

Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Lover of Children and Advocate for the Poor

A Prayer Service for Boards

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

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, you told us that the poor would be with us always (Mt 26:11, Mk 14:7, Jn 12:8). Help us to challenge ourselves and not be afraid to see the poor, alienated, and oppressed in our own backyards and in the world. Help us to recognize in them your face and the wounds and the suffering that you bore for our salvation. Help us to follow in the footsteps of our Founder, Saint John Baptist de La Salle, who loved you in loving and reaching out to the poor and marginalized of his time and place. We make this prayer in his name, through the intercession of St. La Salle, while we commit ourselves to bringing about God's reign of justice and peace throughout our world. **AMEN!**

Readings/Slides

(In advance, prepare six board members to read the following selections. Ideally, there could be six "slides" projected on a large screen to serve as a backdrop, i.e., Jesus teaching in the Temple, Jesus and the disciples, Jesus and the little children, Jesus reaching out to the poor or raising Lazarus, De La Salle giving bread to the poor, our Lasallian mission(s) in Africa/San Miguel Schools, mission trips with students/faculty/staff from our universities to locations where we serve the poor, John Paul II with the poor, and so on. There should be a full minute pause between the opening prayer and also between each of the readings.)

Reading #1

(Luke 4: 18 – 19)

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Reading #2

(Saint John Baptist de La Salle, Meditations, 173.1.)

“You are required by your work to love the poor, since the task you have in this work is to devote yourself to their instruction. Look upon them with Saint Francis as images of Jesus Christ, and as those who are best disposed to receive his Spirit in abundance.”

Reading #3

(Article 141 of the Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools)

“The words of St. John Baptist de La Salle are still true: ‘The need for this Institute is very great’. The young, the poor, the world and the Church still need the ministry of the Brothers [and Lasallian partners]. Despite the difficulties which they meet, the Brothers [and Lasallian partners] know, in faith, that God does not abandon ‘his work’ but that ‘it pleases him, to make it bear fruit day by day’.”

Reading #4

(Article 40 of the Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools)

“[Lasallians] have always in view the promotion of justice in the light of the gospel and either the direct or indirect service of the poor as the preferred aspect of their ministry of education. They work directly for the poor by providing an education for the economically deprived, victims of social injustice, delinquents, and those neglected by the rest of society. When [Lasallians] work with students from families that are more or less well off, they teach them their duties and responsibilities with regard to social justice and charity towards everyone. [Lasallians] give special attention to their students who have difficulties at school, at home, or problems adjusting to society.”

Reading #5 (Associated with the *God of the Poor*, Pastoral Letter of Brother Superior Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, FSC, 25 December 2003, pp. 49-50.)

“...providing welfare is not enough. It is important to get to the root causes of poverty and search for solutions of a structural nature. At the same time, we need to be aware that we cannot do everything and that we ought to respond, first and foremost, by means of Christian education. But it is important to be familiar with reality. The Rule tells us that the Founder *was deeply moved and concerned*. . . . Education for justice should not be merely a specific subject area but a common thread that runs through the entire curriculum. This common thread should be reinforced by daily practice within the school. . . . It is important that within the school there exists an experience of justice in which values, such as solidarity, communion, and participation are top priorities.”

Reading #6

(Matthew. 25:31-40)

“...when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him; and he will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and he will put the sheep on his right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in; naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me. . . . Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers or sisters of mine, even the least of them, you did it to me. . . .’”

Reflection

(One minute of silence, “re-do” the six slides again, in order, 10 seconds each)

Shared Reflection and Intercessions

Closing Prayer: The Lord’s Prayer (Recited together.)

***Saint John Baptist de La Salle...Pray for us!
Live, Jesus, in our hearts...Forever!***