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## A Lasallian Response to Rape Culture

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### Introduction

This article<sup>3</sup> offers a challenge to, and an invocation of, the values of Lasallian mission in the wake of the #MeToo movement and the international movement, on college campuses, against campus rape. It emerges out of an extended conversation between students and faculty about how our shared Lasallian mission might offer spaces of resistance to these forms of violence, as well as how this mission might need to be considered in a new light as our students – particularly our women students – thought about their experiences as women on Lasallian campuses. As one student, our research partner, Alannah Boyle, put it:

The need for these questions grew out of a personal need I had, that I saw replicated amongst my peers. Manhattan College held certain charisms in principle, but those were not being implemented in a way palpable to students, particularly women. An interrogation into this began with conversations between students and faculty members. Three professors and two students formed a reading group to examine the roots and beginnings of the Lasallian tradition through John Baptist de La Salle's words.

That conversation, which began with our collaborative reading group, has expanded through Boyle's own research and experience at the Global Lasallian Women's Symposium in New Zealand in 2017, both the First and Second Annual Lasallian Women and Gender Conferences at Manhattan College (2017 and 2018), and through ongoing scholarship and engagement on our campus. This article reflects these experiences, builds on conversations between students and faculty, and applies the authors' own experiences, as feminist philosophers who engage with the Lasallian charism.

Our starting point, in placing the Lasallian charism in conversation with feminist interventions in rape culture, is that the Lasallian charism begins from the perspective of the marginalized; it is not merely about kindness to or support of the most vulnerable, but a pedagogy of active solidarity that meets them where they are, and addresses both the structural and cultural dynamics of marginalization. It is a solidarity that is led by the experiences and needs of the most marginalized--and that requires those with greater social, structural, or institutional power to question how their own assumptions and priorities may be further entrenching these vulnerabilities. We argue, therefore, that the Lasallian charism includes a unique calling to respond to and resist the patterns and structures of rape culture and to draw on its own resources to stand with those students most marginalized and abused by a culture that normalizes violence against women.

To make this argument we first explain what we mean by rape culture. We then draw on Lasallian views of salvation to support the stance that the Lasallian charism morally obligates us

to address this culture. We explore historical responses within the Lasallian tradition to the pervasive problem of rape culture in society, and find that while certain historical practices no longer serve us, the underlying charism contains rich resources. Two such resources are the notion of the virtue of silence and the value placed on association. We weave together readings of foundational Lasallian texts with contemporary feminist and moral theory to unpack the significance of understanding silence as a virtue within the context of rape culture. We show that cultivating a properly understood virtue of silence in conjunction with association can lead to some of the personal and institutional transformations that are necessary to correct current limitations of merely legal responses to sexual violence. We conclude by considering specific steps to effectively address rape culture on college campuses. We make this argument at a moment when the Lasallian network, like all Catholic communities, has a deep responsibility to examine its own practices and complicities in structures of sexual abuse. While the analysis we offer here focuses on sexual violence on college campuses, particularly as they affect heterosexual students, we believe that the call to draw on the valuable resources of the Lasallian network to better respond to and support survivors of sexual violence is also necessary to combat patterns of violence in other Lasallian spaces.

### **What Is Rape Culture?**

At the heart of the Lasallian educational mission is the practice of meeting students where they are. And where our students are, particularly on college campuses across the USA, is in a context shaped by rape culture, by the much-publicized fact that one in five women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime, and that, whether she is assaulted or not, women's and girls' lived experience is shaped by the threat of assault, by a culture that condones violent sexuality, misogyny, and the objectification of women.<sup>4</sup> A major "sign of the times" is that students are profoundly shaped, marked, and damaged by the ubiquity of rape culture. They grew up in it and are coming to our colleges and universities in great need as a result of the distortion of human dignity, autonomy, and bodily integrity that this culture represents.

The framework of *rape culture*, developed by Emilie Buchenwald, Pamela Fletcher, and Martha Roth in their 1993 classic *Transforming a Rape Culture*, has been deepened and developed through the recent #MeToo movement, which has made more broadly visible the variety of ways women are disciplined by rape culture, whether or not they themselves are assaulted.<sup>5</sup> It refers to a continuum of violence, from the outright misogynistic terrorism committed by Elliott Rodgers and Alek Minassian, to the ongoing threat of assault and harassment, to the normalization of emotional and physical coercion.<sup>6</sup> It names various institutional complicities in supporting these practices and the systemic silencing of women and victims, and it recognizes that rape is a form of terrorism against all women, an assertion that women are rapable, and that their bodies, lives, and agency exist to serve the interests and desires of men. Rape culture refers to the reality that while a small percentage of men commit rape and harassment,<sup>7</sup> behaviors that we now recognize as sexual assault have been so normalized that, according to a 2006 study of men at one university, 63.3% of male students self-reported acts that could qualify as assault or attempted assault.<sup>8</sup> The culture of complicity that silences women and normalizes this pattern of assault and harassment ensures that all women live under threat of rape, harassment, and sexual violence.

Because rape culture is about power and discipline, it provides a map of vulnerabilities both on and beyond college campuses. 23.1% of female undergraduates and 21% of transgender,

genderqueer, and nonconforming students have been sexually assaulted through physical force, violence, or incapacitation, while approximately 1 in 10 assault victims are male.<sup>9</sup> Campus sexual assault has a “season”: 50% of assaults occur in the first four months of the term, and students are disproportionately vulnerable to assault during their first year on campus, when they are most likely to be without a support system.<sup>10</sup> Rape and sexual assault survivors may represent the largest number of cases of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.<sup>11</sup> Rape culture both preys on and produces new vulnerabilities, creating hostile environments in classrooms, dorm rooms, and workplaces for women and those who are LGBTQ, in which they are sexualized, traumatized, and silenced through the pervasive threat of sexual assault and harassment.

In thinking about rape culture from a Lasallian perspective, we begin by thinking about the ways in which rape culture denies human dignity to those objectified and traumatized by it; the ways it denies quality education to those who must live under constant threat; the ways that it denies access to salvation for those disciplined by its world-view; and the ways that it undermines inclusive community by constantly emphasizing the dangers female bodies pose in purportedly communal spaces. In all these ways, we understand rape culture as producing critical matrices of vulnerability that must be made visible within Lasallian campuses. De La Salle’s commitment to “solidarity with the poor” has been more recently interpreted to include “the economically poor, the victims of social injustice, delinquents and those excluded from society,” and “those whose dignity and basic rights are not recognized.”<sup>12</sup> We take this broader definition of solidarity to include a range of intersectional vulnerabilities, particularly in light of the emphasis in the 2015 *Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* on the educator’s duty to “give special attention to those of their pupils who have greater difficulties at school, personal problems, or problems adjusting to family life or society.”<sup>13</sup> As we interpret vulnerability in a more comprehensive and intersectional way, we also find ourselves in need of new analytic tools to identify relevant axes of vulnerability, particularly in domains where our tradition may have tended toward a willful blindness. Thus, we argue that solidarity requires us to seek out new analytic frameworks for understanding the varied and overlapping forms of vulnerability and oppression that organize our students lives, and to adapt our pedagogical tools accordingly.

The framework of intersectional feminism, developed in the 1980s by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, emerges out of a need for new analytic tools to identify vulnerabilities that were obscured by existing moral and legal frameworks.<sup>14</sup> Crenshaw was examining employment discrimination against black women and found that neither the legal paradigm for combatting discrimination against women, nor that designed to address racial discrimination, could illuminate the forms of discrimination and vulnerability black women faced in the workplace. Intersectional feminism is thus a tool designed to make invisible vulnerabilities visible so that they might be addressed. In drawing on this intersectional framework to identify the need on Lasallian campuses to engage rape culture, we position ourselves as part of this lineage of actively and intentionally expanding the understanding of the Lasallian value of “solidarity with the poor” to include a range of previously invisible vulnerabilities.

There is an overtly economic dimension to rape culture, in the sense that economic precarity makes women and members of the LGBTQ community more vulnerable to attack as well as because of the ways that systemic sexual violence and harassment function to exclude women from economic stability and career advancement.<sup>15</sup> In educational settings, sexual assault and

harassment are explicitly understood as issues of equality, covered by Title IX's commitment to ensuring equal access to education. However, legal frameworks that understand sexual assault and harassment as a problem of equity outside the academy remain wanting. Although Title IX explicitly defines assault as a hindrance to equal education access for girls and women, it tends to be interpreted narrowly, as a call to reform sexual assault policies, rather than as a wider duty to radically rethink the institution's obligation to challenge and dismantle rape culture and inequity more generally. Thus, instead of "meeting students where they are" and offering both training in healthy relationships and comprehensive sex education, Catholic institutions<sup>16</sup> in particular provide limited sex education, often abstinence-only when it is offered at all, alongside anti-sexuality policies, including rules that outright ban sex on campus or in dormitories under threat of expulsion.<sup>17</sup> We will argue, however, that just as Lasallian pedagogy has been supple enough to adapt to higher education, it has ample resources to meet our students where they are, in the context of rape culture, and to create spaces where students can learn and explore what moral sexual relationships might mean.

### **The Lasallian Obligation to Address Rape Culture**

Lasallian institutions emerge from De La Salle's conviction that God wants everyone to be saved.<sup>18</sup> In his analysis of the founding story, Brother Gerard Rummery, FSC, describes this conviction as one of two insights that comprise De La Salle's "double contemplation." While salvation for all is the Lasallian educator's guiding ideal, the Lasallian educator also observes the reality that many are far from salvation. This "double contemplation" – witnessing the ideal, the real, and the gap between them – is what generates the pragmatic response of creating the Christian Schools.<sup>19</sup> Unpacking the terms "all" and "saved" and the notion of the educator as guided by the "double contemplation" shows that Lasallian schools are not just obligated to address rape culture in order to adhere to legal and secular norms, but must address rape culture in order to remain consistent with their own mission.

A contemporary educator, raised in a society that values equality, even if just the equality that makes meritocracy possible, will likely be amenable to the abstract claim that God wants *all* to be saved. But De La Salle believed that schools are one of the places where the gap between this ideal and reality is to be closed, which means he challenges us to consider the extent to which educators are taking practical steps to bring about this ideal. There are formal ways to encourage salvation for all, for example, supporting the advancement of women by recruiting them into institutions of higher education or following equal opportunity laws when hiring faculty. Though he was focused more on class barriers than on gender barriers, historians have noted that De La Salle was one of the first to champion and attempt to practically implement universal education.<sup>20</sup> Yet, De La Salle recognized that external formal steps are necessary but not sufficient. An inner conversion is needed to uproot systemic barriers to salvation. In his mediation for the "Vigil of the Nativity of Jesus Christ," he wrote:

See how the world acts! People consider only what is externally apparent in a person and pay respect only if they are attracted by what fascinates the eyes of the world . . . Because they considered [Mary] only as an ordinary person and the wife of a working-man, there was no shelter for her. For how long has Jesus been presenting himself to you and knocking at the door of your heart to make his dwelling within you, and you have not

wanted to receive him? Why? Because he only presents himself under the form of a poor man, a slave, a man of sorrows.<sup>21</sup>

It is tempting to read this exhortation as having merely abstract import, absolving the educator of rigorous self-examination. Of course, the good Christian lets Jesus into her heart! But De La Salle wrote these meditations specifically for teachers; and he had something much harder in mind, namely equally welcoming each and every student into the heart of the educator. De La Salle himself struggled to overcome the visceral contempt and disgust he felt for those different from himself.<sup>22</sup> He cautioned us, “You will give an account to God . . . whether you neglected some students because they were the slowest, perhaps also the poorest, and whether you showed favoritism toward others because they were rich, pleasant, or naturally possessed more lovable qualities than the others did.”<sup>23</sup> De La Salle’s God was “a God who challenges distinctions, separations, and excuses,” and Lasallian spirituality challenges each of us to fully embrace every student, regardless of gender, sex, or sexual orientation, as equally worthy of salvation and hence equally worthy of our care as Lasallian educators.<sup>24</sup>

In American higher education, some Lasallians might shy away from the language of *salvation* for all. An imperative to work for salvation can be hard to reconcile with our pluralistic and often secular society, and the idea of saving can seem dangerously paternalistic or colonialist. We tend to talk more about “whole person education” rather than education for salvation. This substitution of “whole person education” for “salvation” is acceptable only if the key ideas of “saving from” and “saving for” are not lost.<sup>25</sup> De La Salle understood persons to be fundamentally interdependent, such that we cannot become whole in isolation, but only through relationships with others. Indeed, the etymology of “religion” implies re-binding something that has separated. “Religious” education hence implies saving students *from* broken relationships, whether these are social structures that oppress and exclude, family relationships, or broken relationships with oneself. “Whole person education” does not just mean educating all aspects of students. It is education *in* community in order to educate students *for* community and a flourishing life of wholeness. In this sense Lasallian education is radically prophetic:

In the Christian Schools they learned that there was more to life than what they saw and experienced on the streets, that they were created by a loving God and endowed with a unique dignity and an eternal destiny, that they could find in the school community a new set of values, new role models, and a new meaning and opportunity for salvation both in this world and the next.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time we do have to carefully dismantle paternalistic models of salvation. The “double contemplation” is not about creating further systems of inequity or dependence, but about moving toward a more perfect community in which the spiritual or ethical reality of the equal dignity of all persons is manifested in social reality.

Lasallian educators are much more than teachers of our respective disciplines. We are part of a salvation journey<sup>27</sup> that requires risk and courage.<sup>28</sup> This requires us to face the reality that many are far from salvation, and to not shirk responsibility for addressing whatever threatens salvation, including rape culture, which epitomizes the culture of broken relationships that all educators are called to mend. An image that is often used to describe the ideal Lasallian educator is that of the

good shepherd.<sup>29</sup> De La Salle identified three lessons to be learned from John 10:11-16.<sup>30</sup> First, the shepherd knows each of her sheep individually. Second, the sheep know their shepherd as a model of virtue and as someone who is so attentive and vigilant that “anything which might be capable of injuring or wounding these souls will call for [her] attention.” The individuals we teach are embodied subjects situated within social and political structures. Knowing our students and being known by them for our virtue and attentiveness requires us to recognize when men and women students have been failed by society and by their prior education. It requires us to step up when, to use another common Lasallian image, we ascertain that they have been “abandoned” to learn about relationships and sexuality from mainstream media, internet culture, and pornography.<sup>31</sup> Finally, the sheep hear the shepherd, that is, the educator meets students where they are and uses effective tools to prophetically lead students to a life of fullness and community. This cannot just be about protecting victims of assault but must also include education that addresses the culture that leads to perpetrators and bystanders. In rape culture, everyone loses. As De La Salle wrote, “Have you considered carefully what it means to give an account to God for the salvation of a soul that is damned because you did not care to lead it to what is right and to assist it to live accordingly?”<sup>32</sup>

### **Historical Lasallian Texts Examined under the Lens of Rape Culture Today**

De La Salle gestured toward a response to what is now identified as rape culture in some of his texts, which were written over 300 years ago. In some respects he ignored embodiment, for example, by shunting away gendered and racialized bodies, and in other respects he was preoccupied<sup>33</sup> with finding ways to respect and honor the body as a living temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit.<sup>34</sup> Among the account of habits, desires, and bodily practices detailed in *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility* he advised women to cover their bodies and veil their faces,<sup>35</sup> and chastises women for ornamenting their bodies.<sup>36</sup> In his early eighteenth century texts, he went so far as to insist that girls never be allowed into the Christian Schools<sup>37</sup> and that parents of prospective students must agree to not let their sons associate with girls, even to play with them.<sup>38</sup>

A particularly salient feature of rape culture, which merits scrutiny and vigilance for those of us working today within the Lasallian tradition, is the ways in which women are still systemically blamed for their own assaults and sexualization, and the ways in which institutions normalize and support predatory behavior by problematizing female bodies, behaviors, and dress rather than focusing on the patterns of male entitlement and violence that force women to live under threat. We see this in dress codes that discipline girls from elementary school on so that their bodies will not distract male students, to student life policies on college campuses that focus on women’s alcohol consumption as a leading “cause” of sexual assault or offer gendered suggestions to both men and women to avoid assault, as if women were equally complicit in patterns of sexual violence.

If the founding story can be summed up as a “double contemplation,”<sup>39</sup> reading some of the founding texts as a Lasallian woman, with twenty-first century sensibilities, can be summed up as an experience of double-consciousness.<sup>40</sup> Where are, in these early eighteenth century texts, embodied women students and educators in this image of salvation for all? Why would the eighteenth century view be that the veiling and banning of women would be the best way to

ensure lives of fullness and community? How did these practices prepare students of their day to have healthy sexual relationships and family lives? De La Salle's emphasis on *decency* – or, more broadly, on civility and decorum as the antidote to sexual libertinism – is explicitly gendered. Women's bodies must be disciplined or disappeared in order to allow men to control their desires; sexual morality for men hinges on both institutional and individual control over women's bodies. It is a relief to read De La Salle explaining that the rules he laid out are not to be done for their own sake, but because they serve to promote relationships of respect and dignity. He recognized that rules of conduct are relative, indeed, so relative that polite practices from past centuries may be decidedly impolite in a current setting.<sup>41</sup> Yet insofar as these attitudes of accepted patriarchal normality reverberate across the centuries, there is a grave danger of institutionally reinscribing rape culture into the very mechanisms that are meant to combat it.

We think that today's reality demands that an analysis of rape culture, and the vulnerabilities it produces, are essential to institutions within the Lasallian educational network, precisely because of our duty to meet students where they are and to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable. De La Salle's "double contemplation," language of salvation, and image of the ideal Lasallian educator challenge us to ask: are we doing enough to procure the flourishing of *all* of our students? Are we prophetically imagining what healthy, life-affirming relationships and a culture free from sexual violence and injustice might be like? If rape culture is one of the most salient gaps between the ideal of salvation for all and the reality that many are far from salvation, what practical steps can we take to fulfill our mission of closing that gap? What would a contemporary practice promoting relationships of respect and dignity between embodied adult men and women students look like? And how can we structure these practices in ways that do not paternalistically replicate the barriers to salvation that we seek to dismantle?

### **The Lasallian Virtue of Silence in the Context of Rape Culture**

Our move to engage rape culture – both in society and on college campuses – through Lasallian values is driven by our belief that we are called to stand with the most vulnerable and that on our campuses, vulnerability is produced through institutional blind spots that result in complicity with rape culture. Institutional blindspots and the limitations of historical responses to rape culture notwithstanding, we believe that the Lasallian tradition has much to offer. One tool from the Lasallian tradition that can be used to challenge rape culture is the Lasallian virtue of silence described in Brother Agathon, FSC's, *The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher*.<sup>42</sup> The most recent translator of *The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher*, Brother Gerard Rummery, FSC, considers Brother Agathon, FSC's, elaboration of the twelve virtues, originally cursorily listed in De La Salle's 1706 manuscript of *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, to be the most significant work in the Lasallian heritage after *The Conduct of Christian Schools*.<sup>43</sup> Agathon writes, "silence is a virtue which leads the teacher to avoid talking when he must not speak and to speak when he should not be silent."<sup>44</sup> In placing virtue at the center of effective teaching, De La Salle and Agathon drew on the long philosophic and Catholic tradition that runs from Aristotle through Aquinas, in which "virtue is always the just balance between excess and defect" and "virtues can be acquired by the cultivation of regular actions which build up to a habit."<sup>45</sup> Read as a whole, the Lasallian corpus suggests that the rules given in *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility* are not universal prescriptions but attempts to instill habits with the aim of leading a virtuous life. It is because the pursuit of virtue requires practical wisdom and the careful, context-specific

avoidance of excess and deficiency that, as noted above, De La Salle recognized the relative nature of the rules he laid out even as he held fast to the more general goals of dignity, charity, generosity, and so on.

In the last few decades, several philosophers working to understand and dismantle systems of oppression have framed their work as “social epistemology” or “virtue epistemology.” Social epistemology explores the ways in which knowledge is socially produced and hence arises out of a nexus of power relations, particularly social rules regarding who is allowed to speak, whose testimony is accorded respect, and hence who is allowed to contribute to the shared production of knowledge. Virtue epistemologists propose to combat epistemological injustice through the development of related virtues, such as the virtue of accurately (versus prejudicially) assessing the credibility of a witness. In what follows, we weave together these contemporary elements of social and virtue epistemology with Brother Agathon, FSC’s, virtue of silence and De La Salle’s related discussion of the social rules of language in his *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility* in order to argue for the potential of the Lasallian virtue of silence to combat rape culture.

The move we are making to reclaim the radical potential of the virtue of silence is counter-intuitive insofar as sexual assault and harassment are rendered possible by silence. Cultures of rape and harassment arise through silence: the traumatized silence of victims, the guilty silence of those who see harassment and say nothing, the ignorant silence of those in positions of power, the entitled silence of those who commit sexual violence. Those who commit sexual violence do so often in cultural spaces in which they feel entitled to the silence of others: this was one of the primary lessons of the Harvey Weinstein scandal and ensuing #MeToo movement, and it is reflected in countless other sexual abuse scandals. This is because transforming a culture in which sexual abuse flourishes is, first and foremost, a project of “knowledge production”: in order to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable, we must be aware of their vulnerability and we must possess the tools to see and to know it in order to be able to change it.

But this is difficult, because sexual abuse thrives, as we are now more readily acknowledging, in credibility economies in which victims are disempowered and silenced, and in which their testimony will be less likely to be believed than that of their attackers. Philosopher Miranda Fricker has called this “testimonial injustice”: the injustice that arises when one person’s testimony does not carry the same weight in the credibility economy as that of someone else.<sup>46</sup> This means that their testimony is unlikely to gain “uptake”: it is unlikely to be believed. And this, in turn, results in what Kristie Dotson calls “testimonial quieting”: a condition in which a person is unwilling to tell their story because they have no reasonable expectation that the other person is capable of believing their story or of hearing it in the spirit in which it was intended.<sup>47</sup> This is a self-silencing, but it is a self-silencing that both results from and produces an injustice. It describes both a condition in which someone knows their story cannot be believed and in which they are forced to participate in their own silencing--thus perpetuating the injustice in question.

This framework for understanding silencing requires us to think of “knowledge formation” as a reciprocal project: the speaker’s work, of telling her story, is only part of the process. The listener’s capacity to conceive of the speaker as a knower of her own experience, to listen



openly, and to accept the speaker's testimony – to give it “uptake” – is an equally important part of this dynamic. This is particularly true in contexts where the listener has greater institutional power, and therefore has an amplified voice in the credibility economy. But placing this emphasis on the listener's role in knowledge production forces us to grapple with the countervailing interests that may lead a listener to commit testimonial injustice. Consider, for example, a case where a student employee in the dining hall tells her supervisor that a member of the college's staff has made lewd or suggestive comments in her direction. Whether or not this will be treated as a case of harassment is as dependent – if not more so – upon the supervisor's response as it is upon the student's testimony. But let us imagine that, in the moment, the supervisor responds by saying “oh, I'm sure he didn't mean it like that.” He denies the student's testimony, not by telling her that it is untrue, but by telling her that she has interpreted things wrongly: she has failed as a knower of her own experience. This refusal to accept her testimony as true is not only an injustice in this case; it also creates or perpetuates a culture in which the student knows she will not be believed, that there is no sense in reporting harassment (or worse) to her boss. She suffers testimonial quieting, learning that her own interpretation of her own experience will not be believed.

In this instance, the supervisor refuses to listen because perhaps it is in his interest not to. If harassment were going on in his dining hall, he would have to intervene, to report the incident to the Human Resources department, to change schedules around to separate the student from the staff member, to institute stricter sexual harassment and active bystander policies. He would, in other words, be required to do a lot of difficult and time-consuming work which is avoided by merely assuming that the student employee must be oversensitive. It is in his interest not to believe her. Perhaps this is exacerbated by the fact that he is on friendly terms with the staff member who harassed the student; acknowledging her statement as a valid experience worthy of uptake would mean engaging the moral failings of a friend, and perhaps examining his own complicity in this harassment.

Our point is not that the supervisor actively chooses not to believe the student or that he is purposely vicious. Rather, we point to the ways in which his own relative privilege might have allowed him to tailor the credibility economy to support his own interests. Those in positions of power often participate in what philosophers call an “epistemology of ignorance”: an active set of belief practices that allow them to know the world in a way that is most comfortable, or more empowering for them.<sup>48</sup> We saw this in particularly clear relief on the national scene throughout the fall of 2017, as powerful men in media were accused by multiple women of sexual assault and harassment. What was striking in these stories was not merely how pernicious and common this harassment was, but how many people seemed to have chosen not to see it. The scandals that produced the #MeToo movement map institutional complicities and active practices of ignorance that systemically worked to silence many, many women who had been harassed, assaulted, and disbelieved.

But #MeToo also provides a guide to upending unjust credibility economies. The movement derives its name from the hashtag created by activist Tarana Burke, who suggested that if more women chimed in with their own “me too” stories, these stories would serve to amplify the stories of other women. The avalanche of #MeToo testimony that followed the Harvey Weinstein scandal in October 2017 had two immediate effects on the credibility economy around sexual

assault and harassment. First, the onslaught of stories amplified and reinforced one another, making it more difficult for individual stories to be ignored. And second, as women shared their stories with one another, often overcoming the testimonial quieting they had become accustomed to, they identified commonalities in their experiences that are still yielding new ways of understanding what rape culture and a pernicious sexual culture looks like. Together, these two aspects of #MeToo culture are working to transform both what stories – and what speakers – count as “believable” and what kinds of behavior should be counted as unacceptable.<sup>49</sup> In the fall of 2018, the national response to Christine Blasey Ford’s testimony against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, in which she accused him of sexual assault in high school, illustrated the limits of this transformation, yielding a national scandal in which prominent politicians, including the president, mocked and undermined her testimony, reasserting the norms of silencing that prevent women from coming forward with stories of abuse.

Challenging the testimonial injustices produced by rape culture means transforming our practices of silence and silencing. And here, the Lasallian virtue of silence is particularly useful. In Lasallian pedagogy, silence is often a tool of discipline and the means and mechanism of order, a norm to be harshly enforced in the classroom.<sup>50</sup> But silence is not merely required of students: it is also one of the virtues of teachers: a teacher’s silence is useful because it lends weight to the words he or she speaks. De La Salle’s pedagogy of silence is radical because of how it inverts the power dynamics of the classroom, enacting the ideal of teachers as brothers and sisters rather than “masters.” The teacher’s silence creates space for the students’ speech, and the teacher’s example of silence models the weighty nature of speech. Speech, De La Salle explained, should be guided by truth, sincerity, respect and charity,<sup>51</sup> and prudence is needed when considering the right time to speak and the right time to remain silent.<sup>52</sup> Properly understood as a virtue and not as a rule, silence need not just be a tool of discipline and order. It can be a tool for empowerment and solidarity, giving our students the space to recognize their own voices as ones that matter, and their own knowledge and experience as valuable to our shared project of knowledge, no matter how difficult or inconvenient it might be.

The virtue of silence is, on this account, a tool of justice and a reminder that teaching is also about listening. Listening is part of the pedagogy of silence, and it is an elemental aspect of religious life, which requires listening to God as well as listening in communion with others. Listening is both a communal act and a contemplative project, which requires us simultaneously to be with others, and to reflect on our own heart, spirit, and conscience, as well as the needs of our community.<sup>53</sup> The Lasallian virtue of silence recognizes the active empathetic, analytic, and reflective labor involved in listening, and encourages us to reflect as intentionally upon our silences as upon our speech. But who we listen to, how we listen to them, and how we participate in or thwart their words gaining “uptake” – i.e., becoming a part of our communal understanding of the world, and being accepted as testimony by those with greater power – are an active part of our commitment to both justice and salvation.

This is particularly true for teachers, who often find themselves positioned between their vulnerable students, seeking to tell their stories, and the structures of power and discipline that organize institutions. Teachers are often on the front lines as listeners, and their practices of listening and commitment to testimonial justice will often determine whether or not students feel

that they can speak, as well as whether or not their words can or will be heard by those with greater systemic power in the institution.<sup>54</sup>

Even as this work is being done by some members of a campus community, it often remains invisible in other spaces. This is not just a problem of unrecognized labor; problems of testimonial injustice and lack of uptake shape dynamics within faculty and administration, often with disastrous consequences for the students under our care. Those of us on the front lines as listeners often experience testimonial quieting when we share our experiences and knowledge in other institutional spaces. Indeed, the Australian Royal Commission report identified the lack of women in management positions and gendered patterns of testimonial quieting as a contributing cause to institutional failures to adequately respond to child sexual abuse:

In an institutional context, the people most likely to detect instances of child sexual abuse are rank and file workers in closest contact with perpetrators and victims. To trigger an institutional response to abuse, they must make credible reports about the abuse to their organization's leadership. However . . . men tend to fill upper-level management positions, while women fill lower-level staff positions . . . As a result, it may be that many detected instances of child sexual abuse fail to trigger a robust institutional response *simply because they are observed by women and communicated to men.*<sup>55</sup>

If the virtue of silence is a reminder that teaching is also about listening, it is also a reminder for those in positions of power that in order to effectively meet students where they are we need to be willing to hear challenges to our own “epistemology of ignorance.” This is particularly true when we are called to listen to testimony that shows us that the gap between the ideal of salvation for all and our reality is both wider than we thought, and more pervasive, permeating dynamics within and between students, faculty, and administrators.

Thinking about the way social norms of language and listening enable or thwart justice casts new light on De La Salle's early eighteenth century rules for proper conversation in *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*. Because they are designed to train children, particularly working class children, to speak to “superiors” – whether these be teachers, or not, to allow the students to “pass” as they seek upward mobility in the highly stratified echelons of eighteenth century French society – De La Salle devises rules designed to inculcate what we now recognize as the habit of testimonial quieting. Over three hundred years later, many of our students, particularly women students, come to us with similarly ingrained habits, such that they speak to their male peers as if they were “nobility.” This is particularly dangerous as testimonial quieting does not here come about because one has given up on being heard, but because one was trained, even still now in the twenty-first century, to believe it is moral to never assert one's self in the first place. Consider, for example, the following rules given three centuries ago by De La Salle to elementary school boys, and how much they overlap even today with the way many women have been trained to speak:

- [Talking about yourself] would be most disagreeable and burdensome to others . . . A wise person never speaks about [her]self, except to answer a question. Even then [s]he does so with great moderation, modesty, and reserve.<sup>56</sup>

- When giving an opinion, you must be careful not to maintain it stubbornly, for you ought not to be so sure of your ideas as to think them incontrovertible. It would also be very unseemly to argue in order to make your opinions prevail, for you must not be so firmly attached to your ideas that you refuse to yield to those of others . . . Esteem and praise the ideas of others and state your views only because you were asked to give them.<sup>57</sup>
- If you believe that the opinion you have set forth is correct, you must defend it, but this ought to be done with such moderation that the person arguing against you may yield without embarrassment.<sup>58</sup>
- It is uncivilized and shocking for you to tell a person, “You broke your word to me”; “You fooled me.” It is proper to find a way to express yourself in other terms that are more polite, saying, for instance, “Apparently you either did not remember, sir . . . .”; “I suppose you were unable to do what you had promised me.”<sup>59</sup>

Now consider today what happens when a student who has developed these same habits meets a student who has developed opposing habits, namely the excessive testimonial confidence of the “nobility.”<sup>60</sup>

Meaghan, a college student, tells the story of her response to a male partner pushing his way into what she called “the husband-only zone”: “‘And this?’ he asked. I was silent for longer this time, before the word ‘yeah’ emerged in a nervous high-pitched squeak. He started to fumble with my buttons, hands grazing over my racing heart. You’ve let it go too far now, I thought. It would be rude to stop him. Besides, you felt good before. Maybe it will get better?”<sup>61</sup> In this exchange, Meaghan consents to something she clearly does not want to do, and in fact believes is wrong, because she has been trained not to be rude. Courtney, another student, explains the dynamic as follows: “The first time I had sex, the implication was that I would say yes. Not because I had to under some form of coercion, but simply because it was the polite, lady-like thing to do. I was not the kind of woman who said no. And throughout the years, I thought that gave me power over the situation, but really, it took even more away.”<sup>62</sup> Both Meaghan and Courtney point to a lack of entitlement: in the moment, their sense of decorum prevents them from feeling a simple right to assert what they do, or do not want. And this becomes even more problematic in an encounter with a partner who *does* feel entitled, and who has not been similarly disciplined into politeness and civility. Danni adds, “He kept kissing me, or what I thought was maybe supposed to be kissing. But it didn’t feel good, or right. I felt like something was being done to me. What followed was 20 minutes of ‘Please?’ followed by ‘I don’t want to.’ My mind, buried somewhere under layers of intoxication, finally figured that if I did it, I would get to go home, and no one would be mad at me.” Those “20 minutes of Please?” are Danni’s partner behaving with the assumptions of entitlement that are remarkably similar, we contend, to sentiments De La Salle attributed in the early eighteenth century to the nobility: a sense of entitlement to her body, and her will, the sense that his own desires ought to overcome hers. This is not a negotiation but a process of quieting, for which both partners have been amply socially disciplined: he, to assert and cajole; she, to politeness and decorum, virtues that in fact aid in the process of quieting.

These examples point to the importance of examining our commitments to virtue in the contexts and cultures in which we find ourselves. Aristotle, for example, reflected on the virtues of the slaveholder; in the context of a slave-owning society, virtue meant excellence in slave-holding, not a duty to resist the institution of slavery.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, in the context of rape culture, virtues like silence, civility, politeness, and decorum can tend to uphold the status quo. Aristotle's answer to this problem was to distinguish between moral and intellectual virtue: the former are the virtues we practice and develop as habits; the latter are the virtues we are taught, which should shape the virtues we develop. The Aristotelian idea of virtue, like that of De La Salle, places emphasis on the careful education of virtues and on the place of the educator, who must work against, and in light of, the ways that immoral and harmful systems undermine the moral quality of our virtues. The ideal educator and administrator, who like the good shepherd knows each of her sheep individually, must model the virtue of silence *in light of* the credibility economy at play, and recognize when to encourage more or less speech and epistemic confidence.

Sometimes, our role is not to speak; our silence can serve to amplify the speech of others. Solidarity may require us not to tell someone else's story, but to create spaces and dynamics for them to tell it, for example, to work against the contexts in which survivors of sexual violence experience testimonial quieting. Silence means allowing others to speak and seeking to expand the spaces in which their speech can and will be heard. But the virtue of silence may also require speech: it may require us to speak in spaces where *only* our voice can be heard, where the credibility economy requires us to speak on behalf of the more vulnerable, to echo their voices and carve out spaces where their words, and ultimately, their voices, can be heard.<sup>64</sup> Distinguishing these two aspects of the virtue of silence requires judicious attention to the ways in which our own privilege and power operates in different contexts and credibility economies and requires us to embody the virtue of silence always in solidarity with the most vulnerable, seeking to amplify or echo their voices in ways that do not unjustly burden them.<sup>65</sup>

Finally, the virtue of silence requires us to be attentive to the ways in which new and prophetic ways of knowledge are often being produced out of contexts of vulnerability, trauma, and solidarity. The idea of *rape culture*, and the related legal concept of *sexual harassment*, emerged out of the "second wave" of feminism as women carved out spaces to share their experiences of trauma with one another, creating in that communal act of listening new ways of understanding the burdens of living as women in a man's world. Our current moment of shared sexual trauma and feminist solidarity is in the process of yielding new and prophetic ways of knowing. Women are engaged in communally sharing and naming new dimensions of pernicious sexual inequality, from the ways that workplace sexual harassment produces the gendered wage gap<sup>66</sup> to the ways that sex has been defined to privilege male experience and pleasure.<sup>67</sup> These new ways of understanding the world are made possible because of shifts in the credibility economy: because new voices are being heard, and in hearing one another, people are thinking in new ways. The costs of testimonial quieting are not just that some voices are silenced, which is bad enough, but that whole dimensions of our shared human experience are lost in our communal effort to understand the world we presently have and to prophetically imagine and work toward a better one. These new ways of knowing are uncomfortable for those who benefit from the injustices they describe as well as for the institutions interested and complicit in protecting the status quo.

## Lasallian Association as a Corrective to the Limitations of the Consent Paradigm

The virtue of silence and the moral importance of related epistemic and testimonial practices lead us to the next Lasallian tool that we believe can help dismantle rape culture: the notion of association. To explain the importance of association for this project we first need to distinguish between the *legality* and *morality* of sexuality on campus. In the age of Title IX, institutional culpability often decenters broader moral questions about what healthy sexuality should look like. De La Salle's writings emphasize the importance of treating students as whole, embodied persons and guiding the entirety of the person, including their habits, desires, and bodily practices. De La Salle went into great detail concerning early eighteenth century rules of decorum, but, as previously noted, recognizes that we do not do them for their own sake, but because they serve to promote relationships of respect and dignity. Moral sexual education which meets students where they are must be honest about students who are involving themselves in sexual relationships and provide vocabulary and categories to help them navigate toward life-affirming, life-giving practices. In meeting this need, legality is only a starting point; discussions of Title IX, bystander intervention, and consent are necessary, but they are not sufficient to the Lasallian vision of education. Likewise, denial or prohibition of premarital sexual activity, although normative Roman Catholic teaching,<sup>68</sup> may not, we contend, be the best conduit for this sort of education for young adults on college campuses. Students are starved for models of moral sexuality and moral relationships in a time marked by rape culture and porn culture.

When we fail to prepare our students for this terrain we are not saving them; what we are doing is reflecting the structural failures of our culture and in so doing we are making them more vulnerable. This is especially true for those already disadvantaged by rape culture. Our current legal consent paradigm, which through Title IX programs is the dominant paradigm on American college campuses, does not equally empower young men and women in sexual relationships. Our refusal to engage this reality by simply holding that students should not engage in sexual activity outside of marriage exacerbates, we contend, the injustices and power inequities written into rape culture. Moreover, we should remember that contemporary marriage emerges out of rape culture, as per our earlier explanation of this pervasive and pernicious evil; and that there is no reason to believe that the gendered power dynamics and practices of coercive sex written into rape culture will not themselves become embedded in marriages unless our students are offered models and tools for what healthy relationships and empowered communication around sexuality might look like.

Consent is crucial to distinguishing legally permissible sex from assault, but it falls short as a moral framework for thinking about healthy relationships consistent with dignity and respect. The very idea of consent, as we have been arguing, is born out of the intricacies of rape law: "consent" is, in effect, the answer to "how do we know when something is rape?" While rape law historically defined assault through evidence of extreme physical violence – to prove rape, there had to be evidence that the woman had struggled "to the utmost of her ability" – feminist transformations of rape law in the 1970s-1980s positioned consent as the demarcation of permissible sex. This emerged through the "no means no" framework and is now being developed into the "yes means yes" affirmative consent model, which is now law in states like New York and California. Consent, then, tells us when sex is not rape. But it emerges out of an

historical continuum that assumes male rights to female bodies, which assumes that, unless a woman actively says no, then her body can be used in any way by any man at any time.<sup>69</sup>

This means that consent culture prioritizes not just a male definition of sex, but a male right to female bodies. Like the chastity narrative that informs De La Salle's exclusion of women from his elementary schools in early eighteenth century France, consent culture today places the onus of policing sexuality on those most vulnerable to sexual violence. As a female college student expressed it, "No, I do not want to have sex. No, I don't want to try that. Can we stop this now? These vocalizations are how we are taught to handle consent. But it is also exhausting to have to constantly ask to be heard. It is draining to keep putting up yield and stop signs. Yes, I consented, but man, am I tired of being the only one responsible for keeping things consensual. The agency to keep saying 'no' isn't agency at all."<sup>70</sup> Like the old sexual morality in which women's chastity was required to protect male virtue, consent culture continues to place the onus on determining when sex is permissible on women, who continue to be offered limited agency by this framework. Consent is not the right to decide what a sexual encounter will look like, any more than a "terms of service" agreement on an iPhone is an opportunity to negotiate one's right to digital privacy. Consent – even affirmative consent – is merely the right to say no (or, in really enlightened circles, yes) to someone else's proposal. Thus, consent continues to empower men to define and pursue sex on their own terms – terms often uncritically shaped by porn and rape culture – while merely offering women the right to opt out of this opportunity, should they be able or confident enough to do so.<sup>71</sup>

The celebration of the power of "affirmative consent" on college campuses nationwide reveals the difficulty we have in seeing how little agency consent truly offers women and others implicitly defined as "recipients" of sex under rape culture. Holding consent up as a paradigm of healthy sexual culture involves a pernicious kind of testimonial quieting, a cultural and institutional reinforcement of the idea that women's sexual agency must be enacted through the virtue of silence, of knowing when and when not, to speak. Because consent culture falls short, we believe Lasallian values, and not just Title IX projects, should be brought to bear on campus sex education. This would require us to think not just about satisfying legal requirements but also morally combatting a culture of unhealthy relationships: "A fraternal life presupposes relationships that are full of respect, understanding and mutual affection. The lack of these things is a source of suffering. De La Salle warned us that 'a community without charity and union is a kind of hell.'"<sup>72</sup> What would it mean to offer young adult college students a model of sexuality that one enters as an equal partner, engaging openly in the question of what level and kind of sexual activity is consistent with their own dignity and desire? What would it mean to teach students to respect one another as equals in creating healthy sexual relationships, laying the groundwork for truly life-affirming, egalitarian marriages of respect, understanding, and mutual affection down the line?

While these questions may seem daunting, we cannot ignore them, and we have powerful tools with which to address them: the Brothers' notion of association in conjunction with the lived experience of partners in the mission. Early Lasallian teachers cast aside the title of "Master," rejecting "ascendency and domination," and adopted the language of siblinghood.<sup>73</sup> This rejection of ascendancy and domination is a key element in combating a culture of broken relationships and modeling for students relationships informed by dignity and respect. As

Brother Luke Salm, FSC, explains, “Brotherhood is a horizontal model that implicitly rejects the paternalism in the vertical model of fatherhood. At the same time, brotherhood implies and affirms equality in sisterhood. The Brothers today want to share with their associates in the educational mission these values implicit in their tradition of brotherhood.”<sup>74</sup> Taking seriously De La Salle’s insistence that “the community should be for the Brother the theological place of encounter with God”<sup>75</sup> helps us to see the importance of developing, by extension, the notion of association not just to include partners in the mission but also to offer association as a model of salvation to our students. Recall that salvation is not just about “saving from,” but also about “saving for.” The respect, dignity, and egalitarianism implicit in the value of association might provide the groundwork for developing a prophetic morality of healthy and life-affirming sexual relationships.

While Lasallian educators generally know how to model association in the ways we treat colleagues and students, one might wonder how we can teach the application of these values with respect to sexual relationships. Lay women and lay men, together and by association with the Brothers in the mission, can play a crucial role in modeling for students what moral relationships could look like in adulthood. This resource should not be viewed as antithetical to the mission of colleges, but rather as a necessary complement and set of unique gifts brought into the Lasallian mission by its inclusive vision of partnership in mission. Just as the Lasallian model of education has been supple enough to expand to higher education and co-educational settings, the model of the educator or administrator as the “good shepherd” can perhaps, by extension, be broadened in this instance to include a paradigm of accompaniment and mentoring rather than prohibition or condemnation. Brother Álvaro expresses this vision of Lasallian educators as those who meet students where they are, “in order to fight for justice, to become a part of their worlds, to understand them from the inside, as friends who accompany them, and not as judges, who, from the outside, condemn them.”<sup>76</sup> Meeting students where they are, seeing all the forms of poverty that confront them, such as the poverty of relationships, walking alongside them instead of judging them, and having honest conversations with them about the ways in which their sexuality is expressed is vital, we contend, to educating them in moral models of relationship.

What do moral models of sexual relationships look like? What does it mean to hope for more for our students on college campuses than mere consent? The skills required to rethink sexuality are skills that our students already have: co-creating a sexual experience is very much like the negotiations that go into any shared experience, once we remove the deeply damaging assumption of men’s rights to women’s bodies. Sex is not a contract, but a conversation, a space in which two people both express desires, listen to one another, and work together to create an experience that reflects each participants’ values, preferences, and limits. The sex educator Al Vernacchio likens it to ordering a pizza: participants may be in agreement that what they want is a pizza, but the details – from where? with what toppings and what kind of crust? – must be determined through a process of negotiation. Feminist scholars have called this “communicative sexuality,” or a model of sexuality that takes conversation, rather than contract, as the basis for understanding the dynamic between sexual partners.<sup>77</sup> They stress how the duties and virtues of conversation – of clearly and honestly expressing one’s own desires and limits, of openly and charitably listening to one’s partner, of ensuring a shared communicative space in which both partners can be heard, and of creating a shared experience that reflects the desires and values of both partners – are precisely the practices required to reshape sexual expectations in a way that



transforms the dynamics of consent culture, which systemically silences women, offering them the agency only to say “no” or “yes.”

Of course, these practices are not easily learned, particularly for students raised in rape culture and often educated to practice communication in highly gendered ways. It is not easy for young men to learn to listen to women and to have their sexual experience guided by their partner’s desires. It may be even more difficult for young women who have never been asked what they want from a sexual encounter to find themselves equal participants in determining what good and desirable sex should look and feel like. These transformations require support, education, and the creation of spaces in which students can challenge and explore their own sexual assumptions, ignorances, limits, and preferences.<sup>78</sup> But they are lifelong transformations, which lay the groundwork for college-aged students to feel empowered to connect their sexual practices<sup>79</sup> to their values and priorities, to understand – against every dictate of rape culture – sexual relationships as spaces in which persons deserve *heightened* respect and consideration. And they are transformations for which the values of our educational pedagogy are uniquely suited since they are ultimately about respect, solidarity, and inclusiveness in our most intimate dynamics. What they require are morally informed communicative practices that value listening and association. The virtues our students must develop in the name of their own salvation are *precisely* the virtues required for healthy, joyous, and respectful sexual relationships.

### **Conclusion: Where Do We Go from Here?**

We began this article by explaining what is meant by rape culture and arguing that the gap between this reality and the ideal of salvation for all requires Lasallian educators to employ the “double contemplation” to meet students where they are, stand with those students most marginalized and abused by a culture that normalizes violence against women, and pragmatically work to transform that culture. In making this claim, we recognize that in many institutions even merely legal and secular norms regarding consent and harassment are not being adequately implemented and enforced. But even if they were – which would likely lead to improved equality for our students, as well as for vulnerable partners in mission – this would not be sufficient. Just as the “double contemplation” requires us to simultaneously see the ideal, the real, and the gap between them, as Lasallians we must hold front-and-center in our vision moral obligations as well as legal requirements, recognize when there is a gap between the two, and hold ourselves to the higher standard of workers in a larger project of salvation for all. When we forget this, we begin to treat codes of conduct as if they have intrinsic worth, rather than as pedagogic tools in this salvation history.<sup>80</sup> Along these lines, we made a distinction between the specific historical codes of conduct endorsed by De La Salle in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and his underlying ethical and theological claims. We argued that it is essential to hold on to the Lasallian framework of virtue, rather than codes of conduct, and that the development and exercise of virtue requires context-specific judgment. We analyzed the virtue of silence in the context of rape culture and argued that it, in conjunction with the Lasallian principle of association, means that the Lasallian charism has a unique ability to draw on its own resources to respond to and resist the patterns and structures of rape culture.

Moving forward, we advocate that Lasallian institutions draw on the tools of their mission in designing both a culture responsive to reports of sexual assault and harassment as well as a

community with a shared commitment to supporting students as they build the tools necessary for healthy, life-fulfilling relationships. This means, we contend, recognizing that both college campuses and Catholic structures have often failed survivors of sexual abuse and that this history of failure involves a pattern of epistemic injustice that makes survivors less likely to come forward, given a reasonable expectation that their testimony will fail to gain uptake in these spaces. One response to this, at the USA national level, has been the expansion of Title IX programs, including requirements on college campuses that all faculty, administrators, and students in leadership positions become “mandatory reporters” responsible for reporting any allegations of sexual abuse to the institution. This requirement has yielded improved data about sexual abuse on college campuses; but it has also too often reoriented the response to sexual abuse around institutional liability rather than the experience of students and survivors who may be resistant to reporting and feel isolated when they realize that most of the community around them is legally required to report any story they share.

While we recognize that our institutions, like other colleges, must comply with the law, we advocate that Lasallian institutions reflect on the resources of our mission to ensure that our policies and procedures are designed with a concern for solidarity with the most vulnerable and marginalized. Lasallian institutions should be troubled by the ways in which mandatory reporting can undermine our duties to be together by association. What mandatory reporting policies miss is that students who share stories of sexual abuse with faculty rarely come to our offices and say “I was assaulted last weekend”; in most cases, they come to us with a vague sense that something bad has happened to them, and they have come to us seeking the language and conceptual tools to name and explain their own experience. When we must interrupt this critical process to signal our status as mandatory reporters, our duties to the institution undermine our duties to stand in solidarity with our students.

These cases also illustrate that there is a critical pedagogical dimension to reporting sexual violations that is often invisible from certain institutional standpoints. While colleges can and must improve reporting procedures, by having an accessible, responsible, and compassionate sexual misconduct officer, and expanding and improving the counseling support available to students, they should also recognize that part of what Title IX and other sexual misconduct law identifies is the way in which sexual violation undermines a student’s capacity to learn, making it an issue of gender discrimination. Articulating one’s experience of sexual violation, as well as understanding how it has impacted one’s education, is a pedagogical process; and this is part of the reason why students often seek out faculty and trusted administrators to share their stories, rather than relying on counselors or chaplains alone. Recognizing this as a critical dimension of solidarity with students grappling with sexual abuse requires our institutions to carve out spaces in which faculty, administrators, and students can find moments of association and solidarity. This may mean inventing new spaces, like a Women’s and/or Gender Center designed to support this process or it may mean offering greater institutional recognition and support to existing spaces in which this kind of work occurs, including expanded training for those faculty, administrators, and student leaders who find themselves engaged in these exchanges.

In recent years we have learned much about the normalization of sexual abuse, both in the Church and in the culture at large. It is critical that our institutions examine the stories we are telling students about healthy relationships and the resources we offer them in resistance to the

violence and misogyny that infuse our culture as well as the silence and complicity that characterizes our national history. On college campuses, insistence on consent has become the primary way in which students are taught about healthy relationships, but we argue that when institutions fulfill their legal duty to define consent without interrogating how their own values inform and transform what consent involves, consent becomes a tool for silencing women. As we have argued, in Lasallian spaces, consent becomes problematic when it works in tandem with a virtue of silence understood merely as a valorization of codes of civility.

Thus, we argue that Lasallian institutions have a duty to actively teach students about healthy relationships, gender norms, and sexuality. This might occur through coursework in these areas – on our campus, courses like “Race, Class, and Gender,” “Sex, Love, and Friendship,” “Sexuality and the Sacred,” and “Sex and Violence” do some of this work, although none of these courses are required of students. Broader college programming such as Take Back the Night, first-year student programs on healthy relationships, and speaker series on healthy sexuality and relationships are ways to engage our students in these conversations. But we find, again and again, that offering these opportunities as *options* to students is often insufficient: a recent, well-publicized talk on our campus about philosophy and sexual consent was well-attended – by women; *only one male student attended*. Because rape culture cannot be transformed by women alone, and because Lasallian values insist on solidarity and association, it is imperative that we collectively examine how to engage the men on our campuses in these conversations.

This article was written by women faculty responding to the needs our students articulated to us. In the years leading up to and in the culminating of the writing of this article we attended, participated in, and even created several formation programs. At almost every step of the way, men – usually Brothers – opened the door to the Lasallian mission. Sometimes we entered at their invitation, other times we knocked on the door ourselves, and other times the door was merely held ajar so that we could peek in. We were often shown statistics about the numbers of women and lay persons working in Lasallian institutions and told that it was imperative that lay partners understand the mission and that Lasallians are student centered. We have listened to and learned from both these established men and our students, often acting as ambassadors and translators for each side. We are coming to the end of what we can accomplish alone. The culture of broken relationships and the undermining of association we see expressed in sexual violence, as well as in gendered practices of testimonial injustice and epistemologies of ignorance, is all of our problems as Lasallians. It is not merely the work of faculty and staff on the front lines. It is not merely the work of lay persons. It is not merely the work of student advocates. It is not merely the work of women. We were heartened by Superior General Brother Robert Schieler, FSC, who in his opening address at the 2017 Lasallian Global Women’s Symposium, said, “I am here to listen and learn.” We need women *and men* on our campuses – students, administrators, Brothers – to be willing to engage in difficult conversations and take responsibility for their part in this salvation history. Students will follow the lead set by faculty and staff. These conversations and transformations will not be easy, but, as we have shown, in the Lasallian charism and history we have a powerful resource to sustain and guide us.

## Endnotes

1. Jordan Pascoe, an associate professor of philosophy at Manhattan College, earned her doctorate at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY).

2. Sarah Scott, an associate professor of philosophy at Manhattan College, earned her doctorate at The New School for Social Research (NY).

3. Both authors contributed equally to this article. We thank our research partners at Manhattan College, particularly Alannah Boyle and Natalia Imperatori-Lee, as well as the leaders and participants of the Lasallian formation programs we have attended. Sarah Scott gives special thanks to the teachers and participants of the Buttimer Institute of Lasallian Studies, class of 2017.

4. National Sexual Violence Resource Society, “Statistics about Sexual Violence,” [https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications\\_nsvrc\\_factsheet\\_media-packet\\_statistics-about-sexual-violence\\_0.pdf](https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_factsheet_media-packet_statistics-about-sexual-violence_0.pdf).

5. “What is a rape culture? It is a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm. In a rape culture both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life, inevitable as death or taxes. This violence, however, is neither biologically nor divinely ordained. Much of what we accept as inevitable is in fact the expression of values and attitudes that can change.” Emilie Buchwald, Pamela Fletcher and Martha Roth, editors, *Transforming a Rape Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 1993).

6. Julia Conley, “Misogynists Praise Toronto Killer,” *Green Left Weekly* 1178 (2018): 19; Niraj Chokshi, “What Is an Incel? A Term Used by the Toronto Van Attack Suspect, Explained,” *The New York Times*, April 24, 2018.

7. Statistics, as well as the wave of scandals from Harvey Weinstein to Eric Schneiderman, show that most assailants are repeat offenders, committing assault an average of six times, and that on college campuses, 3% of men commit 90% of assaults. RAINN.

8. David Lisak and Paul M. Miller, “Repeat Rape and Multiple Offending among Undetected Rapists,” *Violence and Victims* 17:1 (2002): 73, 78.

9. RAINN, <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/scope-problem>.

10. Ibid.

11. Jill Astbury, “Services for Victim/Survivors of Sexual Assault: Identifying Needs, Interventions and Provision of Services in Australia,” *ACSSA Issues* 6 (Dec. 2006): 1.

12. Brothers of the Christian Schools, *Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* (Rome: 2015), Article 29, 1 and 5.

13. *Ibid.*, Article 29, 2.

14. Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1 (1989): 139.

15. See, for example, the historic exclusion of women from single-sex educational institutions (like a goodly number of Lasallian schools), to US Vice-President Mike Pence’s refusal to dine alone with a woman, which highlighted the ways in which even supposedly “respectful” moves alone with a woman, which highlighted the ways in which even supposedly “respectful” moves to respect women within the context of rape culture lead to disparate career opportunities and access to spaces of power and negotiation for women.

16. Concerning the Roman Catholic Church’s teaching about sexual matters, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition, (US Conference of Catholic Bishops – Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), articles #2331 through #2400 (the sixth commandment).

17. For arguments for comprehensive sexual health education on Catholic campuses see Mary Franz, “Sex, Milk, and Cookies: Tackling Sexual Health Promotion on a Catholic College Campus,” All College Thesis Program, College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University (Spring 2016).

18. “God wills not only that all come to the knowledge of the truth but also that all be saved (1 *Tim* 2:4). He cannot truly desire this without providing the means for it and, therefore, without giving children the teachers who will assist them in the fulfillment of his plan.” John Baptist de La Salle, *Meditations*, translated by Richard Arnandez FSC and Augustine Loes FSC and edited by Augustine Loes FSC and Francis Huether FSC (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1994), #193.3.

19. Gerard Rummery FSC, “What De La Salle Lived and Achieved: The Double Contemplation,” 1987 handout. Michel Sauvage FSC characterizes the same duality as De La Salle’s “mystical realism” in “The Gospel Journey of John Baptist de La Salle (1651-1719),” in *John Baptist de La Salle Today*, edited by William Mann FSC (Manila, Philippines: De La Salle University Press, 1992), 1-23.

20. Edgard Hengemüle FSC, *Lasallian Education: Which Kind of Education is This?*, translated by Rose M. Beal (Winona, MN: Institute for Lasallian Studies of Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota, 2016), 18.

21. De La Salle, *Meditations*, #85.1.

22. See, for example, De La Salle’s acknowledgement of the disgust he initially felt eating and living with teachers of a lower class status in *The Memoir on the Beginnings*. The original

text of *The Memoir on the Beginnings* is lost; for a study of what is preserved, see Gerard Rummery FSC, “The Memoir on the Beginnings: Text & Context,” *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 8:1 (2017): 27-63.

23. De La Salle, *Meditations*, #206.1.

24. Jeffrey L. Calligan FSC, “Lasallian Spirituality,” Letter to Lasallians, March 19, 2012. See also Luke Salm FSC, “Lasallian Values in Higher Education,” *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 6:2 (2015): 7, where Salm argues Lasallian schools should focus on recruiting all those “whose environment has prevented them from realizing their full learning potential.”

25. “To fully appreciate the meaning, or the various meanings, of salvation it is necessary to go to the Latin root *salus*, safety or health, which in turn is based on the verb *salvare*, to save. The concept of saving someone or something always involves two elements, one negative (saving from) and the other positive (saving for) . . . Human beings need to be saved from physical evils associated with sickness and the inevitability of death; from emotional evils associated with frustration and loneliness; from the moral evils associated with sin and moral lapses; from the social evils of oppression, exploitation, enslavement, war, and violence . . . [De La Salle’s] entire educational enterprise was aimed at eliminating an environment of ignorance and hopelessness that was a threat to salvation in any form.” Luke Salm FSC, “Salvation,” *Lasallian Themes 2* (Rome: Brothers of the Christian Schools, 1995), 207-213.

26. Salm, “Lasallian Values in Higher Education,” 9.

27. “[Association for mission] is an invitation to feel part of a common adventure and of a salvation history that supersedes any one project in which one may be involved.” Brothers of the Christian Schools, *Circular 461* (Rome: 2010).

28. Jeffrey L. Calligan FSC, “Lasallian Source Ideas,” in *Buttimer 1: Notes on . . . the Founding Story* (2015), 219.

29. In De La Salle’s meditations persons in education are described as being called to be co-workers with God, ambassadors, visible angels among them, good and faithful stewards, good shepherds, vinekeepers, and architects of tomorrow (William Mann FSC, *Buttimer 3 Lecture*, Manhattan College, July 2017).

30. De La Salle, *Meditations*, #33.

31. “The children who come to you either have not had any instruction and have been taught the wrong things or, if they have received some good lessons, bad companions or their own bad habits have prevented them from benefitting . . . You ought to look upon the children whom you are appointed to teach as poor, abandoned orphans. Although the majority of them do have a father here on earth, they are still as if they had none and are abandoned to themselves for the salvation of their souls. This is the reason God places them as if under your guardianship.” De La Salle, *Meditations*, #37.2, 3.

32. Ibid., #206.2.

33. The word “body” is used 851 times in De La Salle’s writing: “Body is the noun most used after God, duty, sin, Jesus Christ, thing, grace, day, Church, spirit, time, soul, person, sacrament and man.” Jaume Pujol i Bardolet FSC, “Chastity,” *Lasallian Themes* 3 (Rome: Brothers of the Christian Schools, 1997), 32.

34. John Baptist de La Salle, *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*, translated by Richard Arnandez FSC and edited by Gregory Wright FSC (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1990), passim, e.g., 36 and 49.

35. Ibid., 36.

36. Ibid., 46 and 49.

37. John Baptist de La Salle, *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, translated by F. de La Fontainerie and Richard Arnandez FSC and edited by William Mann FSC (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1996), 18.

38. Hengemüle, *Lasallian Education*, 111. Hengemüle explains this was normal for the time; Father Barré, for example, advised female students to cover themselves so as to not be like prostitutes and to not walk or play with males, even their own siblings.

39. For a further explanation of the Lasallian concept of “double contemplation” which inspires the way the term is being used in this article, see “The Lasallian Understanding of Gratitude” by Gerard Rummery FSC in *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 8, no. 2 (2017), page 118.

40. “It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.” W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover Publications, 1903), 3.

41. De La Salle, *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*, 9.

42. The twelve virtues are Gravity, Silence, Humility, Prudence, Wisdom, Patience, Reserve, Gentleness, Zeal, Vigilance, Piety, and Generosity.

43. Gerard Rummery FSC, “Introduction to the Present Translation,” in Brother Agathon, FSC, *The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher* (Landover, MD: Christian Brothers Conference, 1785/2000), 3.

44. Brother Agathon, FSC, *The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher*, translated and edited by Gerard Rummery, FSC (Landover, MD: Christian Brothers Conference, 1785/2000), 8.

45. Rummery, "Introduction to the Present Translation," 4.

46. Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), passim.

47. Kristie Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," *Hypatia* 26.2 (2011): 236-257.

48. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 19-20.

49. The #MeToo moment arose in the wake of a similar epistemic transformation on college campuses, in the wake of the (in)famous "Dear Colleague" letter of 2011, which expanded Title IX to combat sexual assault and harassment, and changed the standards for evidence in campus investigations into sexual assault allegations. The Obama-era regulations, which have since been repealed at the federal level, explicitly worked to create a culture on campuses where victims of assault and harassment could be believed, despite the testimonial injustices that support and perpetuate rape culture. By shifting from a "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard to a "preponderance of the evidence" standard, for example, they worked against the grain of a credibility economy in which victims of sexual assault and harassment tend not to be believed.

50. Hengemüle, *Lasallian Education*, 193-195.

51. De La Salle, *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*, 109.

52. *Ibid.*, 117.

53. Judith Schaefer OP, *The Evolution of a Vow: Obedience as Decision Making in Communion* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 176-181.

54. It is worth noting that on any campus, this work will not be evenly distributed. Those of us who teach courses on gender and social inequality or whose identities visibly mark us as role models for students from marginalized populations will do a disproportionate amount of this work; studies show that professors who are women of color do a higher proportion of this emotional labor than do their white colleagues (cf. Colleen Flaherty, "Dancing Backwards in High Heels" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 10, 2018; Patricia Matthew, "What Is Faculty Diversity Worth to a University?" in *The Atlantic*, November 23, 2016; Julie Shayne, "The Importance of Recognizing Faculty for Their Emotional Support" in *Inside Higher Ed*, September 15, 2017; Kathleen Wong, "Emotional Labor of Diversity Work: Women of Color in Predominantly White Institutions," University of Oklahoma published dissertation, December 2007). If certain faculty and staff perform unequal amounts of service and emotional labor, they will be less likely to be able to take on robust research agendas and leadership roles, thus further perpetuating gender and racial inequality within faculty and between faculty and the administration.



55. D. Palmer, et al., “The Role of Organizational Culture in Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Contexts,” Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Sydney, Australia: 2016), Section 3.2.3. Emphasis added.

56. De La Salle, *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*, 119.

57. Ibid., 125.

58. Ibid., 126.

59. Ibid., 130.

60. Sally Haslanger argues, “In individual cases, the dominant party who objectifies another need not exercise this power directly; the force behind the submissive participant’s compliance may have been exercised in other contexts and in indirect ways.” Sally Haslanger, *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 61.

61. Jessica Bennett and Daniel Jones, “45 Stories of Sex and Consent on Campus: Meaghan,” *The New York Times*, May 10, 2018.

62. Jessica Bennett and Daniel Jones, “45 Stories of Sex and Consent on Campus: Courtney,” *The New York Times*, May 10, 2018. Rachel adds, “I hate admitting how much sex I’ve had because it was ‘polite’ to just let him finish. You read stories of rape and sexual assault but never about your own manners pressuring you into having sex.” Jessica Bennett and Daniel Jones, “45 Stories of Sex and Consent on Campus: Rachel,” *The New York Times*, May 10, 2018.

63. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

64. We use “echo” in the sense José Medina describes: “it is when acts of resistance are echoed that they can become repeatable, readily intelligible, and woven into patterns of insurrection that can lead to social change.” José Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and the Social Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 247.

65. Melissa Batchelor Warnke, “Survivors of Sexual Violence Don’t Owe Anyone Our Stories. Here’s Why I’m Telling Mine. #MeToo,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 2017; Sandee LaMotte “For Some, #MeToo Sexual Assault Stories Trigger Trauma Not Empowerment,” *CNN*, October 19, 2017.

66. Jennifer Calfas, “Inside Sexual Harassment’s Hidden Toll on Equal Pay,” *Time*, April 9, 2018.

67. Lili Loufborrow, “The Female Price of Male Pleasure,” *The Week*, January 18, 2018.

68. See endnote #16.

69. To fully experience the strangeness of this paradigm, imagine if other crimes were defined in this way: if someone could steal my wallet, or enter my house, any time they wanted, unless I said “no.”

70. Jessica Bennett and Daniel Jones, “45 Stories of Sex and Consent on Campus: Carly,” *The New York Times*, May 10, 2018.

71. Because consent operates in the larger context of rape culture, in which women are disempowered and constantly threatened, it can be difficult to know when consent is freely given; the #MeToo movement included numerous stories of women who consented, but only under duress or because they felt they had no other option. Comedian Louis C.K., for example, emphasized in his “apology” letter that he had asked for consent, failing to notice both that the women he asked either did not consent, or did so only in a context in which he held significant professional power over them. “Louis C.K. Responds to Accusations: ‘These Stories Are True,’” *The New York Times*, November 10, 2017.

72. Brothers of the Christian Schools, *Circular 466* (Rome: 2013); citing De La Salle, *Meditations*, #65.1. And while the context of this quotation is chaste religious living by celibate Brothers in community, we contend that the point being made is still valid.

73. Calligan, “Lasallian Source Ideas,” 218.

74. Salm, “Lasallian Values in Higher Education,” 7.

75. De La Salle, *Meditations*, 113.2.

76. Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría FSC, “New Wine in New Wineskins,” Address at the International Assembly, Rome, 2006.

77. Lois Pineau, “Date Rape: A Feminist Analysis,” *Law and Philosophy* 8.2 (1989): 217-243.

78. This may take the form of comprehensive sex education, of enhanced scientific education into how sexual pleasure operates differently for men and for women, and of education programs specifically designed to de-program young people steeped in porn and rape culture (e.g., Boston University’s Porn Literacy Program, <http://sites.bu.edu/rothmanlab/research/span-sex-positive-and-abuse-negative/>. Cf. Maggie Jones, “What Teenagers Are Learning from Online Porn,” *The New York Times*, February 7, 2018.

79. One recent study reports that slightly more than 90% of college students in the USA indicate that they have been with a sexual partner in the past twelve months (American College Health Association, “National College Health Assessment: Spring 2018 Report Group Executive Summary,” 10). <https://www.acha.org>

80. Concerning the Roman Catholic Church's understanding of certain beliefs and words and phrases used in this paragraph (e.g., salvation, moral obligations, salvation history, intrinsic worth, underlying ethical and theological claims . . . ), see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition, articles #1691 through #2557 (Life in Christ).