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The Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Apostolate of Higher Education: Some Reflections

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Introduction

On the very day I received Brother Mel Anderson's letter inviting me to attend this meeting and to address the assembly, I responded affirmatively. I was pleased to receive the invitation because I welcome the opportunity to manifest my interest in and support of the apostolate of higher education in the Institute. While the "message" I shall communicate orally, I hope that my keynote address will serve as a point of departure for serious reflection during our three days together.

I wrote Brother Mel that I would envisage my contribution as Superior General as a presentation of reflections, convictions, concerns, and questions concerning FSC involvement in higher education. I notice that Mel gave my address a title based on that description, but that he omitted "questions!" I can assure you, however, that I certainly do have questions.

The scholarly treatment of major themes I leave to those far more qualified. I look forward to the presentations and discussions to follow on *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the history of higher education as an apostolate of the Institute, a philosophy of Lasallian higher education, Catholic social teaching, the current social, political, and ideological issues confronting higher education today, the complex issues grouped under the title "Ecumenical Movement," and, finally, the commitment of the Institute to higher education in the years to come. You have chosen areas for consideration that are extremely pertinent. I think that these three days will be interesting and stimulating to all of us.

What I have chosen to do is to offer some reflections in three areas: 1) Our Mission in the World Today; 2) Higher Education in the Institute; 3) Characteristics of Lasallian Education.

Our Mission in the World Today

One of the most fascinating dimensions of this meeting will surely be its international character. You are citizens of many different parts of the world. This gathering is necessarily a reminder that the Lasallian Family – that is to say, we Brothers and all those associated with us – is a communion of persons charged by God with a mission in the world today.

In my pastoral letter earlier this year, I reflected on our worldwide mission in the light of the expression used by John Paul II in *Christifidelis Laici*, the post-synodal document on the participation of the laity in the Church. The Pope insists that the Church is called to be A COMMUNION OF PERSONS, but a communion which is essentially directed to mission: the

mission of generating communion. The Church is called to be a COMMUNION WHICH GENERATES COMMUNION.

Our Lasallian Family is called to be a communion within that communion which is the Church. One very important aspect of our Lasallian mission in the world today, one that is common to every Lasallian educational activity wherever it is located, is that of promoting brotherhood and sisterhood.

In that same pastoral letter I mentioned that Pedro Arrupe, the late Superior General of the Jesuits, used to say that the great revolution of love proclaimed by Christ is that of breaking down the fences of a restricted brotherhood and sisterhood and calling all to universal brotherhood and sisterhood. Paul VI lamented that the human heart often appears small and egoistic, having place only for oneself and for a few others of one's own family and of one's own caste. What is needed, he said, is a heart with universal dimensions.

It is in this context that I place that communion which should characterize us as Lasallians: Brothers, lay associates, clerical and religious associates, parents, former students, benefactors, and young people. Our vocation – that is to say, our call from God – is to generate communion. It is to work for a world where all can live in peace and justice as sons and daughters of God and as brothers and sisters. The Lasallian Family can be – and I think is in fact – a tremendous force for good in the eighty countries in which we serve. Our mission is clear. The challenge, of course, is to live it authentically.

The current plethora of religious, ethnic, and tribal conflicts, together with a resurgence of racism, in nearly every corner of the globe has tempted me to set aside that description of our mission as hopelessly idealistic. But, no. As idealistic as it may sound, that vision is the goal that God wants us to pursue. The disappointments of the past couple of years, rather than discourage us, should challenge us to renew our commitment to work, through human and Christian education, for universal brotherhood and sisterhood.

During the past sixteen years, ten years as Vicar General and six years as Superior General, I have had the extraordinary privilege of meeting Brothers, lay associates, and young people in nearly every country in which we have a Lasallian presence. The diversity of race, culture, language, religion, and political and economic situations is fascinating and inspiring.

Fascinating also is the diversity of our educational endeavors. Our Lasallian Family is at the service of infants, children, adolescents, young adults, adults, and veteran adults. One of the aspects of our educational mission I have found particularly interesting is pre-school and primary education. I have no personal experience of teaching at this level. But I have been extremely impressed by the dynamism and creativity I have discovered and have become more aware of the necessity of strong pre-school and primary education. The significant contribution we have made to primary education throughout our three hundred year history was cited by UNESCO in awarding our Institute the NOMA Literacy Prize two years ago. We all know that the work of forming teachers was a matter of great interest to our Founder. Many of our institutions of higher education today prepare pre-school and primary school teachers. I am happy to have this opportunity to recognize publicly this important service and to encourage all those engaged in it.

The fact that we Lasallians are working “together and by association” – to use a phrase of our Founder – in some eighty countries should stimulate us to take full advantage of the power for good that effective interdependence can give us. This assembly of heads of our institutions of higher education is an excellent example of what can be done. It seems to me that much more can be realized and ought to be realized in areas such as interchange of experiences through visits and circulars, or through interchange of administrative or teaching personnel and of students. But you know far better than I what precisely would be helpful and what is feasible.

Higher Education in the Institute Today

The recent Institute *Bulletin* dedicated to higher education in the Institute includes a listing of 73 institutions. Given the great variety of educational programs offered by these institutions, it seems to me next to impossible to categorize them. But they are all at the service of students at the tertiary level. A number of these institutions are described in that issue of the *Bulletin*. You will, of course, have the chance during these days to become more familiar with the institutions that are represented here by their presidents, rectors, or directors.

Some of these institutions have a relatively long history. Others are of more recent origin. I think that it is safe to say that all of them came into existence because concrete needs existed and because the Church and/or parents and young people wanted Catholic institutions to meet those needs. I can assure you that this dynamic continues today. In a number of countries, particularly but not exclusively in Latin America, I have been asked to meet with groups of parents who have pleaded that the Institute extend its services to the tertiary level. But I defer to Brother Ronald Isetti for a more informed reflection on the history of higher education in the Institute.

But despite the fact that higher education has a long history in the Institute, the involvement of Brothers at this level has been questioned – and is questioned today. Some Brothers are opposed to FSC commitments in higher education because they say – probably correctly – that John Baptist de La Salle never envisaged higher education as an apostolate of the Institute he founded.

Other Brothers, more open to a dynamic rather than static interpretation of the Founder, question the apostolate of higher education on the grounds of effectiveness. They hold that the difference between Catholic institutions of higher education and those of the state is neither substantial nor significant and that our resources of personnel and finance could be more effectively employed at the secondary or primary level.

I had an experience about ten years ago that I have not forgotten. Several Brothers were speaking about the influence of secularism as well as Marxist ideology in the institutions of higher learning in their country. I said – rather naively – that I was very happy that our student Brothers in that country were attending a university operated by a religious institute. To my great surprise, the Brothers laughed quite spontaneously. “Brother John,” they said, “there is no difference between that university and those of the state.” When I asked why the religious order continued to maintain the university, they simply shrugged their shoulders.

Other Brothers acknowledge that significant numbers of students do in fact come to us, often at great financial sacrifice, usually with the encouragement and help of their parents. But these

Brothers claim that students enroll because of the quality of our academic programs and teachers or because our size, together with a serious effort, makes possible personal attention to the students. They say, however, that as praiseworthy as all that may be, the inadequate attention given to religion courses or effective pastoral programs leads them to the conclusion that a Lasallian presence in higher education is not an effective use of our resources.

Still other Brothers question our involvement at the level of higher education, particularly in universities, because they say that we are educating the intellectually and financially elite, a service which may be appropriate for some other religious institutes, but not for an Institute that was founded to respond primarily to the needs the economically poor have for Christian education. They cite our *Rule* which states clearly that commitment to service of the poor is integral to our religious consecration and spirituality. In fact it is the object of a vow.

I think that these objections must be taken seriously. I would agree that if our institutions do not manifest characteristics that distinguish them, they are not worth the trouble. Our personnel and financial resources can be better utilized at the primary or secondary level.

The questioning of Church involvement in higher education is certainly not limited to our own Institute. In his presentation three years ago to more than 700 Jesuits and lay colleagues at the bicentennial celebration of Jesuit education in the United States, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, Superior General, acknowledged that, after the General Chapter decision affirming that the service of faith and the promotion of justice must be a priority in every Jesuit apostolate, many Jesuits began to question the commitment of the order to higher education. Kolvenbach insisted, however, that far from calling into question the value of education as such, "the decree, in spite of erroneous interpretations, actually asked that the educational apostolate be intensified! The decree describes the power that the educational apostolate has to contribute to the formation of multipliers for the process of educating the world itself."

I agree with Father Kolvenbach's line of reasoning. I believe that the Church should and must continue to accord a high priority to the apostolate of higher education. The motives for according that priority are expressed in detail in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

More to the point, I think that where needs exist and circumstances permit, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools should participate actively in this important dimension of the mission of the Church. Young adults are searching for answers to profound religious, moral, and philosophical questions: they are searching for meaning. They need highly competent teachers who will meet them not only as mentors but also as brothers and sisters, men and women who will take them seriously, walk with them, listen to them, share with them the meaning they have found in their own lives.

Three years ago, during your meeting in Mexico, you sent me by FAX a message, expressed "in awareness that our work forms an integral part of the apostolate of our Institute, and in commitment to the work of the Church in the tradition and spirit of De La Salle." In my response, I stated that I endorsed those words wholeheartedly: "For a number of historical and cultural reasons, our Institute today has in fact a substantial commitment to the apostolate of higher education. Because I am convinced that our response to each of our apostolic endeavors

must always be YES or NO and never MAYBE, SOMEWHAT, PERHAPS, or TOMORROW, I think that we should give an unambiguous YES to our involvement in higher education and participate energetically in the search for the meaning of a Catholic University in general and a Lasallian Catholic University, or other Institution of Higher Education, in particular."

That message might puzzle some of you. I am certain that I have been marked by my own personal experience, and that experience differs perhaps substantially from your own. When I became Visitor in 1971, I found in the district what I interpreted to be a rather halfhearted, uncertain commitment to the university college. I took the position that we had to make up our minds. If we were to maintain the university college, we had to accept the consequences and support it with enthusiasm. We had to integrate the university college apostolate into the district apostolic plan and not allow it to exist on the margin. I think that the discussions which led eventually to a renewed commitment were profitable for all concerned.

During this meeting you intend to consider what if anything the General Chapter in April/May of next year should say or do concerning the apostolate of higher education. If you think that a statement or some specific decision would be helpful in confronting some existing problem or difficulty, you should prepare your proposition very carefully. More than that: you should prepare your delegates so that they will not be caught cold at the chapter itself.

Characteristics of the Lasallian School: Implications for Institutions of Higher Education

There is no place in the writings of De La Salle that we can find a definitive list of the characteristics he considered essential for the Christian schools he founded. For this reason, lists of characteristics can vary somewhat in content, style, and number. I have made a list of seven characteristics of the Lasallian school. I have the suspicion that our Founder is not at all happy with the expression "Lasallian school." He is probably saying: "I founded CHRISTIAN schools and my successor is talking about LASALLIAN schools." The point is well-taken. We must never forget that a Lasallian school – whatever its level or type – is essentially a CHRISTIAN school, but a Christian school in which a certain number of clearly defined characteristics are given prominence.

1. Respect for each student as a unique person

Directly or indirectly, De La Salle used to say: "Brothers, children and young people are so precious in the eyes of God that he has chosen you to respond to their needs for human and Christian education."

I list "respect" as the first characteristic because I am convinced that loving reverence for each student is at the basis of our Lasallian apostolate. "It is God in his Providence" – that is to say, in his loving concern for children and young people – "who has established the Christian schools."

It is clear from the following passage from Canon Blain that the decision to employ the word BROTHER to designate the members of the new Institute was a decision De La Salle and the early Brothers made deliberately and significantly:

If the name of SCHOOLMASTERS had been acceptable up to this time . . . it was no longer proper, now that they had joined together to form a single body. That of BROTHERS was the name that fit them best. For this reason, they chose it.

This name reminds them that as Brothers they owe each other mutual proofs of tender but spiritual friendship; and that considering themselves as the elder brothers of the children who come to be taught by them, they should exercise this ministry of charity with truly loving hearts.

Lasallian teachers, at all levels of education, including, of course, that of higher education, are called to be brothers or sisters to the young people God has confided to them. It is their vocation as teachers to help each student to recognize and develop his or her personal aptitudes.

I have the impression that personal attention to each student and to his or her needs is in fact a high priority in our Lasallian institutions of higher education and is one of the principal reasons students come to us. They know that we want them to succeed and are there to help.

2. Spirit of community

The second characteristic flows from the first. A healthy spirit of community must permeate Lasallian schools. The *Declaration* puts it well:

The school will be a living community where young people, coming from different social and family backgrounds, educate one another by mutual understanding and respect, openness of mind in dialogue, acceptance of the uniqueness and limitations of each, growth in the spirit of service, and the practice of justice and fraternal charity. (*Decl.* 46.2)

But that paragraph needs to be completed. This "living community" includes not only the students. All those involved in the school – administrators, teachers, staff personnel, Brothers' community – are constitutive members of the school community. They must be united among themselves and with the students.

Many of our Lasallian institutions of higher education have a significant number of students in residence on campus. Fostering a spirit of community among the boarders and between the boarders and other members of the school community must obviously be a high priority.

The challenge is particularly great, of course, when there is considerable national, racial, ethnic, religious, political, and economic diversity. But I have the impression that our Lasallian institutions are meeting that challenge and that the spirit of community in our schools is generally good.

3. School of quality

As we all know, De La Salle insisted that the schools of the Brothers be places where learning really took place. With this end in view, he devoted considerable energy to developing effective

methods and techniques. Furthermore, he insisted that the curriculum of the schools be adapted to the needs and capabilities of the children.

Both of those principles are as obvious as they are essential, and are pertinent for our reflection on the participation of the Lasallian Family in higher education.

Our institutions of higher education must be schools of quality. In his introduction to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Pope John Paul II speaks of university life as the time for “the ardent search for truth and its unselfish transmission to youth and to all those learning to think rigorously, so as to act rightly and to serve humanity better” (*ECE* 3).

How essential it is that our institutions of higher learning, whatever their specialty, help our young people to cultivate an ardent longing for truth and to grow in their capacity to think rigorously, so as to act rightly and to serve humanity better.

Concern for the truth is not at all evident in contemporary life. I am frequently dismayed by what appears to me, even among people supposedly educated, a careless and apparently indifferent approach to truth, even to accuracy of facts. What seems to me to be lacking is a commitment to an objective quest for the truth, wherever that quest lead and whatever the consequences.

How essential is this commitment to truth. But how counter-cultural it seems to be in this age of moral relativism. I was struck by a number of the assertions made by United States philosopher and professor Allan Bloom in his book, *The Closing of the American Mind*:

. . . almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative . . . The relativity of truth is not a theoretical insight but a moral postulate, the condition of a free society, or so they see it . . . Relativism is necessary to openness . . . openness and the relativism that makes it the only plausible stance in the face of various claims to truth and various ways of life and kinds of human beings – is the great insight of our times . . . the purpose of their education is not to make them scholars but to provide them with a moral virtue – openness . . . (It is a question of being) open to all kinds of men, all kinds of life-styles, all ideologies. There is no enemy other than the man who is not open to everything. (25-27)

This relativism nourishes the tendency, whether conscious or unconscious I don't know, to consider a thing to be true because one wants it to be true or because one thinks that it is logical or "just" that it be true.

This relativizing of truth for the service of some particular end makes possible another contemporary phenomenon in the United States: "political correctness." I find very disturbing the pressure exerted upon faculty and students alike in a number of universities in the United States to espouse views which are "politically correct" or more frequently, to refrain from expression of views which are not "politically correct."

Disturbing also, particularly in this era of immediate media communication, are hasty, illogical, and irresponsible generalizations that do enormous injustice to people.

The lack of commitment to truth and rigorous thinking is quite evident during this year of political campaigning in many of our countries. We are repelled, I am sure, by the dependence on and apparent influence of slogans and "sound bites."

John Paul II spoke of the fruit to be expected from men and women who have cultivated the search for truth and who have learned to think rigorously: they will be able to act rightly and serve humanity better. Truly educated people are men and women who take responsibility for their lives. They are not part of that phenomenon described in a recent essay in *Time* magazine: the widespread tendency to play "victim" and to devote extraordinary energy to accusing others. There seems to be an all-too-common refusal to take responsibility and to commit oneself.

Our Lasallian institutions of higher education should be centers where, in the words of *Gaudium et Spes*, "the human spirit is cultivated . . . and there is growth in the ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and social sense" (*ECE* 23).

There is a pertinent passage in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*: "Students are challenged to pursue an education that combines excellence in humanistic and cultural development with specialized professional training" (*ECE* 23). A number of our institutions of higher education have as a major focus some form of specialized professional training. They are responding to real needs. But I think it important that, to the extent possible within existing educational structures, attention be given to humanistic and cultural development.

Our Lasallian institutions of higher education must be, therefore, schools of quality.

4. A school that is Catholic

It is not easy to define or even describe the Catholic dimension of Lasallian schools, given the diversity of situations in eighty countries of the world. It is even more difficult to define the Catholic dimension of Lasallian institutions of higher education in the pluralistic society in which we live and work. And to complicate matters further, among the more than seventy institutions of higher education in the Lasallian world are numerous centers of professional training, many of them government supported, where the challenge of expressing the Catholic dimension is particularly acute.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae speaks of four characteristics deemed essential in Catholic Universities – and by extension other Catholic institutions of higher education: a Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such; reflection upon human knowledge in the light of our Catholic faith; fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church; an institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family (*ECE* 13).

More specific and more helpful perhaps for our reflection is article 4.5 of the general norms:

The education of students is to combine academic and professional development with formation in oral and religious principles and the social teachings of the Church; the program of studies for each of the various professions is to include an appropriate ethical formation in that profession. Courses in Catholic doctrine are to be made available to all students.

If my knowledge is correct, some of your institutions require a certain number of courses in the fields of religion or of ethics; others make courses available; still others have no course offerings either in religion or in ethics. On the other hand, some of your institutions offer undergraduate or graduate degrees or diplomas in theology, religious education, or pastoral theology. They render a magnificent service to the Church. I hope that during these days you will have occasion to share your policies, as well as your experiences.

It won't surprise you to know that I support article 4.5 as a general norm. It is based on principles that are certainly consistent with our Lasallian heritage. I think that we should do everything within our power to implement that norm to a significant degree.

But *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* speaks also of pastoral programs, frequently called in the United States, campus ministry. Many of our institutions – I think an increasing number of them – have centers of pastoral ministry, with teams of qualified people – clergy, religious, laity – to animate the religious life of the campus. They organize Eucharistic celebrations, retreats, prayer groups, social action groups, opportunities for spiritual direction, and activities for volunteer service at home and abroad.

In summary, I believe that the Catholic dimension for which the school stands should be clearly visible in programs that are effective and adequately funded.

Furthermore the Lasallian institution and the local Church should enjoy healthy mutual relations. The mission of our centers of higher education should be integrated in the pastoral plan of the dioceses to which they belong. But as you know, better than I, such mutual relations are not always easy to realize. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* insists that any official action or commitment of the university be in accord with its Catholic identity. It states further that Catholic members of the teaching staffs are called to personal fidelity; non-Catholic members must respect the Catholic character of the university while the university in turn respects their religious liberty. As we all know, however, affirmation of principles is one thing, mutually agreed upon interpretations is another, and the lived experience is still another. Periodic problems are perhaps inevitable. But when conscientious attention is given to communication and dialogue, habitually good mutual relations are indeed possible. Fidelity to our Lasallian heritage invites us – more than that, it obliges us to work in close harmony with the local Church.

5. Solidarity with the poor

Earlier I insisted that commitment to the poor is integral to the religious vocation of the Brothers as consecrated men and to the Lasallian mission:

The Brothers are entrusted with their mission by the Institute, a mission especially to the poor. As a community they become increasingly conscious of the reasons for the poverty that surrounds them and so become earnestly involved in the promotion of justice and human dignity through the educational service they provide. This concern of the Brothers for the poor serves also to motivate their activities when they deal with people in a more favorable social environment, urging these to become more sensitive to unjust situations of which the poor are so often the victims. (*Rule 14*)

Solidarity with the poor can be manifested in numerous ways. Our centers of higher education must make organized efforts to help students know and understand the world, recognize their prejudices, become familiar with the major issues, know the position of the Church on social issues, and have structured opportunities for community service at home and abroad.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae calls for study of contemporary problems in areas of dignity of human life, promotion of justice, protection of nature, search for peace and political stability, more just sharing in the world's resources, and a new economic and political order (*ECE 32*).

But more is required. Our Lasallian commitment to the poor, as well as the orientations of the papal document, impels us to make every effort to welcome the economically poor and members of minority groups, who customarily have been deprived of the opportunity for higher education (*ECE 34*). The document adds that a Catholic university has the responsibility to help to promote the development of the emerging nations. This is an opportune moment to express the gratitude of the Institute to those of you who have welcomed and have given financial assistance to both Brothers and lay students from poor countries.

6. Teachers: Men and Women of faith and zeal

When De La Salle insisted that his teachers manifest in a particular way the virtues of faith and zeal, he obviously had in mind the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The situation today is, of course, significantly different from the situation he knew.

As acknowledged in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*:

The academic community is largely composed of laity; in increasing numbers, lay men and women are assuming important functions and responsibilities for the direction of these institutions . . . The future of Catholic universities depends to a great extent on the competent and dedicated service of lay Catholics. All teachers and administrators, at the time of their appointment, are to be informed about the Catholic identity of the Institution and its implications, and about their responsibility to promote, or at least to respect, that identity. (*ECE 25*)

The university community of many Catholic institutions includes members of other churches, ecclesial communities and religions, and also those who profess no religious belief. These men and women offer their training and experience in furthering the various academic disciplines or other university tasks. (*ECE 26*)

But, as the general norms state,

Those teachers and administrators who belong to other churches, ecclesial communities, or religions, as well as those who profess no religious belief, and also all students, are to recognize and respect the distinctive Catholic identity of the university. (*ECE 4.4*)

I have quoted these passages verbatim because I think they are pertinent to the situation in our Lasallian institutions of higher education throughout the world today and because they express principles and orientations with which I am in complete agreement. As difficult as it may be, we must do all we can to cultivate a faculty and staff of grand quality – Catholic or not – who accept the Catholic philosophy of the school and who are; at the very least, not obstacles to its implementation. But to be realistic, if we want an institution that is truly Catholic in tone and substance, we need a solid corps of men and women who are transparently committed Catholics of faith and zeal. This orientation must be reflected in our recruiting and hiring practices.

But while the percentage of Brothers working in our institutions today is relatively small, the contribution of the Brothers, both as individuals and as communities, can and must be significant. The relationship of the Brothers as individuals does not, it seems to me, create a particular structural challenge. But the relationship of the Institute, district, and community to the Board of Trustees and to the institution itself does require serious thought. As I have insisted above, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is interested in maintaining a presence in higher education only to the extent that we can accomplish there the particular mission we believe that God has confided to us.

As head of your institution you do not, at least necessarily, have responsibility for the leadership of the Brothers' community. But you are aware, I am sure, of the necessity of good communication with the head of the community and with the community in general. I am convinced that the Brothers' community can and must play a very special role in our Lasallian institutions of higher education. The Brothers' community should incarnate and make visible the values upon which our institutions of higher learning are based. With due respect to privacy, our community houses should be open to students and teachers. Our communities can make an enormous contribution by sharing their life of faith, prayer, Eucharist, and fraternity.

7. Organized around the story of De La Salle

Many if not all of the six characteristics I have described may well be characteristics of other religious institutes engaged in the apostolate of higher education. What is important is not that we are different, but that we are authentic. In other words, we define our identity in terms of who we are, not in terms of who we are not. Nevertheless, what does indeed differentiate the Lasallian school from other Catholic schools is that it is organized around a remarkable and inspiring story, that of John Baptist de La Salle.

Our experience of recent years indicates clearly that our lay associates, as well as our Brothers, find great inspiration and enlightenment in the story of this man who was so moved by the need the poor children of his day had for education that he changed completely the direction of his

life; entered into two “worlds” that were completely new to him: that of the poor and that of education; and founded the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

Our *Rule* tells us, and our experience verifies it, that the “Spirit of God has given to the Church, in the person of St. John Baptist de La Salle, a charism which even today inspires the Brothers and a great number of other educators” (20).

My focus in these remarks has been the Brothers and their lay associates. But do we not also have to make an organized effort to help our support staffs and, in a particular way, the members of our Boards of Trustees or Boards of Governors to understand the characteristics of Lasallian education?

Conclusion

To conclude, I make my own a remark of Father Kolvenbach during the bicentennial celebration of the Jesuits in the United States:

The talent and dedication assembled in this room is potentially a massive resource for building the Kingdom of God on earth . . . You know that. You are in a position to form the minds and hearts of people who will mold the beginning of the millennium. What a marvelous opportunity for aiming at ever greater, more profound, more universal service.