

## KNOWING OUR LASALLIAN TRADITION: The BROTHERS

### The Men who Carried Out De La Salle's Vision

Servants of the Lord, bless the Lord forever.

(Daniel 3: 87)

The institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools or more commonly referred to, as the Christian Brothers or De La Salle Christian Brothers is a religious congregation founded by a French priest, Saint John Baptist de La Salle, who had a dream.

It was these men whom we now know as Brothers, who worked with De La Salle in setting up free schools where the children of the working class and the poor could learn reading, writing and arithmetic along with a religious instruction and other training appropriate for forming good Christian citizens in their own language rather than Latin.

De La Salle brought together a group of men to live together in community and to conduct the schools. The founding of this religious family is 1680. It was the first religious community in the Church, which did not include priests. The group is comprised solely of laymen who follow the guidelines of De La Salle.

Today the De La Salle Brothers and their partners in ministry conduct

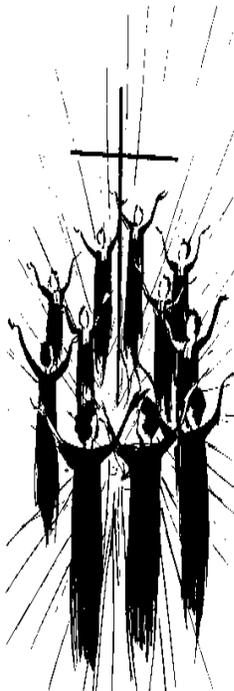
**schools of all kinds in 85 countries of the developed and developing nations of the world.**

#### Formula of Vows for the Brothers

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
with profound respect before Your infinite 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, Brother \_\_\_\_\_, promise to unite myself and 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. I promise to go wherever I may be sent and to do whatever I may be assigned by the body of the Society or its superiors.

Wherefore, I promise and vow chastity, poverty, obedience, association for the service of the poor through education, and stability in the Institute according to the Rule of the Institute. I promise to keep these vows faithfully all my life.



Br. Joseph Hiep, FSC

The Brothers are divided into geographical areas called “Districts” and are directed by a regional representative called the “Brother Visitor” who looks after the spiritual and physical well being of the Brothers in his district. In the United States there are 3 Districts:

District of North America, Midwest, and San Francisco/New Orleans

The De La Salle Brothers are governed by a Brother Superior who is elected by the Brothers and who resides in Rome along with a General Council.

The Brothers dedicate their lives to God through the education of the working class and the poor. In the United States, the Brothers and their colleagues, conduct several elementary schools, high schools, reformatories and 6 colleges along with a number of other educational endeavors:

Lasallian Colleges and universities in the U.S.A.:

Christian Brothers University in Memphis

The College of Saint Mary in California

Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota

Manhattan College in New York

Lewis University in Chicago

Psalm 133

How good it is, how pleasant, where the people dwell as one!

Like precious ointment on the head, running down upon the beard, Upon the beard of Aaron, upon the collar of his robe.

Like dew of Hermon coming down upon the mountains of Zion. There the LORD has lavished blessings, life for evermore!

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#### Footnotes

This is a benediction over a peaceful community.

The history of Israel was a history of distinct groups struggling to live in unity. Here that unity is declared blessed, like the holy oils upon the priest Aaron or the dew of the rainless summer that waters the crops

Ointment: oil was used at the consecration of the high priest ([Exodus 30:22-33](#)).

Dew was an important source of moisture in the dry climate ([Genesis 27:28](#); [Hosea 14:6](#)).

Hermon was: the majestic snow-capped mountain visible in the north of Palestine.



I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourself to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

(Romans 12: 1 – 2)

Jesus said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is it for one to gain the whole world yet lose himself? Whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when He comes in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.” (Luke 9: 23 – 26)

Jesus said to His disciples, “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket, rather it is set on a lamp stand where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify God. (Matthew 5: 13 – 16)

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need.

Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart.

(Acts 2: 42 – 46)

## Reflection of De La Salle

Since you are ambassadors of Jesus Christ in the work that you do, you



must act as representing Jesus Christ Himself. He wants your students to see Him in you and receive your instructions as if He were giving them to them. They must be convinced that your instructions are the truth of Jesus Christ Who speaks with your mouth and that it is only in His name that you teach.

### Intercessions

Jesus, our Lord and Master, You made Yourself a servant in the midst of Your disciples.

Br. Joseph Hiep, FSC

Lord, fill us with Your Spirit and help us to follow Your example in dealing with one another.

Beloved Teacher, You alone have the words of eternal life.

Make each of us generous and courageous witnesses of Your love.

Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, You continue to invite people to follow You today.

May each of us serve You in our own unique way.

May some of us dedicate ourselves to You and Your people as Priests, Brothers or Sisters.

Jesus, the Great Inviter, call young men and women to consider the vocation of educator in our Catholic schools so that the Gospel message may be passed on to future generations.

May we be salt for the earth and light for the world.

Jesus, Lover of us all, bless all of us in our life's journey to You.

Watch over the Christian Brothers and their partners in the ministry of education that they be faithful to Your Gospel and to the dreams of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

Let us pray:

O All Present God, hear our humble prayers and answer them as You know best for us.

May we always accept Your holy will in our regard. Amen.

**Brothers and sisters:**

**Let love be sincere; hate what is evil,  
hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor.**

**Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another;**

**do not be haughty but associate with the lowly;**

**do not be wise in your own estimation. (Romans 12: 9-16)**



**Our Lady of the Star, Queen and Mother of Christian Schools,  
Lead us to Your Son.**

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle, our spiritual father and guide,  
Help us to always live in the holy presence of God and have a special love for Sacred Scripture.**

**Saintly Brother Benilde, apostle of vocations,  
Assist us in encouraging and supporting those who are considering a religious vocation.**

**Saintly Brother Miguel, teacher and scholar,  
Call us to always be solicitous for the poor among us.**

**Saintly Brother Mutien Marie (mew-shin), man of prayer and teacher of the faith,  
Inspire us to be people of prayer and witnesses of Jesus.**

**All you holy Brothers who were martyred for the faith,  
Inspire us to be proud of our Christian faith and give comfort to all who suffer persecution.**

**Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!**