

## **Signs of the Sacred, Shadows of the System: A Semiotic Analysis of De La Salle's *Meditations* and the Identity of the Lasallian Educator in the Philippine Context**

Marco Saez, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>

Maria Gracia Olorga, Ph.D.<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

In a poignant letter published by the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, a student from Masbate recounts how his mother, a public-school teacher, supplements her income by selling banana cue and ice candy, running a boarding house, and taking out loans just to support his college education. In their community, teachers jokingly call themselves "Taga-London," short for "loan dito (*translation: loan here*), loan doon (*translation: loan there*)."<sup>3</sup> This image, both humorous and heartbreaking, captures the lived reality of many Filipino educators today: overworked, underpaid, and spiritually depleted.

This crisis is not isolated. A 2024 report by the Philippine Statistics Authority revealed that nearly half of Filipino teachers plan to leave the profession due to low compensation, while many already juggle multiple roles beyond teaching.<sup>4</sup> Yet compensation is only one facet of a deeper issue. Filipino educators often face a convergence of challenges: excessive workloads, limited institutional support, spiritual fatigue, and the pressure to embody moral and pastoral ideals in environments that may not sustain them.

This study turns to a centuries-old spiritual text, *Meditations* by John Baptist de La Salle,<sup>5</sup> the patron saint of teachers, to explore how the educator is constructed not merely as a professional, but as a sacred sign. As a foundational text in Lasallian formation, the *Meditations* offer a symbolic vocabulary that continues to shape how teachers understand their vocation. Unlike policy documents or contemporary educational literature, the *Meditations* frame the teacher's identity through sacred metaphors that transcend time and culture: shepherd, guardian, guide, minister, father, pastor, and leader."

These metaphors are not merely historical artifacts; they are actively reinterpreted in Lasallian schools today, particularly in the Philippines, where religious imagery remains deeply embedded in educational discourse. For example, De La Salle writes, "Consider Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd of the Gospel, who seeks the lost sheep, puts it on his shoulders, and carries it back to restore it to the fold."<sup>6</sup> This metaphor continues to shape the Lasallian educator's pastoral identity, emphasizing care, vigilance, and restorative guidance.

Analyzing this text through a semiotic lens allows for a deeper understanding of how symbolic language shapes teacher identity, and how these meanings are re-signified in a context marked by both spiritual devotion and systemic neglect.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the continued use of *Meditations* in Lasallian formation, there is limited scholarly work that analyzes these texts through a semiotic lens, particularly within the cultural context of the Philippines. This raises the central research question: *What semiotic structures define the identity of the Lasallian educator in De La Salle's Meditations, and how can these be interpreted within the Philippine educational context?*

This question is both timely and enduring. It addresses the erosion of teacher identity in the face of burnout, spiritual fatigue, and institutional neglect, while also engaging with a deeper philosophical inquiry: *What makes a teacher more than just an instructor?* By exploring this question now, the study seeks to offer a symbolic and cultural re-grounding of the teacher's role, one that may inform renewed formation strategies in Lasallian and other values-based institutions.

### **Objectives**

This study aims to do the following:

1. Identify key signifiers and signifieds in *Meditations* that construct the identity of the Lasallian educator.
2. Analyze these signs using Saussurean semiotics and Barthes' theory of cultural codes.
3. Interpret how these signs are re-signified within the Philippine educational and cultural context.
4. Contribute to the fields of Lasallian studies, religious education, and cultural semiotics by offering a symbolic and contextually grounded reading of teacher identity.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study contributes to ongoing conversations in education, religious formation, and cultural studies by offering a symbolic reading of teacher identity grounded in both faith and context.

**Timeliness:** Recent findings by the Philippine Statistics Authority<sup>7</sup> highlight widespread functional illiteracy and teacher attrition. This study responds to the growing crisis in educational purpose and morale. Teachers are expected to be moral guides, academic experts, and emotional caregivers, often without the institutional support to sustain these roles. By revisiting *Meditations* through a semiotic lens, the study offers a language of meaning and mission that can help educators reconnect with their vocation.

**Timelessness:** The research also engages with a perennial question in education and philosophy: *What makes a teacher more than just an instructor?* This question has persisted from Plato to Freire. By analyzing how De La Salle's metaphors construct the teacher as a sacred sign, the study contributes a faith-based, culturally grounded response to that enduring inquiry.

Interdisciplinary Contribution: This work bridges Lasallian studies, religious education, literary analysis, and cultural semiotics. It treats *Meditations* not only as a theological document but as a symbolic artifact, revealing how sacred metaphors shape professional identity and how these meanings are reinterpreted in a context marked by both reverence and systemic neglect.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Semiotics in Education and Identity Formation***

Semiotics, as developed by Ferdinand de Saussure and later expanded by Roland Barthes, provides a foundational framework for understanding how meaning is constructed through signs. Saussure's dyadic model of the sign (signifier/signified) allows for the structural analysis of language,<sup>8</sup> while Barthes' concept of myth reveals how cultural narratives naturalize ideology through symbolic systems.<sup>9</sup>

In educational contexts, semiotics offers a powerful lens for examining how language and symbols contribute to the construction and perpetuation of ideologies. Edusemiotics, a branch of semiotics focused on education, emphasizes the development of semiotic consciousness, an awareness of how signs shape learning and cultural experience.<sup>10</sup> This perspective reveals that educational practices are not ideologically neutral but are embedded in broader social and cultural systems.

Historically, semiotic principles have influenced educational thought since the medieval period, and their rediscovery in contemporary edusemiotic research challenges modernist, utilitarian curricula that often neglect holistic, embodied learning.<sup>11</sup> Semiotics also provides tools for analyzing media discourse, suggesting that educational content is similarly shaped by ideological forces. By applying semiotic theory, educators can uncover the symbolic structures that shape identity and meaning in the classroom.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Religious Texts and Teacher Identity***

Religious texts play a significant role in shaping teacher identity in faith-based educational institutions. These texts influence educators' beliefs, practices, and relationships with students. For example, evangelical teachers often navigate tensions between their religious convictions and pedagogical responsibilities, which affect how they interpret texts and engage in classroom decision-making.<sup>13</sup>

In English as second language (ESL) contexts, religious beliefs are deeply intertwined with teacher identity, influencing culturally responsive teaching and professional motivation.<sup>14</sup> Understanding these religious orientations can enhance teacher formation by illuminating the values and motivations that guide educators' work.<sup>15</sup>

These studies underscore the importance of integrating religious influences into teacher education frameworks. They also highlight the need for reflective practices that acknowledge how sacred texts and metaphors shape professional identity and pedagogical choices.

## ***Gaps and Contributions***

While semiotic theory has been widely applied in media, advertising, and cultural studies, its use in analyzing spiritual-pedagogical texts (particularly those that shape teacher identity) remains underexplored. Most applications of Saussurean and Barthesian semiotics focus on popular culture, leaving a gap in understanding how sacred texts function as symbolic systems within educational contexts.

This study addresses that gap by applying a semiotic lens to *Meditations* by John Baptist de La Salle, a foundational text in Lasallian formation. It foregrounds the role of sacred metaphors, such as shepherd, minister, and guardian, in constructing a spiritually charged identity for educators. It also responds to calls within edusemiotics for greater attention to the cultural and ideological dimensions of educational language and practice.

In the Philippine context, where religiosity and collectivist values intersect with systemic educational challenges, this research offers a culturally grounded reinterpretation of Lasallian metaphors. It reveals the tension between symbolic elevation and structural neglect, expanding the scope of semiotic analysis and contributing to a more nuanced understanding of teacher formation in faith-based institutions.

## **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

This study is anchored in a dual theoretical framework that draws from Ferdinand de Saussure's structural semiotics and Roland Barthes' theory of cultural codes. Together, these frameworks offer a layered approach to understanding how the identity of the Lasallian educator is constructed in *Meditations* by John Baptist de La Salle and how these constructions are re-signified within the Philippine educational context.

### ***Saussurean Semiotics: Structure of Meaning***

Ferdinand de Saussure's theory<sup>16</sup> of semiotics posits that meaning arises from the relationship between the "signifier" (the form of a word or image) and the "signified" (the concept it represents). This dyadic model emphasizes that signs are arbitrary and gain meaning through their position within a system of differences. In this study, metaphors such as shepherd, minister, and guardian function as signifiers that point to culturally and spiritually loaded signifieds, constructs of the teacher as protector, spiritual leader, and moral guide.

By applying Saussure's model, the study identifies and categorizes these signifiers within the *Meditations*, treating them not as isolated literary devices but as elements within a symbolic system that shapes Lasallian educator identity.

### ***Barthes' Cultural Codes: Myth and Re-Signification***

Building on Saussure, Roland Barthes<sup>17</sup> extends semiotics into the realm of culture and ideology. In *Mythologies*, Barthes introduces the concept of myth as a second-order semiological system,

where signs are transformed into cultural narratives that appear natural or self-evident. Myths, in this sense, reinforce dominant ideologies by masking their constructed nature.

This study uses Barthes’ framework to interrogate how sacred metaphors in the *Meditations*, while spiritually enriching, may also function as cultural myths. For instance, the metaphor of the teacher as a “minister of God” may inspire vocation but also obscure the material and institutional challenges educators face. Barthes’ theory enables a critical reading of how these signs are reinterpreted in the Philippine context, where symbolic elevation often contrasts with structural neglect.

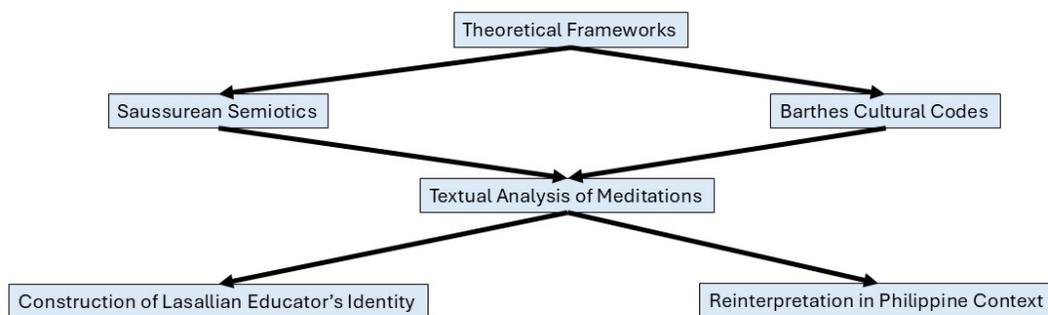
### ***Integration and Application***

The integration of Saussure and Barthes allows for a two-tiered analysis: first, the identification and classification of signs within the text (Saussure), and second, the interpretation of how these signs function ideologically within a specific cultural context (Barthes). This dual framework supports the study’s aim of uncovering both the symbolic construction and the socio-cultural re-signification of the Lasallian educator.

This approach also aligns with the interdisciplinary nature of the research, bridging literary analysis, religious education, and cultural studies. It provides the tools not only to decode the symbolic language of the *Meditations* but also to reflect critically on how these symbols are lived, resisted, or reimagined by Filipino educators today.

### ***Conceptual Framework***

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Semiotic Construction and Cultural Reinterpretation of Lasallian Educator Identity



This study follows a layered analytical pathway that connects theory, text, and context to examine how the identity of the Lasallian educator is constructed and reinterpreted. The conceptual framework outlines the movement from symbolic language in *Meditations* to its cultural re-signification in the Philippine educational landscape.

At the foundation are the theoretical lenses of Saussurean semiotics and Barthesian myth analysis, which guide the identification and interpretation of key metaphors in the text. These metaphors are treated as signs that carry both spiritual and ideological weight. As De La Salle affirms, “He has made you the guardians and guides of children, who belong to him,”<sup>18</sup> reinforcing the educator’s dual role as protector and moral steward. This framing elevates the teacher’s responsibility beyond instruction, positioning them as spiritual caretakers.

The central analytical process involves a close reading of selected meditations addressed to educators. Through coding and thematic grouping, symbolic terms are categorized into identity constructs (e.g., protector, spiritual leader, moral authority). The metaphor of “guide” is exemplified in De La Salle’s exhortation: “You are obliged to keep watch over all those who belong to it,”<sup>19</sup> emphasizing vigilance and responsibility in the educator’s role.

This process bridges the theoretical and empirical, allowing the metaphors to be systematically examined.

The final layer involves contextual interpretation. Here the symbolic identities are reread through the lens of Filipino educational realities, highlighting how sacred metaphors are embraced, adapted, or challenged in light of systemic neglect, spiritual fatigue, and institutional expectations.

This framework thus maps a dynamic flow from theoretical grounding to textual analysis and finally to cultural reinterpretation. It reflects the study’s aim to not only decode symbolic language but also to surface the tensions between symbolic reverence and structural realities in the vocation of teaching.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive textual analysis grounded in semiotic theory. The analysis is deductive, guided by the frameworks of Saussure and Barthes, while allowing for interpretive flexibility in contextualizing signs within Filipino educational culture.

### ***Corpus***

The primary text is the English translation of *Meditations* by John Baptist de La Salle. The analysis focuses on meditations specifically addressed to the vocation of education, from which key metaphors, such as shepherd, guardian, guide, minister, father, pastor, and leader, were identified and grouped into thematic categories.

### ***Coding Strategy***

A combination of manual and AI-assisted coding was used to identify and categorize symbolic language. Metaphors were extracted, coded, and grouped into thematic categories. Likewise, identification of direct quotes and statements coming from the *Meditations* as evidence of the

various signs pointing to the identity of the teacher was done through AI-assisted prompts. Please refer to appendix A for the coding procedure and AI prompt guide.

### ***Contextual Interpretation***

Following coding, the metaphors were interpreted within the Philippine cultural context. This involved asking how Filipino educators might relate to, reinterpret, or resist these symbolic roles in light of their lived realities.

### ***Synthesis***

The final stage involved synthesizing the codes and interpretations to map how the Lasallian educator is symbolically constructed and re-signified. This synthesis informed the thematic structure of the results and discussion.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

The researchers approached the sacred nature of the text with respect and transparency, maintaining the integrity of the *Meditations* while being mindful of its cultural and religious significance. Reflexivity, transparency in coding, and peer review were employed to ensure credibility and reliability.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Symbolic Metaphors and Thematic Identities***

The semiotic analysis of *Meditations* revealed a set of recurring metaphors that construct the identity of the Lasallian educator. These include shepherd, guardian, guide, minister, father, pastor, and leader. Each metaphor was coded and grouped into broader thematic identities: teacher as protector, teacher as spiritual leader, and teacher as moral authority.

Rather than listing all frequencies and codes in the main text, a summary of metaphor assignments, thematic groupings, and their frequencies is provided in appendix B. For direct textual support, appendix C presents a tabular compilation of representative quotes from *Meditations*, including pagination and thematic alignment, to substantiate the symbolic constructs discussed.

### ***Cultural Re-Signification in the Philippine Context***

When interpreted through Barthes' theory of myth, these metaphors acquire new layers of meaning within the Philippine educational landscape. For instance, the metaphor of the shepherd resonates with Filipino values of care and authority, often evoking the image of a barangay elder or a rural teacher who nurtures students like family.<sup>20</sup> In Filipino classrooms, this pastoral image aligns with the concept of "academic care," where authority is balanced with compassion to foster student engagement.<sup>21</sup>

The metaphor of the "minister" aligns with the Lasallian charism of "touching hearts," and reflects the expectation that teachers serve as moral exemplars. This is echoed in De La Salle's

words: “God . . . has made you his ministers in order to reconcile them to him,”<sup>22</sup> framing the teacher’s role as a sacred intermediary between divine grace and the student’s soul.

Filipino educators often emphasize values such as honesty, respect, and humility, traits seen as essential to both leadership and pedagogy.<sup>23</sup> These values are not only personal but cultural, shaping how teachers approach instruction and classroom relationships.<sup>24</sup>

The metaphor of “father” further reinforces the teacher’s quasi-parental role, especially in a culture where familial respect is deeply embedded in social norms. De La Salle writes, “God looks on them with compassion and takes care of them as being their protector, their support, and their father,”<sup>25</sup> a framing that resonates deeply with Filipino familial values and the emotional labor expected of educators.

This symbolic framing elevates the teacher’s role but also places emotional and moral burdens that may not be institutionally supported.

### ***Tensions between Sacred Identity and Institutional Reality***

A central insight from this analysis is the tension between symbolic elevation and structural support. While the metaphors in *Meditations* construct the teacher as a sacred figure, protector, minister, and moral guide, this symbolic identity often clashes with the realities of overwork, under-compensation, and spiritual fatigue.

In public discourse, teachers are hailed as modern-day heroes, echoing the sacred metaphors of the text. Yet this symbolic reverence is rarely matched by policies that address chronic issues such as excessive workloads or lack of professional development.<sup>26</sup> The metaphor of “father” further reinforces the teacher’s quasi-parental role, especially in a culture where familial respect is deeply embedded in social norms. De La Salle writes, “God looks on them with compassion and takes care of them as being their protector, their support, and their father,”<sup>27</sup> a framing that resonates deeply with Filipino familial values and the emotional labor expected of educators.

This symbolic framing elevates the teacher’s role but also places emotional and moral burdens that may not be institutionally supported.

The metaphor of the “shepherd” may inspire, but it can also romanticize sacrifice and normalize burnout.

Even within Lasallian institutions, where spiritual formation is central, some educators quietly express that the symbolic expectations placed upon them are not always accompanied by systems of care or shared institutional influence. These reflections are not critiques, but invitations to discern how sacred metaphors might be more fully embodied in practice, through structures that support not only the mission but the people who carry it. As De La Salle reminds educators, “In some sense it can be said that each of you is a bishop, that is, the vigilant guardian of the flock that God has entrusted to you,”<sup>28</sup> reinforcing the pastoral metaphor as both spiritual and administrative.

## Conclusion

This study began with the image of a Filipino teacher selling banana cue and ice candy to support her child's education, a portrait both tender and troubling. That image, like a living metaphor, captures the paradox at the heart of this research: the teacher as both sacred sign and sacrificial figure.

Through a semiotic analysis of John Baptist de La Salle's *Meditations*, this study has shown that the Lasallian educator is constructed not merely as a professional but as a symbolic archetype: shepherd, guardian, guide, minister, father, pastor, and leader. These metaphors elevate the teacher's role to one of spiritual and moral significance, framing it as a vocation rooted in care, service, and grace.

Yet these sacred identities often collide with institutional realities. While the metaphors inspire, they can also obscure. They uplift, but may unintentionally mask the systemic neglect, spiritual fatigue, and material precarity that many Filipino educators face. In this way, the teacher becomes a mythic figure: honored in language but not always supported in life.

And yet, myths are not illusions. They are truths wrapped in longing. The *Meditations* do not offer a blueprint for perfection, but a vision for transformation. They remind us that teaching is not just a job, but a calling to presence, to accompaniment, and to love. De La Salle urges, "You must honor your ministry and keep trying to save some of these children,"<sup>29</sup> a call to leadership rooted in mission and mercy.

For this vocation to flourish, however, it must be nourished not only by symbols but by systems, not only by metaphors but by mutuality.

This study does not seek to dismantle the sacred image of the teacher. Rather, it invites us to inhabit it more fully, more honestly. It asks, What would it mean to truly live the metaphor? What would it look like if every "shepherd" were given rest, every "minister" formation, every "guardian" protection?

In the end, the *Meditations* are not just a text to be analyzed, but a mirror to be held up to our schools, our policies, and our communities. They ask us not only to see the teacher as a sacred sign but to become, together, the sacred system that sustains them.

## Recommendations

In light of the richness of the signs pointing to the identity and mission of the teacher, the following recommendations are made:

### *Cultivating a Culture of Collegial Solidarity*

The metaphors of "pater" and "pastor," as drawn from Lasallian heritage, invite educators into a relational dynamic marked by accompaniment and shared mission. Yet the hidden solitude many teachers endure exposes a pressing need for compassionate scaffolds. Fostering intentional

spaces, such as peer accompaniment circles and moments of ritual affirmation, restores the communal dimension of teaching and fortifies interior resilience.

### ***Sustaining Interior Life and Ministerial Presence***

To view the educator as minister is to affirm the sacred within the pedagogical. However, amid the demands of contemporary formation, spiritual depletion can quietly erode the sense of mission and vocational clarity. Institutions are thus called to gently cultivate rhythms of renewal through retreats, contemplative reflection, and mentoring pathways that anchor educators in grace and deepen their fidelity to mission.

### ***Reimagining Institutional Structures in Light of the Teacher's Identity***

Lasallian discourse presents the educator as shepherd and guardian, a framing that calls for congruence between spiritual vision and structural support. This could be a renewed formation paradigm that could possibly integrate professional growth with spiritual accompaniment, ensuring that educators are sustained not only in competence but in conviction.

### ***Embodying Metaphors through Contextual Practice***

Metaphors such as shepherd, minister, and guide are not ornamental, they are formative if embodied meaningfully within educational culture. Integrating symbols, blessings, and prayer rituals into ongoing formation, while grounding them in Filipino cultural narratives, allows these metaphors to breathe anew and deepen educators' sense of sacred presence in the classroom.

### ***Exploring Cultural Re-Significations of Teacher Identity across Lasallian Institutions***

Further research is encouraged to examine how Lasallian institutions around the world re-signify the identity of the teacher in light of their distinct cultural, historical, and spiritual contexts. While core metaphors such as shepherd, minister, and guide remain central, their interpretation and embodiment vary across regions. Comparative studies that explore these contextual adaptations can offer valuable insights into how the Lasallian mission is both preserved and transformed globally. Such research could inform more culturally responsive formation programs and deepen the collective understanding of what it means to be a Lasallian educator in diverse educational landscapes.

## Appendix A: Coding Procedure and AI Prompt Guide

To support replicability and transparency, this appendix outlines the coding process and sample prompts used during the semiotic analysis of *Meditations* by John Baptist de La Salle.

### Manual Coding Steps

1. Read selected meditations line by line.
2. Highlight or underline symbolic or metaphorical language (e.g., shepherd, minister, guardian).
3. Assign a code to each phrase based on its symbolic function.  
Example: “shepherd” to code: “teacher as protector.”
4. Group similar codes into thematic categories.  
Example: “shepherd,” “guardian,” and “guide” to theme: teacher as protector

### AI-Assisted Coding Prompts

The following prompts were used to assist in identifying and organizing symbolic language:

- To identify signs:  
“Highlight all metaphors or symbolic terms used to describe teachers in this text.”
- To assign codes:  
“Code every instance where the teacher is referred to using a religious or pastoral metaphor.”
- To group codes:  
“Group the codes ‘shepherd,’ ‘guardian,’ and ‘guide’ under a theme called ‘teacher as protector.’”
- To interpret culturally:  
“How might the metaphor ‘minister of God’ be interpreted in the Philippine context?”
- To generate summaries:  
“Create a summary of all codes and their frequencies.”
- To visualize relationships:  
“Generate a code tree diagram showing the thematic relationships among the metaphors.”

## Appendix B: Metaphor Coding Summary and Thematic Groupings

Table B1. Metaphor Terms, Assigned Codes, and Thematic Groups

<b>Metaphor Term</b>	<b>Assigned Code</b>	<b>Thematic Group</b>
Shepherd	Teacher as Protector	Protector
Guardian	Teacher as Protector	Protector
Guide	Teacher as Protector	Protector
Minister	Teacher as Spiritual Leader	Spiritual Leader
Spiritual leader	Teacher as Spiritual Leader	Spiritual Leader
Moral authority	Teacher as Moral Authority	Moral Authority

Table B2. Frequency Summary

<b>Metaphor Term</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Shepherd	15
Guardian	10
Guide	8
Minister	12
Spiritual leader	9
Moral authority	7

## Appendix C: Specific Passages from Saint John Baptist de La Salle’s “Meditations”

These passages highlight the symbolic roles and responsibilities of educators as envisioned by Saint John Baptist de La Salle in his “Meditations.”

Sign	Text	Reference
<p>1. <b>Shepherd</b></p>	<p>“Consider Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd of the Gospel, who seeks the lost sheep, puts it on his shoulders, and carries it back to restore it to the fold. Because you are taking his place, consider that you are obliged to do the same thing.”</p> <p>“In today’s Gospel Jesus Christ compares those who have charge of souls to a good shepherd who has great care for the sheep.”</p>	<p>Meditation 196.1, page 438</p> <p>Meditation 33.1, page 91</p>
<p>2. <b>Guardian</b></p>	<p>“This is what Saint Paul brings to your attention when he says that those who have been put in charge of others must render an account of them to God. He does not say that they will render an account of their own souls but of the souls of those for whom they are responsible. It is over those souls that they must watch, because they are obliged to render an account to God for them.”</p> <p>“This is the reason God places them as if under your guardianship. God looks on them with compassion and takes care of them as being their protector, their support, and their father.”</p>	<p>Meditation 205.2, page 462</p> <p>Meditation 37.3, page 98</p>

<p><b>3. Guide</b></p>	<p>“You cannot have a better guide than the Most Blessed Virgin, because she is most pure within and without, because the saints call her the treasurer of the graces that God has given to her to share them with you, and because she knows all the paths and means to keep you safe amid the dangers you will encounter.”</p> <p>“God’s interior guidance does not suffice to lead you to him, you need guides who direct you through your senses. This is why God has given you superiors, whose duty it is to hold God’s place in your regard and to guide you on the way to heaven externally as God guides you internally.”</p>	<p>Meditation 164.3, page 320</p> <p>Meditation 91.1, page 385</p>
<p><b>4. Minister</b></p>	<p>“Looking upon yourselves as the ministers of God and the dispensers of his mysteries.”</p> <p>“Because you are ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ in the work that you do, you must act as representing Jesus Christ.”</p>	<p>Meditation 193.1, page 432</p> <p>Meditation 195.2, page 437</p>
<p><b>5. Father</b></p>	<p>“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.”</p>	<p>Meditation 37.3, page 98</p>

	<p>“God looks on them with compassion and takes care of them as being their protector, their support, and their father.”</p>	<p>Meditation 37.3, page 98</p>
<p><b>6. Pastor</b></p>	<p>“You who hold the place of parents and pastors of souls, fear that God will act the same way toward you if you neglect to reprove and correct your disciples when it is needed.”</p> <p>“Adore God’s authority in this sovereign Shepherd of souls, and in the future, look upon him as the great teacher of the Church.”</p>	<p>Meditation 203.3, page 457</p> <p>Meditation 106.2, page 193</p>
<p><b>7. Leader</b></p>	<p>“Two qualities are needed by those who lead others and must be particularly evident in them. The first is a high level of virtue, in order to be models for others, who would not fail to go astray following their guides if the guides themselves did not walk in the right way. The second is the great tenderness they must show for those entrusted to their care.”</p> <p>“You must be convinced of this, that God will begin by making you give an account of their souls before making you give an account of your own. When you took responsibility for them, you became committed at the same time to procure their salvation with as much diligence as your own.”</p>	<p>Meditation 33.2, page 90</p> <p>Meditation 205.3, page 462</p>

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<sup>1</sup> Marco Saez is a full-time faculty of the Languages and Literature Department of De La Salle University-Dasmariñas in the Philippines. He has been with the Institution for more than twenty years, teaching English subjects to college students.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Gracia A. Olorga serves as a Faculty Campus Minister at De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, organizing faith formation programs and animating the worship and liturgical life of the university community. She has been with the institution for more than two decades.

<sup>3</sup> R. M. S. Dela Cruz, “Low Compensation among Teachers a Continuing Injustice in the Philippines,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer* August 28, 2024, <https://opinion.inquirer.net/176376/low-compensation-among-teachers-a-continuing-injustice-in-the-philippines>.

<sup>4</sup> Philippine Statistics Authority, “Clarification on the Alleged 19 Million Functionally Illiterate High School Graduates and Junior High School Completers,” May 19, 2025, <https://edcom2.gov.ph/around-18m-filipinos-finished-high-school-despite-being-functionally-illiterate/>.

<sup>5</sup> John Baptist de La Salle, *Meditations*, translated by Richard Arnandez (Romeoville, IL: Christian Brothers Conference, 2007), <https://lasallian.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Meditations-2007.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Meditation 196.1.

<sup>7</sup> Philippine Statistics Authority, “Clarification on the Alleged 19 Million.”

<sup>8</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, translated by Roy Harris (London: Duckworth, 1983; originally published 1916), <https://www.grammainstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Course-in-General-Linguistics-PDFDrive-.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972; originally published 1957), <https://archive.org/details/barthes-roland-mythologies-en-1972/page/n5/mode/2up>.

<sup>10</sup> John Deely and Irina Semetsky, “Semiotics, Edusemiotics and the Culture of Education,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 49, no. 3 (2017): 207-219, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2016.1190265>.

<sup>11</sup> Alin Olteanu, “Semiotics as a Proposal for a Humanistic Educational Programme,” *Educational Semiotics*, vol. 1 (2018): 3–17, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-66914-4\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-66914-4_1).

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