

## **Lasallian Educational Leadership in the Twenty-First Century**

William Mann, FSC<sup>2</sup>

### **Introductory Comments**

First of all, thank you for the invitation to address you today. Please know how very much I appreciate this opportunity to be with you.

For those of you who serve as chief administrators, I want to say thank you on behalf of the Institute for your good work and your wholehearted commitment to this mission.

For those of you who serve as the chairs and members of boards of trustees, I want to say thank you for your invaluable contribution to these Lasallian ministries and for the generosity of your volunteer service.

Your heroic efforts to keep schools accessible and affordable for the families of the working class and poor [in a country that doesn't subsidize private Catholic education] and the example you provide of good management and creative innovation are truly commendable.

I am aware that work in schools that serve the children of middle class families is not often explicitly referenced in recent Institute publications [as we have quite intentionally highlighted the preferential option for poor] and that you, consequently, often find yourselves somewhat invisible in Institute documents. I apologize for that; and I assure you that your good work of blending excellent teaching with faith and social justice formation is important to our Lasallian Family.

A couple of days ago at the opening liturgy of this Conference [having only just arrived from Rome], some phrases of one of the hymns<sup>3</sup> struck a powerful chord within me. The words "among you I find a truth that bids me rise" and "among you now I find a glimpse of what might be" have, in fact, provided a good frame of understanding for the positive experience I have had among you these past few days and the appreciation I have of the work you do.

### **Lasallian Educational Leadership: Five Metaphors**

We will be drawing upon five metaphors from the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*<sup>4</sup> of John Baptist de La Salle – actually they're biblical images – as the backdrop of the remarks that I will make. These Lasallian images will provide a structure for some ideas about the "mission-ary" role of educators and administrators, which I believe is appropriate, since this Conference, in some ways, has fundamental similarities of purpose with the annual retreats of the early Brothers during the time of the Founder. This annual gathering affords you some time to remember why you do what you do, some time to renew your commitment to the Lasallian mission which we believe to be God's holy work, and some time to recommit your best selves and your good

energies working, together and by association as part of our global Lasallian network, for the benefit of the young people and the families you serve.

On the opening evening of this Conference, Sister Clare Fitzgerald<sup>5</sup> affirmed you in your important work by saying that Catholic schools are one of the great American success stories of the twentieth century and spoke about “a spirituality of leadership” that should help us all exercise well the important roles that have been entrusted to us in the opening years of the twenty-first century. Hopefully, the remarks that I offer will contribute to your understanding of “a spirituality of leadership.”

### **Called to Be Ambassadors**

One way of seeing the work we do as educators and educational leaders is within the invitation of John Baptist de La Salle to understand ourselves as having been called to be *God's ambassadors*. “Since you are ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ in the work that you do, you must act as representing Jesus Christ himself.”<sup>6</sup>

Lasallian educators are invited to be the link, I suggest, between “what is” and “what might be.” We are called, in these times, to be *ambassadors between youngsters and their families . . .* offering assistance to “presumably ‘nice’ kids and their responsible, hardworking parents – who seem to live in different solar systems.”<sup>7</sup> We are called to serve as *ambassadors to the faculty, staff, and the whole of the educational community* by setting a vision for themselves and their work in schools that is anything but mundane. We are called to be *ambassadors of hope* for our present and former students . . . enkindling in others an awareness of and hunger for a deeper sense of meaning and purpose . . . fanning to flame in those entrusted to our care undiscovered [or forgotten] dreams and noble passions.

At the Second International Symposium of Young Lasallians in July 2006, there were 150 young people [18 to 35 years old] gathered at the Casa Generalizia<sup>8</sup> in Rome [some were graduates of your very own schools]. The delegates were folks whose lives have been touched by the Lasallian charism and who seek further engagement with the Lasallian educational mission. They are looking for opportunities to make a contribution to the mission; and they believe that, as the most recent recipients of this gift to Church and Society, they have a unique perspective on its importance and value. An image from the opening prayer ceremony remains with me still. An 18-year-old by the name of Giacomo, the youngest at the Symposium, was carrying a flickering candle into the darkened gathering space. He seemed so vulnerable. Clearly honored in the role he was playing, he was at the same time nervous that the candle would go out on his watch. We need more and more Lasallian men and women willing to step forward<sup>9</sup> to serve as bearers of “light,” among the young and the poor, in “situations of material and spiritual poverty.”<sup>10</sup>

We all are called to be *ambassadors of the providence and immanence of a transcendent God and of the transcendence of God*. As stated in the *Declaration [of the Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today]*, “It is not in words or books that young people meet most forcibly the God who calls them by name, but rather in the person of the one who catechizes them.”<sup>11</sup> This is one of our principal roles, and it cannot be taken lightly.

We are presented, in the opening scripture passage of the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, with the image of a God who desires that all come to the knowledge of the truth . . . that all be saved.<sup>12</sup> The God who guides and who does not abandon us, De La Salle assures us, chosen us to do this work.<sup>13</sup> We need only to recall here the stories of Sister Angela Shaughnessy,<sup>14</sup> who in speaking with us on Wednesday about the “hot button issues” facing leaders in Catholic education, provided herself the witness of a woman who is tirelessly responsive to all those who reach out to her in time of need. And if I could, a story from my own life . . . the story of a visit a number of years ago to a hospital to see a father of two former students. I hadn’t realized that he was at that time on his deathbed. He told me the story of his life-long friendship with a Brother-teacher who taught him in high school and of the hope that he had always had in sending his sons to our school that each might also find someone on the faculty who might be for them a kind of lifelong “wise and spiritual companion.” He expressed his thanks to God, and to me, that his two boys, who seldom agreed on anything, seemingly found in me such a person. The God of De La Salle, who guides and does not abandon, is the God of incarnation [an Incarnate God] . . . God working through us.

And as we consider our role within this **initial metaphor** of *ambassador*, let’s also recall the inspiring words of our Superior General, Brother Álvaro Rodríguez, at the close<sup>15</sup> of the first-of-its-kind International Assembly for mission and association:

I would like this to be my final word. When you return to your families, to your communities, to your schools, to your apostolates, to your Districts . . . bring with you a message of hope and a word of courage. Tell them that the God of life, the God of the poor, the God of history, the God of the kingdom, the forever-young God revealed by Jesus, has made us a part of his work and that we are always disposed to allow ourselves to be guided by his Spirit in order to collaborate in his project of salvation.<sup>16</sup>

Inspired by these sentiments and encouraged by the words of Tom Suddes,<sup>17</sup> the speaker to whom we listened this morning, all of this [the work you do every day] is “an opportunity” for those who accept God’s call to view ourselves as *ambassadors*.

### **Called to Be Good Shepherds**

The heart of the Lasallian educational mission can be found in the Christian Scriptures when Jesus says, “I came that they might have life and have it to the full.”<sup>18</sup> After all, it is the mission of Jesus in which we share as Lasallian educators. Immediately following this line in the *Gospel of John* is the one in which Jesus says, “I am *the good shepherd*”<sup>19</sup>; and this is a **second metaphor** proposed by De La Salle for educators. *A fullness of life for all – especially the lost, forgotten, and vulnerable* – is our mission. Neither economic, affective, spiritual, nor education poverty will, if we can help it, be allowed to be barriers in our educational network.

Consider Jesus Christ as the *Good Shepherd* of the Gospel who seeks the lost sheep, places it upon his shoulders, and carries it back to restore it to the fold. Since you are taking his place look upon yourself as obliged to do the same thing.<sup>20</sup>

Yours is a powerful *story of inclusion and of diversity* in this Region . . . the example of the program for dyslexic youngsters at Calvert Hall College in Baltimore . . . the example of maintaining, by choice and design, a couple of ninth-grade remedial classes at academically-rigorous La Salle Academy in Providence . . . the example of welcome and respect afforded gay and lesbian youngsters in the pastoral plan of the schools of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis<sup>21</sup> . . . the seats made available [often gratuitously], by so many of your schools, for the economically disadvantaged youngsters of the network of San Miguel Middle Schools.

Perhaps some here already know that our own Brother Michael Collins [who is with us today] will receive next month<sup>22</sup> the National Catholic Education Association's *Sister Catherine McNamee Award* for "outstanding leadership in promoting a vision of Catholic education that welcomes and serves students with diverse needs." Along with principal Barry Lieske, Brother Michael heads a school where diversity of color and of faith is celebrated. Support services and significant financial aid make this inclusion of economically- and education-challenged youngsters possible. Brother Michael . . . an articulate Lasallian spokesman on the regional and national levels . . . a witness in word and deed. All of these stories and so many more . . . stories of inclusion and sacrifice . . . for the good of others.<sup>23</sup>

Being a "mission-ary" leader requires sacrifice, and few and far between are the weeks that don't confront us with new challenges; and often enough these trials have a human face. John Baptist de La Salle, in referring to the care of difficult persons in the *Meditations*,<sup>24</sup> links the Gospel image of a *good shepherd*<sup>25</sup> to the Gospel image of the "washing of feet."<sup>26</sup> "Jesus Christ, speaking to his Apostles [on the night before he died], told them that he gave an example to them, so that they may do as he has done."<sup>27</sup> The humble *touching of hearts* is the Lasallian way.

The clearest teaching of De La Salle about what it means to be a *good shepherd* is found in *Meditation #33*. In its first point, the importance of knowing each one of those entrusted to our care individually is accentuated. For us, this means knowing youngsters as they are today and not, nostalgically, as they were yesterday [or, "romantically," as we might have imagined them to be]; and this is not just a matter of behavior [or misbehavior]. Technology is changing our young people in all sorts of ways. One adolescent psychologist recently observed, in commenting on what is ordinary for today's adolescents, that a normal evening often goes something like this:

Being on line with six people at once while talking on the phone with two friends via call waiting, burning a CD for a pal, doing his homework with a friend, and listening to the TV in the background – just to keep him company.<sup>28</sup>

Some data suggests, as I am sure you are well aware, that the very functioning of the human brain of young people is changing. "Shepherds" must know their "sheep." New populations of students require new and adapted methodologies that foster engaged learning.

In its second point, *Meditation #33* stresses the importance of gentleness [Lasallian educators need to be easily approachable and readily accessible to those we serve] and virtuousness [we should be worth knowing and have something good to offer our students].

And in the third point of the meditation, De La Salle notes that “the sheep” must hear “their shepherd’s voice” on important issues. “Explain simply to your students their faults and show them how to correct them,” he writes. “They must understand what you say, so you must give them instructions adapted to their capacity.” Furthermore, we need to show them the way; and this is why “example” is so important to the Founder.<sup>29</sup> We need to “help them see how easy” it is to succeed in being good and in doing what is good.<sup>30</sup> And while this particular meditation references work with students, its message is no less relevant for Lasallian educational leaders in our work with partners and colleagues in mission . . . knowing them . . . being known by them . . . letting our voice be heard on important issues . . . showing others the way.

### **Called to Be Angels among Them**

A **third metaphor** proposed by De La Salle for educators is that of *angels*.

If you want to accomplish your ministry as Guardian Angels for the children whom you instruct, to build up with them the body of Christ . . . , you must work to inspire them with [Christian] sentiments . . . <sup>31</sup>

A few months ago, I attended a family baptism. My brothers and sisters, their spouses and children, their children’s children, and friends – somewhere over one hundred and fifty people – were gathered to witness the baptism of the daughter of one of my nieces. At one point at the reception that followed, two of my sisters took my hands as the family began to form a circle. They tell me – you need to remember that I have been away, in Rome and around the world, for thirteen of the past seventeen years – they have been doing this for the past few years. The song “Angels among Us” by Alabama was playing; and it seems that each time my family hears this song, since the death of my mother a few years ago, they now stand together in solidarity and remembrance of deceased loved ones.

My nieces and nephews had a wonderful relationship with my mother, who while a good mother was an extraordinary grandmother; and it was her eldest grandchild who started this practice. An image from the funeral of my mother came to mind as I stood in this circle of remembrance; and it was the image of being gathered with my brothers and sisters and their spouses behind the coffin of our mother at the entrance of the Church as about thirty of her grandchildren, their spouses, and their children gathered around her coffin – some holding on to it and some held in another’s arms – as they led us toward the front of the Church.

The lyrics of the song recount the story of a youngster lost on the way home one day . . . afraid . . . and disoriented . . . when a stranger came along and led him home. No one else saw this person; but the youngster grew up confident that there are, in fact, *angels among us*.

And just this past week something happened to remind me of this. Actually, it is the serendipitous coincidence of two things. A week ago I was giving a series of conferences to Brothers attending the CIL program;<sup>32</sup> and we were studying De La Salle’s *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, which open [as I’ve already noted] with the scriptural passage of *1 Timothy 2:4* [God desires that all be saved]; and we had been engaged in a quite lively discussion about what this might mean for us in our modern context. And now for the coincidence. Having just left the

house and gotten myself seated on the airplane to begin the trip to be here with you, a five-year-old traveling with his family but sitting beside me introduced himself as Joshua; and during the flight, he unselfconsciously lifted the armrest between us and fell asleep leaning on my shoulder. Replaying in my mind the discussion about the “God who desires that all be saved” and thinking about the remarks that I had prepared to share with you, as “Joshua,” a name which means “God saves!” leans in to sleep. Merely a coincidence? Or *angels among us*?

God cannot truly desire [that all be saved] without providing the means for it and, therefore, without giving children the teachers who will assist them in the fulfillment of God’s plan . . . and you are the ones whom God has chosen to help in this work.<sup>33</sup>

The work that you do, De La Salle suggests, is the work of *angels*. The work that you do, as members of boards and as administrators of schools, to assure accessibility, excellence, and sustainability . . . the work you do in your outreach to those who are poor economically, educationally, affectively, and spiritually.<sup>34</sup>

Another story comes to mind . . . that of a young boy at Martin de Porres School in Springfield Gardens. It was intended for him, on the occasion of the visit the Superior General and I made to his school, to read a poem that he had written. Martin de Porres is a school for youngsters [in New York City] with emotional, learning, and behavioral challenges. The boy didn’t show for school on the day of the visit, and so the principal drove to his home to get him lest this day intended as an experience of affirmation would become one more experience of disappointment and failure. The basic idea of the poem the boy read [as the principal stood by his side] was, “I was nobody [before coming to this school], but I am somebody now.”

I recall another story . . . that of a single, immigrant mother at San Miguel School in Providence. I was attending an evening meal with a group of women whose sons attended this school, which is funded by the generosity of board members and benefactors. She shared that it was in her experience of being connected to San Miguel and in this group, which meets weekly, that she came to know that she was not alone and that God was with her . . . helping her to raise her children.

There are so many other stories that I could tell about benefactors and board members who have spoken with me over the years . . . one of whom told me his story of being a student in a school run by the Brothers. His father had died, and his mother was heroically holding the family together and providing for its needs. They no longer had the money for his tuition, and yet the Brothers kept him at school by giving him after-school cleaning jobs around the building. Every day a Brother would bring a sandwich for him from the Brothers’ house and make sure that he had something to eat at lunchtime. *Angels among us*.<sup>35</sup>

### **Called to Be Architects of Tomorrow**

“Like a *good architect* . . . you are *called to lay the foundation* for the building of the Church,”<sup>36</sup> writes De La Salle in the retreat meditations; and in the meditation for the Feast of Saint Louis King of France he writes, “in your work you should unite zeal for the good of the Church with zeal for the good of the State of which your disciples are beginning to be, and one day should be,

perfect members.”<sup>37</sup> And so a **fourth metaphor** proposed by De La Salle for educators is that of being *architects* of a new tomorrow (i.e., *architects of the future*).<sup>38</sup>

The first question that we need to consider, with relation to this image of being *architects*, concerns the fundamental anthropology that underlies Lasallian education today. In De La Salle’s book on politeness,<sup>39</sup> there is a vision of the youngster as child of God, brother and sister of Jesus Christ, and temple of the Holy Spirit. He was writing in seventeenth-century France, and we live in twenty-first-century America. However, what is the foundational anthropology out of which and toward which you educate in your school? This is the question. Toward what underlying vision of person and youngster do you, together and by association, form and educate?

Secondly, what each of you do as school leaders to assure that the “Christian instruction and education of children” is viewed as a noble vocation by your teachers and that your students are helped along the path of becoming “true children of God and citizens of heaven”<sup>40</sup> is a task which is as important now as it was in the time of De La Salle and the first Brother-teachers. Your ministry as a school leader is undeniably that of an *architect* who is responsible for overseeing the design, plan, and construction of the twenty-first-century educational enterprise in your institutions.

And, thirdly, so many examples of what is being done to *lay a new foundation* for the Lasallian network – its form and infrastructure of support – come to mind: the incorporation of the Delegation of Toronto into the New York District; the initiation of the restructuring of the four Districts of Eastern North America; the co-sponsorship of ministries in the New Orleans-Santa Fe and the San Francisco Districts; the Regional Assembly of 2004 and the USA/Toronto Regional Task Force on restructuring; and the historic International Assembly of 2006.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the importance of education and formation on behalf of the Lasallian educational mission is one more example of the *new foundation* that is being laid to assure the vitality of the mission.<sup>41</sup> Brother Michael McKenery observed, in his keynote address at your first Chief Administrator’s Conference two years ago in San Diego, that association for mission has, in many ways, probably been easier in these days than it will be in future years. With many Brothers, with former Brothers and Sisters and priests, and with so many teachers who grew up in the Catholic Church of the 1950s and 1960s working in the schools, forging a vision and a partnership for mission was, while not without its challenges, “relatively easy.” The prior experience and formation of young teachers working in Lasallian schools today – who bring a totally different background and some of whom have never actually worked with a De La Salle Christian Brother – is going to require wise and thoughtful initiation into Catholic identity and Lasallian culture. A whole new reality awaits us, and now is the time to begin *laying its foundation*.<sup>42</sup>

The work of assuring the *good foundation* in and for schools belongs more to you than it does to me. It is up to you as Lasallian leaders in North America to assure the excellence of twenty-first century education and the integrity of the Lasallian mission on this continent.<sup>43</sup>

## Called to Be Good and Faithful Stewards

A **fifth metaphor** proposed by De La Salle for educators is that of being *good and faithful stewards*.

Jesus Christ . . . will say to you [at the final judgment] as the owner said to his manager, give me an account of your administration.<sup>44</sup> He will then look into the very depths of your heart to examine whether you have been faithful stewards of the wealth he has entrusted to you and of the talents which he has given you to work in his service.<sup>45</sup>

The vision of judgment and reward that we find in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* is quite different from that presented to me as a student in elementary school, which was one of harsh divine retribution, a final judgment in which all of the people of the world would be gathered together and in which my sins and failings were to be publicly enumerated.<sup>46</sup> This is not the image presented by the Founder.

John Baptist de La Salle's image of the final judgment is, on the one hand, well grounded in the Gospel stories of the good and faithful steward<sup>47</sup> and of the talents.<sup>48</sup> "He summoned his servants and gave them each sums of silver pieces." The final judgment, in the retreat meditations, concerns what was done as a *steward of God's household* with the gifts and talents with which we were blessed for mission and on behalf of the persons entrusted to our care.

De La Salle's image of the final judgment is grounded more in the image of the last judgment found in the *Gospel of Matthew* where the judgment concerns the manner in which we have treated the stranger, cared for the hungry, clothed the naked, and comforted the imprisoned.<sup>49</sup> Before we can open our mouths on that day of judgment, De La Salle proposes, their voices [those of our former students] will be heard; and these will be voices bearing witness on our behalf . . . "eternally bearing witness," in the words of the Founder, "to the great gratitude they have for the role you played in their salvation."<sup>50</sup>

For the role you played . . . think about it. For the audacity you had in not giving up on them, believing in them more than they believed in themselves, even on occasion believing in them when parents or guardians seemingly gave up on them, making possible an environment in which their passage to a more full life<sup>51</sup> became practicable, an environment in which "miracles" happened in their lives . . . schools of quality made possible because of you, seats in classrooms made available because of your generosity in working for less and in seeking and finding the necessary funds to keep school tuition affordable.

Surrounded on every side by these grateful former students – that's the image – former students reaching out to touch and accompany us . . . an image that took on new meaning for me when I saw my nieces and nephews leading the coffin containing the body of my deceased mother – their grandmother – toward the sanctuary . . . De La Salle's image of Lasallian educators surrounded on every side by those for whom you have spent your lives . . . bearing witness on your behalf even as you are, at the end of your earthly journey, brought into the very presence of the God in whose service you have labored for so long.



## Conclusion

And so as we bring these remarks to a conclusion, I would like to return to my introductory comments. Hopefully, you have found some “nourishment” for the journey in these remarks about “mission-ary” Lasallian educational leadership. “Among you I find a truth that bids me rise.” It has truly been a pleasure to spend these days with you. “Among you now I find a glimpse of what might be.” Witnessing firsthand your efforts at interdependence and network building on behalf of the Lasallian mission of human and Christian education<sup>52</sup> has been both encouraging and inspiring. A better collaboration among our institutions is an audacious and noble vision. Our global Lasallian educational mission can and does make a great difference for good in our world; and as you well know, there is so much more to do.

Thank you for all that you do each and every day on behalf of so many and for the mission. God bless you and your often heroic efforts on behalf of young people and their families.

## Endnotes

1. These remarks were delivered on March 2, 2007 in San Antonio, Texas, at the conclusion of the Annual Conference of Lasallian Secondary School Chief Administrators (LASSCA).
2. Brother William Mann, who holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from Colgate Rochester Divinity School (1990), serves as the president of Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota since 2008 and as the president of the International Association of Lasallian Universities (IALU) since 2015. He is a former vicar general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (2000-2007).
3. Cf. “Jerusalem My Destiny” by Rory Cooney.
4. John Baptist de La Salle, “Meditations for the Time of Retreat” in *Meditations* (Landover: MD: Lasallian Publications, 1994), pages 432-472.
5. Sister Clare Fitzgerald SSND, an international lecturer, earned her PhD at Saint Louis University. She was for twelve years the founding director of the Catholic School Leadership Program at Boston College.
6. *Meditation* #193.2.
7. Ron Taffel, *Breaking through to Teens* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2005), page 4.
8. Since 1937, the international headquarters of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Lasallian educational network.
9. This implies obviously that Young Lasallians need leaders and administrators interested, by strategic design, in employing them and identifying volunteer opportunities for them in the mission.

10. “In many parts of the world even today material poverty prevents many youths and children from having access to formal education and adequate human and Christian formation. In other areas new forms of poverty challenge the Catholic school. As in the past, it can come up against situations of incomprehension, mistrust and lack of material resources. The girls from the poor families that were taught by the Ursuline nuns in the fifteenth century, the boys that Saint Joseph Calasanz saw running and shouting through the streets of Rome, those that De La Salle came across in the villages of France, or those that were offered shelter by Don Bosco, can be found again among those who have lost all sense of meaning in life and lack any type of inspiring ideal, those to whom no values are proposed and who do not know the beauty of faith, who come from families which are broken and incapable of love, often living in situations of material and spiritual poverty, slaves to the new idols of a society, which, not infrequently, promises them only a future of unemployment and marginalization,” *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (Vatican: Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997), pages 43-44.

11. *The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today: A Declaration* (Rome, 1967), #40.5: “The Word of God does not fall out of the sky in an abstract way on anonymous individuals. It always comes as a way of integrating or enlightening or deepening some human experience. It is not in words or books that young people meet most forcibly the God who calls them by name, but rather in the person of the Brother who catechizes them.”

12. *1 Timothy 2:4*, as quoted in *Meditation #193*; and as Brother Gerard Rummery has brought to our attention, we speak here of *being saved from* all that traps and limits fullness of life in this world and *being saved for* eternal life in the next.

13. Cf. *Memorandum on the Beginnings*, *Meditation #33*, and *Meditation #193.3*.

14. Sister Mary Angela Shaughnessy SCN, a nationally recognized expert on the law as it affects Catholic schools, earned her JD from the University of Louisville and her PhD from Boston College.

15. November 2006.

16. *Report of the International Assembly* (Rome: Brothers of the Christian Schools, 2006), page 44.

17. Tom Suddes is a prolific writer and a well-known master facilitator, thought leader, and motivational coach.

18. *John 10:10*.

19. *John 10:11*.

20. *Meditation #196.1*.

21. DeLaSalle, Totino Grace, Cretin-Derham Hall, and Holy Family High Schools.
22. April 2007.
23. Cf. *Philippians* 2:6-11 and *Meditation* #86.1.
24. *Meditation* #196.2.
25. *John* 10:10.
26. *John* 13:1-7.
27. *Meditation* #196.2, referencing *John* 3:5.
28. Ron Taffel, *Breaking through to Teens* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2005), page 12.
29. “Example makes a much greater impression on the mind and heart than words,” *Meditation* #202.3; and “You will persuade them much more readily through your example of wise and prudent behavior than through all the words you could speak to them,” *Meditation* #33.2.
30. Cf. also *Meditation* #198.2: “Have you been helping them practice the good that is appropriate to their years?”
31. *Meditation* #198.3.
32. Centro Internazionale Lasalliano (CIL) is a, more or less, yearly formation and renewal program conducted at the FSC Casa Generalizia in Rome. Its duration varies from a couple of weeks to several months; and some programs are only for Brothers, and many others are open to all Lasallians (Brothers and Partners alike).
33. *Meditation* #193.3.
34. Concerning the spiritual, we might note especially *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Life of American Teenagers* by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton (Oxford University Press, 2005).
35. When reading the insert in *USA Today*, which I found this morning outside the door of my room, I came across a quotation from Chris Gardner, a CEO and the author of *The Pursuit of Happyness*: “It is true that nobody makes it in this world alone. So to forget who I am, or where I come from, would be to do a disservice to those who raised me and believed in me” (Armistad, 2006). This book is, according to the article, “the astounding saga of a homeless father who raised and cared for his son on the mean streets of San Francisco and went on to become a crown prince of Wall Street.”

36. *Meditation* #199.1.

37. *Meditation* #160.3.

38. “God, having chosen and destined Saint Paul, as he himself says, to preach the Gospel to the nations, gave him such knowledge of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, that he was enabled like a good architect to lay the foundation for the building of the faith and of the religion which God raised up in the cities where Saint Paul announced the Gospel, according to the grace which God had given him . . . Without comparing yourself to this great saint (and keeping in mind the due proportion between your work and his), you can say that you are doing the same thing, and that you are fulfilling the same ministry in your profession,” *Meditation* #199.1.

39. Cf. “Preface” in *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility* by John Baptist de La Salle and translated by Richard Arnandez (Lasallian Publications, 1990), pages 3-5.

40. *Meditation* #199.3.

41. Examples of this would be the Buttimer Institute of Lasallian Studies, the Lasallian Leadership Institute, and the Huether Educational Conference.

42. So many examples along the lines of *laying a new foundation* for mission are in evidence. The 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter itself, which will open in a few weeks, will proceed along a process of discernment and consensus building rather than operating with the legislative model of prior Chapters. New times require new structures. The international Assembly for mission and association [November 2006] with two-thirds of the delegates being Lasallian Partners and one-third being Brothers is but one example of this new kind of structure, and the Report of the Assembly will be the starting point of any discussion on mission at the 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.

43. Excellent education will obviously need to attend to the questions of student-centered learning, new methodologies of instruction, advances in technology, cultural plurality and sensitivities, language study in an increasingly interdependent and mobile world, justice and peace education, etc.; and the integrity of the mission will require that service of the poor [the witness of the message of the Gospel, which is its tangible expression] is coupled with faith formation [the proclamation of the Word, which helps make intelligible the deed that is being witnessed]; faith formation is “the principal function” of the Institute of the Brothers (*Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, #15 and *The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today: A Declaration*, #38.1).

44. *Luke* 16:2.

45. *Meditation* #205.1.

46. This caricature of the final judgment is perhaps only a flawed recollection of what was actually taught in those pre-Second Vatican Council days. However, the *Dies Irae* [*Day of Wrath*] hymn sung in former times at requiem liturgies captures a bit of the vision: “That day of

wrath, that dreadful day . . . heaven and earth in ashes lay . . . death is struck and nature quaking, all creation is awaking, to its judge an answer making. Lo, the book exactly worded, wherein all hath been recorded, thence shall judgment be awarded. When the Judge his seat attaineth, and each hidden deed arraigneth: nothing unavenged remaineth . . .”

47. *Luke* 12:35-48.

48. *Luke* 19:11-27 and *Matthew* 25:14-30.

49. *Matthew* 25:31-46.

50. *Meditation* #208.2.

51. *John* 10:10.

52. Cf. *The Lasallian Mission of Human and Christian Education: A Shared Mission* (Rome: Brothers of the Christian Schools, 1997).