

**THE PASTORAL MINISTRY OF VOCATIONS
THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERYBODY**

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Let us be guided by the spirituality of John Baptist de La Salle:

Everyone who has received from God the grace of knowing Christ considers it impossible to remain silent. This is the case even more for ourselves who, as Christian educators, have been called to *"help children attain the knowledge of God"* (Med.193) and who have chosen an occupation that is *"one of the most important and excellent in the Church"* (Med.155, 1).

To educate means to enable a person to BE increasingly a person, to achieve integrated growth, and to assume all the values that are conducive to his development and improvement. To achieve this we have means and techniques at our disposal, but we are aware that *"it is not the book we read, nor the reasons that we hear that touch our conscience" – (nor the techniques we use) – "but it is God who makes use of these means"* (Collection). It would be a big mistake for us as Christian educators to rely entirely on human methods and means, ignoring the while the action of the Spirit who uses us as intermediaries.

John Baptist de La Salle wishes us to let ourselves be guided *"by FAITH AND THE WORD OF JESUS CHRIST, making it the rule of our conduct"* (Collection). This means that our actions must translate Gospel values into life. As Christian educators, we are aware of *"being in this world...only to do good"* (Collection), and so we must be consistent with what we proclaim and teach. From the moment we are sincere and act *"in view of God"* (Letter 88), we exercise a genuine pastoral ministry of vocations. Our example is the primary point of reference for vocations. *"How powerful and efficacious good example is in converting souls and in making them advance in virtue"* (Med. 180, 1).

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Given this, we can rightly state that the pastoral ministry of vocations is **THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERYBODY**.

- In the first place, of the **BROTHERS**: as sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle, we must be the first to live according to the prophetic inspiration of our Founder, and be the first to show that the Word of God can be exemplified in the world of today through the Lasallian ideal.
- but **ALSO**:
 - of **PARENTS**, who must sow in the hearts of their children the desire to live their lives according to the plan God has prepared for them.
 - of **TEACHERS**, who must open the hearts of their pupils so that the love of their neighbours may grow in them, a love that is shown by service and dedication.

– of **YOUNG PEOPLE**, who must be brave in making their choices and must encourage one another to make discernments on the basis of the truths that have been proclaimed to them.

Yes, the pastoral ministry of vocations is the responsibility of everybody! Each one of us has a contribution to make. We cannot restrict ourselves simply to a reflection, or to organising a Vocations Week (although these are needed too). While it is certain that a vocation is a gift from God, it is nonetheless true that it needs to be cultivated, accompanied, welcomed... seeing that, as Lasallians, we are "obliged, as he was (John the Baptist), to prepare the way of the Lord in the hearts of (your) pupils" (Med.162, 2).

- Our motivation,
- our support for pupils interested in a vocation,
- our reflections, catechisms, celebrations,
- our personal talks,
- our example,
- our explicit invitation,
- our committed work,
- our prayer...

All these means are available to everybody. No one can feel left out. Let us try, then, in the concrete situation in which we find ourselves, and as best we can, to encourage vocations to religious life and the priesthood.

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I should like to conclude these few thoughts by some words from our Founder. They need no commentary. It is up to us to put them into practice:

"PRAY to him (GOD) fervently, too, that he will be pleased to make your Institute GROW and bear fruit day by day, so that, as St. Paul says, the hearts of the faithful may be strengthened in holiness and in justice" (Med.207, 3).

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