



## Memories For What Is Possible: Preparation Road

### Chapter 1: MISSION

#### THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION TODAY

John Baptist de La Salle was neither a sociologist nor a specialist in social analysis; but his concern as a priest developed in him a great attention to situations and events and a vision appropriate to making concrete choices (of persons, relations, methods, decisions, oppositions) which were strategically consistent with the aims indicated in his plan.

In the world of today we can come across some big problem areas (see: MEL bulletin 1 pp.22-28. THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS TODAY. Five colloquia towards a more informed understanding. Institute Bulletin N°245, pp. 113-121) which at present condition the Lasallian mission:

- A. Supervised finances - Money - Violence
- B. Migration - Wandering - The Marginalized
- C. Individual acts - Collective conscience
- D. Families - Man/Woman - Parents/Children
- E. Young people - School - Formation - Educators
- F. Search for meaning - Doubts - Wisdom

#### ***A. Supervised finances - Money - Violence***

Societies are becoming more and more organized, supervised, subject to financial rules dictated by international organizations which transcend borders.

Money has become the center of concern because its necessity is imperative and no one knows how to act or think apart from it. It is the first criterion for relationships, commitments, lifestyles, the taking of power.

All of this fosters the development of parallel, illegal finances which permit many to survive and a smaller number to become rich. Corruption is carried out on all levels and infects all societies.

#### ***B. Migration - Wandering - The Marginalized***

Financial precariousness, the search for work, ethnic conflicts, wars which leave entire families strewn by the highways, children left alone. More and more refugees are concentrated on the borders. And it is predicted that within 30 years, there will be created 10 border cities which will be centers for misery and violence, while 90 other cities will develop, especially in the southern hemisphere.

Today people live amidst a generalized precariousness and their future is unforeseeable. Psychologically a sense of wandering pervades the current mentality, beyond the imposed migrations. No longer is it known where the permanent and the solid are rooted: work is precarious, the political situation is precarious, marriage is precarious, relationships are precarious. More and more persons live with a sense of the immediate, the passing, the ephemeral, with a free-flowing of information, they sense that which is impalpable, multiple, consumable, throwaway. They have a sense of a life governed by insecurity and one which no longer has traits of an historic drama that has its stages, progression, orientation, duration; but life shows a semblance of a tragic future that cannot be overcome, that is imposed and which inclines one to say with resignation: "What has to happen will happen". We are no longer in a tension towards the future, something inherent in Christianity, but we are faced with a cyclic concept of time, which is proper to paganism. This is our destiny.

All this makes more difficult the carrying out of projects, a lasting commitment, a will to bring about changes in the situation and to believe that a well-reasoned commitment of persons is possible.



## Memories For What Is Possible: Preparation Road

### *C. Individual acts - Collective conscience*

Societies are required more and more to keep individuals in mind. It is not enough for them to administer to groups, but they ought to take care of the diversity of persons within those groups.

Relationships between strengths and conflicts are more difficult to administer.

This is not the only consequence of what is unwillingly called "individualism" and the fact that it is a conquest in which Christianity has itself played a role should not be surprising. All societies have not assimilated this as yet.

Much more, thanks to rapid means of communication, each person has the possibility of opening himself or herself up to the problems of the world.

But, if solidarity exists, it nonetheless is difficult to maintain this in the long term and commit to a lasting effort of discussion about the structures and causes of injustice, misfortunes and conflict.

Instant unity is also one aspect of "entertainment" and of "wandering".

To conclude let us note that little by little a common conscience is being developed: human ecology is becoming a concern:

Man, his dignity, his freedom, no matter his location;

The abandoned and socially excluded;

The sick, the feeble, the victims;

The planet and what we will pass on tomorrow to our children;

Deprived and exploited populations.

This common conscience unites men and women from all tendencies and from all religions. It probably expresses what is most authentic about present-day humanity and it allows for a reasonable hope.

### *D. Families - Man/Woman - Parents/Children*

All societies are worried about the FAMILY.

In effect, when there are more difficulties, so much more does the FAMILY become the point of reference, the last refuge for protection, where to take shelter in order not to die. It is guarding or rediscovering one of its primitive purposes: to be the first and last place in which to survive. All societies are alike in this no matter what great technical and social progress has been achieved. But when certain family societies can no longer maintain their children and they toss them into the street, those family societies cry out in desperation and they are seen as dispossessing their very dignity and their reason for being; the drama is complete.

Within this environment the Church has much to say to contemporary man. Unfortunately the Church might be interpreted as a judge and not as a companion who helps one along the journey and to make new journeys.

At the center of the family, obviously, is the married couple. No other era in history has scrutinized with such determination male female relationships in terms of their usual studies, but also in terms of what was previously unknown with regard to family life, social life, the concept of association and even in the life of the Church. This is in part due to the progressive disappearance of traditional social roles observed in certain favored societies, but it is also due to a general sharpened consciousness of the basic role of women in social activities.

The next century will tell if the planet is administered better by women than by men.



## Memories For What Is Possible: Preparation Road

These important relational issues (male/female relationships, heterosexuality, homosexuality, fusion, separation, single parent families, adoption, homosexual families, bi-sexual relationships with regard to the child, etc.) are often lived out in a rough type of arrangement that is entrusted to the good will of individuals. An exaggerated respect for persons and situations keeps one from providing instruments for discussion and discernment on the philosophical, anthropological, theological and spiritual order.

### *E. Young people - School - Formation - Educators*

In the area of formation and school, parents search for what is best for their children. They ask the school for quality instruction and training; they invest in the school and they often request that the school fulfill the role that they themselves do not accomplish within the family.

To some degree everywhere middle school or secondary school instruction (high school and institute level) is the weak point in educational systems. The children come full of energy and they are bored at these levels; they have the impression that they are wasting their energy while achieving nothing, doing useless exercises for an uncertain future (employment or unemployment?) as they finish their schooling which very often will not provide them the economic means to enter society or to marry and raise a family.

Given all this, the great number of students should not be forgotten who -in silence - every day give up middle education, disgusted by structure, by difficult relationships, by a sense of repeated failure and by the uselessness of their existence.

This phenomenon tends to increase in countries where a diploma and social position imperceptibly corrode human relationships. Sometimes this leads to child suicide; often they take their own lives without explanation, leaving parents, friends and teachers abandoned.

### *F. Search for meaning - Doubts - Wisdom*

The freedom of persons and the respect for their free will is a belief which is nearly universal; all countries make reference to it although their practices may be dubious. Nevertheless that belief from the Enlightenment more and more affects the great traditional religious systems and especially those which – like Christianity – have established hierarchies and beliefs. There is a great mistrust towards these systems and they are designated as free-thinking. All the more reason that it is suspected that they are the ones who promote wars and conflicts in the name of divinities or superior beliefs. And in fact, a superficial examination of the international situation tends to demonstrate that many power, interest and ethnic conflicts have their origins in supposedly religious causes.

This personal uncertainty has its origin in the abandonment of the "great stories". Now modern man is faced with himself and he searches his very self for meaning which will lift him from himself: he has a taste for the eternal but he is incapable of realizing this by himself.

Then everyone asks him for help and this upsets him: he is bombarded by different information that gives witness to a multitude of values, ideals, lifestyles that come and go at the beck and call of different styles. His reasoning with its critical, philosophical, theological, scientific equipment...was not prepared for life; therefore he no longer has a natural guide to make judgments with a minimal of common sense.

Contrasted with this, the approach of the Catholic Church seems distant, complicated, abstract and focused on problems. In reality its approach is broad-based and it deals with basic problems in detail (life relationships, economic balance, political systems, faith/reason issues, approaches to life, death, work, the unique vocation of the human being, the contribution of religion to "human togetherness", scientific progress, solidarity...) but this urgent discussion is not sufficiently circulated and neither do thinkers, popular leaders, executive authorities, nor even Christians themselves and especially Christian educators take advantage of this approach.



## Memories For What Is Possible: Preparation Road

Finally, many young people who are at the same time critics with regard to the great religious traditional systems, are asking religions about the meaning of life and about its contribution to the universal "human togetherness." They enjoy only the religious approaches that respect the individual and his freedom, that have a minimal number of doctrinal and hierarchical rules and that interfere in the least possible way in their personal ethics.

Nevertheless religions, which present model men and women who have clearly surrendered themselves to others, even the very gift of themselves, always produce the same fascination. And in those cases young people are capable of being united to them.

(Taken from MEL Booklet 1. Institute Bulletin N°245, pp.113-121)

### ACTIVITIES:

#### a) Questions:

1. Are you in agreement with the approach to present-day problems which is set out by the text?  
Add some other approaches which you consider important or which are used in your area.
2. What are the educational problems which are shown in this analysis of reality?
3. Put in order, from your point of view, the list of the problems described. Against which of these problems should the Young Lasallians first take action?

#### b. Dynamic: **GANDALF AND OTHER WIZARDS OF THE XXI CENTURY. THE DISCOVERY OF THEIR AIMS.**

- A. **OBJECTIVES:** This game helps teenagers and young people to discover which area the most important aims of their life belong to.
- B. **PARTICIPANTS:** From 16 to 99 years.
- C. **APPROXIMATE TIME:** About 60 minutes, depending on the distribution that is made.
- D. **MATERIALS:** The document or file that is attached in the following pages: *Gandalf and other wizards from the XXI century.*
- E. **INSTRUCTIONS:**
  - Through this game you are going to reflect about the fundamental things of your life.
  - You have to work on a document for about 20 minutes...
  - Now, in groups of three, you have to talk about the subjects that were made and try to answer to the following questions: Which element relates the five preferred wizards to each other? On the other side, which element relates the not preferred ones? Which options of life do you discover at the basis of your decisions? Have any very different or peculiar aims been expressed in your group? You have 20 minutes to each other to discuss your ideas.
  - Now focus on the wizard who is most important for you and try to answer the following question: What could each of you do to make one of the things that the wizard could do for you?
  - You have 15 minutes... Now let us evaluate the game together...
- F. **DEEPENING MY REFLECTION:**
  - Did you enjoy the game?
  - In which moment has it captivated you more?



## Memories For What Is Possible: Preparation Road

- About what do still have to reflect?
- Do I wish to add anything else?

### G. OBSERVATIONS:

- If there is enough time, it would be interesting to play this game: two voluntaries play the roll of two wizards, each of them with opposed qualities if possible. Both of the participants should be discovering in which points their profusion of wizards differ from each others and to what extent, despite these differences, their qualities could become those of a person.

### FILE 1

#### *Gandalf and other wizard of the XXI century*

Around the 1000 year of the third age, **Gandalf the Grey** was chosen as one of the wizards that were sent to the middle earth... But few of them knew the 15 experts that teach him all the supernatural arts that he dominated. This art have been shown as really useful in some difficult cases. But now you that start this way with us are asked to choose just five of them. Five that, in you opinion, are more important than the others. Mark with a circle your five preferred wizards. Made that, choose another five, which help, in your opinion, does not have so much importance, and mark them with a cross...

( ) 1. **Professor Charmles Graceful Ness, famous cosmetic surgeon.** *He can give you the appearance you want to have, thanks to a new painless technical. With special medicine, he can change your height and your weight; with his help, you can see your beauty dream come true.*

( ) 2. **Dra. Curri Culump Efect, expert in professional education.** *She creates your ideal profession and also can she exempt you from the military service if you tell her.*

( ) 3. **Sheik Mathu Salem, oriental specialist in longevity until 150 years.** *He can retard your ageing process and, at 60 years, give you the appearance of a teenager.*

( ) 4. **Prof. A. I. Genes Gattaca, expert in superior intelligence with measure.** *He is able to train your brain to reach the 150% of intelligence coefficient . During your whole life will you be able to enjoy this intellectual energy.*

( ) 5. **Lovedana and Eros, experts in erotic relationship and sexual happiness.** *They guarantee you will be the perfect lover, qualified to enjoy sexual pleasures and at the same time, give to other people the same pleasures.*

( ) 6. **Dr. Pathy Psycho, expert in relationships between parents and children.** *He guarantees you will never have any trouble with your parents: they will always appreciate your way of living and your principles; they will never criticise or control you.*

( ) 7. **Dr. Jing Jang Ta Ichi, expert from the distant Orient, specialist in strength and vitality.** *He can make you enjoy the perfect health and provide you with a protective shield against illness and misfortunes.*

( ) 8. **Attorney Lanos Tram Afia, specialist in institutional subjects.** *He will guarantee you will never be annoyed by the authority. He can also protect you from any kind of control from your teachers, the police or the government.*

( ) 9. **M. Lyo De Amicis, expert in friendship.** *He assures that you will always have all the friends you like. He also can make it easier to set up a relationship with other people, and what is more, make them agree with you in any kind of Topic.*

( ) 10. **Mill. O. Nhs, specialist in patrimonial enrichment.** *He guarantees you will have a growing rent and stocks property will grow as well. You will never have economic trouble.*



## Memories For What Is Possible: Preparation Road

- ( ) 11. **George Saddam Termin Ator, jr., general expert in power.** *He will teach you to lead other people, and to reach the top day by day. People that are around you will listen to you, look at you and admire you*
- ( ) 12. **Felicity Fore Ver, specialist in dream come true relationships.** *This lady will help you find the love of the people you are interested in; you will never be alone this way. Your life will become full of love.*
- ( ) 13. **Prof. Astro Logeror Oscope, expert in future subjects and prognostication.** *He will answer all your questions and you will learn the art of prediction for yourself.*
- ( ) 14. **Dra. Anna tipsy, expert in human spirit.** *Her aim is to get to know yourself much better and pay attention to yourself. She knows who you are and what you are able to do.*
- ( ) 15. **Professor C. Morals. spirit and professor T. remorse , specialists in the responsible way of life.** *With their help, you will know what you want to do for you and for others. They will teach you how to look at life without being greedy, and by this way of doing it, you are going to be able to help the other people as well.*

### FILE 2

#### Gandalf and other wizards of the XXI century

Around the 1000 year of the third age, **Gandalf the Grey** was chosen as one of the wizards that were sent to the middle earth... But few of them knew the 15 experts that taught him all the supernatural arts he mastered. These techniques have shown as really useful in some difficult cases. But now, you who start this way with us are asked to choose just five of them. Five that, in your opinion, are more important than the others. Mark with a circle your five preferred wizards. Once you have done that, choose another five, whose help, in your opinion, is not so important, and mark them with a cross...

Write once again, the names of the five wizards that you most appreciate and the names of those you like less:

PREFERRED WIZARDS,	REFUSED WIZARDS,
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

Explain your choice in a few words:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

PRAYER:



## Memories For What Is Possible: Preparation Road

+ The Presence of God: Hymn "Let nothing disturb you" - Taizé

**Nada te turbe**

*♩ = 78*

Na-da te tur-be na-da te\_es-pan-te; quien a Dios tie - ne na-da le fal-ta.

Na-da te tur - be, na-da te\_es-pan-te: só - lo Dios ba - sta.

**No-thing can trou-ble**, no-thing can frigh-ten those who seek God shall ne-ver go want-ing. God a-lone fills us. / **Frykt ik-ke me-re**, vær ei be-kym-ret. Vend deg til Je-sus, se, Her-ren le-ver! Frykt ik-ke me-re, vær ei be-kym-ret. Gud er full av nå-de! / **Nul-la ti tur-bi**, né ti spa-ven-ti: Di-o ti a-ma, nien-te ti man-ca. Nul-la ti tur-bi, né ti spa-ven-ti: so-lo Dio ba-sta. / **Ne félj, ne ag-gódj**, ne sírj ne bán-kódj: ha-ti-éd l's-ten, ti-éd m ár m in-den. Ne félj, ne ag-gódj, ne sírj ne bán-kódj: e-lég Ó né-ked. / **Już się nie le-kaj**, po-rzuć zm-ar-twie-nia. Bo-gu za-u-faj, nic ci nie gro-zí. Już się nie le-kaj, po-rzuć zm-ar-twie-nia. Bóg mi-łóś-cią jest. / **Nič te ne mo-ti**, nič ne vzne-mir-ja; če mu za-u-paš, nič ti ne manj-ka. Nič te ne mo-ti, nič ne vzne-mir-ja, saj do-volj je Bog. / **Za-što taj ne-mir**, za-što tje-sko-ba? Bog je pored te-be, vje-ruj u mi-lost. Vje-ruj u lju-bav u-skrs-log Kri-sta, za nje-ga ži-vi! / 두리워 밀리 걱침을 밀리 주님 계시니 아쉬움 없네 두리워 밀리 걱침을 밀리 주님 인에서 / 不再有憂慮，不再有害怕；與主在一起，什麼都不缺。不再有憂慮，不再有害怕；有主就滿足。 / **Bul ra-gal da-ra**, bul xa-laat da-ra, Boo am-ee Yál-la, ñak-ku-loo da-ra, Bul ra-gal da-ra, bul xa-laat da-ra, Yál-la rekk doy-nal

Music: J. Berthier  
© Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, F-71250 Taizé-Communauté

+ Text:

"One of the main duties of fathers and mothers is to bring up their children in a Christian manner and to teach them their religion. But most parents are not sufficiently enlightened in these matters; some are taken up with their daily concerns and the care of their family; others, under the constant anxiety of earning the necessities of life for themselves and their children, cannot take the time to teach their children their duties as Christians.

It is characteristic of the providence of God and of his vigilance over human conduct to substitute for fathers and mothers persons who have enough knowledge and zeal to bring children to the knowledge of God and of his mysteries. According to the grace of Jesus Christ, that God has given to them, they are like good architects who give all possible care and attention to lay the foundation of religion and Christian piety in the hearts of these children, a great number of whom would otherwise be abandoned.

You, then, whom God has called to this ministry, work according to the grace that has been given to you to instruct by teaching and to exhort by encouraging those who are entrusted to your care, guiding them with attention and vigilance, in order to fulfill toward them the principal duty of fathers and mothers toward their children.

God wills not only that all come to the knowledge of truth, but also that all be saved. He cannot truly desire this without providing the means for it and, therefore, without giving children the teachers who will assist them in the fulfillment of his



## Memories For What Is Possible: Preparation Road

plan. This, says Saint Paul, is the field that God cultivates, the building that he is raising, and you are the ones whom he has chosen to help in this work by announcing to these children the Gospel of his Son and the truths that are contained in it."

(LA SALLE, Meditation 193, Points 2&3)

+ Final Prayer: Jesus, you have said...

Jesus you have said: "Just as you did it to one of the least of these, you did to me".

Help us to love our neighbor as you have loved him.

Help us to create a true community of free and responsible persons  
who accept and respect each other in their diversities and their defects,  
who do not just live physically united but who communicate their interior life with each other in a deep openness of soul.

Help us to be persons, who know how to give and receive,  
who know how to share, to carry each other's burdens in order to suffer and  
rejoice together,  
who know how to pardon each other with generosity and are capable of continuous reconciliation.

Conscious of their limitations they accept and become committed to an active collaboration,  
forming a community of love in order to be a community of service  
towards the poor and the abandoned.

Lord, do not leave us locked up in our egoism .

Make us open persons capable of loving.

Give us a vision capable of seeing your love in the world in spite of the failure of men and women.

Give us the faith necessary to trust in goodness in spite of our ignorance and weakness.

Give us wisdom so that we can continue praying with a heart that is aware.

Show us what each one of us can do to advance the coming of the day of Universal Peace.

FRANK BORMAN  
Astronaut

**LIVE JESUS IN OUR HEARTS**