

Chapter 3 - Lasallian Association: Common Characteristics Experienced in Different Ways (part 2)

Recent Developments Concerning Lasallian Association

3.9. The 44th General Chapter (2007) has invited the Brothers to recover the original inspiration and motivation of the vow of association for the educational service of the poor. This emphasis on the centrality of the vow of association re-arranges the story of the Brothers' association, making it the central element from which they view the other vows and their entire life. It should be noted that the focus on the Brothers' special vows of teaching the poor gratuitously and stability in the Institute has changed since the renewal General Chapter 1966-1967. *The first became a vow to serve the poor through education and the second became a vow of fidelity to be made at final profession. ... In 1986 the vow of stability was reinstated ...integrating the element of fidelity with stability. The mission vow was expanded to include the traditional and fundamental notion of association under the title of the vow of association for the educational service of the poor.* This new context also means that the Brothers live their religious consecration alongside other people who share the same Lasallian charism, becoming "for them and with them, heart, memory, and guarantor of the Lasallian charism."

The Association Story of Lay Lasallians

3.10. The story of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in association has a long history and tradition. The same is not true for others who are now also involved in Lasallian educational ministry. Their movement toward association has been gradually developing. At the present time, no universal model or system of association exists for colleagues in Lasallian educational ministries. What does exist is a kaleidoscope of experiences lived out in various countries and cultures pointing to new directions for the future. These experiences appear in two

complementary global contexts: Christian and multi-religious. New forms of communion and of participation in the Lasallian charism are emerging in both contexts.

3.11. From the Christian perspective, the desire of many colleagues in Lasallian ministries to participate in the charism of the Institute is one of the most significant trends in recent times. This longing for charismatic communion and sharing is fostering a dynamic movement in the Institute. The challenge and the opportunity for the Lasallian charism is clear. The challenge is to find ways to appreciate, acknowledge, and perhaps give form to this action of the Spirit. The opportunity is to identify and expand in the future this new and significant presence of the Lasallian charism in the world of the young, especially the poor.

3.12. In the global context of multireligious societies, the Institute must continue to find ways to appreciate and to encourage people who are motivated and inspired by the Lasallian charism. The central question, perhaps, is not to create organizational structures but to strengthen existing links with these Lasallian educators and supporters by recognizing their original and diverse contributions to the Lasallian educational mission.

3.13. The 43rd Chapter also urges the Institute to take into account the situation of the women and men who participate in the Lasallian mission but do not share the Christian faith. “We should note that in the composition of these groups one can meet Brothers, other Christians, members of other religions, and persons of goodwill whose point of reference, as the 42nd General Chapter indicates, is *the human and spiritual values recognized and pursued by all Lasallians (meditation, service of the poor, the family, the rights of children)*. Let it be stated clearly and unambiguously that calling oneself Lasallian is not relegated only to those of the Christian faith. Many faith-filled people professing other creeds participate daily in the Lasallian educational Mission. They are a valued part of this community.

3.14. In turn the goal, in those places where Lasallians minister in a multi-religious context, needs to be the deepening of faith in each student. It is our hope that students of all religions would graduate from our Lasallian schools professing their beliefs more faithfully and be committed to the construction of a better world.

Toward a New Association Story

3.15. The centuries-old story of Lasallian association follows a well-traveled and meaningful road. More recently new horizons of understanding are emerging that enable Lasallians to revisit our founding story. The Spirit of the Lord is inviting all to discover new powers in the Lasallian charism so as to be able to respond to the educational needs of the children, young people, and adults whom God has entrusted to the Lasallian Educational Mission.