

The Lasallian Educator according to John Baptist de La Salle

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Introduction

What follows are, in fact, ten independent short essays prepared by the author sometime between August 2009 and May 2012. They are grouped here by the editors under the heading of "The Lasallian Educator according to John Baptist de La Salle."

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A Christian Professional Educator

One of John Baptist de La Salle's achievements as an *educator*, said Friedrich Brug, was that he "raised to a position of honor the hitherto despised profession of schoolmaster."² And certainly one way in which the Founder did this was by setting forth the characteristics of a *Christian professional educator*, a person who had and followed certain standards while doing his work. Then De La Salle sought to lead his co-workers to realize them in their lives.

To begin with, he said that such a *teacher* should see his³ work as most important in the Church since it is a prime means of building up the Body of Christ. Then he would highly esteem it, as do others who have the true Christian spirit.⁴ He would view his work, thus, because it helps achieve God's goal of leading all humans to salvation. This requires knowing God's truth so that the *teacher* can provide it for those who otherwise would not receive the needed religious instruction.⁵

Doing this work of God, however, required certain holiness on the part of a *teacher*. Fully aware of this, De La Salle called on his co-workers to become holy and pleasing to God.⁶ For this, he said, was a necessary way of showing the students the type of individuals they should become through the education they were receiving.⁷

Also, it required a definite view of the young people whom one was teaching. Difficult as it might be at times, their *teacher* was to recognize them as members of Jesus Christ. Continually he would then seek to lead them to become faithful disciples of Jesus.⁸ A human knowledge of these young people was also required, for he would see it easier to lead some of them to God and more difficult with regard to others. The boys also should be encouraged to associate only with good companions, avoiding those who could lead them into any kind of wrongdoing.⁹

De La Salle, though, did not neglect what many see as the prime purpose of any schooling, passing on knowledge to society's younger members. This required, he said, knowledge of the subjects one is called on to teach. So a *professional educator* will take all necessary means to acquire a solid knowledge of his subjects.¹⁰ Keeping in mind their age and ability he will then seek to share this knowledge with his students while making good use of all of his class time.¹¹ And in his educational classic, *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*,¹² De La Salle certainly suggested practical and helpful ideas about how an *educator* can accomplish this.

A *Christian educator* will go still farther, seeking to form good followers of Jesus who will live their faith.¹³ The good example he gives the young people at all times, in all places, and in all situations will be a most practical means of doing this.¹⁴ He will also supervise them, acting as a visible *guardian angel* to lead them to avoid sin, do good, and behave properly at all times.¹⁵ When necessary, he will correct a student who is doing wrong. Still, this will be done so as to lead the young person to behave properly and avoid the fault in the future, rather than just to punish his wrongdoing.¹⁶

Being a *Christian professional educator* in the fullest sense of the term, as De La Salle prescribed for his co-workers, was doing God's work. So he reminded each of them that he would have to give an account of how well he had met these standards.¹⁷ But he did not end on a negative note. For he described both the happiness such a *teacher* would have in this life when seeing the good results of his efforts, as well as the reward he will receive for them in heaven.¹⁸ If then the Founder challenged his disciples to become *Christian professional educators*, he also tried to show them how worthwhile it was to achieve this status.

The Task of Winning Hearts

In the final version of the *Rule* he composed for his religious sons,¹⁹ John Baptist de La Salle seemed to want them to keep a distance from their students. For while he called on them to "love all their pupils tenderly" and have an "equal affection for all" regardless of their different socio-economic situations, he said that they should not "be familiar with any of them."²⁰ So they were to avoid any close proximity with any student and not speak privately to one except briefly and only in some special situations.²¹ However, his meditations²² seem to show that he had significantly different ideas regarding these same points.

For in these writings, the Founder repeatedly reminds his disciples of their ministry in which they replaced fathers and mothers, who did not do their duty of giving their children religious instruction, as well as the pastors of the Church.²³ As such, they are called to teach children their faith, serving as the dispensers of God's mysteries to help their pupils achieve salvation.²⁴ And

while doing this they should see themselves as *angels* who prepare the way for Jesus to come to these children so that they will accept and follow his teaching.²⁵

Doing this, he says, requires *teachers* who “touch the hearts” of their pupils and have a duty to learn how to do this. For it would be useless to announce the Gospel to them if they are unwilling to hear and practice its teachings.²⁶ Going farther still he insisted that his disciples had to prove to their pupils that they had a tender love for them. For as De La Salle said in one context, it is not by harsh words and conduct that you win hearts but by kind words and actions. And by this means it becomes possible to attract others and lead them to do what you desire of them.²⁷

Elsewhere, he said, a view of faith will prepare a *teacher* to act in this way.²⁸ Then he cited the examples of several holy people – such as Saint Anselm – whose gentleness and charity made it possible for him to instruct and guide young people successfully. Thus, he helped them to acquire the Christian spirit and live according to its teachings.²⁹ And he insisted that a *Christian educator* should act in this way with all his students, those whose conduct made it difficult for him to do so as well as those more disposed to follow his teachings.³⁰

As always, being realistic, the Founder noted that a *teacher* will have students who “are disorderly and inclined to evil” as well as others inclined to good. And he must seek to win the hearts of these first ones so as to lead them to God.³¹ To begin with, this can require correcting some of his pupils. To show how serious is this obligation he cited the example of the High Priest Eli whom God punished for failing to correct his children’s misbehavior.³² Also, he reminded them of Saint Paul’s instructions to Titus about the need to correct wrongdoers and to prevent others from following their example. But this correction is never to be done with passion or anger that will render it ineffective and harmful to all concerned.³³ For when correcting a student a *teacher* should seek to win his heart and lead him from his wrongdoing.

So perhaps De La Salle best summarized his ideas regarding relations with the students by citing the example of Saint Francis de Sales, from whom the *Christian educator* should learn that “. . . if you have the firmness of a father to restrain them and withdraw them from misbehaving, you must also have for them the tenderness of a mother to draw them to you, and to do for them all the good that depends on you.”³⁴ An essential aspect of a Lasallian education, then, is touching and winning the hearts of the students.

The Lasallian Educator Teaches by Example

When telling his disciples what their spirit of zeal required them to do, John Baptist de La Salle said that they should:

. . . strive by prayer, by instruction, and by vigilance and good conduct in school to procure the salvation of the children confided to their care, bringing them up in piety and a truly Christian spirit, that is according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel.³⁵

And here it should be said that though mentioned last, “good conduct,” the example of the *teacher*, was not seen as the least of the means to achieve this end. For he said his disciples had the duty day in and day out to teach their charges the Gospel truths and lead these young people

to practice them. To do this, he insisted that the teacher faithfully live according to the teachings of Jesus.³⁶ And this is a topic to which he frequently returned in his various sets of meditations.

In connection with this idea, De La Salle told his disciples their first duty is to edify their pupils and be their models of Christian conduct.³⁷ For he said students observe their teachers, and for children, example makes more of an impression than words. So what is said will only influence their conduct if what they are told is in harmony with the conduct of the one who is speaking.³⁸ As a result, if a teacher wants the young people to do what is right, he will seek to persuade them more by his example than by his words alone.³⁹

As always practical in his teachings, the Founder next set about indicating what he thought this required of the *Christian educator*. First of all, his conduct must show that he is a true disciple of Jesus Christ who fully believes and practices the Gospel maxims. In effect, he might have to go beyond this and live a life of no ordinary degree of holiness.⁴⁰ Because of this, the *teacher* will not teach his pupils anything he himself does not practice. Then, never at any time acting out of passion, he will be an example of the reserve and self-control he requires of them. Also during prayers and while attending Church services everything he does will edify them. Likewise, all his conduct will always show a spiritual wisdom worthy of his calling. And in this way he will win the esteem and respect of his students, not for his own sake but as a means by which he will be able to lead them to God. In large measure, this will be because the young people see him as a person whose conduct is different from and superior to what is ordinary and common to most humans.⁴¹

Elsewhere, De La Salle insisted that the virtue such conduct required could not be hidden and will make a strong impression on his students, as well as other people who observe it. And because it will lead the students to imitate it, it will help them to become pious and faithful followers of Jesus Christ. For citing the example of Saint Mark the Evangelist he showed how this had happened in the early Church. Therefore, he insisted the example given by the teacher's good conduct would accomplish the primary objective of all his educational activity, winning his students over to God.⁴² By acting thus, then, the Founder said, the *Christian educator* will be a minister of God, carrying out his important ministry with a sincere and true zeal. So De La Salle had no doubt, then, that the good conduct his disciples showed while doing all phases of their work would have a great effect on the lives of those entrusted to their care.⁴³

The Faith of the Christian Educator

According to John Baptist de La Salle, faith was to be the principal virtue all Lasallians were to strive to practice. Quoting from Saint Paul's *Letter to the Romans*, he stressed, "the just live by faith."⁴⁴ This implied, he said, that a Christian should be governed not by reason and much less by any human or worldly wisdom, but by the word of Jesus that should be the rule of his conduct. Holding fast to faith, then, and to what is of faith, he would follow the traditional teachings of the Church. Rendering her prompt and perfect obedience, he would accept and approve only what comes from her and condemn what is contrary to her teaching. To practice these admonitions, the Christian would be completely submissive to the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, an idea and a practice some people rejected at the time he wrote these things.⁴⁵

This faith the Founder saw as a gift of God, is given us because only through faith can we know God and lead a life that will make us agreeable to him. By it, God enlightens our minds so as to make it possible for a human being to lead the Christian life and to attain the happiness of heaven after death because he was agreeable to God in this life.⁴⁶ Enlightened by the related virtue of charity, this faith will lead a Christian to value God above everything else, to lose everything rather than be separated from God, and to sacrifice everything else so as to serve God and be united with him. The reason for choosing and acting thus is that the Christian recognizes that he has real life only insofar as he is united with Jesus and imitates him.⁴⁷ This in turn leads him to believe all the speculative and practical truths that God teaches us and faithfully to practice them.⁴⁸

All that De La Salle said here and elsewhere about faith and its place in the life of a Christian shows how important he considered this virtue to be in and for the Christian life. However, if he saw faith as a gift of God, he also saw the need for one so gifted to guard and build up his faith, not just to receive this gift and to practice it in a way that requires little or nothing on his part. So, since the truths of faith are found in Holy Scripture, knowledge of the Word of God set forth there is a first and very important step toward building up one's faith. In addition, he insisted, a Christian should frequently meditate on the Word of God found in Holy Scripture. Doing so, he said, would encourage the Christian to do what is right and inspire him to be guided by the spirit of his state. For, he insisted, this is why the Word of God has been given us in this fashion.⁴⁹

The Zeal of the Christian Educator

When establishing his schools for poor boys, in many ways De La Salle showed himself to be very much a man of his time, the "Splendid Century," the Age of Louis XIV (1661-1715). Taking note of the French economic development as directed by King Louis' great minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, he sought to prepare future citizens who could contribute to their country's economic life. His religious sons⁵⁰ would do this by teaching the children of the artisans and the poor, reading, writing, and other subjects that could prepare them to do this. Also, taking note of the Catholic Reform then influencing France's religious life, he called on their *teachers* to help these boys become true Christians who knew and would practice their faith and the Gospel.⁵¹ However, he placed greater and first emphasis on this second objective. His were to be schools that would have the pupils in their care from morning until evening. During this time, their entire program would be directed toward giving the children a Christian education. They would be introduced to the mysteries of the Catholic faith and inspired with the Christian maxims that could lead and help them to live a good life, one worthy of a Christian.⁵²

To accomplish their twofold task, particularly what the Founder viewed as its most important aspect, these *teachers* were to take a view of faith regarding themselves, their pupils and their task. So he insisted that the "spirit of . . . [this] Institute is, first, a spirit of faith . . ."⁵³ Then these men guided by faith would show another important trait while carrying out their educational activity. For . . .

. . . the spirit of this Institute consists secondly in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children and for bringing them up in the fear of God, inducing them to preserve their

innocence if they have not lost it and inspiring them with a great aversion and a great horror for sin and for all that could cause them to lose purity.

To enter into this spirit, the Brothers of the Society will strive by prayer, instruction, and their vigilance and good conduct in school to procure the salvation of the children confided to them, bringing them up in piety, that is, according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel.⁵⁴

Continually, also, he reminded them that God had called them to do this task and of the zeal they should show while doing it.⁵⁵ And if elsewhere in his writings the Founder seemed to take a negative view of the children his disciples were called to teach,⁵⁶ he also stressed how important and honorable was the task they were doing.⁵⁷ Then taking his usual practical approach, De La Salle suggested many ways in which a *Christian educator* could maintain and develop his zeal for what he insisted was a most important work in and for the Church.⁵⁸

So the *Christian educator* can learn from the Founder why he has to be so zealous in his work as well as various means by which he can develop what is for him so necessary a trait. Today, through his writings, John Baptist de La Salle continues to tell us why and how we can become the men and women we need to be to accomplish our apostolate among the young people with whom we are called to work.

The Gentleness of the Christian Educator

Describing a contemporary educational establishment in the late sixteenth century, French author Montaigne wrote:

Tis a real house of correction for imprisoned youth . . . Do but come in when the pupils are about their lessons, and you should hear nothing but the outcries of boys under execution, with the thundering noise of their pedagogues drunk with fury. A very fine way this is to tempt these tender and timorous souls to love their books, with a furious countenance and a rod in hand.⁵⁹

Other authors agree that this system that persisted into the next century was harsh and brutal, relying very heavily on physical punishment of the students. In his younger days, even Louis XIV did not escape this aspect of the system.⁶⁰ That being so, certainly boys from families of the working class and the poor for whom De La Salle created his schools could hardly have expected to escape such treatment if and when they attended a school open to them.

In the twelfth of his *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, the Founder certainly acknowledged that children could be inclined to do wrong, developing bad habits and even committing serious sins. Then, basing himself on Saint Paul, he stressed the duty of a *teacher* to correct his students so as to lead them from their wrongdoing and lead others to behave properly.⁶¹ Regarding this matter, the 1718 *Rule*⁶² and *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*⁶³ deal with it at great length. But in both places, De La Salle seems to be seeking means to avoid occasions for correcting a student while never using the type of correction described by Montaigne. Among other things, he describes how even at such a time a *Christian teacher* can show the gentleness he should practice toward a student so as to lead the wrongdoer to live as a true child of God.⁶⁴

He developed this last idea further in other of his meditations that formed a program of continuing education for his religious sons by the way in which he regularly repeated some ideas that he considered very important. Discussing another topic, he said, scolding, murmuring, complaining aloud and quarreling did not win the hearts of others. Rather, as Jesus said, it is by kindness that we do this.⁶⁵ And having a duty to touch hearts, a *teacher* should strive to develop the appropriate qualities for doing this. Among these is a great tenderness for one's students and avoiding anything that can harm or wound them. This, he added, will lead them to delight in being in your company.⁶⁶

Also, he added that Jesus himself gave an example of winning souls to God in this way, and by imitating him here we are in good company. For among others, Saints Leo the Great, Anselm and Francis de Sales all imitated the Savior's gentleness. In doing so, they won the admiration of those whom they led. And this they used to help them become loyal and faithful disciples of Jesus who turned from any wrongdoing and faithfully practiced their religion.⁶⁷ Then he noted that in the socio-economic situation in which they lived, young people needed to learn a certain gentleness. He saw their *teacher's* example as a powerful means of leading them to acquire this quality.⁶⁸

In brief, the Founder did not ignore the fact that some of the boys who attended his schools did not live up to the teachings and requirements of their Christian religion. But he did suggest that the gentleness of the *Christian educator* could be a better means of improving their conduct than the punishments so vividly described by Montaigne. Also, his example here could be a powerful means of giving them the human and Christian education that De La Salle's schools sought to offer.

Ambassador and Minister of Jesus Christ

Regarding the first *teachers* he had to work with in the schools for poor boys, De La Salle said, "I considered the men whom I was first obliged to employ in the schools in the beginning as being inferior to my valet."⁶⁹ However, in time the quality of those attracted to this apostolate improved; and many of them responded well to his efforts in their regard. So seeking to make them aware of their dignity he told them, "You are ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ in the work that you do."⁷⁰ Then he gave them good reasons for seeing themselves thus and suggested means for living up to this dignity.

God, he said, wanted all to be saved; but to come to salvation a person had to respond to his call. To do this, it was necessary to know Jesus' teachings in order to practice them.⁷¹ Therefore, a person had to be taught the faith; and instructing their children in the faith should be a primary task of mothers and fathers. But since for various reasons they often failed to do this, God called and raised up *teachers* to perform this task.⁷²

Called by God to this ministry, he told them, you are to be led and guided by his Spirit, united with him and living as he would. So like him you are to be the *good shepherd*, watching over and caring for those entrusted to you. This requires his continual help that you should ask for and seek through prayer that leads to union with him.⁷³

Responding to Jesus' call, you will see as your primary task that of leading your pupils to live as perfect as possible a Christian life. This will require you to be moved by the ardent zeal that is the secondary spirit of your Institute.⁷⁴ It will lead you to instruct them, be vigilant in their regard, and reprove and correct those who are at fault. While doing these things, your good conduct, also inspired by your zeal, will attract them and lead them to live a life pleasing to God.⁷⁵

Then you will give glory to God by teaching the students their faith and leading them to practice it. At the same time, you will be building up the Church by leading them to live up to their baptismal commitment. Keeping this in mind, you will see your apostolate as one of the most important and necessary in the Church, esteeming it highly because of what it can accomplish in this world and in the next.⁷⁶

Ever a realist, De La Salle never underestimated the difficulty his disciples would encounter while acting as “ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ,” called to lead youth – often far from God – to their salvation. So to encourage them in their task he stressed the consolation it would procure for them in this world and in the next. Often enough, he said, you will see the results of your efforts in the lives of former pupils who are serving God with faith and piety. In heaven, he added, you will have the joy of seeing your former students who have come to eternal life by living as you had taught them to do.⁷⁷

Certainly, De La Salle desired and desires all those involved in any way in his Christian Schools to be “ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ” for the young people with whom they come in contact. So today *Lasallian educators* might ask themselves, “how can I fulfill this role and set about doing what it requires?” For this is an excellent way of continuing the Lasallian educational tradition.

Visible Guardian Angel of Students

When describing his students in his Christian Schools, John Baptist de La Salle always took a realistic view of them, if one different from the negative view common among some of his contemporaries.⁷⁸ So he felt that they were weak and could easily go astray. In part, he said this was because they did not understand their religion and so found it hard to practice it.⁷⁹ And today many *schoolteachers* would make a similar evaluation of their students.

Therefore, he insisted, children need help to learn, understand, and then practice their religion. And to help them do these things God gives each of them a *guardian angel*.⁸⁰ At the same time, though, he suggested the *Christian educator* should see himself as a visible *guardian angel* sent by God to lead his students to salvation. Then to fulfill this role he should strive to help the young people to find the strength they need to do good and overcome any difficulties to their salvation that they might encounter.⁸¹

To perform the function of his students' *guardian angel*, he said, the *Christian educator* would begin by using the means available to instruct the students in their religion. But he had to realize that instruction in the faith by itself does not lead a person to salvation, it is also necessary for

him to practice what he is taught.⁸² To bring this about, the *teacher* must begin by doing two things. First, he must learn the faith so that he can share it with those in his charge. Then he must learn how to communicate this knowledge to the students on their level.⁸³

After this, in order to guide these young people to salvation, their *teacher* must win their affection and confidence – not for his own sake, but so that he can lead them to practice what they have been taught.⁸⁴ Then while leading the children from doing evil and to doing good, he will be their visible *guardian angel*. As such, he will also be vigilant in their regard, aware of how they need to practice their faith in their life situations and be real Christians and followers of Christ. Here he might even propose that while doing this they practice a counterculture, making their conduct different from what is common and accepted in their environment.⁸⁵ However, striving to fulfill this role might pose a great challenge to the *teacher* as to his students. For this reason, De La Salle proposed he pray to the *guardian angels* of his pupils, requesting help in this matter.⁸⁶

A reflection on these ideas of the Founder could lead someone to say he could be very demanding of the *Christian educator* called to continue his mission in the Church. If this is true, De La Salle encourages the *teacher* to face up to these challenges by pointing out the heavenly reward promised those who strive to be faithful and effective *guardian angels* of the young people confided to their care.⁸⁷

Good Shepherd of Students

Prior to the liturgical reforms effected by the Second Vatican Council,⁸⁸ the Second Sunday after Easter was often called “Good Shepherd Sunday.” This was because the Gospel read at the Masses on that day was *John* 10:11-16 in which Jesus contrasts the *good shepherd* who knows and gives his life for his sheep with the hireling who has no care for them. As usual, basing his meditation for this Sunday on its Gospel reading, John Baptist de La Salle presented the ways in which the *Christian educator* can show himself to be the *good shepherd* of those confided to his care.⁸⁹

First, he said, the *Christian educator* must know his pupils individually. This necessary quality of the *teacher* must be based on an understanding and a discernment of spirit that he frequently asks of God. Then, the Founder says, their *teacher* will be able to deal effectively with each of these young people. For he will know to which ones he needs to show patience and mildness and those with whom he must deal more firmly. Also he will perceive those students who need to be stimulated and spurred on. At the same time, he will also see to which ones he must pay attention, so that they will not go astray, as well as those requiring reproach and correction because of their faults. What De La Salle says here shows his basic knowledge of the educational psychology required of a *teacher* for the successful management of his classes.⁹⁰

Secondly, De La Salle says his *Christian educator* should have a great tenderness for his pupils. This will make him very alert to whatever might harm them. Also in this way he will win their affection, not for his own sake, but for that of his apostolate. For this will make them ready and willing to be with him and follow his lead.⁹¹

However, to lead his students effectively in the right way requires that the *educator* have a high level of virtue. This is because it is what he does that will lead them faithfully to serve God. For the Founder insists, their teacher's good conduct will persuade the young people more than what he might say to them.⁹²

Finally, the *good shepherd* always remains a *teacher* as far as his students are concerned. To do this task well and effectively, he needs to know what he seeks to share with them during his lessons. Also, he must be prepared to adjust his presentations to the level of his students so that they can understand what he tells them. And while doing this, he must find the means to lead them to practice what they are taught, particularly as far as choosing what is right and rejecting what is wrong is concerned.⁹³

Reflecting on what De La Salle says about these matters makes the point that the *Christian educator* must be a good *teacher* in order to be a *good shepherd* of his students. And he will be a good shepherd because he is a competent, concerned, and devoted *educator* in the best sense of this term.

The Rewards of the Lasallian Educator

In his sixteen *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, John Baptist de La Salle dealt with what he considered the most important aspects of the apostolate of the *Christian educator*. And ending his last two meditations on a very positive note, he describes the rewards given even in this life to those who have instructed children and done it well and the rewards a *teacher* doing this work can expect in heaven.

To begin, he says, that even in this world “God is so good that he does not leave unrewarded the work that is done for him and the service that is rendered to him especially for the salvation of souls.”⁹⁴ Next, basing himself on the parable of the talents found in *Matthew* and *Luke*, De La Salle says the reward of the *Christian teacher* has two aspects – an abundance of grace and an extended ministry with a greater facility for accomplishing it. Then, he adds, that doing this task for God well assures the salvation of the *teacher* himself.⁹⁵ But in addition, even in this world the *Christian teacher* has the happiness of seeing God well served by his pupils, both while they are in school and afterwards when they become good citizens of the State as well as Christians living according to the teachings of their faith. His awareness of how he helped bring this about will contribute to the happiness that is part of the *teacher’s* reward in this life.⁹⁶

When discussing the reward reserved for the *Christian teacher* in heaven, De La Salle uses a quotation from the *Book of Daniel*, “Those who instruct many in Christian justice will shine like stars for all eternity.”⁹⁷ But before that he insisted:

... your happiness in heaven will be greater than what will be enjoyed by those who work only for their own salvation. It will, in fact, be much greater in proportion to the number of children you have taught and won over to God.⁹⁸

Therefore, the Founder said that on the Day of Judgment the children the *Christian teacher* has instructed well and to their profit will be the source of his glory.⁹⁹

Developing the idea further, he said, the *Christian teacher* will have the happiness of seeing many of his former students in heaven while perceiving how he helped make this possible. And he even pictures the *teacher* and his former students holding a happy reunion in the presence of God himself.¹⁰⁰ Following this, in a very touching way De La Salle describes how the *Christian teacher* who might have been fearful regarding the account he would have to render to God because of the mission given him and the ministry he undertook will find his fears unfounded. For in the presence of God he will have the joy of hearing those whom he led to heaven reminding Jesus of the good their *teacher* had done for them. So he concludes by saying:

All of them will join in asking Jesus to grant you a favorable judgment, praying him not to delay in putting you in possession of the happiness you procured for them by your work and concern.¹⁰¹

A perusal of De La Salle's spiritual as well as his educational writings will show that he never understated the difficulties a *Christian teacher* will encounter while doing his necessary and important work. At the same time, he also stresses how and why God expects and demands that the *teacher* do his task as well as possible. However, what was just said makes another point. For by describing in great detail the rewards the good and faithful *teacher* will receive in this life and hereafter, he encourages those who generously undertake this important work that builds up the Church of God in this world and for eternity to persevere in this apostolate.

Endnotes

1. Brother Gregory Wright (1928-2014), who received a PhD in History from the University of New Mexico in 1964, was for thirty years a professor at the College of Santa Fe in New Mexico (aka Saint Michael's College) and for the last twenty years of his professional career a professor at De La Salle University in Manila. His doctoral dissertation was entitled *The Writings of Jean-Baptiste de La Salle: His Religious Teachings*. Brother Gregory was the editor of the translation of De La Salle's *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility* (Romeoville, IL: Lasallian Publications, 1990), and he had a series of essays published under the title of *Saint John Baptist de La Salle: A 17th Century Educational Innovator* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 2000).

2. William J. Battersby, *De La Salle: A Pioneer of Modern Education* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1949), page102.

3. Although the author almost always refers to Lasallian students and teachers with the use of the masculine pronoun, we know that many Lasallians today are in fact female.

4. *Meditations* #155.1 and #113.1.

5. *Meditations* #193.1 and #193.2.

6. *Meditations* #39.1 and #39.2.

7. *Meditations* #168.1.
8. *Meditations* #96.1 and #150.2.
9. *Meditations* #186.3 and #56.2.
10. *Meditations* #120.1, #153.1, and #159.1.
11. *Meditations* #91.3 and #206.1.
12. Cf. John Baptist de La Salle, *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, translated by F. de La Fontainerie and Richard Arandez and edited by William Mann (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1996).
13. *Meditations* #61.3.
14. *Meditations* #69.1 and #128.2.
15. *Meditations* #201.3, #197.2, #198.2, and #171.3.
16. *Meditations* #203.3, #161.2, #161.3, and #204.1.
17. *Meditations* #200.1.
18. *Meditations* #207.2, #207.3, #208.1, #208.2, and #208.3.
19. The Brothers of the Christian Schools.
20. John Baptist de La Salle, “Rule of 1705” and “Rule of 1718” in *Rule and Foundational Documents*, translated by Augustine Loes and Ronald Isetti (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 2002), chapter 7, articles #13 and #14, pages 38-39.
21. De La Salle, *Rule and Foundational Documents*, chapter 7, articles #16 and #17, page 39.
22. Cf. *Meditations of John Baptist de La Salle*, translated by Richard Arandez and Augustine Loes and edited by Augustine Loes and Francis Huether (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1994).
23. *Meditations* #203.3.
24. *Meditations* #201.1, #132.1, #193.1, and #39.2.

25. *Meditations* #2.1 and #3.1.
26. *Meditations* #43.3, #129.2, and #81.2.
27. *Meditations* #201.2 and #65.2.
28. *Meditations* #130.3.
29. *Meditations* #115.1.
30. *Meditations* #206.1.
31. *Meditations* #186.3.
32. *Meditations* #203.3.
33. *Meditations* #204.2 and #85.2.
34. *Meditations* #101.3.

35. De La Salle, *Rule and Foundational Documents*, chapter 2, article #10, page 19; and John Baptist de La Salle, *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, translated by William J. Battersby and edited by Daniel Burke (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1993), page 32.

36. *Meditations* #84.1 and #100.2.
37. *Meditations* #91.3.
38. *Meditations* #69.1 and #202.3.
39. *Meditations* #33.2.
40. *Meditations* #87.1, #84.3, and #39.2.
41. *Meditations* #69.1, #128.1, #132.1, and #178.1.
42. *Meditations* #116.3, #136.2, and #158.3.
43. *Meditations* #186.1 and #201.1.
44. *Romans* 1:17.

45. John Baptist de La Salle, *The Duties of a Christian to God*, translated by Richard Arnandez and edited by Alexis James Doval (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 2002), pages 21-22; and De La Salle, *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, pages 66-67.

46. De La Salle, *The Duties of a Christian to God*, pages 21-22, 242.

47. De La Salle, *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, page 67.

48. De La Salle, *The Duties of a Christian to God*, pages 243-244.

49. *Meditations* #192.1 and #192.2.

50. Brothers of the Christian Schools.

51. *Meditation* #160.3.

52. De La Salle, *Rule and Foundational Documents*, chapter 1, article #3, page 14.

53. De La Salle, *Rule and Foundational Documents*, chapter 2, article #2, page 16.

54. De La Salle, *Rule and Foundational Documents*, chapter 2, articles #9 and #10, pages 18-19.

55. *Meditations* #114.2 and #201.1.

56. *Meditations* #203.2.

57. *Meditations* #199.2 and #200.1.

58. *Meditations* #81.3, #67.1 and #162.1.

59. Michel Montaigne (1533-1592) in his essay entitled “On the Education of Children” (1580).

60. Battersby, *De La Salle: Pioneer of Modern Education*, page 95.

61. *Meditations* #203.2.

62. De La Salle, *Rule and Foundational Documents*, chapter 8, articles #1 to #6 and #9 to #11, pages 41-43.

63. De La Salle, *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, part II, chapter 5, pages 135-156.

64. *Meditations* #203.2.

65. *Meditations* #65.2.
66. *Meditations* #33.2 and #129.2.
67. *Meditations* #200.3, #114.1, #115.2, #101.2, and #101.3.
68. *Meditations* #200.3.
69. Jean-Baptiste Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle* (Book One), translated by Richard Arnandez and edited by Luke Salm (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 2000), page 80.
70. *Meditations* #195.2.
71. *Meditations* #193.1.
72. *Meditations* #193.1, #193.2, and #194.1.
73. *Meditations* #195.2, #195.3, #196.1, and #196.2.
74. De La Salle, *Rule and Foundational Documents*, chapter 2, article #9, pages 18-19; *Meditations* #201.1 and #201.2..
75. *Meditations* #195.1, #197.1, #197.2, #197.3, #202.3 and #203.1.
76. *Meditations* #199.1, #199.2, and #206.1.
77. *Meditations* #207.2, #207.3, #208.1, and #208.2.
78. Jean-Baptiste Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle* (Book Two), translated by Richard Arnandez and edited by Luke Salm (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 2000), pages 267-268.
79. *Meditations* #197.1 and #197.3.
80. *Meditations* #197.3 and #198.1.
81. *Meditations* #2.1 and #172.2.
82. *Meditations* #197.2.
83. *Meditations* #198.1.

84. *Meditations* #197.2 and #197.3.
85. *Meditations* #198.2 and #198.3.
86. *Meditations* #172.3.
87. *Meditations* #198.3.
88. The Second Vatican Council opened in 1962 and concluded in 1965.
89. *Meditations* #33.1.
90. *Meditations* #33.1.
91. *Meditations* #33.2.
92. *Meditations* #33.2.
93. *Meditations* #33.3.
94. *Meditations* #207.1.
95. *Meditations* #207.1.
96. *Meditations* #207.2 and #207.3.
97. *Daniel* 12:3, as quoted in *Meditations* #208.2.
98. *Meditations* #208.1; see also *Meditations* #208.3.
99. *Meditations* #208.1.
100. *Meditations* #208.2.
101. *Meditations* #208.3.