

John Baptist de La Salle: The Man & His Message

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Introduction

What follows are, in fact, seven 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 "John Baptist de La Salle: The Man & His Message."

- Seeking to Know the Man
- The School Administrator
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- The Optimism of De La Salle
- De La Salle's Christocentric Message
- On Fostering Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin
- In Praise of Holy Women

The Man

Seeking to Know the Man

As Lasallians, we are told we should learn about and can learn from John Baptist de La Salle. At times, though, it seems difficult to achieve either of these goals because of how the Founder is presented to us. For when writing about his spiritual and inner life, a pioneer biographer asserted that ". . . no one looked more like a saint than . . . De La Salle."² To substantiate this, the author then described the Founder as a man of prayer whose physical appearance showed the beauty of his soul while he led other people to a greater union with God by his practice of so many Christian virtues. Then he adds that De La Salle was dead to the world, having no interest in and a great aversion for its ideas, while showing an interest only in heavenly things and how he might give glory to God. And if he had a hard life, he was content with it, not offended by how others treated him, and never complained about anything. As a result, he was greatly admired by most people whom he encountered.³

This last statement was borne out in 1702 when, for various reasons, the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris sought to replace De La Salle as the Superior of his emerging religious Institute. For the Brothers said most forcefully that they would accept no other Superior but him and would abandon their Paris schools rather than comply with the Cardinal's decision in this matter.⁴ But it might be asked if the saintly man described by Blain could have won the affection and loyalty of his followers to this extent. However, a modern Lasallian scholar suggested why this might be when he noted:

. . . that the type of sanctity of which Blain proposes Monsieur de La Salle as a model is directly at variance with the Founder's manner of acting – as described by Blain himself – and at variance also with the writings of the Founder which the biographer transmits . . .

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Fortunately since 1952, De La Salle's letters – some 134 in all and of longer or shorter length – have been available to help us judge the validity of this last statement.⁶ Written in response to the monthly letters the Brothers sent him, their purpose was to stabilize the situation of each of his religious sons.⁷ What the total number of those documents was we can only guess, but this does not detract from the value of those that have survived. Also because of the nature of their contents, De La Salle seems to have destroyed all the letters that he received, so that reading them is like hearing only one side of a telephone conversation. Still they do give irreplaceable insights about their author.

To begin with, they show that De La Salle was well informed about the situation in which each Brother lived and what it could mean for a given individual. Also, he knew his disciples well, the weaknesses and failings of each, but this did not lead him to give up on any of them. As for their apostolate, whenever possible he tried to help a man having problems as a teacher while also being ready to acknowledge and praise a Brother's success in his work. In the first instance, his charity and compassion were always evident. Likewise, when he had to refuse a request, he seemed able to do so without giving offense. Finally, when made aware of the practical problems of the Brothers' daily lives, he showed a concern that led him to try to help in these situations. While doing all these things, he showed that he was a very competent educationist, as well as a man who could successfully organize and direct what was becoming a large and growing organization.

So we do seem to have two different – some might say contradictory – portraits of the Founder, one by his biographer Blain and one that emerges from his letters. But it might be very appropriate to ask if these two are put together, do we not get a larger and fuller – if not a complete – portrait of the man? Or is an additional and more detailed examination of his life and writings required in order to do this?

The School Administrator

When in his later years John Baptist de La Salle wrote about how he had become involved in his life's work, he said that two events had led him "to take an interest in schools for boys." And he added that, while prior to this several people had suggested he undertake this apostolate, never had he seriously considered doing so. Then, he concluded that his life turned out as it did only because God had imperceptibly led him on and caused things to happen as they did.⁸ And some twentieth-century scholars have noted that while responding to this call, the Founder showed himself to be a competent educationist and a very capable school administrator.⁹

In keeping with this, after 1680, schools became his primary if not his exclusive concern. Through observation and experience, he perceived what was required in and of a well-run school. Prescriptions in the *Common Rules*¹⁰ he composed for his co-workers and his classic *The*

*Conduct of the Christian Schools*¹¹ clearly stated what he had learned in this matter. Also learning from the experiences of his most successful disciples, he joined with them in composing the definitive edition of this latter work.

Though often portrayed as a saint who separated himself from the world in which he lived, he showed himself very aware of the social and economic situation that existed and was developing during the “splendid century.” So the education he made available to poor boys was designed with this in mind. Also, he required those administering his schools to show such awareness. But, each was also required to know the men working with them; their abilities, strengths and weaknesses, and how each could best contribute to their school’s mission. This was in order that a school administrator would be able to lead his co-workers most effectively in their shared task.

The Prudence of De La Salle

At some length and in some detail, De La Salle’s three pioneer biographers describe the careful way in which he went about opening the school in the parish of Saint Maurice that marked the beginning of his new religious Institute.¹² Certainly, he was aware of and influenced by the experience of Nicolas Roland – described at great length by Brother Yves Poutet, FSC, – when he sought to establish schools for poor girls and ensure the survival of this apostolate.¹³ Undoubtedly, De La Salle also knew that in Rheims the situation described so well by W. H. Lewis in *The Splendid Century* had to be taken into account. For as this author said:

. . . the establishment of a new religious house raised all sorts of municipal problems. Would the parish priest’s income fall off? Would the revenue of other religious houses decline? If the Order were a mendicant one, what would be the effect on the town charities?¹⁴

So in this matter, the Founder was showing the prudence that he usually manifested later on while carrying out his life’s work.

One of the twelve virtues De La Salle recommended to the good teacher¹⁵ was described thus by Brother Agathon:

Prudence is a virtue that makes us understand what we need to do and what we need to avoid. Prudence indicates to us the wise and legitimate means of attaining a praiseworthy end. Therefore, it determines the use we should make of our intelligence and our mind to turn us away from what we might have to regret in the undertakings or actions of life. Besides, the means it uses will always be legitimate if they are inspired by reason or by faith; and they will be sure to be neither insufficient nor excessive.¹⁶

And it is easy to cite other examples of the Founder’s prudence that show the characteristics listed above.

Since Blain describes De La Salle’s decisions and actions in more detail, it is easier to choose incidents mentioned in his biography. Aware that many schools for the poor failed because of poor performance by their teachers, to save the schools opened by Adrian Nyel the Founder set

about putting some order in the lives of their teachers.¹⁷ Once he had men of a better quality working in the poor schools for which he had taken responsibility, to lead them to persevere in the work, he realized he had to become like them. This led him to give up his canonry and his personal wealth.¹⁸

When first invited to open a school in Paris, De La Salle perceived that his religious sons¹⁹ were not yet ready to take such a step. So acting on the advice of Nicolas Barré, he did not accept this offer.²⁰ To commit his co-workers more firmly to their task, in a founding assembly he involved them in organizing their new Society. Now calling themselves “Brothers,” they sought to firm up their commitment to their apostolate by making solemn and perpetual vows of religion. But seeing that they were not ready to take such a step, he persuaded them to make temporary and simple vows for three years only.²¹

In keeping with the thinking of the time, De La Salle at first assumed there would be clerical members in his Institute who would serve as its Superiors. However, the death of Brother Henri L’Heureux, FSC, on the eve of his ordination led him to see that this was not the will of God for his religious family. Instead it would be composed exclusively of non-clerical members who could devote themselves primarily to conducting elementary schools.²²

Finally, if it would confine its work to his diocese of Rheims, Archbishop Charles-Maurice Le Tellier offered to ensure the survival of the new Institute by securing Church and State approval for it. But seeing the need to expand its work so it could serve the entire country, he rejected this offer by opening his first school in Paris.²³

Just a little reflection shows how important these decisions of De La Salle were for the founding of his religious Institute. In each instance, he saw what needed to be done to achieve a given goal. Then guided by intelligence as well as by faith, he chose wise means that were sufficient but not excessive in a given situation.

Learning from the Founder’s example, today’s Lasallians can imitate his prudence by acting as he did when selecting the means to provide the “human and Christian education” suitable to their situations.

The Optimism of De La Salle

France’s “splendid century” had a pessimistic atmosphere as far as religion was concerned. For “the working class and the poor” whose sons frequented De La Salle’s schools, the Jansenism then prevalent in that country tended to deliver them “in bonds and fetters into the hands of a merciless God.” And for them, it “preached a doctrine of despair by requiring an impossible degree of perfection” of anyone who wanted to receive the Eucharist.²⁴ However, in his approach to the younger members of this group, the Founder completely rejected these false religious teachings.

Beyond any doubt, though, his writings showed his full awareness of the socio-economic situation in which the children of the working class and the poor lived and in which he chose to live and work. In effect, he saw their situation could cause many of them to be abandoned by

their parents, as far as their religious instruction and other aspects of their lives were concerned. Often, this brought them into contact with evil people who could lead them to develop bad habits that later in life it would be difficult or almost impossible for them to break.²⁵ Also “weak in mind as well as body,” they had “little understanding of what is for their own good.” Then, more inclined to material things rather than to the spiritual or intellectual, hardly were they prepared to understand and accept Christian teaching. So they tended to act without thinking, making many mistakes, and seeking to satisfy themselves, they could and did find pleasure in sinful acts.²⁶

Yet, this is not what they are called to be. Rather, they are called to be and can be children of God, holy and conformed to the “perfect man who is Christ.”²⁷ As such, they will be part of the structure of the Church and in eternity “citizens of heaven.”²⁸

And the Christian educator has an important role to play in helping these young people achieve these goals. Keeping in mind their age and situation he can help lead them to this union with God. For the religious instruction he gives them can be a key means for doing this.²⁹ Through his efforts, many of them can be helped to correct their faults and overcome their evil habits, while those who have preserved their baptismal innocence can find help to continue to do so.³⁰ By saying this, De La Salle challenged his disciples, calling on them to be a means of building up the Church of God.³¹

Always there will be older people who insist that the younger generation is nowhere near as good Christians as they were when they were in that age group. Beyond doubt this happened during France’s “splendid century.” For Jean-Baptiste Blain, the Canon of Rouen, gave a very vivid description of all the faults and failings of the boys in the school of Saint Sulpice before the arrival of the Brothers there. However, he also noted that De La Salle was asked to open a school in Calais because a priest from that city was so impressed by the good conduct of the boys in one of the Brothers’ schools in Paris. And he told how Monsieur de La Chétardie was forced by the parents of the students to recall the Brothers on their own terms to reopen the schools in his parish. This was because these adults said that De La Salle’s disciples had done so much to improve the conduct of their sons.³²

So evidently the Founder’s optimism about the impact his religious sons could have on boys – otherwise so far from salvation – was well founded. Then, imitating his optimism, his disciples today can take a positive and hopeful view of any situation and its challenges while finding and using means to justify taking such a point of view.

His Message

De La Salle’s Christocentric Message

John Baptist de La Salle’s “Christmas message” is found essentially in his meditations for December 24,³³ December 25,³⁴ and January 6.³⁵ Regarding the first of these meditations, a modern Lasallian scholar says “it is a good example of the Christocentric character of Lasallian spirituality.”³⁶ However, this might be equally true of the other two.

The meditation for December 24 deals with the coming of Jesus Christ into the world and how “he came unto his own, and his own received him not.”³⁷ According to De La Salle, this was because the people of the world see things incorrectly, not as God sees them.³⁸ Then in what some might see as a traditional and pious view of Christmas, the Founder stresses how this feast symbolizes the coming of Jesus into each person’s life. Yet, like what happened in Bethlehem, many refuse to receive him because they share the worldly view mentioned above and have no room for him in their hearts.³⁹ But he says that the coming of Jesus into a human life is a great advantage for the one who receives him. So to enter into what De La Salle sees as the true spirit of the feast, each of us should prepare for it by making himself⁴⁰ ready and willing to receive the Savior.⁴¹

Next, recalling another traditional aspect of the Christmas story, De La Salle describes how Jesus was born in a stable and placed in a manger that served as his crib. He uses this to bring out the poverty associated with the Savior’s birth.⁴² Then he calls on his readers to accept and to imitate this virtue and the lowliness it will lead to in their lives. And accurately describing the situation existing in his time as well as today, he says that those committing themselves to the educational apostolate must expect and accept poverty and lowliness of life.⁴³ For now as then, a Christian teacher will find that many of his students are poor, if not materially speaking, in other ways that leave them needing the concern and care he can give them. But he insists, now as then, only an educator who approaches his students with a certain Christian lowliness can and will influence them and lead them to God. So his apostolate requires a Lasallian educator to imitate the lowliness of Jesus at his birth.⁴⁴

Another virtue the Founder saw as very present during the Nativity events was faith. Two who exemplified it, he said, were the shepherds⁴⁵ and especially the Magi.⁴⁶ The latter he saw as a striking example of faith in the way they followed the star announcing Jesus’ birth, overcoming all human considerations and obstacles to find the newborn Savior.⁴⁷ Then when they did find him they were neither shocked nor disappointed because of what they saw. Rather, they accepted and adored him as their God. Following this, De La Salle noted that the Christian teacher is also called on to make an act of faith by recognizing Jesus in the students entrusted to his care. Seeing them thus he accepts them as they are while working to lead them to the eternal life to which they are called. To do this, De La Salle says, the Christian educator may need to have and be guided by a faith as great as that shown by the Magi.⁴⁸

John Baptist de La Salle’s “Christmas message” to his disciples was, that having prepared themselves to do so, they should receive Jesus into their lives. Then he called on them to practice some of the virtues exemplified in this feast, namely the Savior’s poverty and lowliness along with the faith shown by the Magi. In this way, he said, they will make Christmas a special feast and experience it in the fullest sense of these terms.

On Fostering Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin

One statement of the Jansenist teaching so widespread in France during the time of the Founder, when dealing with devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, concluded by saying that “the praise which is offered to Mary as Mary is vain.”⁴⁹ But just as he rejected Jansenist teaching regarding

Holy Communion, De La Salle clearly and emphatically rejected their teaching regarding devotion to the Mother of God.

To begin with, in his catechism⁵⁰ the Founder presented material explaining the reasons for having devotion to Mary and encouraging its practice. Also, in his meditations he sought to foster this devotion among his religious sons.⁵¹ So twenty-one of the meditations he wrote for Sundays and Feasts⁵² contain significant reference to the Mother of God (twelve of them only briefly while nine of them deal almost exclusively with her). And two of the latter⁵³ were exclusively exhortatory, strongly urging devotion to Mary.

His other Marian meditations definitely present and describe Mary's role in God's plan of salvation while stressing her holiness and dignity as the Mother of God. Then basing himself mainly on the writings of Saint Bernard – in his meditation for the Holy Name of Mary – he describes the role she can play in our salvation. He starts by saying that we are in this world only to achieve our salvation, which he insists is not always easy to do. But giving Mary the title of “Star of the Sea,” he presents her as the best guide we can have for achieving this goal. And he insists that she never fails those who are devoted to her and call upon her to help them in this matter.⁵⁴

Again basing himself on writings by Saint Bernard – but also on some from Saint Anselm – in his meditation for Our Lady of the Snow, De La Salle suggests at great length how a person can show devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin. To begin with, he insisted that through her intercession we can obtain all the help needed to achieve our salvation. For all that is done to honor her will be richly rewarded by God who will not refuse anything she requests of him. And because she is the holiest of all creatures, having the highest place in heaven, he insists that we do well to honor her continually and above all the saints. Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, he adds, should be a daily aspect of our lives.⁵⁵

The Founder gives yet another reason why his disciples should have a great devotion to the Mother of God. An essential aspect of our apostolate is to help develop the piety of those entrusted to our care. He sees encouraging them to have devotion to Mary as an important and necessary means of doing this. But almost as if he is saying that you cannot give what you yourself do not have, he insists that a teacher can best do this by sharing his devotion to her with his students. And by having and developing his devotion to Mary, a teacher will best prepare himself to do this.⁵⁶

So, we should feel called to develop our devotion to the Mother of God while using means to lead our students to do the same.⁵⁷ In this way, we can respond to a call of the Founder and offer a more complete Lasallian education.

In Praise of Holy Women

Both Blain and Maillefer⁵⁸ describe an incident in De La Salle's life that probably took place in 1691. When he was seriously ill, his maternal grandmother⁵⁹ came to see him to find out how serious his health problems were. She expected to visit him in his bedroom but was told he would see her in the parlor since the *Common Rules* of the Brothers⁶⁰ did not allow women to go

elsewhere in the house. Then slowly and with great difficulty, the saint dressed and went to the parlor to see his grandmother. In spite of her protests, he said that this was how it had to be. And later, he told the Brothers that because he acted thus, in the future none of them could ask to be dispensed from observing this rule. Blain then concluded his account by praising De La Salle for rigorously upholding this point of the *Common Rules*.⁶¹

Possibly today people would not react similarly to that story. Rather, they might say it showed that he had a very negative and un-Christian attitude toward women joined with a deep-rooted fear and a great aversion for them. But this might be because some of his writings that show a significantly different and very positive attitude toward women are not that well known.⁶² Among these are his fourteen surviving letters in which he gave spiritual direction to a number of nuns and one laywoman.⁶³ Also, there are his twenty-one meditations for the feasts of the Most Blessed Virgin and eleven dealing with the lives and activities of certain women saints.⁶⁴ The one that will be cited now is about Saint Margaret, Queen of Scotland.⁶⁵

As he did in his meditations for “women of proven worth,”⁶⁶ De La Salle began by praising her piety and love of prayer, portraying her as a model for Lasallian teachers.⁶⁷ And had he stopped here he would have given the impression that Saint Margaret was more a model for contemplative religious than for those teaching day-after-day for long hours in crowded classrooms. But he did not stop here.

For De La Salle devotes the remainder of this meditation to her concern to lead members of her household and others to revere and love God. Beginning with her own children, she became their teacher so as to provide them with “a human and Christian education.” And she saw this as the principal means she had of serving and pleasing God. In this way, she made herself a model for those God calls to instruct the young. And De La Salle said that the Christian educator should consider it an honor to serve God by imitating Saint Margaret and faithfully undertaking this apostolate.⁶⁸

However, Saint Margaret’s zeal did not stop here. Seeing them as children of God, she extended her educational activity to various poor children. Honoring them as members of Jesus Christ, she sought the means to help them achieve the salvation to which they were called. Here again she was a model for the Christian teachers who like her would educate children who were poor and perhaps unattractive in other ways. Only faith like that shown by this saint, he said, would make it possible to do this task.⁶⁹ So once more De La Salle returned to an idea he repeatedly emphasized to his disciples. As he had done in his meditation for the Epiphany, the Founder called on them to recognize and adore Jesus in students who humanly speaking are unattractive so as to lead them to become children of their heavenly Father.⁷⁰

When composing his meditation on Saint Margaret, De La Salle borrowed from and elaborated on her life as presented in a then popular, *Lives of the Saints*. By showing her as he did, he clearly indicated why she was one of his “women of proven worth.” But above all, he showed how her piety joined to her educational activity made her a worthy model for the women and men of today who provide children with the “human and Christian education” that his Institute was founded to give them.

Endnotes

1. Brother Gregory Wright, FSC (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. Jean-Baptiste Blain, *The Mind and Heart of John Baptist de La Salle* [Book Four], translated by Edwin Bannon, and edited by Augustine Loes, FSC (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 2002), page 535.
3. Blain, *The Mind and Heart of John Baptist de La Salle*, pages 535-536.
4. Jean-Baptiste Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book Two (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 2000), pages 421-441.
5. Edwin Bannon, *De La Salle: A Founder as Pilgrim* (London: De La Salle Provincialate, 1988), page 10.
6. Frère Félix-Paul, FEC, *Les Lettres de saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle* (Procure général des Frères des Écoles Chrétienne, 1952). Cf. *The Letters of John Baptist de La Salle*, translated by Colman Molloy and edited by Augustine Loes (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1988).
7. Brothers of the Christian Schools.
8. Jean-Baptiste Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book One, pages 79-80.
9. Ellwood Patterson Cubberley, *The History of Education: Educational Practice and Progress Considered as a Phase of the Development and Spread of Western Civilization* (Houghton Mifflin, 1920), pages 347-348; Henri Daniel-Rops, *The Church in the Seventeenth Century*, Volume II, translated by J. J. Buckingham (New York: Image Books, 1965), page 91; H. Outram Evennett, *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation* (Cambridge University Press, 1968), pages 85-86; Kennerh Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*. Volume II: 1500-1975. 7th Printing (Prince Press Edition, 2007), pages 878-879 [Harper & Row Publishers, 1975].
10. Cf. 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).

11. Cf. John Baptist de La Salle, *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, translated by F. de La Fontainerie and Brother Richard Arnandez, FSC, and edited by Brother William Mann, FSC (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1996).
12. Brother Bernard, "John Baptist de La Salle" in *John Baptist de La Salle: Two Early Biographies*, translated by William Quinn and Donald Mouton and edited by Paul Grass (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1996), pages 288-289; Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book One, pages 68 and 74; Dom François-Elie Maillefer, "The Life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle" in *John Baptist de La Salle: Two Early Biographies*, translated by William Quinn and Donald Mouton and edited by Paul Grass (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1996), pages 35-37.
13. Yves Poutet, FSC, *Originalité et influence de Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, *Cahiers lasalliens* #43 (Rome, 1999), pages 82-106.
14. W. H. Lewis, *The Splendid Century: Life in the France of Louis XIV* (Doubleday, 1953), page 162.
15. De La Salle, *The Conduct of the Christian Schools* (1996), page 187.
16. Brother Agathon, *The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher*, translated by Gerard Rummery (Washington, DC: Christian Brothers Conference, 2008), page 11.
17. Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book One, pages 80-84.
18. Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book One, pages 111-119 and 144-153.
19. Brothers of the Christian Schools.
20. Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book One, pages 139-144.
21. Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book Two, pages 172-180.
22. Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book Two, pages 228-230.
23. Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book Two, pages 249-252.
24. William J. Battersby, *De La Salle: Saint and Spiritual Writer* (London: Longmans Green, 1950), pages 100-101.
25. *Meditations* #194.1 and #202.2.
26. *Meditations* #197.1, #197.3, #203.1, and #207.2.

27. *Meditations* #199.3 and #205.3.
28. *Meditations* #200.1, #205.3, and #199.3.
29. *Meditations* #193.3, #197.2, #198.1, #198.2, and #206.1.
30. *Meditations* #208.3.
31. *Meditations* #200.1 and #203.2.
32. Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book Two, pages 387-388; Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book Three, pages 544-545.
33. *Meditations* #85.
34. *Meditations* #86.
35. *Meditations* #96.
36. Cf. The editor's note by Augustine Loes after meditation #85.3 in *Meditations by John Baptist de La Salle*, translated by Richard Arnandez and Augustine Loes and edited by Augustine Loes and Francis Huether (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1994), page 375.
37. *John* 1:11.
38. *Meditations* #85.1.
39. *Meditations* #85.1 and #85.2.
40. Although the author usually refers to Lasallian students and teachers with the use of the masculine pronoun, we know that many Lasallians today are in fact female.
41. *Meditations* #85.2 and #85.3.
42. *Meditations* #86.1.
43. *Meditations* #86.2.
44. *Meditations* #86.3.
45. *Meditations* #86.2.
46. *Meditations* #96.1.

47. *Meditations* #96.1 and #96.2.
48. *Meditations* #96.3.
49. Battersby, *De La Salle: Saint and Spiritual Writer*, page 104.
50. Cf. 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).
51. Brothers of the Christian Schools.
52. *Meditations* #1 to #77 for Sundays and *Meditations* #78 to #192 for Feasts.
53. *Meditation* #151 for Our Lady of the Snow on August 5; and *Meditation* #164 For the Holy Name of Mary, which was then celebrated on September 12.
54. *Meditations* #164.1, #164.2, and #164.3.
55. *Meditations* #151.1, #151.2, and #151.3.
56. *Meditations* #146.2 and #150.3.
57. Omitted here are the words, “during the month of May, traditionally the month of Mary.”
58. Along with Brother Bernard, Canon Jean-Baptist Blain and Dom François-Elie Maillefer were the initial three biographers of John Baptist de La Salle.
59. Madame Nicole Moët de Brouillet.
60. De La Salle, *Rule and Foundational Documents*, pages 62-64.
61. Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, Book Two, page 278; Maillefer, “The Life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle” in *John Baptist de La Salle: Two Early Biographies*, page 55.
62. However positive a view of women De La Salle may or may not have had, readers should understand De La Salle’s views on this topic as something written in France by a celibate cleric at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries.
63. Cf. *The Letters of John Baptist de La Salle* (1988).
64. Cf. *Meditations by John Baptist de La Salle* (1994).

65. *Meditation* #133. The feast was then celebrated on June 10 and now is celebrated on November 16.

66. This is a phrase borrowed from *Proverbs* 31:29.

67. *Meditations* #133.1.

68. *Meditations* #133.2.

69. *Meditations* #133.3.

70. *Meditations* #96.3.