
KNOWING OUR LASALLIAN HERITAGE CELEBRATING SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

From time to time, God sends men and women to build up the Church in different ways through a variety of gifts.

**There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit;
there are different forms of service but the same Lord;
there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.
To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.**

- 1 Corinthians 12: 4 - 7

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**Let us pause and in silence remember that we are always and everywhere
in the holy presence of the God
Who created us, redeemed us,
and Who continually calls us to wholeness and holiness.
All glory and honor are Yours, Almighty Father, Redeeming Son, and Sanctifying
Holy Spirit.**

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St. John Baptist de la Salle
Father, Founder, Guide, Teacher and Saint
(1651–1719)

Complete dedication to what he saw as God's will for him dominated the life of John Baptist de la Salle. In 1950, Pope Pius XII named him patron of teachers for his efforts in upgrading school instruction. As a young seventeenth-century Frenchman, John had everything going for him: scholarly bent, good looks, noble family background, money, refined upbringing. At an early age he received the tonsure and started preparation for the priesthood, to which he was ordained at 27. He seemed assured then of a life of dignified ease and a high position in the Church.

But God had other plans for John, which were gradually revealed to him in the next several years. During a chance meeting with Mr. Nyel of Raven, he became interested in the creation of schools for poor boys in Raven, where he was stationed. Though the work was extremely distasteful to him at first, he became more involved in working with the deprived youths.

Once convinced that this was his divinely appointed mission, John threw himself wholeheartedly into the work, left home and family, abandoned his position as canon at Rheims, gave away his fortune and reduced himself to the level of the poor to whom he devoted his entire life.

The remainder of his life was closely entwined with the community of religious men he founded, the Brothers of the Christian School (Christian Brothers, or De La Salle Brothers). This community grew rapidly and was successful in educating boys of poor families using methods developed by John Baptist de La Salle:

(1) the employment of the "simultaneous method" by which a large number of children of the same intellectual ability could be taught together, and
(2) the use of the vernacular or ordinary spoken language in teaching instead of Latin which the poor boys did not know.

He prepared teachers in the first training college for teachers and also set up homes and schools for young delinquents of wealthy families. In all cases, the goal was to make the children good Christians.

Yet even in his success, John did not escape experiencing many trials: heartrending disappointment and defections among his disciples, bitter opposition from the secular schoolmasters who resented his new and fruitful methods and persistent opposition from the Jansenists of his time, whose heretical doctrines John resisted vehemently all his life.

Afflicted with asthma and rheumatism in his last years, he died on Good Friday at 68 and was canonized in 1900. The feast day of Saint John Baptist de La Salle is celebrated by the whole Church on April 7th. The Brothers celebrate his feast on May 15th.

Thoughts

Complete dedication to one's calling by God, whatever it may be, is a rare quality. Jesus asks us to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12: 30).

Paul gives similar advice: "Whatever you do, do it from the heart..." – Colossians 3: 23

"What is nobler than to mold the character of the young?

I consider that he who knows how to form the youthful mind is truly greater than all painters, sculptors and all others of that sort" – St. John Chrysostom

"Be driven by the love of God because Jesus Christ died for all, that those who live may live not for themselves but for Him, who died and rose for them. Above all, let your charity and zeal show how you love the Church. Your work is for the Church, which is the body of Christ. " – from a meditation by John Baptist de La Salle

Let us pray:

O God, You Who chose Saint John Baptist de La Salle for the Christian education of youth, inspire teachers for Your Church who are dedicated to serve the new generation in schools and throughout life. We ask this in the name of Jesus our brother and Redeemer. Amen.

Psalm 112

**Happy are those who fear the Lord,
who greatly delight in God's commands.
Their descendants shall be numerous in the land,
a group of people who are upright and blessed.
they shall shine through the darkness, a light for the upright;
they shall be gracious, merciful and just.
Their hearts shall be strong in the Lord.
Happy are those who fear the Lord.**

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**His care is to seek the Lord his Maker,
to petition the Most High God,
to open his lips in prayer,
to ask pardon for his sins.
Then, if it pleases the Lord Almighty,
he will be filled with the Spirit of understanding.
He will pour forth his words of wisdom
and in prayer give thanks to God
Who will direct his knowledge and counsel.
He will show the wisdom of what he has learned
and glory in the Law of the Lord.
Unfading will be his memory,
through all generations his name will live.
People will speak of his wisdom,
and sing his praises.**

– Sirach 39: 6 – 10

**You are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by all,
shown to be a letter of Christ administered by us,
written not in ink but by the Spirit of the Living God,
not on tablets of stone but on tablets that are hearts of flesh. – 2 Corinthians 3: 2 – 3**

The disciples approached Jesus and said, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” Jesus called a child over, placed the child in their midst and said, “Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one child such as this in My name receives Me.” – Matthew 18: 1 – 5

Reflection

As we go about our variety of activities each day and strive to grow in our Christian way of living, let our journey be highlighted by traveling with De La Salle as our spiritual companion by trusting as he did that God will provide and lead the way.

Let us pray :

**Stir up your trust in God’s infinite goodness
and honor God**

by leaving in God’s hands the care of your person.

**Be not troubled about the present
or disquieted about the future,**

**but be concerned only
about the moment you must now live.**

**Do not let anticipation of tomorrow
be a burden on the day that is passing.**

**What you lack in the evening
the morrow will bring you,
if you know how to hope in God.**

– St. John Baptist de La Salle

Reflective questions

How do I show my trust in the goodness of God each day?

How do I give myself and my work over to the Lord each day?

How do I effectively live in the here and now?

**How do I live out my hope in the Lord with the ending of each day
and the dawning of a new day?**

Intercessions

**Almighty God, You have given us Your Divine Son as our Good Shepherd and Teacher,
May we always be open to His inspiration in our lives.**

Loving God, help us to love the poor and abandoned as Saint John Baptist de la Salle did.

May we recognize our Lord Jesus Christ in the faces of our brothers and sisters.

Lord Jesus, You proclaimed children to be blessed and You loved them.

Teach us to be patient with our brothers and sisters as they take the time to mature.

O Most Holy One, raise up Christian educators everywhere to proclaim the Good News of Jesus.

May our teachers assist us to grow in grace, in wisdom and in knowledge.

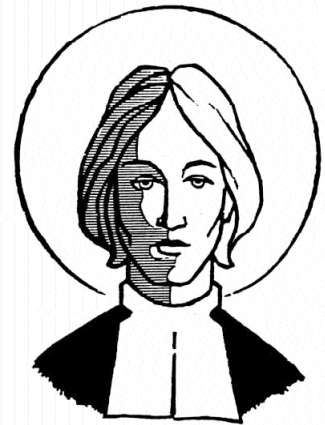
O Triune God, You gave us Saint John Baptist de La Salle who called together a group of men to give a Christian education to the working class and the poor.

Send generous men to follow in his footsteps as Brothers who will continue his dream and vision .

Litany

Response: *Pray for us.*

**De La Salle, holy priest of God,
De La Salle, our Father and Founder,
De La Salle, patron of Christian teachers,
De La Salle, innovator of teaching methods,
De La Salle, animated by a great zeal for the salvation of souls,
De La Salle, always aware of the presence of God,
De La Salle, lover of Sacred Scripture,
De La Salle, continually led by the Spirit of God,
De La Salle, concerned for the poor,
De La Salle, always resigned to the Will of God,
De La Salle, interested in the education of the working class and the poor,
De La Salle, patient in tribulations,
De La Salle, instrument in gathering together and forming the first Brothers,
De La Salle, always living in a spirit of faith,
De La Salle, man of prayer,
De La Salle, devoted to our Blessed Mother,
De La Salle, always caring for the Brothers,
De La Salle, continually obedient to the Church,
De La Salle, spiritual director of souls,
De La Salle, model of holiness,**



Let us pray:

Father and founder of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools, you realized the value of competent Christian educators and worked untiringly for the instruction of the working class and the poor always relying on the providence of God.

Send generous followers to live your ideals of a spiritual life through the service of Christian education.

May we be filled with the spirit and zeal of those first Brothers who ministered so diligently for the salvation of youth through Christian education.

May we and our Lasallian colleagues be Christ-like models for others and may the spirit of Jesus be forever in our hearts. Amen.

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!

