

Our Enduring Legacy



De La Salle

Life, Vocation, Mission
Scholar
Visionary
Lover of Children/
Advocate of the Poor
Community Builder
Faithful Founder

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE: Visionary and Educator

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Reading: Boards of Trustees are to “pray deeply, consult wisely, and decide boldly.”

The world changes but too often structures remain the same. Visionaries, however, look at society, see its ills and work to change systems that keep people from reaching their fullest human potential. Saint John Baptist de La Salle was a man of vision, but his vision did not come from seeing only with his eyes but with his heart. He looked upon the children in 17th century France and was moved with compassion. He worked zealously to change structures that impoverished children and worked toward building an educational system where all had the “right” to be educated.

In the time of De La Salle, primary schools for the lower class were generally disorganized and showed little care for either the students’ welfare or academic competence. The quality of one’s life depended on the family’s social standing, financial resources, and academic interest.

When Saint John Baptist de La Salle and the Brothers established their schools, they virtually cut through these determinant influences by insisting that all students be treated the same – as if they were the sons of kings. Social standing made no difference and everyone was to receive a gratuitous education that cultivated academic engagement focused on a practical based curriculum. These were schools that took the Gospel seriously, teaching those whom society had labeled socially unworthy, financially undeserving, and academically inadequate.

Throughout the years, Lasallian institutions have held fast to the values of the Founder, even as society changes and life becomes more complex. Lasallian education sees with the “eyes of the heart” and believes in the human person and her or his potential. The twenty-first century is in great need of educated men and women who are principled and who work toward building an inclusive community where Christian values are the hallmark of every transaction.

As Board members, you are charged with giving new life to the vision of the Founder while holding steadfast to his tradition. More than ever in a culture that struggles to live Christian values, there is a growing need to retell the Founder’s story while reframing the vision to meet the challenges of our contemporary culture.

The world has changed but the vision remains the same: to provide an inclusive education based on Christian values where students, administrators, faculty, and staff are engaged in making a contribution to the global community through their educational endeavors.

The vision continues as Boards of Trustees meet the challenge of a complex society. “Together and by association” with the Brothers of the Christian Schools, they are to “pray deeply, consult wisely, and decide boldly” so that the vision will continue to teach minds, touch hearts, and transform lives.

Reflection:

If you look with the lens of the “heart,” what challenges need to be met at this university in keeping with the vision of the Founder?

As a member of the Board, what gifts do you bring to your role?

If learning is said to be a life long process, what will this university teach you as a member of the Board?

(After personal reflection, questions can be shared with one other member of the Board or with the Board as a whole.)

Closing Prayer:

Creator God, you have called us to be life-givers of the Lasallian tradition. We bring before you the gifts that we have been given. Let us look with new eyes as we meet the challenges of this university while holding fast to the vision of the Founder. May we trust that “the work is yours” and we need only to be open to the Spirit that is guiding us. In our deliberations today, we invite your Spirit into our prayer as we consult wisely and act boldly. It is in the boldness of our actions that we will continue the vision of St. John Baptist de La Salle by teaching minds, touching hearts and transforming lives.

Amen

Leader:

Saint John Baptist de La Salle, visionary and educator... Pray for us!
Live Jesus in Our Hearts...Forever!