

THE RULE

of

THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS



ROME – 2015

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THE REVISED RULE OF 2015

Dear Brothers,

I am delighted to present to you this edition of our revised Rule. Initiated by the 43rd General Chapter in 2000, the revisions are a result of a collective discernment on the changes and developments in our Church, Institute and world since the publication of the 1987 Rule. Two developments in particular are worth noting: the recognition of the centrality of our vow of Association and the educational mission we share with our Partners.

Following the 44th General Chapter in 2007, two commissions were created to prepare a draft with proposed revisions to the Rule. Their work included consultation, collaboration and dialogue across the Institute and was completed in September, 2012. This draft prepared by the second commission for the revision to the Rule was proposed and adopted as a working document of the 45th General Chapter.

The text of the Rule includes two categories of articles:

- The first are the fundamental code of rules for the Institute which are called CONSTITUTIONS; these cannot be modified without the authorization of the Holy See.
- The second category, called the STATUTES, present a complementary code which remains subject to the authority of the General Chapters.

All the articles, however, have the same force of law for the Institute and, together, they constitute the RULE, which has for its object the guidance of the Brothers in the fulfillment of their vocation within the Church.

This new edition, with the approbation of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, comes into force on September 8, 2015, feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. From that date onward previously approved texts of the Rule

promulgated by the 41st, 42nd, 43th and 44th General Chapters are abrogated. I pray that this new momentum for our vocation in service to all those entrusted to our care, as witnesses to the Gospel, and in our communion with all engaged in human and Christian education, leads us to find once again our first love when we committed ourselves to the following of Jesus. “Christ loved me and gave his life for me” (Gal 2:20).

Only the awareness of being infinitely loved can help us overcome every personal and institutional difficulty. Consecrated persons cannot be creative, capable of renewing the Institute and opening new pastoral paths if they do not feel loved with this love. It is this love that makes them strong and courageous, instills fire and enables them to dare all.¹

May this revised Rule, the result of our collective discernment, be a symbol of determination to joyfully live our Lasallian vocation with love and a renewed vision in service with the poor and vulnerable, and the calls of the Church and world for which our Institute remains very much needed. May it strengthen the contemplative dimension of our life with a passion for God and for humanity. And may it help us appreciate all the more the gift of our life together in fraternal community.

At Rome, 8 September 2015,

Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin

Fraternally in Saint La Salle,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Bro. Robert Schieler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'B' and 'R'.

Brother Robert Schieler, FSC
Superior General

¹ *Starting Afresh from Christ*, Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, (2002), No. 22.



CONGREGATIO
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE

Prot. n. P. 80¹ / 2007

DECREE

Very dear Brother,

Your request for the approval of the modifications to your Constitutions, voted during your last General Chapter in 2014, after a work accomplished throughout the Institute over the last years, duly came to us.

First of all, we want to thank and congratulate you for this work, which comes as a testimony to the spiritual and missionary vitality of your Institute, in faithfulness to the charism received from Saint John Baptist de La Salle. As the note of presentation specifies it, the changes are minor for what concerns the strictly legal clauses; it is rather a matter of rewriting the charismatic clauses centered on three axes:

- The fraternal community life with a reaffirmation of the vow of association (a traditional vow, coming from the Founder and reintroduced in the formula of vows in 2008).
- A more important reintroduction of references to the Founder and to the origins.
- Some details on the mission for an adaptation to times and places, more specifically the apostolic education of the poorest in a secularized society or in a context of religious pluralism, a special care of the respect of creation, and also the collaboration with the people working with you.

We approve the modifications of your constitutions, as they have been voted during your General Chapter in Rome from 22 April to 2 June, such as they have been deposited in our archives, except for what concerns number 73, which was modifying the clauses of number 71 in the former writing.

Indeed, for what concerns the celebration in community of the liturgy of the hours, number 73 in the new writing (which modifies the former number 71) specifies that “the Brothers meet together at least in the morning and in the evening for the time of community prayer. They use or take their inspiration from the liturgy of the hours...”. However, canon 663.3 CIC requires that religious celebrate with dignity the liturgical hours according to the specifications of their own law (*droit propre*), which decides what hours must be celebrated, but not the liturgical form. That is why you will consequently keep the former wording, which guarantees the celebration of the liturgy in accordance with the rules specified by the Church and authorizes to gather for a less formal prayer outside the liturgy.

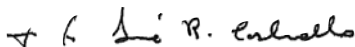
The modifications so approved being important, it is necessary to proceed to a new and complete edition, reviewed and corrected, which must be available to the Brothers and of which you will send us three copies.

I wish that these new Constitutions, enriched by your experience and rooted in your tradition, support the faithful commitment of each of the members, in order to shape men according to God’s loving plan.

I take advantage of this opportunity to greet you and each of your Brothers cordially in the Lord.



R. P. Sebastiano Paciolla, O.Cist.
Undersecretary



✠ José Rodríguez Carballo, O.F.M.

Archbishop Secretary



KEY TO MARGINAL REFERENCES

Holy Scripture

Ps.	Psalms
Ho.	Hosea
Mt.	Gospel of St Matthew
Lk.	Gospel of St Luke
Jn.	Gospel of St. John
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Rm.	Letter to the Romans
1 Cor.	First Letter to the Corinthians
2 Cor.	Second Letter to the Corinthians
Ph.	Letter to the Philippians
Col.	Letter to the Colossians
1 Tim.	First letter to Timothy
Heb.	Letter to the Hebrews
Ja.	Letter of St James

Church documents

AG	Ad gentes – Vatican II – 1965
Can.	Code of Canon Law. <i>Codex iuris canonici</i> 1983
ChL	Christifideles Laici – John Paul II – 1988
DFRI	Directives on formation in religious institutes – CICLSAL – 1990
ECE	Ex Corde Ecclesiae – John Paul II – 1990
EG	Evangelii Gaudium – Francis – 2013
FLC	Fraternal Life in Community – CICLSAL – 1994
GE	Gravissimum Educationis – Vatican II – 1965
GS	Gaudium et Spes – Vatican II – 1965
ICF	Inter-Institute Collaboration for Formation – CICLSAL ¹ – 1998
LG	Lumen Gentium – Vatican II – 1964
NMI	Novo Millennio Ineunte – John Paul II – 2001
Ordo prof. relig.	Ordo Professionis Religiosae – 1970

¹ CICLSAL: Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life

PC	Perfectae Caritatis – Vatican II – 1963 Starting Afresh from Christ – CICLSAL – 2002
SC	Sacrosanctum Concilium – Vatican II – 1963
SCar	Sacramentum Caritatis – Benedict XVI – 2007
VC	Vita Consecrata – John Paul II – 1996

Institute texts

B	Bull of Pope Benedict XIII approving the Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools – 1725
CE	Conduct of Schools – 1720
CL 7	Cahiers Lasalliens n° 7 – Blain, Vie de Monsieur... Volume I
CL 8	Cahiers Lasalliens n° 8 – Blain, Vie de Monsieur... Volume II
D	Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today - A Declaration – 1967
EMP	Explanation of the Method of Interior Prayer
Form. V.	Formula of Vows
GC	General Chapter
LI	<i>Lettres imprimées</i> : letters of De La Salle quoted by his early biographers.
Med.	Meditations of Saint John Baptist de La Salle (Christian Brothers Conference)
MH	Memoire on the Habit
R	Collection of Various Short Treatises
RC 1718	Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (1718 manuscript)
RCV	Religious Consecration and Vows – 39 th General Chapter
T	Testament. Rule and Foundational Documents

N.B.: THE RULE is a single entity: all the articles in the Rule have the same status of law in the Institute.

In the present edition of the Rule the **CONSTITUTIONS** are printed in ordinary characters and the **STATUTES** in italics.

THE SPIRIT OF THIS INSTITUTE

That which is of the utmost importance, and to which the greatest attention should be given in an Institute is that all who compose it possess the spirit peculiar to it; that the novices apply themselves to acquire it; and that those who are already members make it their first care to preserve and increase it in themselves; for it is this spirit that should animate all their actions, be the motive of their whole conduct; and those who do not possess it and those who have lost it, should be looked upon as dead members, and they should look upon themselves as such; because they are deprived of the life and grace of their state; and they should be convinced that it will be very difficult for them to preserve the grace of God.

The spirit of this Institute is first, a spirit of faith, which should induce those who compose it not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God, and to attribute all to God, always entering into these sentiments of Job: "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; as it has pleased the Lord, so it is done", and into other similar sentiments so often expressed in Holy Scripture and uttered by the Patriarchs of old.

In order to enter into this spirit and live up to it:

1. The Brothers of this Society shall have a most profound respect for the Holy Scriptures; and, in proof thereof, they shall always carry the New Testament about them, and pass no day without reading some of it, through a sentiment of faith, respect and veneration for the divine words contained therein, looking upon it as their first and principal rule.
2. The Brothers of this Society shall animate all their actions with sentiments of faith; and, in performing them, they shall always have in view the orders and the will of God, which they shall adore in all things, and by which they shall be careful to regulate their conduct.

For this purpose they shall apply themselves to have great control over their senses and to use them only through necessity, not wishing to use them but according to the order and the will of God.

They shall make it their study to exercise continual watchfulness over themselves, so as not to perform, if possible, a single action from natural impulse, through custom or any human motive; but they shall act so as to perform them all by the guidance of God, through the movement of His Spirit, and with the intention of pleasing Him.

They shall pay as much attention as they can to the holy presence of God, and take care to renew it from time to time; being well convinced that they should think only of Him and of what He ordains, that is, of what concerns their duty and employment.

They shall banish from their minds all vain ideas and thoughts that might withdraw them from these practices, which are very important for them, and without which they can neither acquire nor preserve the spirit of their state.

Secondly, the spirit of their Institute consists in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children, and for bringing them up in the fear of God, inducing them to preserve their innocence if they have not lost it, and inspiring them with a great aversion and horror for sin and whatever might cause them to lose purity.

In order to enter into this spirit, the Brothers of the Society shall strive by prayer, instruction, and by their vigilance and good conduct in school, to procure the salvation of the children confided to their care, bringing them up in piety and in a truly Christian spirit, that is, according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel.

(Complete text of Chapter 2:
"De l'esprit de cet Institut"-
Règles communes, 1718)

EPIGRAPH

“It is necessary that the Brothers take for the foundation and support of their observance of the Rule what Saint Augustine says at the beginning of his Rule: that those who live in community should, before all else, love God and next their neighbour because these are the principal commandments given to us by God and because any observance of the Rule is useless if separated from the observance of these two commandments and is quite useless for salvation because it is established in communities only for the purpose of giving the members facility to observe with exactness the commandments of God.”

(From Chapter XVI,
“De la Régularité”;
Règles communes, 1718)

PART 1

THE VOCATION OF THE BROTHER

CHAPTER 1

THE PURPOSE AND THE SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE

B 1
RC 1718 Ch. 1
D 28,1
D 31
D 44
D 45

1. Deeply moved by the human and spiritual distress “of the children of artisans and of the poor”, and in response to the call of God, John Baptist de La Salle and his first Brothers made a lifelong commitment to God to provide these children with a human and Christian education, and so extend the glory of God on earth. They reformed the kind of schooling available at the time to make it accessible to the poor, and to offer it to all as a sign of the Reign of God and as a means of salvation.

PC 2
B 6
Form. V.
D 5-7

2. In their following of Jesus Christ, and in their faithful response to the calls of the Spirit and to the charism of their Founder, the Brothers consecrate themselves to God to procure his glory by fulfilling “together and by association” their apostolic ministry of education.

PC 2
Can. 578
RC 1718 Ch. 1
D 22
D 32
D 51

3. The purpose of this Institute is to provide a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor, according to the ministry which the Church has entrusted to it.

Christian schools, which need to be constantly renewed, are the preferred sphere of activity for the

Brothers. The Institute is open also to other forms of teaching and education, suited to the needs of time and place.

Can. 588 §3
Can. 589
B 7
RC 1718
Ch. 1

4. The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, approved by the Bull *“In apostolicae dignitatis solio”* of Pope Benedict XIII, is an institute of pontifical right, composed exclusively of lay religious.

Mt. 23,8
Can. 607 §2
VC 60
RC 1718
Ch. 1,1

5. The members of this Institute live in community and call themselves Brothers. By the fraternal character of their community life and their active and disinterested presence among those they serve, they bear witness to the possibility of true brotherhood among people and nations.

GS 4, 1
RC 1718
Ch. 2
Med. 96
D 22,1

6. “The spirit of this Institute is a spirit of faith” which leads the Brothers “to look upon everything with the eyes of faith, to do everything in view of God, and attribute all to God”.

By faith, they judge all the realities of life in the light of the Gospel.

By faith, the Brothers find God in their work, in their concerns and in their joys.

By faith, the Brothers learn to discern in every event, and in every person, especially in the poor, a sign and a call of the Spirit.

By faith, as “co-operators with Jesus Christ”, the

Brothers dedicate their whole life to the building up of the Reign of God through the service of education. By faith, the Brothers abandon themselves, like their Founder, to God's guidance.

Can. 675 §1
RC 1718 Ch. 2
Med. 201
Med. 202
D 22,1

7. The spirit of faith inspires the Brothers with an ardent zeal to serve those entrusted to them and to work with those who share this aim. This zeal, stimulated by the Holy Spirit, infuses life into their apostolic prayer and into all the activities of their educational ministry. Commitment to the apostolate is an integral part of the Brother's consecration to God. The spirit of the Institute implies that all its members are imbued with zeal inspired by the life and teachings of the Founder.

Jn. 16, 13
RC 1718 Ch. 2
D 38, 5

8. In order to enter into and live according to the spirit of their Institute, the Brothers constantly seek sustenance in the Word of God, which they study, meditate on and share with one another. They have a very profound respect for Sacred Scripture, and especially for the Gospel, their "first and principal Rule".

Through a spirit of prayer and attention to the presence of God, the Brothers remain open to listen to the Holy Spirit, who increasingly reveals to them the truth of faith.

By their biblical and theological studies, the Brothers nourish and strengthen their faith.

By their constant efforts to achieve interior purity and self-mastery, they strive, as far as possible, to perform all their actions “by the guidance of God, by the movement of his Spirit, and with the intention of pleasing him”.

RC 1718
Ch. 2

9. The knowledge and the acquisition of the spirit of the Institute are the primary objective of the initial formation of the Brothers. Growth in this spirit commits their whole lives to a Gospel journey. This strengthens their fidelity to their Brothers, to their pupils and to their Partners.

Can. 578
D 5-7

10. Convinced that the Holy Spirit revealed himself in a special way in the life, work and writings of St John Baptist de La Salle, their Father, and subsequently, in the living tradition of their Institute, the Brothers find in these sources the principle inspiration of their mission and their conduct. For this reason, they strive to deepen their knowledge of the Founder and of the history of the Institute.

VC 54

11. The lifelong commitment of the Brothers to one another and to the educational service of the poor defines the specific nature of the Institute.

The Brothers live out their ministry in communion with the Church, and above all, with those who share this same educational mission. They are for them witnesses to the dignity and the splendour of a commitment to education, to concern for young

people, and especially the poor.

Association for the mission leads them to welcome and accompany those who wish to share the Lasallian charism and deepen their knowledge of it. The specific contribution of the Brothers to the shared mission lies in their consecration to the Most Blessed Trinity, lived out in community. Their total gift of themselves to young people, especially the poor, is a special sign of God's own fidelity to them.

D 25

12. Each Brother takes upon himself the responsibility for integrating within his own person these constitutive dimensions of his vocation: consecration to God as a lay religious, the apostolic ministry of education, especially among the poor, and community life.

CHAPTER 2

THE MISSION

From the origins to the present

GS 11
PC 8
Can. 675 §3
Can. 677
RC 1718
Ch. 1, 4.6

13. Deeply moved by the neglected state of “the children of the artisans and the poor”, and as a result of their contemplation of God’s saving plan, John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers joined together to conduct gratuitous Christian schools.

By combining Christian formation and good quality teaching, and doing so in a brotherly manner, they rendered an important and much-needed service to the Church and society.

Today, the Brothers pursue the Lasallian mission in partnership with men and women who recognise the relevance of the Lasallian charism.

They carry out their mission as a witness, a service and a communion.

The Institute’s primary concern is the educational needs of those whose dignity and basic rights are not recognised. By its mission, it seeks to make it possible for them to live with dignity as sons and daughters of God. The Institute establishes, renews and diversifies its works according to the needs of the Reign of God.

In a pluralistic world

AG 11
D 11

14. The Brothers seek to understand the deep aspirations of those they work with. Sensitive to social and religious contexts, they discern the most appropriate ways of announcing the Good News.

***14.1** The Lasallian mission, at both the national and international level, is expanding in secularised, pluri-religious and multi-cultural contexts. In these contexts, the Brothers strive to enter into a respectful dialogue with the persons they are called to serve. This attitude presupposes openness and a willingness to listen, to learn, to witness to Gospel values and, as far as possible, to announce the Word of God.*

***14.2** In order to remain faithful to the charism of the Institute, the Brothers analyse new educational and pastoral needs. They respond to them in a creative manner, either in their existing educational establishments, or by founding other educational institutions for the service of the poor.*

The Mission as Witness

Can. 673
VC 8
Med. 195

15. As “ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ”, the Brothers consecrate their life to God to bring the Gospel to the world of education.

The primary responsibility of the Brothers, and their distinctive contribution to the shared mission, is the witness of a ministerial community, living its religious life in fraternal charity and in solidarity with the poor through its educational service.

The witness of a consecrated life lived in community is a sign and an instrument of God's plan. It demonstrates that love is a saving reality and that, by being Brothers among themselves and with others, they make the Reign of God visible.

The mission as a service: education and evangelization

Med. 160, 3
Med. 193
D 39, 4
D 48,7

16. The Brothers consider their professional work as a ministry. They strive to combine cultural growth with the proclamation of the Word of God, helping those they serve to discover, appreciate and assimilate human and Gospel values.

They accompany each person in their search for meaning and for God.

They are convinced that an education which promotes the integral development of individuals makes them open to the grace of God and the light of faith.

EG 178
D 32,2

16.1 *Sent primarily to the poor, the Brothers, both as individuals and as a community, are led to discover the root causes of the poverty which surrounds them, and to undertake, with great*

determination, the promotion of justice and human dignity by their educational service.

This concern inspires also the activity of the Brothers when it takes place in a better-off social context. They increase the sense of solidarity in those entrusted to them, and make them sensitive to unjust situations of which the poor are so often the victims.

Med. 145,3
D 38,1

17. The life and the educational activity of the Brothers are an integral part of the Church's work of evangelisation. They believe that catechesis, as the Founder insisted, is "their principal function". This conviction determines their formation as well as the choice of tasks to which they may be assigned.

GE 8
ECE 32
GC 44 Ch.
5,1

17.1 *The Brothers play a part in ensuring that Lasallian institutions make the means of salvation accessible to everyone. They do so by means of a quality education and, as far as possible, by an explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ, while bearing in mind the cultural context.*

School curricula are marked by their concern for the promotion of justice and peace, and the integrity of creation. The Brothers take care to safeguard the rights of children and young people.

Brothers working in institutions of higher education pay special attention to ensuring that their students make concern for social justice and the fight against

all kinds of poverty a characteristic of their personal and professional commitments.

ChL 33
D 38, 2

17.2 *To enable baptised persons to live as Christians and become disciples of Jesus Christ, the Brothers accompany them as they seek to grow in faith, fraternity and service. They help them develop a personal relationship with God; to make their contact with his Word, the liturgy and the sacraments a life-giving one; and to prepare themselves for social commitment.*

In their contact with people with different religious traditions, or in highly pluralistic or secularised countries, the Brothers seek inventive ways to announce the Gospel : the witness of a Christian presence and fraternal relations, gratuitous service, the experience of prayer in common, inter-religious dialogue, and sharing with one another the story of Jesus Christ. In their turn, the Brothers allow themselves to be questioned by these people.

When they work with Partners with different beliefs and religious traditions, the Brothers seek to establish common ground for co-operation on the basis of the promotion of human dignity, solidarity among all human beings, and the integral development of the individual, in line with the Lasallian tradition.

The mission as communion

B 6
Form. V.
D 13,3
GC 44 Ch. 1

18. The mission of the Brother finds its sustenance in the passion of God for the poor. Sharing this same passion, the Brothers have, from the beginning of the Institute, carried out their mission “together and by association”.

Communion among the Brothers is both the source and the fruit of the mission they carry out. Each one carries out his apostolate as a member of a community by which he knows he is recognised, supported and sent. Together with his community, he reviews the joys and difficulties of his ministry. This communion extends to all who are committed to the mission.

CE 0, 0, 2
D 8-11

18.1 *The Brothers discern God’s calls in community and respond to them in faith and with zeal. Their discernment takes place also in gatherings in which other people involved in the Lasallian mission take part.*

They take into account the gifts of each person as well as the signs of the times, the challenges of the Gospel and of the Church, and the guidelines of the Institute.

D 13, 3

18.2 *By virtue of their vow of Association, all the Brothers participate as a body in the ecclesial mission of the Institute. By carrying out their*

ministry, whatever their function may be, they contribute to the realisation of this mission.

18.3 *Age or infirmity can oblige Brothers to reduce the pace of their active life. Motivated by faith and zeal, they look for a more appropriate way of exercising their ministry in response to a new call from God. They are then supported by the Brothers of their community and by the Superiors as they look for and carry out, apostolic tasks within their capabilities and in keeping with the aims of the Institute.*

Inspired by the same charism

VC 55 **19.** The Lasallian charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit given to the Church in view of human and Christian education. The Brothers joyfully share the same mission together with their Partners who recognise and live the Lasallian charism. Together, they ensure the vitality of this charism by creating or developing organisational, formation and research structures, in which each one can deepen their understanding of their own vocation and of the Lasallian mission.

VC 56,1 **19.1** *The Brothers strive to promote the spirit of association in educational communities. They are at pains to make the Lasallian message known to all their members; to invite those who so wish, to*

share Lasallian spirituality and to strengthen their apostolic commitment; and to share in the creation and animation of intentional Lasallian communities.

MH 0, 0, 4-0,
0, 6
D 49,5
GC 44 Ch. 8

19.2 *Since their foundation, the Brothers have been helping to promote the Christian laity, and especially lay educators who wish their professional work to be a form of Gospel ministry. Each District recognises the important role of all the Partners in the mission. For this purpose, and as an expression of the spirit of association, it establishes participative structures intended to help the Brother Visitor in areas which concern the mission.*

Urged on by faith and zeal

Mt. 11, 5
Form. V.
Med. 132, 2
Med. 166, 2

20. The Brothers live out their faith as a gift received for the ministry of Christian education. By faith, they contemplate God who has chosen them as workers to bring his salvation to the very poor and lowly.

“Together and by association”, they undertake this saving work with their Partners, in a profession in which “the poor are evangelised”, and young people and adults grow as human beings and as sons and daughters of God. By faith, they praise God at seeing his Reign extended

RC 1718 Ch. 2
D 38, 4
Med. 43, 3
Med. 201, 2

21. “Ministers of God and of the Church”, anxious “to touch hearts”, the Brothers carry out their mission with the “ardent zeal” which the Lord’s work requires.

Urged on by this zeal, and with the attitude of Jesus Christ the servant, they generously put their time, their talents, their energy and their sufferings at the service of those God entrusts to them.

That is why they constantly strive to improve their competence, the quality of their relationships, the witness of their life, and the strength of their faith.

The whole life of the Brothers is transfigured by the presence of the Lord who calls, consecrates, sends and saves.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONSECRATED LIFE

From the origins to the present

Form. V.

22. John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers committed their lives to the progressive establishment of a community which responded to the needs of poor and neglected children.

Called by God to procure his glory by undertaking his work, and by making a lifelong commitment to remain associated with one another in order “to run together and by association Christian and gratuitous schools”, they lived out their consecration to the Most Holy Trinity.

The path they followed continues to inspire and focus the consecration of the Brothers today.

Following Jesus Christ

Rm. 8, 29
Form. V.
RCV 47-49

23. In response to the personal call of the Holy Spirit, the Brothers consecrate themselves entirely to the Most Holy Trinity. For this purpose they associate with one another to procure the glory of God in the ministry of Christian education.

By this total gift of their lives they manifest their confidence in the love of God for them and for those who will be entrusted to them. They find in this ministry and in this love the fundamental motivation for their consecration and their sanctification. They make their whole life a process of identification with Jesus Christ “the first-born of many brothers” in order to be the living memory of his love, and to continue his ministry of salvation.

Rm. 6
Can. 654
VC 30
VC 41
D 17
D 18

24. The consecration of the Brothers expresses the richness of baptism in a distinctive way which complements other forms of Christian life. This consecration gives meaning to the specific activities which it inspires, and gives unity to all the moments of their life. It is for all a constant sign that the work to which they are committed is the work of God. It is a manifestation of the mystery of communion in the Church, an expression of the love of God for humanity, and a prophetic sign which establishes the values of the Reign of God as criteria for discerning human realities.

The Formula of Consecration

B 9
Form. V.
RC 1718
Ch. 33
GC 41
GC 44

25. The Brothers express their consecration, first by temporary and then by perpetual vows, using the following formula :

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
prostrate with the most profound respect before your

infinite and adorable majesty, I consecrate myself entirely to you to procure your glory as far as I shall be able and as you will require of me.

For this purpose, I... promise and vow to unite myself, and to remain in society, with the Brothers of the Christian Schools who are associated to conduct together and by association, schools for the service of the poor, to go wherever I may be sent and to do whatever I shall be assigned, either by the Body of the Society, or by its Superiors.

Wherefore, I promise and vow association for the service of the poor through education, stability in the Institute, obedience, chastity and poverty, in accordance with the Bull of Approbation and the Rule of the Institute.

I promise to keep these vows faithfully (for a period of...years) all my life.

In testimony thereof, I have signed. Done at... on ... in the year of Our Lord...

Signature

Can. 669 §1

26. The Brothers indicate visibly their consecration in different ways depending on circumstances, notably by wearing the distinctive habit of the Institute.

B 18

26.1 *The traditional habit of the Brothers is the robe and white rabat. Depending on local conditions, Brothers in charge of Districts can issue practical instructions regarding the wearing of the*

habit. These instructions are submitted to Brother Superior General for approval.

A charismatic dynamism

RC 1718
Ch. 33
GC 43
GC 44

27. Following the example of John Baptist de La Salle and of the first Brothers, Brothers today take the vow of association for the educational service of the poor. This vow, together with that of stability in the Institute, expresses the specificity of the religious consecration of the Brothers for the glory of God: it unites each Brother strongly with the other Brothers, while also extending and strengthening the spirit of belonging to, and in solidarity with, the whole Institute.

This charismatic dynamism stimulates the creativity of the Brothers to provide the best possible and lasting response to the needs of those who benefit from their mission. It leads them to understand and to live out their other vows from this same perspective.

Association for the educational service of the poor

Form. V.
D 28

28. By the vow of association for the educational service of the poor, the Brothers promise to "conduct" as a community, educational works accessible to the poor.

VC 51

28.1 *The bond resulting from this vow supports and increases the witness that the Brothers give*

of fraternity, and contributes to the effectiveness of the Institute's apostolic activity.

28.2 *To arrive at necessary decisions, they exercise their right and fulfil their duty to participate in discernment processes which take place at various levels of the Institute.*

VC 55

28.3 *The dynamism of unity shown in the community of Brothers binds the Brothers also to all those committed to the Lasallian mission.*

RC 1718
Ch. 7, 14
D 29-33

29. In the light of the Gospel, the Brothers always keep in mind the promotion of justice and the direct or indirect service of the poor – the economically poor, the victims of social injustice, delinquents and those excluded from society – which is the preferred option of their ministry of education. When they work with pupils from better-off families, they teach them the duties imposed by responsibility, and those regarding social justice and worldwide charity.

The Brothers give special attention to those of their pupils who have greater difficulties at school, personal problems, or problems adjusting to family life or society.

D 34, 4

29.1 *Regions and Districts draw up plans which enable all their works to be really committed to helping the poor and combating the causes of poverty. These plans, which include co-operation*

between congregations, develop the community dimension of educational works, and encourage the shared mission to open up more to the service of the poor.

Med. 150, 1

29.2 *Following the example of their Founder, the Brothers see their lives as a process of affective, intellectual, moral and religious conversion, which commits them increasingly to the cause of helping the poor. They do this through dialogue and by taking into account existing social conditions.*

VC 82

29.3 *By their entire life and by their teaching inspired by the social doctrine of the Church, the Brothers prepare their pupils to create relations that are more just among peoples. They help them to become actively involved in promoting justice, peace, solidarity, and the protection of creation.*

Stability in the Institute

Ps. 138
(137), 8
B 9
Med. 59,3
R 2, 2-3

30. By this vow of stability, the Founder and the Brothers expressed both their trust in God who “does not abandon his work”, and their desire to build together, with mutual trust, a community that would ensure the continuity of the work of the schools.

It is this same intention which leads the Brothers today to pronounce the vow of stability in the Institute. By it, they profess that fidelity to their vocation is both a

precious gift of God's love received day after day, and a daily human response to his fidelity.

B 9
Med. 59, 3
R 2, 2-3

31. By this vow, they make a commitment to remain in the Institute in order to fulfil its mission, and to live in fraternal and apostolic communion, faithful to its spirit, to their Brothers, and to those whom they serve in their ministry.

1 Cor. 2, 12
Form. V.
Med. 189, 1

32. By their promise to “remain in Society”, the Brothers commit themselves to strengthening fraternal bonds in community and cohesion between the communities which compose the District and the Institute.

They ask the Holy Spirit to “make known to them the gifts God gives them” so that they may generously put them at the service of the common mission.

Form. V.
Med. 99, 2
R 16, 2, 10

32.1 *The Brothers commit themselves to the Institute in all their uniqueness as persons. Aware of the difficulties that await them, they are ready to respond joyfully and creatively to the successive calls of God at the various stages of their life.*

Obedience

Mt. 18, 14
Jn. 6, 38
Ph. 2, 8
Heb. 5, 8
VC 92
Form. V.

33. Evangelical obedience is a communion with the Holy Spirit who progressively identifies the will of the Brothers with that of Jesus Christ, who did not come to do his own will, but that of the One who sent him “so that none of these little ones would be lost”. This

Spirit reveals his plans through world events, young people, the community, Superiors, the Body of the Institute and the Church.

Inspired by the example of the Founder who submitted his own wishes to the discernment of the “Body of the Society”, the Brothers live out their obedience in a spirit of availability. Each Brother gives priority to common projects over his own plans, and considers his own interests of secondary importance.

D 20,8

34. The Holy Spirit reveals himself usually in community. Each member of the community should be listened to since the Holy Spirit speaks and acts in every Brother.

Differences of age, outlook and formation are a valuable asset when it comes to drawing up the guidelines and making the decisions which the competent Superior has the responsibility of confirming.

Obedience sometimes seems difficult and can conflict with one’s legitimate personal convictions.

If the Brothers do not find a solution by explaining their own point of view to the community and to the Superiors, they accept, by an act of faith, the decision of the Superiors.

Can. 590 §2
Can. 601
T

35. By the vow of obedience, the Brothers make explicit and consecrate their will to obey their legitimate Superiors in all they command, in accordance with the Rule, and relating directly or indirectly to the purpose

of the Institute. By this vow, the Brothers are likewise obliged to obey the Holy Father.

***35.1** Since commands by virtue of the vow are rarely given, the competent Superior should clearly state his intention to do so by an appropriate formula.*

Chastity

Mt. 19, 11-12
PC 12
Can. 599
Med. 201, 3

36. In order to follow Jesus Christ, and as an expression of the total gift of their life to God, the Brothers commit themselves by vow to live a chaste celibate life in community.

Consecrated chastity, a gift of the Holy Spirit and a mystery of death and resurrection, sacrifice and fruitfulness, bears witness before the world to the value of a life in which love is put at the service of all. It also manifests the hope of a promise, based on Jesus Christ's resurrection, that this love has an eternal value.

The vow of chastity makes the Brothers totally available to meet the requirements of their vow of association for the service of the mission.

PC 12
RC 1718
Ch. 7, 13
Med. 101, 3

37. This commitment leads the Brothers to live a life of self-sacrificing love marked by tenderness, wisdom, maturity and respect, and to create among themselves and with their colleagues, an atmosphere

based on fraternal relations. It leads them also to love with respect those entrusted to their care in a way that gives them freedom to grow as persons.

PC 12

38. The Brothers strive to take control of their affective life by being discerning and disciplined in their relationships. They find in their community the support they need, thanks to prayer and appropriate accompaniment. They recognise that the call to a life of chastity implies the need to govern their affective life according to Gospel values.

GC 44 Ch. 6

38.1 *Spiritual accompaniment and the help of competent persons will be made available to Brothers during their initial formation, and in continuing formation programmes*

VC 88

39. Chastity leads the Brothers to value the gift of true fraternity and affection which stimulates community relations. To maintain it, they take care not to allow themselves to be absorbed by their work or their personal interests. They are careful also to maintain their physical health and their psychological balance.

Poverty

Mt. 8, 20
Mt. 19, 24
2 Cor. 8, 9
PC 13

40. By evangelical poverty, the Brothers choose to follow Jesus Christ who, out of love, made himself poor in order to enrich us all by his poverty. Following

Med. 86
Med. 179, 1
D 34, 2

his example, John Baptist de La Salle divested himself of his goods to make himself similar to the poor teachers, and with them, he put his hope in God's Providence, making possible the "Society of the Christian Schools".

Today the Brothers, men of hope, set out on the same path to become poor in spirit and be converted to God, their true treasure. In this way, they make possible association among themselves, availability to their Partners and to the calls of the Church, and a solidarity and closeness to the poor they wish to serve.

Mt. 10, 8
Acts 20, 35
Ja. 2, 15-16
Med. 86
Med. 194, 1

40.1 *In the spirit of the Beatitudes, the Brothers consider all that they are and all that they have as gifts to be shared. In their work, they maintain a spirit of gratuity. They pay special attention to the very poor to whom the Good News is preferentially addressed. They are always looking for better ways of responding to their needs.*

In their personal and community lifestyle, the Brothers seek simplicity in order to be closer to the poor. When working with the poor and sharing their condition, the Brothers are happy to risk losing their social prestige.

RCV 97-142

40.2 *By pooling the fruits of their work, the Brothers demonstrate their fraternal solidarity. Through a spirit of association, each one feels*

personally responsible for shared resources before God and the community. Each Brother freely puts his talents and abilities at the service of others and does not hesitate to ask for help when he needs it.

VC 89
Med. 96, 3
D 30

40.3 *Through love of the Gospel, and as signs of the hope to which the Reign of God invites them, the Brothers make themselves poor and commit themselves resolutely to love the poor and to fight against poverty.*

PC 13

40.4 *The Brothers are careful to ensure that the pooling of the fruits of their work does not lead to collective wealth. Rather, they share generously with their Brothers, with Districts most in need, and with the poor.*

Can. 600
Can. 668 §3

41. By the vow of poverty, the Brothers forego the independent use and free disposal of goods or objects having monetary value. They retain only the bare ownership of their inheritance and the right to inherit.

Whatever a Brother produces by his work, as well as what he receives as a salary, pension or gift, belongs to the Institute.

Can. 668
§§1.2

42. Before the first profession, each Brother hands over to the person of his choice the administration and revenue of his inheritance; and before his perpetual profession, he makes a will, valid in civil

law, by which he disposes of his personal temporal goods.

To change any disposition already made, or to take any action whatever concerning their temporal goods, Brothers need the permission of the Brother Visitor.

PC 13
Can. 668 §4

43. Through a spirit of evangelical detachment, a Brother having at least five years of perpetual profession can freely renounce his personal goods.

To obtain authorisation to do this, he refers to the Brother Visitor who passes on his request to Brother Superior General.

The act of renunciation will, as far as possible, be valid in civil law.

Consecration lived out in community

1 Tim. 2, 4
Form. V.
Med. 193

44. John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers lived out their consecration to God in a community entirely dedicated to the educational service of those He had confided to their care.

Aware of participating in the plan of God “who wishes all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth”, the Brothers live out their consecration day after day by devoting themselves “as far as they are able” and “together and by association” to the mission of the Institute.

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITY LIFE

From the origins to the present

Med. 193
D 7, 1

45. John Baptist de La Salle was led to found a community of men who, enlightened by God and sharing in his plan of salvation, joined together to respond to the needs of young people who were poor and far from salvation. Even today, every community of Brothers finds in this event a fundamental source of inspiration.

Med. 180, 1

45.1 *For each Brother the community is the privileged place to evangelise his life, to develop as a person, and discern educational needs.*

By their presence and their active participation, the Brothers build up a consecrated and fraternal community, dedicated to the mission.

A community of faith

Jn. 17, 21
VC 42
EMP 2, 27

46. The Brothers find inspiration in the prayer of Jesus Christ: “Father, that they may be one as you and I are one, so that the world may believe that you have sent

me”. The community is where the Brothers live out their consecration to God.

It is a community of faith in which the Brothers share their experience of God, encountered in daily commitments and in listening to the Word of God, in personal and community prayer, in reading the signs of the times and in the discernment of the will of God.

D 27, 2
D 20, 2

46.1 *The community values each Brother and supports him as he seeks to respond to the will of God.*

Jn. 13, 34
Med. 91, 2

46.2 *“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another”. The Brothers practise the “new commandment” of charity as being the principal driving force of their life and the primary commitment of their religious consecration.*

Mt. 18, 19-20
EMP 2, 25-32
D 20, 9

47. The Brothers’ community is a community of prayer. The Brothers pray together. Together they hear the Word of God and meditate on it. Together they recognise that they are sinners before God and participate in the Eucharist. Together they seek and find God.

A fraternal community

VC 41
EMP 2, 24-32
Med. 39, 3

48. The community life of the Brothers is, above all, a gift from God, which they receive through Jesus

Christ present in their midst. It is He who gives them the Spirit of love who lives in each Brother and unites the community.

They ask for this gift in prayer. They respond to this grace by putting themselves joyfully at the service of others. In this way, they reflect among themselves in an imperfect manner, the bonds of knowledge and love which constitute the life of the Trinity.

Med. 74

48.1 *The Brothers are aware that their community is a prophetic but fragile sign. Attentive to the daily wear and tear and the fatigue which can affect the community, they ensure that it is constantly renewed. They welcome with gratitude the grace of reconciliation and forgiveness between its members.*

Col. 1, 20

48.2 *As they approach God in prayer and in work, the Brothers are led to go beyond their personal differences and natural preferences with a view to building up a community which recognises the completion of all things in Jesus Christ.*

49. The community is for the Brothers their home. There they live together. They experience anew each day the friendship, the esteem, the trust and the respect they have for one another. They share their sufferings and their joys and allow themselves to be questioned by others. They pay special attention to the young Brothers.

They enjoy sharing their meals, their moments of leisure, and the various services made necessary by life in common. By this active presence and their sensitivity to one another, the Brothers ensure the cohesion of the community.

Rm. 12, 10
Ph. 2, 3-4
RC 1718
Ch. 13, 5-6

49.1 *Community life cannot be maintained without self-denial. The Brothers accept and love one another in their differences as well as in their similarities. They try to be friendly to everyone and a burden to none. In their conversation they stress what is positive and avoid anything that could cause pain.*

Mt. 18, 15-17
Med. 91, 2

49.2 *With tact and charity each member of the community knows how to point out to his Brothers whatever it is in their attitude that is the source of difficulty and conflict either for himself or for the community. In certain cases the community as a whole could be called upon to render this service for one of its members. In such a situation, the Brother Director acts as the person ultimately responsible for safeguarding the fraternal unity of the community.*

Can. 666

49.3 *The community organises its leisure time and holidays. Each Brother uses the means of social communication with discernment. Out of consideration for the work, prayer and repose of the other Brothers, each one is careful to observe periods of silence.*

Can. 608
Can. 665 §1
Can. 667 §1

50. The Brothers' house should be simple and planned in a way that fosters their fraternal relations and their work and prayer. It is established canonically and includes certain areas reserved for the Brothers.

The Brothers make it a duty to reside there habitually, and absent themselves only with the permission of the Brother Director or of the Brother Visitor. For a prolonged absence, canonical prescriptions are to be observed.

SC 73
Can. 921
Can. 922
Can. 998
Can. 1002
Can. 1004
RC 1718 Ch. 22

51. The community shows affectionate concern for the Brothers who are elderly, sick, discouraged or distressed, so that all may feel supported by the love of Jesus Christ.

Keenly aware of the obligations of fraternal friendship the Brothers are especially attentive to those who are undergoing the ordeal of illness, or whom the Lord is preparing to call to himself. At the appropriate time they invite them to ask for the sacrament of the sick.

VC 51
NMI 43

52. The Brothers seek to share with many other people the fraternity they foster in their community. The community, as the home and school of communion, is actively and generously accessible to others, especially to Partners, young people trying to discover their vocation, and to the close relatives of its members. This openness should respect the

requirements of the personal life of the Brothers and that of the community.

CL 7, 240-241
Med. 180, 1

53. The Brothers wish to be at one and the same time brothers among themselves, brothers to those they meet and their Partners, and older brothers to those entrusted to them. Through these relations, they witness to evangelical fraternity, a sign of the presence of the Lord.

An apostolic community

VC 72
D 25, 4

54. Dedicated to the apostolic ministry of education, the community realizes that its mission constantly needs to be discovered at the different stages of its life and as it comes into contact with new situations. Accordingly, it takes part in the reappraisal of both its aims and methods, with a view to coming closer to the spirit of the Gospel and to re-examining the pastoral value of its activity.

D 21

54.1 *Every community contributes to the implementation of the District's apostolic plan by its witness as a community. Individual Brothers contribute directly by their work in educational establishments, by their prayer, by their sharing in Christ's sufferings, and by other means available to them.*

54.2 *The community takes part in an appropriate fashion in the running of the educational establishment it is involved with. In a spirit of association with the Partners, it contributes to the fraternal atmosphere which, marked by mutual respect and freedom, aims to create a community of faith at the heart of the educational community.*

D 26, 4

54.3 *In educational institutions, the visibility of the Brothers' community should be a form of Gospel witness.*

54.4 *The Lasallian charism is a gift for the Church and for the world. Today, it is increasingly a source of spirituality for all those who share the mission. Attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit, the Institute is open to new forms of community life. It is for the Brother Visitor and his Council to discern what form it should take in the light of local conditions.*

Can. 678

55. The community involves itself in the pastoral activity of the local Church. It takes part in the missionary effort of the Institute.

55.1 *The community maintains cordial and generous relations with the Brothers on the missions. It is keen to learn more about their work and to support it.*

The organisation of community life

56. The community takes the time and means to study how it should apply the Rule to its actual situation. It determines also the decisions it should take regarding its life or its mission. Discussions give everyone an opportunity to say what he thinks, and tend to bring about a general agreement of viewpoint and action.

***56.1** At the beginning of each year, and in a spirit of discernment, the Brothers draw up or revise their annual community programme. Everything that forms part of the life of the community is taken into account in establishing this programme: its prayer life, its apostolic commitments, its fraternal life, its internal organisation, its provision for continuing formation, its leisure activities and its relations with outsiders.*

This programme must take into account the guidelines and directives of the District Chapter.

Once the community programme is drawn up, and then submitted for approval by the Brother Visitor, the Brothers are committed to it. It serves as a point of reference for both personal and community assessments during the course of the year, and especially when the Brother Visitor comes for his visit.

56.2 *Each Brother is invited to draw up his own personal programme. Such a programme commits the Brother to a process of ongoing conversion which gives unity and direction to his life.*

When the Brother draws up and evaluates this programme, he takes into account his spiritual growth, the requirements of the community and those of District programmes. If he wishes to do so, the Brother shares his personal programme with the community.

D 20, 8

56.3 *Community meetings are an important occasion for reflection in the light of the Gospel. At these meetings, the Brothers are able to give their opinion, make suggestions and share their experience and knowledge. They consider them to be a necessary part of community life and they participate in them willingly.*

Can. 627

57. As a rule, the whole community acts as the Council of the Brother Director.

In communities where the number of Brothers or some other reason requires it, a Council of fewer members may be formed by agreement with the Brother Visitor. In such a case, the community delegates a certain number of its members to represent it and deliberate in its name.

Can. 627

57.1 *Formal deliberations take place in community before the adoption of the most important decisions.*

Minutes record these deliberations and the decisions taken, and include a special mention of requests to be submitted to the Brother Visitor or to the Brother Superior General.

Brothers who may not be able to take part in the deliberations are duly informed of the matters treated or due to be treated, and also of the decisions taken.

57.2 *All the Brothers support the decisions arrived at by the community and approved by the Brother Director. Each Brother undertakes to implement them.*

PC 13

58. The community administers its material goods in the spirit of the Gospel and in accordance with the demands of religious poverty.

58.1 *Each community has a financial administration, a budget, and accounts separate from those of the educational establishment or establishments with which it is connected. It renders an account of the administration of its temporal goods to the Brother Visitor and to the District Bursar.*

58.2 *The Brothers help to draw up the community budget and to implement it, always having in view the promotion of a simple lifestyle.*

58.3 *In its dealings with its employees, the community observes both the obligations of social justice and the demands of Christian charity.*

T

58.4 *Through fidelity to the spirit of the Founder, and in line with the cultural traditions of the place where it is located, the community is careful to bear witness to gratuity and evangelical detachment with regard to gifts.*

The Brother Director

Can. 618
VC 43
FLC 47-53

59. As the person primarily responsible for the community and its unity, the Brother Director assumes with simplicity his responsibilities, considering them to be a service.

He accompanies, stimulates and supports his Brothers as they seek the common good; he listens to them, respecting confidentiality; he keeps them informed, and he helps them to adopt a spirit of discernment. He intervenes at the appropriate moment to endorse decisions that have matured, and make others regarding matters which cannot wait.

Can. 619

60. As religious superior, the Brother Director is at the service of his Brothers, to support them in their spiritual growth and in the fulfilment of their vocation as individuals and as members of the community. He offers them the support of his help, his advice and his authority. He strives to live himself, and to help others live, according to the spirit of the Rule. He is accompanied in this task by the Brother Visitor or his representative.

60.1 *The responsibility for arranging a periodical personal meeting rests with both the individual Brother and the Brother Director. This meeting is one of the matters discussed when the annual programme is drawn up. Each Brother arranges with the Brother Director when and how these meetings take place.*

60.2 *The Brothers accept this meeting through a spirit of faith. It is first of all a sharing of experience which helps their human and spiritual growth. It promotes also the building up of a fraternal community in which each feels responsible and knows that he is listened to, understood, appreciated and loved.*

Can. 624

61. The Brother Director is appointed by the Brother Visitor according to the procedure established by the District Chapter. Normally, his mandate runs for either three or four years, renewable once or twice, but not exceeding nine consecutive years.

Can. 623

61.1 *At his first appointment, the Brother Director must have had at least one year of perpetual profession in the Institute.*

61.2 *The Brother Director is the usual channel of communication between the community, Brother Visitor and the other communities of the District.*

61.3 *When it is useful, a Brother Sub-Director can be appointed to assist, or if the need arises, to replace the Brother Director of the community. Such an appointment is made in accordance with the norms adopted by the District Chapter.*

Can. 636

61.4 *With the help as far as possible of a local bursar, the Brother Director looks after the maintenance of the buildings and furniture, the administration of property, and the smooth running of the common services. He sees that archive documents are preserved and classified. He respects the deadline when requested to send various documents to the District Secretary.*

The community and the Institute

D 21

62. Each local community forms with the other communities of the District an integral part of the Institute as a whole. It maintains a bond of communion and cordial relations with the other local communities, as well as a readiness to provide fraternal help where needed. It offers a welcome also to other members of the Lasallian Family.

62.1 *The Brothers participate in the life and events of the District. They act on the directives and guidelines given by the District Chapter and by District leadership.*

62.2 *The official visit of the Brother Visitor to the community is the principal occasion on which it evaluates its internal life and apostolic commitments, and deepens its communion with the District and the Institute.*

62.3 *The community takes a special interest in circular letters and other documents sent out by the District, the Region and the Centre of the Institute. The Brothers reflect on them, discuss them and pray about them.*

PC 13

62.4 *Brothers who live in better-off sectors show their concern for sectors of the Institute faced with precarious situations, and readily share various resources with them.*

CHAPTER 5

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE BROTHERS

A spirituality for Brothers dedicated to the poor

R 16, 1, 4
Med. 43

63. For John Baptist de La Salle, the Christian education of the poor is the work of God and must be carried out by men led by the Holy Spirit. He invited the Brothers to unify their life: “Make no distinction between the affairs proper to your state and those of your salvation and perfection”.

Faced with the challenges encountered in his ministry and in his personal and community life, the Brother recognises an invitation from God to deepen his communion with him, with his Brothers and with those entrusted to him. The Institute becomes in this way a living reminder of God’s presence in the world of education.

The Word of God and the spirit of faith

VC 85
Can. 662
Med. 96, 3
Med. 192
RC 1718 Ch. 2

64. In this pluralistic and, in numerous places, secularised world, the Brothers feel the need for daily contact with the Word of God. It is what nourishes their whole life and helps them to understand people, events and the world, in relation to God’s plan.

The spirit of faith teaches them to recognise the invitation of God to love him and serve him in others and in all that makes up their life. Invited by the Founder to do so, the Brothers recognise Jesus Christ in the poor and they adore Him in them.

RC 1718 Ch.
27, 1
CE 2, 2, 23
CE 10, 3, 11

64.1 *In the invocation “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God” as also in the prayer “Live Jesus in our hearts! Forever!”, the Brothers find both the assurance of the constant presence of the Triune God and the call to become in Jesus Christ mediators of his love.*

Med. 195-196
EMP 7

65. The Brothers contemplate Jesus Christ in order to share in his life and become part of his intimate communion with the Father and his abandonment to his will. In this way, they increasingly conform to Jesus Christ, who dwells in them and enables them to represent him as his “ambassadors”, and to communicate him to those they meet in their ministry.

R 13

65.1 *Attentive to the call of the Founder who invites them to be interior men, the Brothers have a responsibility to live a deep spiritual life, paying special attention to their personal prayer and to finding opportunities for silence. They try to avoid anything that leads to superficiality and dissipation, in particular by a responsible use of communication technology.*

VC 44
LI 5
LI 7

65.2 *Inspired by the example of their Founder, elderly Brothers are aware they have begun a new stage in their life. The Lord calls them to participate gladly and in a new way in the mission of the Institute as far as they are able.*

The prayer of the Brothers

Jn. 14, 23
Lk. 11, 1
Rm. 8, 15-
16.26-27
EMP
Med. 62, 2-3

66. Prayer is first of all a gift the Brothers receive from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. For their part, the Brothers welcome it in all the events of their daily life in a way that it inspires a response in the form of praise or thanksgiving, intercession or asking for forgiveness. They never tire of saying “Lord, teach us to pray.”

PC 6, 2
Can. 663 §3
Med. 159, 1
D 9-11

67. The Brothers find the principal source of their prayer in the Word of God, in the liturgy and in the calls that come from their ministry, the Church and the world.

Med. 198, 1
CL 8, 118

68. The work of the Institute is the work of God: prayer and the apostolate are inseparable. The Brothers make every aspect of their ministry a part of their prayer. It is in communion with Jesus Christ that they discover the interior freedom, the grace and the spiritual discernment required by their ministry. Whatever their professional responsibilities, the Brothers make sure they devote the time necessary

to their prayer. In this way they show that the success of their work is in the hands of God. This view frees them to carry out properly even the most difficult tasks with commitment, discernment and peace of mind.

Rm. 13, 14
Can. 663
§§2.3
RC 1718 Ch. 4
EM
Med. 33, 1
Med. 78, 1
Med. 129, 2
Med. 159, 2
Med. 198, 1

69. The Brothers should have a special love for interior prayer and consider it “as the first and principal of their daily exercises”.

In interior prayer, they unite themselves with the person of Jesus Christ in his mysteries, virtues and teachings. In this way, they are continually called to make their own the spirit and the heart of Jesus Christ, and to live in his presence all day long.

Interior prayer breathes life into all aspects of the Brothers’ ministry. It draws down the blessing of God on all their activities and on those entrusted to their care. They share in this way the fruit of their prayer.

Can. 664
Med. 205, 1
R 14, 8

70. In their daily examination of conscience, the Brothers become aware of the loving action of God in their life, and intensify the quality of their response. In this exercise, they find the help necessary for their spiritual growth.

Spiritual growth as members of a community

FLC 39-40
NMI 43
Form. V.

71. Consecrated to the Holy Trinity, the Brothers live in association for the mission.

Their fraternal life in community is a gift of the Holy Spirit which leads each one to overcome any tendency to be withdrawn. By accepting this gift, the community develops a spirituality of communion.

Faith and charity lead the Brothers to accept those with whom God has called them to live. They recognise the challenges of community life as an invitation of the Holy Spirit to grow in love, understanding and forgiveness.

Med. 74, 2

72. Recognising that unity in a community calls for a constant effort of conversion, the Brothers, by their active presence in community life, organise their spiritual life and seek to deepen it. In this way they help one another to grow in faith.

Can. 663 §5
R 14, 12

72.1 *Periodically, and especially during the annual retreat, the Brothers take stock of their lives in the light of the Gospel.*

VC 95
Can. 630
§§1.2.5
Can. 664

72.2 *The Brothers frequently approach Jesus Christ in the sacrament of reconciliation. They welcome his forgiveness and learn from Him how to forgive.*

VC 95
Can. 630 §1

72.3 *The Brothers are invited to have recourse to spiritual accompaniment throughout their life.*

72.4 *The Brothers organise their activities in a way that enables them to give the necessary importance to religious studies and spiritual reading.*

SC 84
VC 95
FLC 14
Can. 663 §3
Can. 1173-
1175
D 20, 9

73. The Brothers meet together at least in the morning and in the evening to celebrate the liturgy of the hours in union with the praise and continual intercession of the Church. They may also organise different forms of prayer by which to express the life of the community.

VC 93
VC 94
FLC 16
Med. 159, 1

73.1 *The Brothers regularly share the Word of God: it enlightens their life and inspires their mission.*

73.2 *The Brothers seek to make their community an example of spiritual life. They welcome gladly those who wish to join them in their community prayers. On such occasions they organise these prayers to take their presence into account. They show their availability to help people who wish to learn to pray.*

Can. 608
Can. 663 §2

73.3 *The oratory where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved is the preferred place for community prayer. Brothers choose their own times for adoration.*

1 Cor. 11, 26
SCar 81
Can. 663 §2
Can. 897
Can. 899
D 18, 7
D 20, 10

74. The Brothers recognise that the Eucharist, a communion with Jesus Christ and his paschal mystery, is the principal source of their sanctification, the growth of their union, and the vitality of their ministry.

As far as possible, they take part in the Eucharist every day.

74.1 *The community annual programme makes provision for a certain number of occasions when the Eucharist will be celebrated in a more personalised and festive way. It provides also for Eucharistic services for days on which it is not possible to have Mass.*

74.2 *As members of the local Church, the Brothers take part in its life as far as possible.*

LG 69
Can. 663 §4
B 1
Med. 150, 3

75. Spiritual life is nourished also by traditional Institute devotions. The Brothers have a special devotion to Mary, Mother of God, to whom John Baptist de La Salle consecrated his Institute. They learn from her the docility to the Holy Spirit which characterises a true disciple. In her total “yes” they see a model for their own consecration and an example of abandonment to God.

The Brothers find a model for their whole life in St Joseph who shared in the work of salvation by the human education of Jesus Christ. They invoke him, remembering that the Founder placed the Institute under his protection.

Can. 663, 4
Med. 151, 3
D 53, 3

75.1 *Mindful of the recommendations of the Church, and faithful to the traditions of the Institute, the Brothers honour the Virgin Mary each day, either individually or as a community, by the recitation of the rosary or by some other devotion to Mary approved by the Church.*

D 53, 3

76. To St. John Baptist de La Salle, they accord the honour and love due to their Founder and spiritual master. They immerse themselves in his writings and in the lessons to be drawn from his life. They seek to make him known and invite others to follow him as Patron Saint of Teachers. They imitate him in his love of the Church and his dedication to humanity.

They keep in mind the saints and the beatified Brothers, and have recourse to their intercession.

RC 1718 Ch. 23
Med 185

77. The Brothers faithfully keep alive the memory of their deceased Brothers, especially those they have known and loved. In prayer and in the Eucharist, they remember them and express their communion with them.

CHAPTER 6

THE FORMATION OF THE BROTHERS

BECOMING A BROTHER, A LIFELONG PROCESS

Growth in faith and accompaniment

CL 7, 169
CL 8, 28-29

78. Welcoming the will of God in his regard, John Baptist de La Salle transformed his entire life “from commitment to commitment” and through a succession of calls and failures, into a process of constant growth in faith. To enable his Brothers also to grow in their vocation and to make their mission to young people bear fruit, he provided for them accompaniment of quality.

Lk. 4, 16-19
VC 82
CL 7, 222;
325s

79. Following Jesus and the example of their Founder, the Brothers see their personal, community, intellectual and spiritual development as a progressive conversion to the God of the poor.

Mt. 4, 18-22
Lk. 19, 1-10
Jn. 4, 1-42
PC 18
VC 17
DFRI 8-9

80. Every vocation originates in the mystery of a personal meeting with God, whose calls elicit free responses.

By faith, the Brother recognises that his life is a dialogue with God, which enables him to grow continuously in fidelity.

He discovers in this way the daily presence of the living God in his mission, his consecration and his community.

VC 67 **80.1** *Personal and community accompaniment help each Brother to integrate the constitutive elements of his vocation. This accompaniment requires particular attention to be given to the various processes which lead to his affective, intellectual, moral and religious maturity.*

Can. 661
VC 71
DFRI 29
DFRI 67 **80.2** *Responsibility for a Brother's formation lies first and foremost with the Brother himself.*
He is invited to draw up a personal formation programme to help him live out his vocation more fully.
This continuing formation includes all dimensions of his life.

FLC 43
DFRI 26 **81.** Brought together by God for the educational service of young people, and especially of the poor, the community, a forum for dialogue and a home, is the context, the recipient and the agent of the formation of the Brothers.

In the community, the Brothers help one another to grow humanly and spiritually.

By this process of association, they fulfil their vocation and deepen their sense of belonging to the Institute.

81.1 *The community draws up an effective and continuing plan for its own formation. It evaluates it as part of its annual community programme.*

81.2 *The District is responsible for the formation of all the Brothers at the various stages of their life.*

The responsibility of the Institute for the formation of the Brother

Can. 659
Can. 661
Starting
Afresh from
Christ 15

82. The Superiors and the communities provide each Brother with the necessary living conditions and means to pursue his spiritual, theological and catechetical formation, and to maintain his professional skills at the required level.

Can. 659 §2
DFRI 70

82.1 *In order to respond to the needs of the Brothers, those responsible for Regions and Districts draw up appropriate personal renewal programmes intended especially for Brothers of a mature age.*

For those approaching retirement, they offer opportunities to renew themselves and to acquire new skills.

DFRI 29

83. Throughout their life, and particularly during the decisive first years following their perpetual profession, Brothers grow in their vocation by being responsible for their own continuing formation.

83.1 *The Superiors take the necessary means to*

ensure that qualified and competent Brothers take charge of continuing formation programmes.

83.2 *Those responsible evaluate periodically the formation programmes and plans organized in communities in their jurisdiction, as well as the actual participation of each Brother in this renewal.*

83.3 *Anxious to provide Brothers with the spiritual help they need, those in charge of the District give much thought to providing formation intended specifically for Brother Directors and for those who are more involved in personal accompaniment.*

83.4 *Brother Superior General and his Council make sure they promote continuing formation programmes in the Institute, intended in particular for the training of formation personnel. They ensure that even Districts with fewer human and financial resources can participate also in renewal programmes organised in the Institute.*

VC 71
VC 98

83.5 *As a service specific to the Centre of the Institute, the International Lasallian Centre (C.I.L.) aims to contribute to the living unity and the revitalisation of the Institute in the various cultures of the world. It promotes the spiritual renewal of the Brothers who take part in it and helps to prepare those who will be called to fill leadership positions in the Institute.*

VC 71
ICF 7-8

83.6 *The Centre of the Institute promotes and organises research projects on the person of the Founder and his thought, the development over the years of the work he started, and the educational practice and spirituality of the contemporary Institute. It provides financial help for this research and for the translation and diffusion of the Lasallian message.*

ICF 8

83.7 *The Brothers take advantage of the formation programmes organised by the local church or other institutions.*

The pastoral ministry of vocations

Mt. 9, 37-38
Rm. 12, 4-5
LG Ch. 5
Can. 233 §1
GC 44 Ch. 5

84. The entire People of God is responsible for awakening vocations in the Church. The Brothers make their Lasallian charism known, and show the importance and specificity of their vocation. They show they are willing and ready as intermediaries of the Lord to invite and accompany young people and adults who feel called to the various Lasallian vocations.

GC 44 Ch. 5

84.1 *Each Brothers' community examines the quality of its witness to the Gospel and its ability to awaken, welcome and accompany new vocations. Likewise, the whole educational and Christian community undertakes to promote vocations.*

GC 44 Ch. 5 **84.2** *The pastoral ministry of vocations normally depends on the educational values of the establishments and movements that young people and adults belong to. The promotion of a culture which takes vocations into account makes individuals aware of their gifts and invites them to put them at the service of others.*

84.3 *First-hand experience of the poor through voluntary service, and living and working with them, offers young people the opportunity to understand the value of a vocation and the service of others.*

Mt. 9, 37
Med. 207, 3 **85.** The words of Christ “Ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest” lead the Brothers to consider prayer as a fundamental aspect of setting up and developing a pastoral ministry of vocations.

The recommendation of the Founder “Pray to him that he will be pleased to make your Institute grow and bear fruit day by day” stimulates the Brothers to organise prayers for vocations in community and in their establishments, and among parents of pupils, teachers, friends and among the young people themselves.

Jn. 1, 39
Heb. 13, 1-2
Can. 673 **86.** For a pastoral ministry of vocations to become an effective invitation to share the life of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, it is necessary:

– that by their own lives, the Brothers witness to the

presence of God among people, to the liberating force of his Spirit, and to the tenderness of his love;

- that communities which make a point of being open and welcoming, put into practice, in a fraternal and apostolic way, the words of the Gospel “Come and see”;
- that the Institute works effectively to renew itself by responding to the most urgent needs of the world of young people waiting to be evangelised.

INITIAL STAGES OF FORMATION

Admission and accompaniment of vocations

Can. 597
DFRI 2
D 15, 1

87. Those who come to the Institute to discern and to develop their vocation need to find points of reference and persons to accompany them. The formation of candidates therefore is one of the Institute’s major concerns. In consultation with the centre of the Institute, each District or Region ensures that it draws up and implements a coherent formation programme for all the stages of introduction to the life of the Brother. This coherence ensures a correct balance between human development, spiritual initiation, studies and a first-hand experience of the life and ministry of the Brother.

DFRI 30-34
D 14, 2

88. All the Brothers, and in particular those responsible for formation, are careful, when dealing with candidates, to take into account their age, their culture,

their social background, the level of their religious, intellectual and professional training, and their personal experience of the Church and of the Institute.

88.1 *The Brother lives out his vocation in an international context. This makes it necessary for some stages of formation to take place at a regional level in programmes which cater for Brothers of different languages and cultures.*

Openness with regard to other cultures will also require the Brother to express the fundamental dimensions of his vocation in the context in which he will exercise his ministry.

DFRI 6

89. When it accepts a candidate, the Institute commits itself to providing him with the means he needs to achieve his goal in life and to fulfil his vocation; and to assist him in his personal process of growth as a Christian and of his progressive incorporation into the Institute. The community life of the formation staff must be, by its quality, a sign of the authenticity of the religious life into which they are initiating the candidates, and an effective way to lead them to commit themselves to it. Candidates commit themselves to their formation with their gifts and their limits, and with a great openness to the Spirit.

D 16-27

90. Initiation into the life of the Brother is a unified process which goes from the period of preparation before the novitiate to perpetual profession. Its aim

is to help candidates acquire the spirit of faith and of zeal proper to the Institute, to meet Christ in their life and to follow him. It supports them as they mature and discern their personal vocation; and it prepares them to commit their entire life to a process of growth in the faith and of progressive integration into the Institute.

Can. 597 §2
DFRI 42
DFRI 51

90.1 *The stages of formation take into account the different pace at which candidates progress. Each District ensures that the length of each of these stages is sufficient, and does not shorten it when urgent needs arise. Canon Law and the norms of the Institute, in particular those of the Guide for Formation guarantee the freedom and authenticity of the course of action followed by each candidate.*

Can. 660 §1

90.2 *Study programmes for candidates should be drawn up with reference to programmes recognised by academic or ecclesiastical authorities. The purpose of these programmes is to provide the religious educator with the skills he needs. Theological, catechetical and pedagogical studies are an essential means to help the candidate or the young Brother consolidate the foundations of his faith and the skills required by his mission.*

90.3 *The personal interview plays an essential role in accompaniment and in evaluating the extent to which candidates have matured.*

The postulancy

Can. 597
DFRI 42

91. The postulancy is that stage in initial formation which precedes and prepares for entry into the novitiate. It provides the candidate with the means to pursue his growth in maturity, to enrich his faith, and to discern the authenticity of his vocation to the Brothers' life. It provides an opportunity for his decision to enter the novitiate to mature by allowing him to experience for the first time the Institute's religious community and apostolic life.

***91.1** The postulancy has its own programme distinct from that of the novitiate. It takes place as far as possible in the cultural setting of the candidate.*

***91.2** Initiation into Christian life and instruction in it are the focus of special attention during the postulancy to enable postulants to deepen their life of faith.*

***91.3** First-hand experience of living and working in association for the educational service of the poor is an essential factor in the discernment of the postulant's vocation.*

The novitiate

Can. 646

92. The novitiate is the unique experience of initiation into the religious life of the Brother. With

great respect for each candidate's pace, formation staff lead the novices to adopt progressively the fundamental spiritual attitude of a disciple of Saint John Baptist de La Salle: abandonment to God in the footsteps of Christ, for a community service of evangelisation and education accessible to everyone, but giving preference to the poor and young people.

92.1 *In the case of an inter-District novitiate, the manner in which Brother Visitors exercise their authority will be stipulated in the relevant statutes.*

Can. 641-645 **93.** To be validly admitted to the novitiate, the candidate must be seventeen years of age and be free of any canonical impediment. To be admitted licitly, he must satisfy the other conditions required by Canon Law. Admission to the novitiate falls within the competence of the Brother Visitor of the District in which the candidate requests to be admitted.

Can. 641 **93.1** *The candidate expresses his reasons for joining the Institute in writing and in discussions with those in charge. This written request is submitted to the Brother Visitor who makes a decision after consulting the District Council.*

Ordo prof.
relig. 1970
N° 1-13 **93.2** *The beginning of the novitiate is marked by a special ceremony during which the candidate receives some symbols of his entry into the Institute, such as the religious habit, the Rule or the Bible. Such a ceremony is intended to highlight*

the determination of the candidate to follow Jesus Christ in his life as a Brother, as well as the welcome of a new member by the fraternal community of the Institute.

Can. 652

93.3 *The novitiate programme should enable the novices to know themselves better, to understand better the contemporary world and Institute, and to adjust better to their own culture. The novice, therefore, undertakes:*

- 1. to know the nature, the finality and the history of religious life;*
- 2. to situate the distinctive vocation of the Brother in salvation history and in the service of the Church, and in the complementarity of Lasallian vocations;*
- 3. to begin to experience a more personal encounter with Jesus Christ;*
- 4. to learn about prayer, asceticism and the apostolate, taking into account the contribution of the Bible, liturgy, catechetics, theology and pastoral ministry;*
- 5. to know the Brothers' way of life by learning about the Institute and its mission, by studying Institute texts and in particular by assimilating the fundamental inspiration of Saint John Baptist de La Salle;*
- 6. to develop a positive attitude towards different*

cultures, and to learn from the various experiences of the inculturation of the Gospel.

Ho 2, 16
Can. 652
D 16-27

93.4 *To implement the aims of the novitiate an atmosphere is required which is conducive to recollection, to long periods devoted to prayer, reflection, and the assimilation of what has been taught; as well as a practical introduction to community life, and a reasonable amount of apostolic work. The novitiate provides opportunities for synthesis which help the novice to continue the process of integrating the constitutive dimensions of the Brothers' life.*

Can. 648 §2
Can. 650 §1
Form. V.

93.5 *Bearing in mind that the first vow of the Brothers is that of association for the educational service of the poor, novices are progressively offered the opportunity to engage in apostolic work, suited to their ability, and which is constantly evaluated with those accompanying them.*

Can. 650

93.6 *Individual spiritual accompaniment is a fundamental part of initiation into the consecrated life. The Brother Director of novices explains the importance of spiritual direction. He has the primary responsibility for it, but this does not prevent the novices from being able to approach some other qualified person.*

Can. 650 §1

93.7 *The general conditions governing novitiate formation stipulated by Canon Law allow for a*

certain degree of flexibility in their implementation. The overall novitiate programme is approved by the Brother Superior General. It is subsequently adapted, with the active and ongoing participation, of the novices who come.

Can. 647 §2
Can. 648
Can. 649 §1

94. To be valid, the novitiate must be made in a house designated for this purpose and must last for a minimum of twelve months, spread over a period of no more than two years. An absence from the novitiate house lasting more than three months, continuous or otherwise, renders the novitiate invalid. An absence of more than fifteen days must be made good.

Can. 647 §1

94.1 *The opening or transfer of a novitiate always requires the consent of the General Council and the written approval of Brother Superior General.*

Can. 647 §3

95. The Brother Visitor may authorise the group of novices to live for specific periods of time in another house designated by him.

Can. 647 §2

96. With the consent of his Council, the Brother Superior General may authorise a candidate to make his novitiate validly in another community of the Institute, under the authority of a specifically named professed Brother.

Can. 650 §2
Can. 651

97. The position of Director of novices is normally entrusted to a Brother with at least five years of

perpetual vows and completely free to do this work full-time. As far as possible, he will be given one or more persons to help him.

Can. 653 §1

97.1 *In his work of discernment, it can happen that the Brother Director has to send a novice away. However, if he has to make such a decision, he would do so only after discussing the matter with the novice, asking the advice of his staff, and contacting the Brother Visitor.*

Making vows

Can. 653 §2

Can. 649 §2

Can. 656

98. On the completion of his novitiate, and with all the conditions required by Canon Law duly fulfilled, the novice, if he is considered suitable, is admitted to temporary profession; otherwise, he is dismissed. If any doubt remains regarding his suitability, the Brother Visitor may prolong the time of probation for a further period fixed by him, but which may not exceed six months.

Can. 653 §2

Can. 656, 3°

98.1 *Not later than two months before the end of the novitiate, the novices freely make a written request to make their first vows. The Brother Director sends the Brother Visitor non-confidential information which could be useful.*

Can. 656-658

Can. 689

98.2 *Vows are made according to the norms of Canon Law and the following prescriptions:*

- 1. Admission to vows is decided by the Brother Visitor.*
- 2. The request of the candidate for each admission to vows is examined by a Chapter of Admission made up solely of finally professed Brothers, and whose composition is determined by the District Chapter. When first vows are involved, at least one member of the novitiate staff is invited to take part. In the case of final profession, the Chapter of Admission must include the fully-professed members of the District Council. The vote of the Chapter is consultative, except in the case of perpetual profession, when it is deliberative.*
- 3. The Brother Visitor invites the candidate to come in person to speak to the members of the Chapter of Admission to explain to them the reasons for his decision. If he prefers, the candidate is free to do so in a letter addressed to the Brother Visitor or the members of the Chapter of Admission.*
- 4. When special difficulties occur during a Chapter of admission to vows, or regarding the non-admission of a candidate, the candidate himself or the Brother Visitor can always refer the case to the Brother Superior General.*
- 5. When perpetual profession is involved:*
 - If the majority vote of the Chapter of Vows is negative, the Brother Visitor cannot admit the candidate to vows, but the candidate or the*

Brother Visitor can refer the case to the Brother Superior General.

- The minutes of the Chapter of Admission must be sent to the Brother Superior General, together with the Brother Visitor's decision for or against the admission. The Brother Superior General confirms or invalidates the decision made by the Brother Visitor. The ratification of the Brother Superior General is indispensable for the validity of perpetual vows.

6. Vows are received in any part of the Institute by the Brother Superior General or his delegate, Brother Vicar General or one of the General Councillors; and in a District, by the Brother Visitor or his delegate.

The period of temporary vows

Can. 659 §1
DFRI 56
DFRI 59

99. The period of temporary vows has as its aim to enable the young Brother to grow in his vocation and to continue the formation begun in the novitiate. It serves also to consolidate his fidelity in everyday life, and prepare him for perpetual profession. The Brother must therefore acquire the skills he needs on a professional and apostolic level, learn how to live in community and how to live out his consecration.

Can. 659 §2
Can. 600
DFRI 60

99.1 *Suitable and high-quality structures, in particular, scholasticates or host-communities, are put in place in each District or Region to provide formation processes which respond to the particular needs of student Brothers.*

FLC 54

99.2 *The community is for the Brother a place where his formation continues. The example of a life of prayer and service, and the example of fraternal dialogue help him to make adjustments in his first years of community life.*

99.3 *In his choice of studies, the Brother takes into account the aims set by his District and by the Institute regarding pastoral service. This choice is made on the basis of discussions between the Brother and District authorities. The international dimension of the Institute makes the learning of at least one foreign language necessary.*

99.4 *To make it possible for Brothers with temporary vows to participate more in the life of the Institute, District authorities ensure that they can take part in various District study and decision-making bodies, such as Chapters, Councils and Commissions.*

Can. 659 §2
Can. 660 §2

99.5 *The period of temporary vows must be closely supervised by the Brother Visitor and the Formation Commission. Three periods deserve special attention:*

- 1. The period immediately after the novitiate which serves to prepare the Brother to exercise his mission as a catechist and as an educator, if this preparation was not done previously;*
- 2. The first years in an active community, during which there should be a plan designed by the District and community to provide accompaniment for the Brother as he tries to pursue his own formation. In particular, he learns how to exercise his ministry as a Brother in the context of the shared mission;*
- 3. The period of preparation immediately before perpetual profession.*

Can. 655
B 8

99.6 *To prepare for their perpetual profession, and beginning at the end of the novitiate, the Brothers commit themselves by temporary vows for periods which may vary from one to three years. The duration of the period of vows is decided by the District authorities in agreement with the Brother requesting to make the vows.*

Can. 607 §2
Can. 657 §1

99.7 *At the end of each period of temporary vows, the Brothers request to renew them, unless they are eligible and wish to ask for admission to perpetual vows, or they prefer to leave the Institute of their own accord.*

Perpetual profession

Can. 654
Form. V.
D 18, 1

100. By his perpetual profession, the Brother expresses his commitment to unite himself and to remain in society for his whole life with the Brothers of the Christian Schools. His feelings are similar to those of the Founder and of the first Brothers when they formed an association at the beginning of the Institute.

D 18, 7

101. The nature and importance of the definitive commitment call for certain preconditions: human and spiritual maturity, growth in faith, assumption of personal responsibility for his life as a Brother, and an understanding of the values which underpin his commitment.

***101.1** The Brother Visitor and the Formation Commission, in collaboration with other Districts and the Region if necessary, make suitable arrangements for accompaniment during the period immediately preceding the taking of perpetual vows, and during the years that follow.*

Can. 655
Can. 657
Can. 658, 2°

102. The Brothers may be admitted to pronounce their perpetual vows when they have fulfilled the following conditions: they are at least twenty-five years of age, with at least five years of temporary vows in the Institute, and they have lived three years in a community doing apostolic work.

Can. 655
Can. 657 §2

102.1 *The period of temporary vows may not exceed eight years. However, if it seems appropriate, the Brother Superior General may permit the Brother to prolong this period but not beyond a ninth year with temporary vows.*

Fidelity to the Institute

Form. V.
D 53, 2

103. Throughout his formation and its follow-up, the fidelity of each Brother to the Institute is reinforced by his continual conversion to Jesus Christ, and by his vow of stability. The Brother witnesses to his fidelity in the mission.

Can. 688
Can. 691 §1

104. A Brother may believe that he has just reasons for leaving the Institute. He should, however, through personal prayer and reflection, weigh carefully the reasons for such a decision. If after serious reflection and counselling, the Brother discerns he has good reasons for leaving the Institute he can make his request at peace with himself and in a spirit of abandonment to the Lord.

Can. 688-692
B 1

105. A Brother with temporary or perpetual vows may not leave the Institute of his own accord without having been dispensed from his vows by the competent authority: the Brother Superior General with the consent of his Council, in the case of temporary vows; the Holy See, to which the Brother

Superior General will transmit the request together with his own opinion and that of his Council, in the case of perpetual vows.

Can. 684-687 **106.** All that concerns the transfer to another
Can. 694-704 institute, exclaustation or the dismissal of a Brother, must conform to the prescriptions of Canon Law and to the norms proper to the Institute.

Can. 702 **107.** A Brother who leaves the Institute lawfully, or who is lawfully dismissed from it, cannot claim recompense for any work done in the Institute. Charity and equity demand that the Brothers do not lose sight of their duties regarding those who leave them.

Readmission to the Institute

Can. 690 §1 **108.** The readmission to the Institute of a Brother who left it lawfully is a matter for the Brother Superior General. He makes a decision only with the consent of his Council. The candidate for readmission need not repeat the novitiate, but it is for the Brother Superior General to determine the conditions of an appropriate period of probation to prepare for temporary profession, as well as the length of time in vows before making perpetual profession.

PART 2

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE INSTITUTE

INTRODUCTION

A dispute arose also between them about which should be reckoned the greatest, but he said to them, among pagans it is the kings who lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are given the title Benefactor. This must not happen with you. No, the greatest among you must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves. For who is the greater: the one at table or the one who serves? The one at table, surely? Yet here am I among you as one who serves! (Lk. 22, 24-27)

Lk. 22, 24-27 **109.** Gathered together as a community in response to a personal call of the Spirit, consecrated to the Triune God to procure his glory, associated by vow for the educational service of the poor, the Brothers, following the example of Jesus Christ, consider authority to be a service.

110. Following the example of John Baptist de La Salle who, from the beginning of the Institute involved the

“principal Brothers” in a process of consultation, discernment and decision-making, the Brothers exercise authority in a spirit of co-responsibility and subsidiarity. Those who hold authority encourage initiative and a sense of responsibility in each of the Brothers in the areas under their charge.

110.1 Brothers called upon to exercise authority are appointed for a fixed period. They act both in response to current situations and in view of the future, for the service of the common good.

110.2 At all levels of the Institute, Brothers called upon to exercise authority allow themselves to be guided by the Spirit as they seek and accomplish the will of God. They also accept the views of the Brothers as a means of perceiving together God’s plan.

110.3 On the completion of a process of listening, fraternal discussion and community discernment, it falls to those who exercise authority to assume all their responsibilities by making decisions and by encouraging the initiatives necessary for the smooth running of the communities, the Districts and the Institute, in accordance with its charism.

110.4 Authority is at the service of communion among everyone. It reflects its concern for the vitality of the Institute as a whole notably by

developing interdependence among the units that compose it.

110.5 *Authority is careful to ensure that the mission entrusted to each Brother corresponds to his personal vocation and to the needs of association for the educational service of the poor. Those who exercise it seek to develop the quality and efficacy of the ecclesial mission of the Institute.*

CHAPTER 7

THE GENERAL CHAPTER

Lk. 22, 25
Can. 618
Can. 619
D 53, 2

111. In imitation of Jesus Christ who serves his brothers, and following the example of their Founder, the Brothers consider the exercise of authority as a way of serving the community. Authority has for its purpose to promote communion among all the Brothers, the vitality of the institute, the efficacy of the mission and interdependence among the various units that compose it.

Can. 596 §1
Can. 631
§§1.2

112. Constituted to represent the whole Institute, the General Chapter has been since the days of the Founder the ultimate expression of the communion that exists among all the Brothers. It perpetuates among them the living fidelity to the special charism of the Institute.

Responsible for the whole Body of the Institute, the Chapter is qualified to undertake in its name a periodical evaluation of the life of the Institute, to provide for its continuing adaptation and renewal, and to set out the main guidelines for future action. In addition, the Chapter elects the Brother Superior General and the Brother General Councillors. It has the power to take all suitable legislative and

administrative measures that concern the establishments and members of the Institute.

113. An ordinary General Chapter is held once every seven years. It is normally convoked by the Brother Superior General.

If because of exceptional circumstances, it is not possible to hold an ordinary General Chapter at the end of the seven-year period, the Brother Superior General has recourse to the Holy See for a temporary prolongation of his mandate and that of his Councillors.

114. When circumstances require it, the Brother Superior General or, if the need arises, the Brother Vicar General or, failing this, the General Councillors, can convoke an extraordinary General Chapter, provided the decision to do so is supported by a majority of General Councillors, voting in secret.

Can. 631

114.1 *About two years before an ordinary General Chapter is to be held, the Brother Superior General announces an approximate date for its opening. At the same time, he informs the Institute of the measures being taken to ensure its preparation.*

For this purpose, the Brother Superior General and his Council appoint a Preparatory Commission to study and organise the preparation of the Chapter.

This Commission collects all the information considered appropriate from the Brothers and from the various administrative units of the

Institute, as well as from study groups or specially appointed commissions.

Can. 631 §2

114.2 *The General Chapter takes into account reports from various units of the Lasallian mission.*

The members of the General Chapter are as follows: those who are members by right; those who may be appointed by Brother Superior General and his Council; those, the majority, who are the delegates of all the Brothers of the Institute.

The members by right of the General Chapter are: the Brother Superior General, former Brother Superior Generals, the Brother General Councillors and the Brother Secretary General.

With the consent of his Council, the Brother Superior General can appoint up to ten supplementary delegates so as to ensure a better representation of the diversity of the Institute.

114.3 *The number of delegates to be elected, based on the statistics of the Institute on the date of the publication of the Circular of Convocation, is determined as follows:*

1^o The number of delegates is a function of the number of Brothers in the District. It is fixed at one more than the whole quotient of the number of those Brothers by the number N fixed by the Brother Superior General and his Council. The

whole number immediately higher than the quotient obtained becomes the number of District delegates.

2º Each Sub-District or Delegation officially constituted elects one delegate.

3º Brother Superior General and his Council fix the number N in such a way that the total number of elected delegates is not smaller than one per cent and not greater than one and a half per cent of the number of Brothers in the Institute.

115. Every Brother with vows in the Institute on the date of publication of the Circular of Convocation is an elector. Every Brother perpetually professed in the Institute on the date of publication of the Circular of Convocation can be elected.

115.1 *In each District Sub-District, and Delegation, the Chapter or, failing this, the Brother Visitor or Auxiliary Visitor, with the consent of his Council, determines the rules of procedure for the election of the allotted delegate or delegates, as well as of their substitutes, bearing in mind the following norms:*

In order to be elected, a delegate must obtain an absolute majority of the votes validly cast. However, if a third ballot is necessary, a relative majority will suffice.

Substitutes, in the same number as the delegates, are elected by a separate vote.

A full report of the results of the election should be sent without delay to the Brothers of the District and to the General Secretariat.

Any derogation from the preceding norms requires the approval of the Brother Superior General and his Council.

116. About one year before the date fixed for the opening of an ordinary General Chapter, the Brother Superior General, after taking the advice of his Council, sends out the Letter of Convocation.

116.1 *The Circular of Convocation publishes the names of the members by right, as well as the number of delegates to be elected in each of the Districts, Sub-Districts and Delegations.*

Can. 631 §2 **117.** The Brother Superior General is by right the presiding officer of the General Chapter.

117.1 *At the appropriate time, the General Chapter elects its own officers. However, the Brother Secretary General is the Chapter Secretary.*

Can. 631 §3 **117.2** *The General Chapter is fully responsible for the organisation of its work. This organisation can be greatly facilitated by the suggestions, recommendations, studies, working schedules and draft documents provided by the Preparatory Commission.*

117.3 *The Brother Superior General and his Council as well as the General Chapter can invite persons to participate in the work of the Chapter as experts or consultants.*

Can. 631 §3 **118.** All the Brothers of the Institute are invited to participate in the work of preparing for an ordinary General Chapter. Each Brother has the right to send to the Brother Superior General or the Brother Secretary General whatever notes or position papers, duly signed, he may judge useful.

Can. 631 §3
Can. 633 **118.1** *The General Chapter takes into account the consultations of the Brothers, especially in District Chapters, and in regional assemblies held with a view to better informing the General Chapter. It also takes account of notes from communities or individuals properly signed by their authors. These notes may be addressed to the General Chapter, to the Preparatory Commission, or to the Secretary General of the Institute.*

119. The Brother Superior General makes a report to the General Chapter on the manner in which he and the Council have carried out their mandate. This report includes also the activities of the General Services of the Institute.

Can. 164-179
Can. 119 §1
Can. 625 §1
Can. 631 §1
B 3 **120.** The ordinary General Chapter elects the Brother Superior General.

It fixes the number of General Councillors, which must not be lower than six. It can also designate the principal functions certain General Councillors would carry out.

It elects first the Vicar General who is the first among the Councillors. It then proceeds to elect the other members of the Council.

Each and every one must be elected by an absolute majority of the votes validly cast, no matter how many ballots are necessary to obtain this majority.

Can. 631 §2

120.1 *The election of the Brother Superior General may be preceded by a period of consultation, the practical details of which are specified by the General Chapter itself.*

Can. 631 §2

120.2 *To prepare for the election of the Brother Vicar and of the other members of the General Council, the newly-elected Superior General gathers whatever information is useful and passes it on to the capitulants.*

If he judges it opportune, he can suggest a sounding vote within the Chapter and then propose to the electors the names of the Brothers he considers suitable for the role.

121. The Brother Superior General and the members of the General Council in office retain their mandate until the election of the new Brother Superior General.

Can. 631 §2
Can. 578
Can. 587
Can. 593

122. A prior condition for submitting to the Holy See proposals to amend the Bull of Approbation, and to add, modify or suppress Constitutions, is the approval of the General Chapter by a majority of two-thirds of the validly cast votes.

Amendments to the Statutes are approved by an absolute majority of the votes, unless otherwise specified and announced.

It is also the remit of the General Chapter to determine the norms governing the drawing up of directories intended to include Institute legislation not contained in the Constitutions and Statutes.

Can. 631 §2

122.1 *The General Chapter can make a certain number of decisions without incorporating them into the Statutes. Such decisions apply as norms or directives until the following ordinary General Chapter which will assess their implementation.*

Can. 631 §2

122.2 *All Chapter decisions must be promulgated in an official circular. They become effective no later than three months after promulgation.*

Can. 631 §2

122.3 *The Act constituting the General Chapter, the Act of Closure of the Chapter, as well as the Acts recording the elections of the Brother Superior General, of the Brother Vicar General and of the other Brother General Councillors must be submitted to the Capitulants for approbation, and be signed by them.*

CHAPTER 8

THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Can. 627 §1 **123.** Responsibility for the government of the Institute is entrusted by the General Chapter to the Brother Superior General. He is assisted by a permanent council known as the General Council.

***123.1** The Brother General Councillors work closely with the Brother Superior General who is invested with the highest level of authority in the Institute. Complementing each other and pooling their experience, they are inspired by a willingness to serve in the areas of responsibility assigned to them.*

***123.2** The choice of the Brother General Councillors takes into account the variety of functions in the government, and as far as possible, the universality of the Institute and its cultural diversity.*

B 4 **124.** Constituted as a community at the Centre of the Institute, the Brother Superior General and his Councillors are a symbol of unity, and they work to ensure the fidelity of the entire Body to the faith of the Church, the directives of the Holy See, and the living charism of the Founder.

124.1 *The Brother Superior General and his Councillors have as their mission to strengthen communion and interdependence in the Institute. In their efforts to establish and maintain the structures that are needed for the unity of the Institute and the efficacy of what they do, they ensure that concern for the individual remains a priority.*

Can. 592 §2

124.2 *The Brother Superior General and his Councillors take the means necessary to make the Founder known by the Brothers. They strive likewise to ensure a correct understanding of the Rule, the directives of the Church and the normative documents of the Institute. In this way, they make it easier for the Brothers to accept the measures contained in these documents and to implement them.*

Can. 578

125. In their style of government, the Brother Superior General and his Councillors have recourse to the prophetic dynamism still alive in the spiritual heritage left by the Founder.

Open to the Spirit, they use the discernment required regarding the spiritual renewal of the Brothers, various situations and new apostolic needs, and they take the decisions which are necessary.

They keep in touch with all parts of the Institute. They choose wisely those they appoint to positions of leadership, and they encourage and promote creative

initiatives. The Brother Superior General and his Councillors are messengers of hope and they share their conviction with the Brothers throughout the Institute. Guarantors of the charism of the Founder and of the mission of the Institute, they never hesitate to bring to the attention of the Brothers, and to reappraise, what they think should be changed.

125.1 *At the beginning of their mandate, the Brother Superior General and his Councillors draw up a coherent plan to enable them to respond to what they discern to be the calls of the Spirit or the needs of the Institute, and to the decisions taken by the General Chapter.*

This plan sets out the responsibilities undertaken by the General Council as a whole, and the specific tasks entrusted to each Brother Councillor.

125.2 *In the period between two ordinary General Chapters, they meet at least once with the representatives of the Districts, Sub-Districts and Delegations of each Region.*

The Brother Superior General

Can. 129
Can. 622-624
Can. 625 §1
Can. 626
Can. 629
Can. 164-179
B 11

126. The Brother Superior General is elected by the General Chapter and he exercises his authority over the whole Institute, in accordance with the norms of Canon Law and Institute legislation.

At the time of his election, he has to have at least ten years of perpetual profession in the Institute. His mandate runs until the following ordinary General Chapter. He can be re-elected.

He and his Council normally reside in the Generalate. He can be deposed for reasons stated in article eleven of the Bull of Approbation of the Institute.

Can. 118

126.1 *It is the responsibility of the Brother Superior General:*

- 1. to convoke the ordinary General Chapter and, if the need arises, an extraordinary General Chapter;*
- 2. to assign to posts of responsibility, in line with the norms of Canon Law and Institute legislation;*
- 3. within the limits permitted by law, to delegate some of his powers to Brothers of his choice;*
- 4. as the chief representative of the Institute, and speaking in its name, to maintain relations with the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as well as with any other authority or institution.*
- 5. to authorise some temporary dispensations from disciplinary norms established by Institute legislation, in response to requests formally endorsed by relevant authorities, and with the advice of his Council.*

126.2 *When the Brother Superior is ill or prevented from acting, he can transfer his powers temporarily*

to the Brother Vicar General. He is even obliged to do this if the General Council, by secret vote and by an absolute majority, require him to do so.

126.3 *If, outside the time a General Chapter is in session, the Brother Superior General feels he should resign from his post, he announces his intention to do so, and gives his reasons in a letter addressed to the members of the Council. After discussing the matter in the absence of the Brother Superior General, the Council decides by an absolute majority of the votes cast in a secret ballot whether or not to accept the resignation. If the vote is in the affirmative, the Brother Vicar General takes the place of the Brother Superior General who has resigned.*

126.4 *The deposition of the Brother Superior General, were it to happen, would be a matter for the Holy See, following a vote of the General Council. (cf. 8.8.2)*

The Brother Vicar General

Can. 620

127. The Brother Vicar General is the first collaborator of the Brother Superior General. He replaces him in the ordinary administration of the Institute when the Brother Superior General is absent or prevented from exercising his office.

He is normally elected during an ordinary General Chapter. He can be elected exceptionally during an extraordinary General Chapter, or even at a meeting of the General Council in accordance with the norms set out in the Statutes (cf. 130.2).

At the time of his election, he must have at least ten years of perpetual profession in the Institute.

His mandate runs until the following General Chapter. He can be re-elected.

127.1 *On the death of the Brother Superior General in office, or in the case of his resignation or deposition, the Brother Vicar succeeds him with full rights and fulfils the duties of a Superior General until the following ordinary General Chapter.*

127.2 *If the post of the Brother Vicar General becomes vacant outside the time when a General Chapter is in session, the General Council must first proceed with the election of a new Councillor, if this is necessary. Once the Council is at full strength, it elects by a majority of two-thirds one of its own members to be the new Brother Vicar General (cf. 130.2).*

The General Councillors

Can. 627 **128.** The mission of the Brother General Councillors is to assist the Brother Superior General in the

government and the animation of the Institute. They share with him and under his authority all the tasks of the government of the Institute.

Their election normally takes place during an ordinary General Chapter which will have previously determined their number according to the needs of the Institute, taking into account article 120.

In exceptional circumstances, they can be elected in the course of an extraordinary General Chapter, or even during a meeting of the General Council, in accordance with the provisions of the Statutes (cf. 130.2).

At the time of their election, they must have at least ten years of perpetual profession in the Institute.

Their mandate runs until the following ordinary General Chapter. They can be re-elected.

128.1 *In the period between two ordinary General Chapters, a Brother Councillor may offer his resignation; he may also be invited to do so by the Brother Superior General. In either eventuality, the General Council will make a decision only after prudently evaluating the reasons given by the persons concerned. The final decision is made by a secret ballot in the absence of the Councillor concerned. The vote required is an absolute majority for a Councillor who wishes to resign, and a two-thirds majority in the case of a Councillor who is asked to resign (cf. 130.2)*

128.2 *In the case of a vacancy in the General Council, the Council, on the proposal of the Brother Superior General, proceeds with the election of a new Brother Councillor by a secret ballot, a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast being required. It is always left to the Brother Superior General and his Council to decide whether or not to fill the vacancy in cases where the number of Brother Councillors in office remains within the limits designated by the General Chapter (cf.130.2).*

128.3 *1. In the period between two ordinary General Chapters, the Brother Superior General can add one or two new members to the General Council.*

2. First of all, the General Council has to vote on whether it is opportune to increase the number of its members. If the vote is positive, the Brother Superior General then presents the name of the candidate or candidates and the Council proceeds to the election.

3° Each vote taken in this procedure is by secret ballot and requires a two-third majority (cf. 130.2).

The meetings of the General Council

Can. 127
Can. 627

129. The General Council is convoked and presided over by Brother Superior General or, in his absence, by the Brother Vicar General. The frequency and the

arrangement of the meetings, as well as the nature and kind of vote required in each case, are regulated by the norms of Canon Law and of Institute legislation.

Can. 127
Can. 627
Can. 638 §3
Can. 1292

130. To make certain decisions validly, the Brother Superior must obtain either the advice or the consent of the General Council. He himself does not vote.

When consent is required, at least an absolute majority of those voting is necessary. Such a vote, if it is positive, does not bind the Brother Superior General. He cannot act contrary to a negative majority vote.

When advice is required, the Brother Superior General remains free to make his own decision, whatever the result of the vote.

In either case, there must be a quorum of at least half of the total number of members of the General Council. If the matter is urgent, and such a quorum is lacking, it falls to the president of the meeting to make up the numbers by admitting to the discussions one or two heads of the General Services.

130.1 *In cases not governed by Canon Law and Institute legislation, the consent of the General Council is required in the following instances:*

1. the convocation of an extraordinary General Chapter or the adoption, because of urgent circumstances and on a temporary basis, of certain measures normally requiring the decision of a

General Chapter;

2. the application of Canon Law legislation, or of faculties granted by the Holy See each time the document granting them requires it;

3. all alienations of material goods which exceed the limits fixed by law, and the alienation of an object considered valuable because of its historic or artistic worth;

4. any act of lending or borrowing entered into with persons outside the Institute, when the amount or the conditions involved exceed powers granted by the Brother Superior General to the Brother Visitor or the District Council;

5. the designation of supplementary Brother capitulants (cf. 114.2);

6. the appointment of the Brother Secretary General. In other cases, only the advice of the General Council is required.

130.2 *Except in unforeseeable circumstances, all the Brother Councillors in office must take part in the deliberations and voting stipulated by articles 126.4, 127, 127.2, 128, 128.1, 128.2, 128.3 above. These votes must be taken by a secret ballot and require a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, taking into account the two cases mentioned in article 128.1.*

130.3 *Brothers other than Councillors may, because of their office or special competence, participate in certain meetings of the General Council at the invitation of the presiding officer. These Brothers have only a consultative role and do not take part in the voting.*

The General Services of the Institute

131. The Brother Superior General and his Council are helped in the work of government by a certain number of General Services. These are of two kinds:

- there are those of an administrative nature which deal with everything to do with communication, the organisation of work in the central government offices, the management of temporal goods, juridical questions and relations with the Holy See;
- the others deal with missionary, educational and pastoral objectives and with formation in the Institute.

131.1 *The Brother Bursar General and the other heads of the General Services receive their obedience, which is for a specific time and renewable, from the Brother Superior General after consultation with his Council.*

They work in constant contact with the General Council and are called upon by it whenever the matter being dealt with is of their competence.

*A specific description of their responsibilities
appears in the Administrator's Directory.*

CHAPTER 9

THE DISTRICT AND THE REGION

The District

Can. 621

132. The District, as the ordinary expression of the communion existing between the communities and the Brothers who compose it, is more than a structure of government. It manifests and supports the fraternal union which enables all, communities and Brothers, to help one another to shoulder together the responsibility for their life and their apostolic work.

For this reason, the chief mission of those in charge of the District is to promote the unity, as well as the active participation of the Brothers and communities and, by this means, ensure the value and efficacy of their witness within the local Church.

The District is also called to establish and maintain relations with other Districts or Delegations, and strengthen those uniting it to the Centre of the Institute.

***132.1** Those in charge of Districts and of District apostolic works develop and promote communion among the persons involved in the educational mission: the Brothers, Associates and Partners.*

Can. 581
Can. 621

133. A District is established by the Brother Superior General with the consent of his Council and after consultation with the Brothers affected by this decision.

133.1 *The establishment of a District presupposes the existence of a certain number of links between the communities called upon to compose it. It requires also the guarantee of a well-founded hope that the District will have in the near future sufficient resources in personnel and funds to be able to fill leadership positions in communities, provide for the formation of the Brothers, and ensure the development of the works for which the District is responsible.*

133.2 *The District Chapter draws up and updates the statutes of the District which have to be approved by the Brother Superior General with the advice of his Council.*

133.3 *For geographical, political or other reasons, a District can organise one or more administrative sectors, whose relative autonomy will be determined by the District Chapter, and approved by Brother Superior General with the advice of his Council.*

133.4 *A part of a District which is composed of a sufficient number of Brothers, and situated in a particular socio-cultural area far from the centre*

of the District, can be established as a Sub-District. Its statutes which stipulate the maintenance of its union with the District are conferred upon it by Brother Superior General with the advice of his Council.

The Sub-District is placed under the responsibility of an Auxiliary Visitor assisted by a Council. Their respective areas of responsibility are defined by the District Chapter.

133.5 *The initial and continuing formation of the Brothers remains one of the major concerns of the District, which takes the means to make its own provision for it. If it is unable to do so, it collaborates with other Districts in the running of joint formation centres.*

GC 45 Ch. 5

133.6 *The Lasallian formation of Partners, whatever their function in the educational community, is also a District priority.*

133.7 *In the context of the shared mission, every District must provide itself with the structures necessary for the running and administration of its establishments.*

Can. 581
Can. 585

133.8 *If a District no longer fulfils the conditions mentioned in article 133.1, discussions need to take place between it and the Region to which it belongs. The Brother Superior General and his*

Council will subsequently take the appropriate steps and ensure that all is done with due respect for the Brothers involved.

The Delegation

134. A Delegation is a group of communities which for reasons of a practical or provisional nature cannot form a District or a Sub-District. It remains directly dependent on the Brother Superior General.

***134.1** In exceptional circumstances, the Brother Superior General can establish a Delegation with the advice of his Council and after consulting the Brothers and the communities concerned. It falls to him to determine its structures and to appoint those who will be in charge.*

The Region

135. The Region is a permanent body whose function is to ensure coordination and collaboration between the Districts, Sub-Districts and Delegations of the Institute.

Unity of heart and mind among the Brothers of the Region and all those who are committed to the mission, is established and increases through effective communication and exchanges. The Region enables those who work in it to co-operate and

benefit from a common vitality, as well as from a closer contact with the Centre of the Institute. The Brother Superior General and his Council ensure that no part of the Institute remains isolated.

135.1 *The composition of the Region is determined by an agreement between the Brother Superior General and his Council, on the one hand, and on the other, the Districts, Sub-Districts and the Delegations concerned.*

136. Regions can exist in quite different forms. It is up to the Districts, Sub-Districts and Delegations concerned to study and determine the form their association should take. They submit their plan to the Brother Superior General and his Council.

136.1 *The Brother Visitors and those in charge of Delegations of the same Region form a Conference under the presidency of the Brother Councillor for the Region.*

At the Regional Assembly or at the Conference, they establish the statutes of the Region, which they submit to the Brother Superior General and his Council for their approval. If the Region or the Brother Superior General so wish, the statutes of the Region can assign authority to the Brother Councillor for the Region and a decision-making role in certain areas or in certain cases.

GC 44 Ch. 8
GC 45 Ch. 6

136.2 *The Brother Councillor for the Region promotes contact between the Brother Visitors of the Region, and supports them in the work they do. He provides a link between the Region and the General Council and the different services of the Institute. He ensures that decisions made by the Institute and programmes adopted for the Region as a whole are implemented. He fosters also cooperation and interdependence within the Region, as well as between it and other Regions.*

136.3 *Sending Brothers to the parts of the Institute which have particular needs or are lacking in vocations, and the sharing of material or spiritual resources, are significant forms of co-operation between Regions. Agreements reached between the Districts which send and those which receive Brothers specify the details of this kind of collaboration.*

The District Chapter

Can. 632

137. As an assembly of a pastoral and administrative nature, the District Chapter manifests the profound unity existing among the Brothers, and permits their active participation, either directly or through their delegates, in the study groups or decision-making bodies of the District.

The District Chapter is convoked by the Brother Visitor. It evaluates all aspects of the life of the District. It takes into account the local situation and it establishes a schedule of precise programmes for renewal, adaptation or growth to be implemented in the near future. Evaluation and the establishment of new programmes are carried out in accordance with the directives and guidelines of the Church and of the Institute.

137.1 *The District Chapter organises its programme of sessions in a way that enables various representatives of the educational mission to address the Chapter.*

138. All that is said concerning the District Chapter applies likewise to the Sub-District, according to the arrangements stipulated by their statutes.

139. The District Chapter is held normally when the Brother Visitor is about to complete his term of office. It must be held also following a General Chapter in order to promote the application of General Chapter decisions.

If circumstances warrant it, the Chapter to be held following a General Chapter can be considered as the final stage of a District Chapter which began prior to the General Chapter.

139.1 *The District Chapter is presided over by the*

Brother Visitor. The Chapter itself elects its other officers.

139.2 *With the advice of his Council, the Brother Visitor can decide to convoke an extraordinary Chapter. He is even obliged to do so if half of the members of the previous Chapter request it.*

140. When deciding on the procedure for the election of delegates, the District Chapter, or by default, the Brother Visitor and his Council, ensure that there is a balanced representation of Brothers according to age groups, competence, functions and geographical areas.

However the following norms must be observed:

1. Members by right are the Brother Visitor, the Brother Auxiliary Visitor(s), the members of the District Council, and other Brothers designated by the previous District Chapter.
2. The number of elected members is greater than that of the members by right.
3. Every Brother in the District has the right to elect and to be elected.
4. The Brother Visitor and his Council can invite all the Brothers to participate in the District Chapter. Only elected members and members by right can vote.

140.1 *The Chapter welcomes questions put to it by Brothers from the District; it desires to associate*

them all in its preparation; it encourages the widest possible participation.

141. The resolutions adopted by the District Chapter must always conform to the directives given by the General Chapter. They are submitted to Brother Superior General and his Council for their approval.

Once approved they come into effect in the District. They have normative force for all those to whom they apply. They are communicated to the Brothers of the District.

141.1 *To ensure the proper participation of those who contribute to the shared mission, the resolutions or the statutes of a District must indicate the structures and the mechanism which promotes it.*

The Brother Visitor

Can. 617
Can. 618
Can. 619
Can. 620
Can. 832

142. The Brother Visitor is the guarantor of the unity and vitality of the District. He is the one primarily responsible for the District and for its leadership. He exercises his authority as a major superior in accordance with the norms of Canon Law, Institute legislation and the directives of the District Chapter.

The Brother Visitor is at the service of his Brothers, ready to listen to them and remaining in contact with them. He cares about their vocation and tries to

promote close co-operation between them, to help them carry out their mission more effectively in all their apostolic works.

The Brother Visitor assigns the Brothers to their communities and provides for the various posts of responsibility according to the norms established by the District Chapter. He visits the communities and ensures that the District remains in contact with the Region and the Centre of the Institute.

He admits candidates to the novitiate and to vows, subject to the prescriptions contained in article 98.2. He grants authorisations specified by law, including that of publishing writings on matters of religion and morality.

142.1 *When he visits communities at least once a year, the Brother Visitor evaluates with the Brothers the quality of their community life, their apostolic activities and factors which influence their spiritual life. If necessary, he redefines with them the objectives to pursue in the light of the community annual programme previously drawn up and approved. In the course of his visit, he meets each Brother individually.*

142.2 *The Brother Visitor communicates to the Brothers the documents he receives from the Centre of the Institute. He tries to ensure that their contents are understood and to make it easier to act on them.*

Once a year, he sends the Brother Superior General a succinct but sufficiently detailed report on the situation in the District.

142.3 *The Brother Visitor organizes meetings for Brothers and lay persons on religious, apostolic and religious life. These meetings provide an opportunity for an exchange of ideas and experiences, as well as the starting point of concrete plans.*

The Brother Visitor ensures that evaluation takes place of the efficacy of the structures established by the District for the running and organisation of establishments.

142.4 *The Brother Visitor ensures that the requirements of Canon Law and civil law are complied with in what concerns the goods of the District and the goods inherited by the Brothers. The same applies to whatever concerns social justice in areas affecting employees. He authorizes building work, repairs and other expenditure within the limits approved by the Brother Superior General.*

142.5 *The Brother Visitor promotes the pastoral ministry of vocations. He watches over the initial formation of the Brothers, and provides for them the help of a group of Brothers trained for this purpose. He ensures that Brothers of all ages have the necessary means to pursue their own*

development and take part in continuing formation programmes. He supports the Brother Directors in their role as leaders.

Can. 623 **143.** The Brother Visitor is appointed by Brother Superior General with the advice of his Council. For this purpose, the District sends him the results of the sounding vote taken to establish a list of proposed candidates. At the time of his appointment, the Brother Visitor must have at least five years of perpetual profession in the Institute (cf. 144.1).

Can. 624 **144.** The Brother Visitor is appointed for three years or for four years, according to what has been decided by the District Chapter.

The total duration of the successive mandates of a Brother Visitor in the same District cannot exceed nine years.

GC 44
Ch. 8, 3.6 **144.1** *The District Chapter establishes the procedure to be followed for presenting to the Brother Superior General the names of the Brothers considered suitable for the office of Visitor. This procedure respects, however, the principle, on the one hand, that all the Brothers of the District are consulted, and on the other, that Brother Superior General retains the freedom to choose.*

To ensure this, the final sounding vote for the appointment is sent to Brother Superior General without being scrutinized.

144.2 *The Brother Visitor can be assisted by one or several Auxiliary Visitors. These are appointed by Brother Superior General following a submission of the names of candidates according to a procedure determined by the District Chapter.*

GC 43 Rec. 32

144.3 *The Brother Superior General can appoint a Brother to be the Visitor of a District to which he does not belong.*

Can. 609 §1
Can. 616 §1
B 2

145. To open a community, the Brother Visitor must obtain the prior written consent of the Brother Superior General and of the bishop of the diocese.

The closure of a community is decided by the Brother Superior General, the local bishop having been previously consulted.

146. The transfer of a Brother from one District to another takes place with his consent, following an agreement between the Brother Visitors concerned, and with the advice of their Councils.

The District Council

Can. 627

147. The mission of the District Council is to promote the unity of the District and to assist the Brother Visitor in the exercise of his duties. The Brother Visitor and his Council draw up plans together regarding the running of the District, and they study how to face the problems that arise.

Every year, the Brother Visitor undertakes with his Council a fraternal evaluation of his own work and of the state of the District.

147.1 *The Brother Visitor and his Council complement one another in their work with the various bodies involved in the mission, as they draw up guidelines and make decisions relating to the mission. The final responsibility remains with the Brother Visitor.*

148. The District Chapter determines the number of District Councillors. It stipulates the length of their period in office and it establishes the procedure for their election or appointment.

The Brother Visitor is by right the President of the District Council. Brother Auxiliary Visitors are members by right.

148.1 *The minimum number of Councillors is six. Two-thirds at least are elected. The Brother Visitor can appoint one or two Councillors of his choice to ensure a better representation of the Brothers.*

148.2 *Substitute members are elected. They can take part in all the meetings of the District Council. They have the right to vote only when they are replacing an absent Councillor.*

148.3 *The District Council is convoked and*

presided over by the Brother Visitor or by his delegate. It meets as often as circumstances require, and at least once every three months.

The Council meets also on the request of at least half its members.

All the members of the Council must be notified, as well as any substitutes, should the situation require it.

The Brother Visitor can invite consultants to the meetings of the Council. They do not have the right to vote.

148.4 *The agenda for Council meetings is prepared under the direction of Brother Visitor or of his delegate. It is then communicated in good time to the Councillors and to the substitutes. Any Brother of the District may submit a topic for the Council to consider. The agenda includes necessarily topics proposed by Council members. Due discretion being observed, the Brothers of the District are informed of the work of the Council and of the decisions made.*

The minutes of the Council meetings are kept in a special register, which includes also the decisions of the Brother Superior General, where these are made.

Can. 127
Can. 627

149. To make certain decisions validly, the Brother Visitor must obtain either the advice, or the consent of his Council. When the consent of the Council is

required, the Brother Visitor cannot go against a negative majority vote.

When the advice of the Council is required, the Brother Visitor remains free to make his own decision, whatever the result of the vote.

The quorum required for a meeting of a District Council is a half of the total number of its members. The Brother Visitor does not take part in the vote but he makes the final decision.

Can. 656, 3°
Can. 703

149.1 *The consent of the District Council is required in the following cases:*

- 1. the admission to perpetual profession (cf. 98.2-2);*
- 2. the dismissal of a professed Brother, living in the District, whether he belongs to it or not, in emergency cases foreseen in Canon Law;*
- 3. the transfer of goods from one house to another in the District;*
- 4. the allocation of the contents of a house when it has been closed;*
- 5. setting limits to the spending powers granted to Brother Directors and Bursars;*
- 6. other exceptional administrative measures involving District finances.*

Can. 641

149.2 *The advice of the District Council is required in the following cases:*

- 1. the admission of candidates to the novitiate;*

2. the appointment of the Bursar and of others on the administrative staff of the District;

3. the convocation of the District Chapter.

Can. 609 §1

Can. 1292

149.3 *The following cases require the advice of the District Council before being sent for ratification by the Brother Superior General:*

1. any plan to open or close a community; taking charge, withdrawing from, or closing a pastoral educational establishment;

2. all alienation of goods when the limit imposed by the Holy See is exceeded;

3. all borrowing or lending outside the District when the amount or the conditions of this borrowing or lending go beyond the limits fixed by the General Council;

4. all agreements or contracts made with the authorities of the local Church, or with other public or private bodies, which would make the District and Institute jointly answerable;

5. any request for the use of powers placed at the discretion of the Brother Superior General and his Council by the Holy See.

149.4 *Apart from cases where the Rule indicates expressly that the vote of the District Council is deliberative, this vote is only consultative.*

What is said of the District Council applies also, all

things considered, to Sub-District and Delegation Councils.

The administration of temporal goods

Can. 634-640 **150.** The Institute, Districts and similar groupings legitimately constituted, and communities are non-profit entities. They have the right to acquire, possess, administer and dispose of material goods in view of their specific mission. These bodies act within their authorised limits and under their own responsibility, conforming to Canon Law and Institute legislation, and taking into account civil law.

The Brothers appointed to administer the goods of the Institute do so as trustees of the goods of the Church.

Those in charge at all levels see that the resources are shared equitably, in such a way that sectors which are better off come to the aid of Brothers less favourably placed, so as to minimize as far as possible the differences in living conditions which could exist in communities in the same sector.

Can. 635 §1 **150.1** *In all cases where the administration of the goods of the Institute is entrusted to legally recognised firms, such arrangements must be submitted to the Brother Superior General and his Council for approval.*

GC 44
Ch. 8, 3.3

150.2 *Districts differentiate clearly between the goods and resources for the service of the mission, and those that are the Patrimony of the District, as a community of Brothers, in accordance with the laws of the country.*

Can. 636
Can. 1280

151. In each District, a Bursar, distinct from the Brother Visitor but working under his authority, is in charge of the administration of goods. This Bursar is assisted by an Economic Council.

151.1 *Taking into account the guidelines of the District Chapter, the Bursar prepares the annual budget with the help of the Economic Council. He then submits it to the Brother Visitor and his Council. For its part, the Economic Council checks how the budget is followed and studies ways of solving the difficulties that arise.*

Can. 636 §2

151.2 *Every year, the Bursar submits a report on the financial situation of the District to Brother Visitor and his Council for their approval. Once this report has been declared accurate, it is sent by the Brother Visitor to the Brother Bursar General.*

151.3 *The various Districts, Sub-Districts and Delegations jointly contribute towards the running costs of the central administration of the Institute, and to other expenses it has.*

The contributions of Districts is calculated by a

system devised by the General Chapter and updated every year by the General Council, according to what is proposed by the International Economic Council.

CHAPTER 10

BROTHERS TODAY

1 Cor. 9, 18
RC 1718 Ch. 1
Med. 194, 1
Med. 201, 1
Med. 207, 3

152. Since the time of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, “this Institute has been very necessary”. Young people, the poor, the world and the Church need the witness and ministry of the Brothers. By making gratuity a fundamental characteristic of his foundation, La Salle invited the Brothers to manifest the gratuity of the love of God. His disciples, like himself, experience personally that the Lord does not abandon “his work” but “is pleased to make it bear fruit from day to day”.

D 23
GC 44

153. Today, with their Partners, the Brothers wish to respond in a creative way to the educational and spiritual needs of young people, especially of those who are the most vulnerable.

1 Cor. 3, 6-15
Med. 207, 3

154. The life and development of the Institute depend above all on the mystery and the power of grace. But by the gift of freedom, the Lord wanted to put the destiny of the Institute into the hands of the Brothers. At the heart of the Lasallian Family, the Brothers are a source of inspiration for all Lasallians who increasingly share the mission and the charism of the Institute.

VC 63

CL 7, 311-318

155. The Brothers recognise, analyse and face together, in faith, the difficulties and the particular challenges encountered by their Institute. By contemplating the history of salvation being enacted in their life and in that of the Institute, they experience the grace of the paschal mystery. By meditating on the Gospel journey of the Founder, they find a model of fidelity in adversity and the power of new beginnings.

156. For the Brothers, reasons for giving thanks and growing in hope are numerous.

- They rejoice at the fidelity of their older Brothers who have an unfailing love for their Institute.
- They see in the increasingly broad understanding of their vow of association for the educational service of the poor a will to be more faithful to their origins.
- They note with satisfaction the establishment and development of the Institute in various countries, and the effective presence of the Brothers among the poor and marginalised people.
- They praise the missionary spirit expressed through an openness to young people of different cultures, marked by both a concern to respect the religious heritage proper to each one, and a desire to build up the individual according to the values of the Gospel.
- They welcome with joy each new vocation as a renewed manifestation of the grace of God.

VC 54-55
FLC 70
Starting
Afresh from
Christ 31

157. With no thought of turning back, John Baptist de La Salle and his Brothers opened a path to holiness for all educators. The Brothers, the first guardians of the Lasallian charism, are happy to see numerous Partners wishing to deepen the knowledge of the Founder revealed in his life, spirituality and work.

In the growth of association with men and women who walk side-by-side with them and identify themselves today as the sons and daughters of John Baptist de La Salle, they see a sign of the times which fills them with hope.

As a consequence, the Brothers feel they have a special responsibility to share their pedagogical and spiritual heritage with all those they work with. Through this sharing they receive the calls of the Spirit to be Brothers today:

- the call to be brothers with them and to live fraternally as a sign for all Lasallian educators;
- the call to be for them and with them a channel for the light with which God “himself enlightened the hearts of those he destined to announce his word to children”;
- the call to be among them and with them the heart, the memory and the guarantor of the Lasallian charism.

PC 2
Can. 662
RC 1718 Ch. 16
D 6-7

158. The Rule manifests the charism of the Institute and defines the meaning of the Brothers’ life in

today's context. It shows them how to live out the Gospel as the Founder did.

Individually and as a community, they study it, meditate on it and assimilate its riches and its spirit. By being faithful to it, they follow and serve Jesus Christ.

Mt. 20, 1-16
Lk. 10, 2
VC 60
FLC 54-57
GC 45 Ch. 4

159. The Brothers are convinced that their fraternity demonstrated in community and in their educational ministry, as lay religious, is a prophetic sign for the Church and for the world. That is why they consider their involvement in the pastoral ministry of vocations to the Brothers' life to be a source of vitality and a pledge for the future.

The Brothers with the Partners base their pastoral ministry of Lasallian vocations on the conviction that the Lord still calls today labourers to work in his vineyard.

D 5-7
D 10-11
D 53
Med. 106, 1
Med. 201
T

160. As Brothers, we show Saint John Baptist de La Salle the love due to our Founder. We follow him in his abandonment to God, his attachment to the Church, his creative apostolic spirit, and his life-long commitment to the evangelisation of young people.

The life of our Institute, along with the updating of its mission, constitute a never-ending series of creative acts inspired by fidelity, which at times, call for difficult commitments, as John Baptist de La Salle himself experienced.

Today, the Founder still calls to us, continuing to inspire and support all men and women who identify with him.

Imbued with the spirit he bequeathed to us, and with the Partners who share our mission, we remain faithful to the living tradition of the Institute. In communion with all those who preceded us, we continue to respond with burning zeal to the calls of the Lord, of the Church and of the world for the glory of God.

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