especially by those with leadership and managerial responsibilities in schools. It is our hope that they can stimulate, enrich and guide discussions on educational and pastoral concerns.



Introduction

Guiding Principles

Lasallian Formation, Lasallian Education & Social Development

These three documents, the Foundational Principles of Lasallian Formation, the Principles of Lasallian Education in the Philippines, and the Principles of Lasallian Social Development, are products of an ongoing effort to define and clarify the nature of the Lasallian presence and mission in the country today. They are the direct result of resolutions passed during the First Lasallian Family Convocation of 2003 calling for the strengthening of the sense of Lasallian identity and the deepening of the Lasallian charism among individuals and institutions in the Philippine District. Each of these statements builds on three values which are fundamental to Lasallian identity: *the spirit of faith, zeal for service*, and *communion in mission*. The intention of each of the three documents is to articulate the commitments that flow from these values in relation to the training and formation of Lasallian associates and partners, the conduct of the Lasallian educational mission in schools and the socio-political involvement of the Lasallian Family.

The preamble of the Foundational Principles of Lasallian Formation articulates the core values of Lasallian identity. In this sense, it is the “heart” of the three documents. The values of faith, zeal for service, and communion, taken together as dimensions of one spirit, capture an important dynamism that goes back to the time of the Founder and his first associates. It is this same dynamism that has given rise to the countless apostolic initiatives and innovations that have since grown out of St. John Baptist de La Salle’s initial response to the call of God discerned in the needs of poor and abandoned youth. Taken as one spirit, the spirit of faith, zeal and communion provide a paradigm for living the Lasallian story today.

These documents are intended to stimulate apostolic creativity, not to restrict it. The intention of the members of the three committees tasked with drawing up these documents was to provide a starting point for discernment regarding the way the Lasallian charism and mission are to be incarnated in Philippine society today. They are intended to provide principles and parameters rather than specific answers and solutions. It is the task of individuals and institutions using these documents to find ways in which to develop their own contextualized way of living out the Lasallian story in creative fidelity to the principles articulated herein.



Foundational Principles of Lasallian Formation

Preamble

“As he became aware, by God’s grace, of the human and spiritual distress of the ‘children of the artisans and the poor,’ John Baptist de La Salle devoted himself to forming schoolmasters totally dedicated to teaching and to Christian education. He brought these teachers together in a community and subsequently founded with them the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.”
(R.I.I.)

In creative fidelity to our Founder’s inspiration, we, the Lasallian formators’ in the Philippines, commit ourselves to assuring the vitality and continuity of the Founder’s mission by providing a genuine Lasallian formation to all members of the Lasallian Family in the Philippines.

Believing in a God of goodness and compassion who wills the integral liberation and salvation of all,² we as Lasallian formators commit ourselves to educating and forming persons of faith and zeal who will make the saving compassion of God a living and effective reality in the lives of men and women today, especially those who are poor and vulnerable³ in society.

We believe that the vocation of an authentic Lasallian is essentially a free and willing collaboration with God in the work of building truly human communities that reflect the values of God’s kingdom as expressed in the Gospel. Thus, the process of Lasallian formation is about enabling persons to acquire the *vision, values, attitudes* and *practices* that support collaboration with God’s creative and redemptive action in the world.

In the Lasallian tradition, there are three constitutive elements that enable this participation. These elements, taken together as one dynamic unity, provide a way of integrating and expressing every Lasallian’s vocation.

The Spirit of Faith

The spirit of faith⁴ flows from a relationship of communion with the Triune God who wills to save all people by drawing them into a life-giving communion with him and with one another in the Lasallian tradition, the spirit of faith is a spirit that allows one to:

- *discover* God's active presence in his Word, in men and women, in the poor, in nature, in history, and in ourselves;⁵
- *judge and evaluate* things in the light of the gospel,⁶
- *search for God's will* in order to carry out his saving plan,⁷
- *unite* one's actions to the ongoing saving action of God in the world⁸ and
- *trust* in God's loving presence and providence when acting or discerning God's will.⁹

Zeal for the Integral Salvation of All

Zeal¹⁰ is the active expression of faith in gospel witness and service. It is oriented towards the integral salvation of persons, particularly the poor and the excluded. Zeal is the enthusiastic and total gift of self for the sake of the mission expressed in such qualities as gratuity and generosity¹¹, creativity and fortitude,¹² compassion and commitment.¹³ It involves a preferential concern for the poor and the vulnerable. The desire to be of greater service to others conditions the quest for excellence and continuous self-improvement.¹⁴

Communion in Mission, Mission as Communion

Communion¹⁵ recalls the dynamic of association¹⁶ by which the first Brothers bonded together for the sake of the particular mission entrusted to them by God. Communion has four dimensions. As a relationship with God, it is the *source* of all mission and ministry; as a *way of accomplishing mission*, it suggests the solidarity and collaboration that comes from sharing in one vision, one spirit and one mission; as a *way of relating* to others, it suggests openness to all persons and the desire to be brother or sister to all especially those in need; as a *goal* of mission, it suggests the unity that comes through reconciliation between God, human beings and creation.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Lasallian educators are considered formators by virtue of their participation in the Lasallian experience of education and formation. Moreover, those who enable persons to

acquire vision, values, and practices through activities initiated by the campus ministry, social action, guidance counseling, and Lasallian Family offices are considered in a more formal sense as Lasallian formators.

² *Integral salvation and liberation* – Integral salvation refers to the salvation of the whole person in communion with others and with the whole of creation. This salvation embraces the physical, intellectual, affective, imaginative, moral-spiritual, and social-relational dimensions of human existence. It can be experienced in a partial way in history but awaits consummation at the end of time. *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.

³ *Poor and vulnerable* – 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.

⁴ *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.

⁵ In his letter to young Lasallians (July 2002), the Superior General, Br. Álvaro Rodríguez Echevarría FSC, writes:

“First of all, the spirit of faith invites us to look at life, events, history, as places where God is made manifest. Here we are speaking of looking at everything in the light of faith or in the light of God, and to discover Him present in his Word, in men and women, in the poor, in nature, in history, and in ourselves.

“In the GOSPEL, his Word is always alive and ever present. For De La Salle, the Gospel was not a book which evoked a story of the past, but the Good News of a close God who loves us as we are “today.” And it is up to us to make that gratuitous love present to the world, that love which we experience in our lives.

“In HUMAN PERSONS made in the image of God and the revelation of his mysteries.

“In the POOR. If everyone is a reflection of the face of God it is especially in the poor where his manifestation is greater. The Founder invites us to “recognize Jesus beneath the poor rags of

the children” (Meditation 96.3). The more we have this attitude, the more we will be attentive and sensitive to all forms that are opposed to God’s saving plan. Being sensitive to, and defending human rights, especially those of children, is part of our Lasallian vocation.

“In NATURE, the place of the marvels of God. It is this nature, which each year is renewed in passing from the death of winter to the life of spring. We need only to open our eyes to find God. The sky, mountains, the sea... all of these are gifts from God. By means of the book of the world, we can reach the author of everything.

“In HISTORY, the place of God’s activities, where his saving plan is made manifest. In a certain way for the Christian, all of history is sacred, because it reveals God and his love for the world. Therefore, two types of reading are mandatory for all young Lasallians. The Bible, especially the Gospels, where God is revealed in his Word and the newspaper or the television news, where each day I can discover the face of God through world events about which I cannot be indifferent.

“In MYSELF, the temple of the Trinity. The more I go deeply into myself the more I encounter God. This was the experience of Saint Augustine: *‘I loved you late in life, beauty so ancient and so new, I loved you late in life. You were in my inner being and I was outside and I set about searching for you in all the beautiful things created by You.’*”

⁶ “Saint John Baptist de La Salle invites us to look at the world with the eyes of faith in such a way that we can say that the two Lasallian places of encounter with God are REALITY and the WORD OF GOD. De La Salle always looked upon everything with a contemplative view of reality, a double view, if you will. On the one hand, there is God’s saving plan, discovered in his Word and in prayer; on the other hand, there is the historic view of the abandonment of the children of artisans and the poor. Both views have the same goal: to put the means of salvation within the reach of young people who are far from it.”

⁷ “... the spirit of faith invites us always to search for God’s will. Basically, this involves searching for the best way to carry out God’s saving plan.” (Br. Álvaro Rodríguez Echevarría FSC). God’s saving plan is the integral salvation and liberation of all, and especially of those who experience the greatest level of need.

⁸ “It is interesting to note that our Founder in his writings cites this text from John four times: *‘I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.’* (John 10:10) God’s will is that each person might have a full life. Therefore, because I have experienced in my life the loving and liberating actions of God, I decide to share with my brothers and sisters my lived experience and to commit myself to God’s work, as De La Salle liked to say.” (Br. Álvaro Rodríguez Echevarría FSC)

⁹ “... the spirit of faith involves always trusting God, abandoning myself into his hands. And I can do it because the Lord is always there, in my inner being. Therefore De La Salle always insisted on the presence of God and I can do this, because the Lord is not only there, but he also leads me in my own history and in the history of humankind. This is one of the principal Lasallian ideas: God seeks us first, before we seek Him; God is already present, God guides us. It is up to us to open ourselves to Him, recognizing Him by faith.” (Br. Álvaro

Rodríguez Echevarría FSC)

¹⁰ *Zeal* – A passionate commitment to realize God’s will which, in Lasallian terms, is the integral liberation and salvation of all, especially the 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.

¹¹ *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.

¹² *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.

¹³ *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.

¹⁴ Attention to excellence and quality in one’s work is a manifestation of zeal for service. One tries to be and do the best one can in order to be of greater service to God and to contribute to the common good.

¹⁵ John Paul II defines communion this way: “Communion... speaks of the union with God brought about by Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.” (*Christifidelis Laici* 19). Communion with the Triune God bears fruit in communion with others: “Communion with Jesus, which gives rise to the communion of Christians among themselves is an indispensable condition for bearing fruit: ‘Apart from me you can do nothing.’ (Jn 15.5) And communion with others is the most magnificent fruit that the branches can give: in fact, it is the gift of Christ and His Spirit... Communion and mission are profoundly connected with one another, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other, to the point that communion represents both the source and fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion.” (CL 32)

¹⁶ *Association* - Lasallian expression approximating “communion in mission.” Association carries the sense of fidelity to God, to one’s collaborators, and to the mission. 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.



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 education¹ 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."²

Today, the mission of human and Christian education is a wide-ranging collaborative effort³ 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.⁴ Each member of the Lasallian Family lives out this commitment through association⁵ 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,⁶ we are convinced that:

- Lasallian education is a mission and ministry⁷ at the service of God, the Church and society, and directed towards integral human and Christian development and liberation.⁸
- Lasallian education is imbued with a spirit of faith,⁹ 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:¹⁰ the whole-hearted giving of oneself to the service of others, in gratuity and generosity,¹¹ in creativity and fortitude,¹² in compassion and commitment.¹³
- Lasallian education is exercised as a communion in mission¹⁴ marked by a fraternal spirit¹⁵ 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,¹⁶ who bring the transforming power of the Gospel to bear on culture and on every human endeavor in order to realize God's kingdom¹⁷ of truth, justice, love and peace.

Guided by these principles, we believe that...

- **Lasallian schools are educational communities where all sectors...**¹⁸
 - participate in the Church's mission and are committed to easing the plight of the vulnerable and marginalized sectors¹⁹ 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 climate²⁰ conducive to genuine learning and character formation;²¹
 - are stakeholders who work in association with one another in a strong spirit of fraternal solidarity;²² 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;²³
 - 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.²⁴

- **Lasallian educators are service-oriented professionals who...**
 - 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 uniqueness²⁵ and seek to build appropriate relationships²⁶ 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;²⁷
 - 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.

ENDNOTES

¹ 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).

² *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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ *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.

⁶ *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)

⁷ *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.

⁸ *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.

⁹ *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.

¹⁰ *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.

¹¹ *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.

¹² *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.

¹³ *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.

¹⁴ *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.

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

¹⁶ *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.

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

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

¹⁹ *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.

²⁰ 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. ”

²¹ 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.

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

²³ “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*)

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ *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.

²⁶ *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.

²⁷ 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)

just society. In developing such awareness, our institutions should recognize the following:

- Awareness is the **first level** in a prolonged **process of formation-conscientization** that is **integral to our educational mission**.
- Every individual needs to be constantly exposed to or immersed in the pressing social problems to which we subsequently aim to contribute a resolution. Such **recursive and multi-sensory experience** should enable the Lasallian to **transcend his/her class** in the same manner that our Founder, St. John Baptist de la Salle, gave up the comforts of the canonry in favor of providing educational services to the poor.
- **Heightened awareness of social realities** subsequently **aids the Lasallian in reading the signs of the times**, discerning from this expansive assessment of social realities the various modes of life-affirming action that could be implemented to address prolonged social problems.

EFFECT LIBERATING ACTION. Individually and collectively, Lasallians must act to eliminate forms of human suffering that contradict God's plan of fullness of life. Avenues and opportunities for self-propelled individual, collective and institutional life-affirming action to respond to varied social issues must be provided in every Lasallian institution.⁸ In carrying out all forms of social development interventions, Lasallian individuals and institutions must be guided by the following:

- The action to be undertaken must be **context-sensitive** so that it could be purposeful and sustainable, necessary attributes of social interventions owing to the depth/magnitude of the social problems to which we hope to contribute resolutions. The contexts for social development intervention cover two dimensions — **institutional** and **societal**. As regards the first, the actions to be undertaken must be aligned to the core mission/purpose of their institution while the second requires that all actions are appropriate to the social milieu where such intervention will be effected. A thorough appreciation of the context would allow for a nuanced selection among the various forms of liberating action (from providing support services [resources and skills sharing] to community and institutional partners, advocating policies to address social and ecological issues, to capacity-building engagements).
- Actions must always be **life-affirming**. The goal of social development interventions is to preserve and bring forth the fullness of life.

- Liberating action is **mutually empowering**, enabling the individuals and institutions engaged in such action to increasingly realize their own worth as individuals and as a collective, deriving joy and fulfillment from the faith-strengthening experience of inducing social change.
- Liberating action should be **capacitating** and not a mere transfer of the endowments of a Lasallian individual or institution to less privileged and impoverished groups. The latter simply reproduces the conditions that perpetuate dependence, helplessness, indifference, benevolence and structural inequality.

BE IN SOLIDARITY WITH PROGRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF THE LARGER COMMUNITY TO BRING FORTH A SOCIETY THAT IS IN KEEPING WITH GOD'S PLAN. As a member of a community, of the nation, and of the global village, **Lasallian institutions must work in solidarity with peoples and institutions** that share the conviction in denouncing and working towards the elimination of unjust practices and social structures that deal death on the suffering majorities, promoting the participation of the underrepresented and implementing other life-giving interventions.

- The institutions and peoples that our institutions could partner with locate themselves in communities, at the regional and national levels, in the Asia-Pacific region, and across the world. **Lasallian institutions**, individually and as a Philippine Family, **have the capacities to effectively work in partnership** with larger organizations, be they Church-based, multisectoral, or a network of civil society organizations.
- At the District level, the Lasallian Justice and Peace Commission (LJPC) shall be the chief vehicle in forging partnerships with national and international organizations that share the same conviction for social change and emancipation in keeping with God's plan.

ENDNOTES

¹ Human suffering, when brought about by faceless forces and structures that are within human control, direction and influence, or when directly inflicted by a human being to another human being, thwarts the will of God and moves the reflection towards theodicy, or the question of the presence of evil in the world. The Lasallian project is intrinsically and constitutively aligned with the Deity that creates and sustains life, wills its well-being and brings it towards fullness.

² As regards freedom, while the Freedom House survey on Freedom in the World reports in 2002 that a record number of countries, 89, have been classified as free, where there is such as broad scope for political competition, respect for civil liberties, independent civic life and media, among others, there are still 103 countries that are categorized as partially free/not free, representing more than 55% of the world's population, where basic political rights are absent and basic civil liberties were widely and systematically denied. From <http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2003/akessay.htm>.

³ In 2002, 37 conflicts in 29 countries in 2002 were recorded. The Philippines was one of the four states to have more than one conflict within its territory. See the website <http://www.proughshares.ca/content/ACR/ACRoo/ACR03-Introduction.html>

⁴ The latest Philippine Human Development Report notes that the country, unlike other Asian nations, has been beset by interrupted growth, which has had a deleterious effect on employment conditions and poverty levels. From the period 1998 to 2001, absolute poverty in the country, in terms of percentage and actual number of people affected has also increased despite the pronouncements of government that they have prioritized poverty reduction. See <http://www.census.gov.ph>

⁵ While fullness of life is understood to be consummated in the as yet continuously unfolding Reign of God and the unrealized eschaton, and as such involves a “not yet” dimension that will be fully realized only in God's own time, the human being's own efforts to contribute to it and consequently to the building of the Reign of God has always been held in highest value in Christianity. All individual and collective efforts then towards praxis in favor of life sustenance and fullness therefore hasten the manifestation of the Reign of God in all its plenitude.

⁶ The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) in its January 29, 1988 Pastoral Letter on Ecology states:

The Bible tells us that God created this beautiful and fruitful world for all his creatures to live in (Gen 1:1-2:4), and that He has given us the task of being stewards of His creation (Gen 2:19-20).

The relationship which links God, human beings, and all the community of the living is emphasized in the covenant which God made with Noah after the flood. (Gen 9:9-12). This covenant recognizes the very close bonds which bind living forms together in what are called ecosystems. The implications of this covenant for us today are clear. As people of the covenant, we are called to protect endangered ecosystems, like our forests, mangroves and coral reefs and to establish just human communities in our land. More and more we must recognize that the commitment to work for justice and to preserve the integrity of creation are two inseparable dimensions of our Christian vocation to work for the coming of the kingdom of God in our times. (Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, What is Happening to our Beautiful Land? [A Pastoral Letter on Ecology]. 29 January 1998)

Stewardship, therefore, means that creation is entrusted to humans, not to exploit and use as they please, but to rule with mercy, love and real concern for the welfare of all. (Sean McDonagh, *Passion for the Earth*. Claretian Publication 1994 p.140)

⁷ Genesis 1:26-28 is often used as the basis of the notion of stewardship as one of the most appropriate Judeo-Christian concepts for addressing the environmental question. “Human beings were created in the ‘image’ of God and commanded to rule over other creatures.” Many have taken this to mean that “all created goods are directed to the good of humanity” and may be used for such. This is an erroneous interpretation that has resulted in the wanton exploitation of non-renewable resources, pollution of the environment, destruction of ecosystems and extinction of species, all in the name of development.

The anthropocentric ethical norms of our Western humanist and religious traditions are not adequate for the challenges which the earth community now faces. In these traditions, only humans have rights; other members of the earth community are mere instruments to be used by humans to meet their needs. The bottom line is that the earth is at the service of humans. (Opcit, McDonagh p. 134)

Integrity of creation means firstly, that all of creation has its own intrinsic value, dignity and reason for being; and secondly, that all of creation is closely linked and interdependent. Humans must broaden their horizons and begin to see themselves within the larger context of the earth, as an integral community of all living and non-living components. Thomas Berry contends that if we are to have a proper ethical framework adequate for the present task of stopping the destruction of our planet and rebuilding it according to God's plan, we must recognize that:

The human community is subordinate to the ecological community. The ecological imperative is not derivative from human ethics. Human ethics is derivative from the ecological imperative. The basic ethical norm is the well-being of the comprehensive community, not the well-being of the human community. The earth is a single ethical system, as the universe itself is a single ethical system. (Thomas Berry, “Ethics and Ecology” unpublished paper (1994))

This does not mean abandoning the traditional Christian insistence on the dignity and value of the human person and opting for what some call a ‘biospheric democracy.’ But it does mean respecting the intrinsic value of other creatures and acting accordingly. (Opcit, McDonagh p. 140)

⁸ Self-propelled individuals are people who take it upon themselves to advocate and work for personal and societal change due to strong personal convictions.



Introduction

Lasallian Associations

In recent years, the concept of association has drawn much attention in the Lasallian world.

From a historical perspective, the Brothers have come to realize the centrality of association to their origins and self-understanding: the primordial community that grew to become the Brothers of the Christian schools was born through an act of association—a commitment to God mediated through active solidarity with one another for the purpose of insuring the accomplishment of God’s work: the salvation and liberation of poor and abandoned youth.

Theologically, we are beginning to understand association in terms of a theology and ecclesiology of communion. Association as it has been lived out in Lasallian communities and schools is a “communion in mission” which finds its origins in the loving outreach of the Son and Spirit who are at work in the world to reconcile all people to one another and to the Father. This understanding is felicitously captured in the Brothers’ formula of vows and the Founder’s retreat meditations. Brotherhood, the charism of fraternity, consists in living out the communion of love rooted in the Blessed Trinity.

The phenomenal growth and development of the Lasallian Family in the past 20 years also points to the fruitfulness of the dynamism of association. The evolution of “shared mission” from the idea of laypersons sharing in the Brothers’ mission to Brothers and partners sharing in one Lasallian mission has been one of the major paradigm shifts that has changed the landscape of the Lasallian presence and apostolate in the country.

The reality of Lasallian association as we experience it today admits to different levels and degrees of ownership and involvement. While the Brothers by their religious consecration symbolize the totality of self-gift to God in the educational mission, there is a growing recognition that there are many other complementary ways of living out the Lasallian charism that are as significant today—the fruits of a charism that is given by God not just to the Brothers but to the entire Church. The present document is an attempt to describe these modes and relationships.



Lasallian Associations, Associates & Other Relationships

Whereas, the Lasallian Family is growing worldwide and the levels of involvement and relationships of its members have evolved over the years in an altogether unique way;

Whereas, the Philippine Lasallian Family recognizes individuals and groups that have a long history of collaboration and have answered the call to deepen their commitment to the Lasallian Mission as manifested by their lives, which are marked by distinctive Lasallian characteristics;

Whereas, the Philippine Lasallian Family sees the need to create a Task Force that will set in place definitive criteria and process in classifying and recognizing Lasallian Associations, Associates and Other Relationships with the end in view of providing them with options to deepen their commitment to the “Shared Mission;”

Let it be resolved that the Brother Visitor create that Task Force within School Year 2003-2004 considering sectoral and geographic representations to generate District-wide participation utilizing various approaches and strategies. The Chair of the Lasallian Partners Council shall convene the Task Force.

Let it be further resolved that the Task Force shall submit within one year its final output to the District Council and Lasallian Partners Council. In turn, the District Council and Lasallian Partners Council shall forward their recommendations to the Brother Visitor for final approval. Dissemination and adoption of the approved criteria and process immediately follow.

Let it be further resolved that the District provide necessary resources to carry out this mandate.

Basic Premise

The main basis for the definitions provided below is the varying levels of commitment to the Lasallian Mission.

Section I: Individuals

A. Members of the Philippine Lasallian Family

This is the entire universe of Lasallians: Brothers, Sisters, students, parents, alumni, teachers, support staff and benefactors who have been or are currently connected to La Salle by virtue of their employment, enrolment or participation in a Lasallian ministry, and who explicitly or implicitly consider themselves members of the Lasallian Family.

B. Lasallian Partners

[These are Lasallians] who in fact share [the Lasallian Mission] in its multiple educational, catechetical, apostolic and professional aspects, and make it possible for the mission to be accomplished. They collaborate with conviction for the time they are [connected with La Salle]. [cf. The Documents of the 43rd General Chapter, p. 4]

These are members of the Lasallian Family who are currently and actively engaged in a Lasallian ministry, and **endeavor** to be personal witnesses through their ethical and moral lives, to live integrated lives worthy of their vocations, and to be committed to their chosen faiths, vocations and professions.

Since the main criterion is active engagement in a Lasallian ministry, some students, parents and alumni may also be considered Lasallian Partners if their involvement goes beyond being beneficiaries of Lasallian education. When these people volunteer to be involved in the delivery of the Lasallian Mission to others, they are de facto Lasallian Partners.

C. Lasallian Associates

[These] are Partners who have had a long record of collaborating in the Lasallian Mission, and who feel a call to deepen the charism, spirituality and Lasallian communion in which they wish to participate. In particular, their lives are already marked by a number of distinctively Lasallian characteristics:

- *a vocation inspired by the charism of Saint John Baptist de La Salle and his values;*
- *a life of faith which discovers God in everyday life understood in the light of*

Scripture and, for persons of other religions, in the light of their own sacred texts;

- *a community experience of some form or other suited to the identity of its members;*
- *a mission of some duration which associates persons with the educational service of the poor;*
- *an openness of mind which makes it possible to see beyond the individual and his immediate environment.*

[cf. The Documents of the 43rd General Chapter, p. 4]

For some persons who are involved in the mission, sharing tasks and responsibilities is a truly personal response to an interior call which they feel, and which motivates them to accept formation, to share, and to listen to Lasallian appeals for commitment to the service of young people in difficulty. By mutual agreement, they may eventually be associated with a community of Brothers or a District, depending on their type of commitment. Perhaps they are already part of a process which will lead them, later on, to join an intentional group, if they so desire.

In certain cases, these persons, if they so wish, and at their request, may express a desire to be associated in a more formal way with the Institute. It is for the Brother Visitor and his Council to recognize these persons as Associates. [The Documents of the 43rd General Chapter, p. 5]

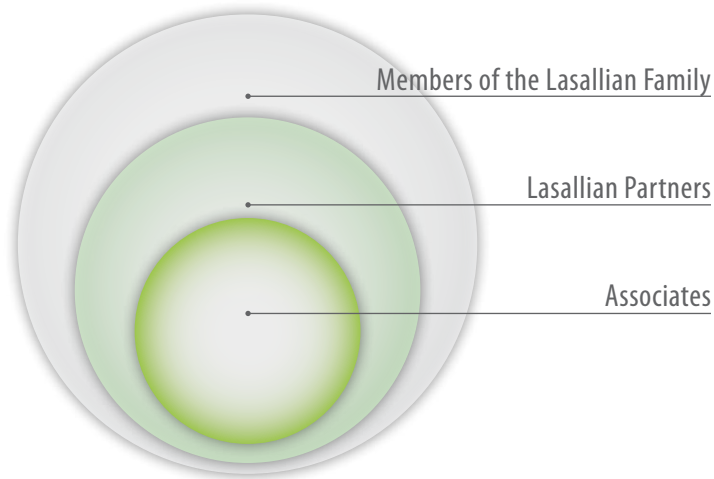
Becoming an Associate is not an award or recognition given by the District. It is first and foremost a free choice of the Partner to deepen his/her commitment to the Mission and to express this commitment in a more formal way. The District merely accepts the commitment and commissions the Partner as an Associate. Because of this deepening commitment, the commissioned Associate can expect, as St. La Salle says, to receive two kinds of rewards: (1) “an abundance of grace”; and (2) “a more extended ministry and a greater ability to procure the conversion of souls.” [Meditation 207.1] The reward for such commitment and good work is, simply put, more work, more responsibility, and the ability to do the work.

The goal of the District is not to create an elite class of Associates. Rather, the goal is to promote the vocation of the Associate so that there will be more Partners willing to commit themselves to the Lasallian Mission in a deeper way. Building up a critical mass of such Associates is necessary to further the Lasallian Mission in the Philippines.

The following are expected of Associates:

- 1 An Associate must constantly endeavor to grow in Lasallian spirituality by his/her involvement in Lasallian formation, be it personal or for other Partners.
- 2 An Associate must be actively involved in the advocacy of particular causes relevant to the advancement of the Lasallian Mission.
- 3 An Associate must continue to strive to live up to the criteria by which he/she was commissioned as an Associate.

☉ Lasallian Individuals



Section II: Groups

A. Lasallian Groups

This is the entire universe of Lasallian organizations, groups and communities: religious congregations, student organizations, parents associations, alumni associations, faculty and staff associations, labor unions, etc. These are all groups that have been formed because of some connection with a Lasallian institution or ministry.

B. Lasallian Partner Groups

We call groups 'intentional' when their members, in response to an interior call, come together voluntarily to practice some aspects of Lasallian life, each group choosing a particular type of life and the length of their members' commitment. For this to be considered an intentional Lasallian group, there are three necessary conditions:

- that some aspect of Lasallian practice are clearly visible;
- that there is a clear commitment to young people and the poor;
- that the Visitor and his Council have authenticated it in an official document for a prescribed time.

...In the medium term, we think that it is possible that a number of other intentional groups will be founded. In fact, these groups already exist, although they may have no juridical structure. They exist because their members have developed links and relationships, and have adopted projects, and have done so with explicit reference to the Lasallian charism which they share. If they so wish, they could envisage becoming intentional groups.

Such a request could come from a whole variety of groups. These could include, among others: Lasallian teams, teams of educators and teachers, joining forces temporarily to respond to specific needs encountered by young people in difficulty, Christian Lasallian communities, volunteers, Lasallian Youth, young people doing missionary work, former pupils, parents of students...

We should note that in the composition of these groups, one can meet Brothers, other Christians, members of other religions, and persons of good will whose point of reference, as the 42nd General Chapter indicates, is the "human and spiritual values recognized, pursued by and lived by all Lasallians – meditation, service of the poor, the family, human rights, the rights of children..." (Circular 435, p. 43) [The Documents of the 43rd General Chapter, p. 5-6]

Lasallian Partner Groups are Lasallian Groups that are currently and actively

engaged in a Lasallian ministry. Since the main criterion is active engagement, some student organizations, parents and alumni associations may also be considered Lasallian Partner Groups if their involvement is in the delivery of the Lasallian Mission to others.

C. Lasallian Associations

Consequently, we recognize as being associated with the Lasallian Mission all intentional groups and all persons who respond to an interior call by an educational commitment which has Lasallian characteristics, and which has been authenticated by a competent authority.

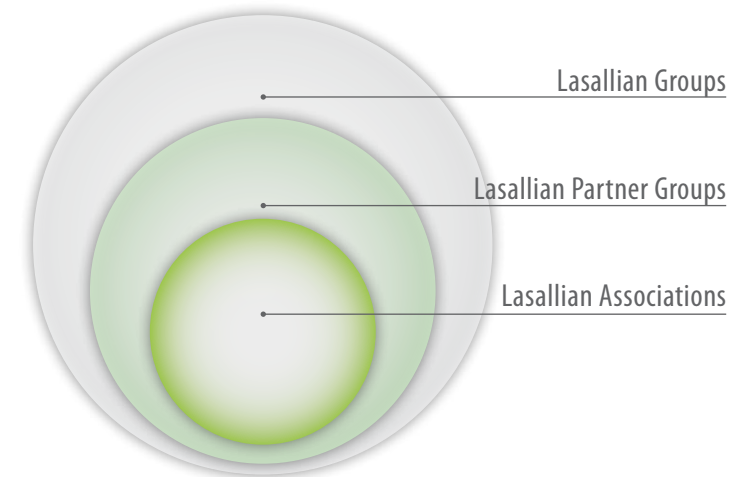
Together, these persons and groups are associated with the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, in order to respond, in a complementary manner, to the demands of the Lasallian Mission. The charism inspiring this mission was given to Saint John Baptist de La Salle, and was authenticated by the Church, for the service of young people. [The Documents of the 43rd General Chapter, p. 6]

A Lasallian Association is a Lasallian Partner Group that has asked to be formally associated with the Lasallian Mission. Becoming a Lasallian Association is not an award or recognition given by the District. It is first and foremost a free choice of the Lasallian Partner Group members to deepen their commitment to the Mission and to express this commitment in a more formal way. The District merely accepts the commitment.

The following are expected of Lasallian Associations:

- 1 The group must have some structures for formation and renewal.
- 2 The group must be aligned with the directions of the Lasallian Mission set by the De La Salle Brothers and the Philippine Lasallian Family as expressed in the resolutions of the General Chapter, the District Chapter and the Philippine Lasallian Family Convocation.

Lasallian Groups



In behalf of the Philippine Lasallian Family, we salute the following committed Brothers and Lay Partners who shared their time and talents to draw up the 3 documents as mandated by the Convocation of 2003.

Convocation Ad Hoc Committee Members

◆ Foundational Principles of Lasallian Formation

Br. Michael Valenzuela FSC (Chair)
Mr. Michael Gamon
Mr. Voc Mistades
Ms. Amy Galang
Dr. Roberto Borromeo
Ms. Myra Patambang
Ms. Evangeline de Peralta

Br. Raymundo Suplido FSC
Ms. Josefina Burgos
Br. Kenneth Martinez FSC
Br. Cecilio Hojilla FSC
Mr. Rene Recones
Br. Josemari Jimenez FSC
Mr. Jojo Iñola

◆ Principles of Lasallian Education in the Philippines

Dr. Allan Bernardo (Chair)
Br. Michael Valenzuela FSC
Mrs. Rebecca Mendoza
Mrs. Teresa Jochico
Dr. Roberto Borromeo
Ms. Teresa Barcoma
Br. Roberto Casingal FSC

◆ Principles of Lasallian Social Development

Mr. Ronald Holmes (Chair)
Mr. Cesar Villanueva
Mr. Eric dela Torre
Br. Emmanuel Hilado FSC
Br. Manuel Pajarillo FSC

◆ Lasallian Associations, Associates and Other Relationships

Dr. Roberto Borromeo (Chair)
Mr. Fernando Belleza
Ms. Josefina Burgos
Ms. Evangeline de Peralta
Br. Armin Luistro FSC
Ms. Mila Manatad
Mrs. Myra Patambang
Dr. Carmelita Quebengco AFSC
Br. Raymundo Suplido FSC

Photos taken from
District Archives

