

# *Service of the Poor*

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

## *God's Word*

*(Isaiah 58: 4b-9a)*

Would that today you might fast so as to make your voice heard on high! Is this the manner of fasting I wish, of keeping a day of penance: That a man bow his head like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own. Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!

## *Contemporary Lasallian Voices*

*Please pause briefly in between each quote*

1. "I have long advocated that each of our schools be an 'impact center,' that is to say, a center which 'reaches out' to the poor around it and responds creatively and effectively.... *(John Johnston, FSC)*
2. "The possibilities for service are almost unlimited..." *(John Johnston, FSC)*
3. Shared mission requires that we continue to seek ways to revitalize the school and other educational apostolates with a particular attention to the service of the poor, to the promotion of justice, to pastoral action, and to cultural awareness. *(Dave Hotek on Shared Mission, thoughts after the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Chapter—1993)*
4. "...But who are the poor? The RULE is clear: the economically deprived, victims of social injustice, delinquents, the marginalized and neglected, those who have learning difficulties and those who suffer from personal, social and family problems....Solidarity with the poor is not an accident or secondary aspect of a Lasallian school. It is an essential characteristic. *(John Johnston, FSC)*
5. True ministry is that which invites people to live ever more deeply their baptismal commitment to discipleship. Thus, it challenges people to enter into loving service of others following the example of Jesus Christ. ... The commitment to serve, however, cannot be something which lasts only during one's youth. It must also mark one's participation as an adult in the faith community. *(Thomas Clark, FSC)*

6. In his *Pastoral Letter on Solidarity* in 1989, Brother John Johnston suggests that “we have to **see** more vividly and to **feel** more intensely the poverty that exists throughout the world, in our cities, and perhaps in our own backyard.”
7. The service of the poor requires that the Brother [sic], in conformity with his mission, stand in opposition to all forms of poverty as frustration and to have, above all, a special concern for the full human development of persons who are poor, sensitizing them to improve the milieu in which they live. Concern for the needs of individual persons and taking on enterprises in favor of the poor can never dispense with efforts to establish a just social order. (from the *Declaration on the Brothers in the World*, 1966, 30.3)
8. LASALLIAN SCHOOLS ARE COMMITTED TO THE POOR. De La Salle’s concern was for the poor, the neglected and the overlooked. Lasallian teachers give greatest attention to the neglected and less attractive students. Service projects bring the poor’s voice into the lives of students. (one of the Ten Commitments of Lasallian Schools in *Touching the Hearts of Students*, George Van Grieken, FSC)

## *Quiet Reflection*

### *Voice of the Church*

*(Pope John Paul II)*

“ The poor of the world  
are your brothers and sisters in Christ.  
You must never be content  
to leave them just the crumbs from the feast.  
You must give of your substance  
and not just of abundance,  
in order to help them.  
And you must treat them as guests at your family table.”

## ***Closing Prayer***

- May God bless us with discomfort  
at easy answers, half truths and superficial relationships  
so that we will live deep within our hearts.
- May God bless us with anger  
at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,  
so that we will work for justice, equality and peace.
- May God bless us with tears to shed  
for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war,  
so that we will reach out our hand to comfort them  
and change their pain into joy.
- And may God bless us  
with the foolishness to think  
we can make a difference in the world,  
so that we will do the things  
which others tell us cannot be done. Amen.

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