

LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY IS ESSENTIALLY INSPIRING

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ABSTRACT

Lasallian pedagogy is the deliberate method of educating proposed by Saint John Baptist De La Salle in his writings. So often when addressing fundamental educational subjects does La Salle use the notion of inspiring and its derivatives or equivalents, that the present investigation proposes: 1) to show the frequency of the desire to inspire in the fundamental Lasallian educational texts, 2) the meaning of inspiring, 3) to point out as the origin of his inspiring pedagogy his educational theology, and 5) propose actions to inspire the Lasallian pedagogy of the 21st century. An annex on the life of La Salle is provided.

Key Words : Pedagogy; Saint John the Baptist De La Salle; inspiring; example.

Introduction

Lasallian pedagogy is the deliberate method of educating proposed by Saint John Baptist De La Salle in his writings. Designed by him, founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (*Fratres Scholarum Christianarum*, F.S.C.), for those who train Christians, they also apply it with sympathy, especially in non-Christian or multi-denominational societies, non-Catholic educators in a way that is compatible with their worldview. So often when addressing fundamental educational subjects does La Salle use the notion of inspiring and its derivatives or equivalents, that the present investigation proposes: 1) to show the frequency of the desire to inspire in the fundamental Lasallian educational texts, 2) the meaning of inspiring, 3) to point out as the origin of his inspiring pedagogy his educational theology, and 5) propose actions to inspire the Lasallian pedagogy of the 21st century.

Main document of this exhibition is the complete works of Saint John Baptist de La Salle (Madrid, Ediciones San Pío X, 2001) with the quotation of the texts there used, which corresponds to change if the works are used in another languages.

1. Inspiring, in fundamental texts of Lasallian pedagogy

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The *Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* of 1718 (RC)¹ states solemnly: “The purpose of this Institute is to give Christian education to children; and for this purpose it has schools, [...] so that children are under the direction of teachers morning and afternoon, who instruct them in the mysteries of our holy religion, inspiring in them Christian maxims and therefore providing them with education which is right for them” (RC 1, 3). Thus, inspiring with Christian maxims is an educational goal of instruction on Christian mysteries.

“They will endeavour to give their students, with their manners and in all their behaviour, a constant example of modesty and all the other virtues that they should teach them and make them practice” (RC 7, 15). It fulfils the goal of inspiring the highest Christian values, the constant example of virtues and of all the conduct that should be taught and practiced.

“They will love all their students tenderly; However, they will not become familiar with any of them, nor will they give them anything as a special preference, but only as a reward or encouragement” (RC 7,13). “Show all students equal affection, and even more to the poor than on the rich, for being those much more entrusted by their Institute than these” (RC 7, 14). Love, especially toward the poor², is the reason to educate.

“After breakfast, the Brothers will go to the oratory, where they will pray the Litany of the Most Holy Child Jesus, to prepare to go to the schools, and ask the Divine Infant for his spirit, in order to be able to communicate it to the children they taught” (RC 27, 15). They educate Christians by communicating the spirit of Jesus implored in prayer.

“The first day of class after the holidays, the Brothers who work at the school will gather at the community Mass, in order to ask God for the wisdom and grace needed to educate their students well, and to educate them and lead them according to the spirit of Christianity” (RC 30, 1). They commune and pray, asking God for the grace to instruct and educate according to the spirit of Christianity. According to these parallel texts, the spirit of Christianity is the spirit of Christ.

In the *Collection of Various Tracts* (CT), the Catalogue of conversation topics for the Brothers in the recreations, it asks them to speak about: “The various maxims and practices that children are to be inspired to acquire the spirit of Christianity” (CT 10,2,29). They inspire Christian maxims and practices so that they acquire the spirit of Christianity. In his *Meditations for all Sundays of the year* (MD) he writes: “Do you want your disciples to do what is right? Then you do so too. You will persuade them much more readily through your example of wise and prudent behavior than through all the words you could speak to them.” (MD 33,2,2). It is best to practice it more than with words.

¹ DE LA SALLE, Saint John the Baptist. *Obras Completas*. Madrid, Editions, St. Pius X, 2001, vol. I, pp.. 13-56.

² Br. Superior General Gabriel Marie stated to Leo XIII in an interview that he considered him the pope of the workers, of which the Supreme Pontiff declared himself to be very honoured, before which he confirmed the convenience of being the one who canonized Blessed John Baptist De La Salle for having dedicated to educate the children of artisans and the poor, for which the pope set the date of his liturgical celebration on May 15 for the anniversary of his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. See GABRIEL MARIA, F.S.C., Br. Superior General. 88 *Circular* (26 July 1899).

“Your students are watching you. That is why you have an obligation to give good example with your doctrine, imitating our Lord who, according to Luke in the *Acts of the Apostles*, began to act before teaching (Acts 1, 19). That is what will make you recommendable before your students” (MD 69 1.1). The good example of imitating Jesus Christ recommends the teacher to the students.

“In your exhortations you have to ... inspire them to have a very great dread of sin and to avoid bad companions. In a word, speak to them of everything that can lead them to piety.” (MD 33,3,1). Exhortations should inspire extreme dread of sin and bad company as a means of moving toward godliness. In this, inspire means to move or motivate.

“There is nothing you ought to omit in order to eradicate from the spirit of your disciples the maxims and the practices of the world and to inspire them with a horror for them” (MD 44,3,2). The beginning of the sentence (There is nothing you should omit) recognizes many ways to fulfil the duty of inspiring disdain for worldly practices. Saint John (Jn 15: 18-19) affirms that the world loves its own and not Jesus Christ.

“Act, therefore, with all possible care to keep your disciples away from bad companions. See to it that they associate only with good ones, so that in this way, having only good example, they will practice what is good with great ease” (MD 56,2,2). It makes it easy to practice good care that disciples receive only healthy influences for good.

“An account you must give will have to do with piety, whether you take care to impart it to your disciples: whether they are self-controlled and reserved in church, whether they pray to God all the time they are there, whether they do not talk there, whether they do not sometimes play there, whether they pray to God every morning and evening, whether when they pray in school they pray with attention, whether they have a horror for taking oaths and improper language, whether they respect their parents and obey them faithfully, whether they avoid bad companions, whether you encourage them in all these practices, whether you watch diligently over their behavior as far as necessary to help them carry out these practices, whether you take care that they go to Confession from time to time” (MD 61,3,1). You should inspire piety, from which he will realize God, manifest in the behaviour and prayer in the church, in praying morning and night, in respecting the parents, in having horror of committing bad deeds, in confessing from time to time.

“If, then, you do not belong to God, if you do not frequently turn to God in prayer, if you teach only external matters to children, and if you do not put all your care to give them the spirit of religion, must you not be considered by God as a thief (see Lk 19, 41-47) who has broken into his house, who remains there without his consent, and who, instead of inspiring students with the Christian spirit as you ought to do, only teaches them things that will be of use to them in this world?” (MD 62,1,2). Being of God and praying often inspires the religious spirit or spirit of Christianity.

“Often call to mind the purpose of your vocation, and let this inspire you to do your part to establish and to maintain the kingdom of God in the hearts of your students” (MD 67,1,2). The Christian educator is called to contribute, to establish and consolidate the kingdom of God in the heart of the students.

According to the *Meditations for the time of retreat* (MR): The importance of the ministry of Christian education comes from it being “the first duty that Jesus Christ entrusted to his apostles, a fact Saint Luke reports when he says that as soon as Jesus had chosen his Apostles, he sent them forth to proclaim the Kingdom of God (Lk 9:1-2)” (MR 199, 2, 1). The ministry of Christian education is important because as the apostles preached the kingdom of God.

In the *Meditations for the main festivities of the year* (MF) said: “You have a work that is honorable only in the sight of God because it seeks to spread his kingdom.” (MF 143, 3,2). God respects the use of educating Christians because he extends his Kingdom.³

“If you love Jesus Christ well, you will try in every possible way to enkindle his holy love in the hearts of the children you are forming to be his disciples. See to it that they often think of Jesus, their good and only Lord, that they often speak of Jesus, and that they long only for Jesus and desire only Jesus.” (MF 102,2,2). The educator who loves Jesus imprints that love in the hearts to make disciples to think of Jesus, talk about Jesus, to aspire to Jesus and do everything for Jesus.

“Are you careful to learn thoroughly the holy maxims contained in this saint’s Gospel and to meditate on them often, so that you will be able to inspire them in those for whom you are responsible?” (MF 116,2,2). Inspire the maxims of the Gospel who knows them, meditates and lives them.

“You must be powerfully motivated by the Christian spirit in order to procure this spirit for the children” (MF 132,1,2). “To communicate the spirit of Christianity to others it is necessary that one possesses it in abundance” (MF 171,3,2). It fulfils the duty of the person who possesses it in abundance to communicate the spirit of Christianity or Christian spirit.

“The example of your virtues is the main apostolic function that you must exercise” (MF 128, 1.2). Apostle in Greek means sent. The Lasallian educator is sent primarily to set an example of virtues.

“The first thing that you owe to your students is the building and the good example ... Have you thought that you should be their model in the virtues that you wish them to practice? Have you behaved this year as must the good teachers?...The teacher who is fond of piety *will beget wisdom* (Pr 10, 31) said the wise; that is to say, will acquire wisdom for himself; and, at the same time, will make wise who instructs” (MF 91,3,1). Wisdom is sanity on the basis of religious piety, needed to be an example and model of virtues and transmit wisdom.

“Is it by your meekness and prudence that you induce those who are entrusted to you to abandon vice and disorder, and to yield to piety?” (MF 114,1,2). You must induce or inspire Christian piety contrary to the vices and disorders who live the Christian virtues.

³ La Salle never talks about building the Kingdom of God. "BENEDICT XVI teaches:" Certainly we can not build the kingdom of God with our strength, what we always build is the kingdom of man with all the limits of human nature. The kingdom of God is a gift, and precisely because of this it is great and beautiful, and constitutes the answer to hope. (Encyclical Spe Salvi, 35). It is up to us to announce, preach, extend the Kingdom of God, the work of God alone, to which we can contribute

“Are you careful to keep your students away from what can corrupt their habits, especially bad companies, and inspire horror towards them?” (MF 111,3,2). It must be inspiring horror to the bad habits and bad company.

“You are obliged by your state to teach children the mysteries of religion and to give them the Christian spirit” (MF 109,3,2). In teaching the mysteries of religion, the spirit of Christianity must be infused or inspired.

“Do you have such faith that you can move the hearts of your students and inspire them with the Christian spirit?” (MF 139, 3, 2). To inspire the Christian spirit is to move hearts with Christ to faith.

“You are responsible for the education of children ... all your care must be to procure for them the Christian spirit. You must consider the obligation you have to win their hearts to be a principal means to lead them to live in a Christian manner” (MF 115,3,2). The Christian educator must win the hearts to move or inspire to live the spirit of Christianity.

“Do you have these sentiments of charity and tenderness toward the poor children whom you have to educate? Do you take advantage of their affection for you to lead them to God? If you have for them the firmness of a father to restrain and to withdraw them from misbehavior, you must also have for them the tenderness of a mother to draw them to you and to do for them all the good that depends on you.” (MF 101,3,2). One must have the firmness of a father to correct and the tenderness of a mother to welcome and do all the possible good to lead the youngsters to God.

“With the observant life you will edify your disciples, and you will serve them as a continuous model of modesty, sanity and piety, which will be a very penetrating lesson for them” (MF 153, 2,2). Penetrating lessons are the virtues of which the teacher is model.

The *Conduct of the Christian Schools* (GE) contains the technical dimension of Lasallian pedagogy⁴, which also inspires the Christian spirit. (To the students) “we must inspire them with piety, fear of God and horror of sin, and encourage them to take the sacraments often” (GE 25,3,2,1). We must inspire piety and encourage the sacramental frequency, the fear of God and the dread of sin.

[The teacher] “will dedicate enough time, six months at least, to prepare those who should receive it for the first time to the sacred communion; and will procure this benefit... only to those who judge that they are prepared, both for their piety and for their conduct and for the benefit they have derived from the instructions they have been given, and provided they are at least twelve or thirteen years old and consider that they are in a position to preserve the grace of their first communion” (GE 25,4,23). They prepare to begin communion of piety, long-term good conduct, relevant instruction and a willingness to keep the grace of God or be of the Kingdom of God.

⁴ WESCHENFELDER, F.S.C. Ignacio Lucio *As dimensões na pedagogia de La Salle*. Rio de Janeiro, Editora Autografia, 2015.

“If there is someone who is not confirmed, he will prepare them to receive the sacrament of confirmation, if he finds it easy for them to receive it” (GE 25, 4, 24). “He will teach them the need to pray often and the way to do it well, and will be careful that they fulfil this duty with piety” (GE 25,4,25). “He will also instruct them on the promises they made in the holy baptism and on the renunciations they made through the mouths of their godparents and godmothers” (GE 25,4,26). “It will inspire profound respect to the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, which will help them to remain attentive in the church and in the divine service, especially in the Holy Mass; he will explain to them that those who do not pray in it, can not be considered as having attended, and have an obligation to confess about it, as if they had not heard it: (GE 25, 4, 27). “He will inspire profound respect to the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, which will help them to remain attentive in the church and in the divine service, especially in the Holy Mass; he will explain to them that those who do not pray in it, can not be considered as having attended, and have an obligation to confess about it, as if they had not heard it “(GE 25, 4, 27). “Little by little, they will practice piety and will be careful to preserve their baptismal innocence, inspiring them with great esteem and making them appreciate this benefit” (GE 25, 4, 29). Conditions for receiving Confirmation are to pray with piety often and at Mass, to fulfil the promises and renouncements of holy baptism, to inspire respect for the Eucharist, devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to her patron saints and great esteem towards baptismal innocence or life in God’s grace.

“It is necessary to inspire all the novice teachers with perfect charity; try not to fix several defects (yours) or difficulties at the same time, but in one or two at the most, and provide them with the means to overcome them. Support them and engage them, encouraging them from time to time” (GE 25,2,6,1). Teachers must be inspired to perfect charity, that is, to support and encourage and engage them.

The *Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility for the use of the Christian Schools* (RU), an advanced reading book, relate to the Christian spirit a secular lesson: good treatment. It is an original example of the evangelization of academic culture⁵. “It is striking that most Christians only consider civility and courtesy as a purely human and worldly quality, and do not think about elevating their spirit higher. They do not consider it as a virtue that is related to God, to our neighbour and to ourselves” (RU 01). “However, that Spirit is the only one who must animate all our actions to make them holy and pleasing to God” (RU 0.2). “When giving them the rules of civility, they should never forget to teach them that they should be practiced only for purely Christian reasons and that they consider the glory of God and salvation” (RU 0.5).

⁵ RODRÍGUEZ MANCINI, F.S.C., Santiago. *Pastoral educativa, una mirada de fe sobre la tarea escolar*. “Cuadernos MEL” 28 (2005) 29-37. GARCÍA AHUMADA, F.S.C. Enrique, *Evangelizar la cultura académica*, in: *Teología de la educación hoy*, Santiago Chile, Universidad Finis Terrae, 2017, 297-364.

2. Meaning of inspiring in the Lasallian pedagogy

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The important texts of Saint John the Baptist De La Salle on inspiring concludes: What is it to inspire? It is to infuse or communicate a way of being, to induce, to move or to motivate the positive and to reject the negative, to give healthy influence, to encourage, to animate, to engage.

Inspire what? The religious spirit, the spirit of Christianity, Christian spirit or spirit of Christ or desire for the Kingdom of God.

What methods strengthen the Christian spirit?

1. Piety, which consists in living with Jesus with love.

The piety shown in composure and prayer in the church, in the daily prayer with care, in sacramental frequency, in devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to other saints, in great esteem toward baptismal innocence or life in God's grace or be of the Kingdom of God.

He who lives the Christian virtues induces piety contrary to vices and ethical disorder.

Taking first communion is conditioned on piety, proper instruction, prolonged good behaviour and a willingness to keep grace or life in communion with God.

To receive confirmation, it is necessary to pray often with piety, to know the promises and renouncements of holy baptism, to inspire respect for the Eucharist, devotion to the Blessed Virgin and her patron saints and great esteem for baptismal innocence or life in the grace of God.

2. The fear of God, the feeling of having to give an account to God in the final judgment.

He shows himself in trying to keep himself in God's grace.

3. The horror of sin is horror to turn away from God. Shown in rejecting vices and bad company, the practices of the mundane, unseemly or sinful words.

What is the purpose of Lasallian inspiring education?

Establish and consolidate the kingdom of God in the hearts of the students and extend it in the world.

Who inspires?

God with his love and grace infuses the desire to be saved and to follow Jesus.

What does the educator do to inspire?

The educator inspires as an instrument of God when seeks to extend the Kingdom of God.

The educator who loves Jesus applies himself to imprint that love in the hearts of the students.

The educator mediator between the student and God prays for his perfection and salvation.

He who knows and meditates on Gospel maxims inspires with them.
 He who possesses the Christian spirit inspires with it.
 He who possesses religious wisdom or sanity of religious communicates them.

How does the educator inspire?

The educator is sent mainly to exemplify virtues.
 The primary means of the educator to inspire is to win hearts.
 The educator inspires by example of the virtues and of all good conduct.
 His good example raises the teacher in the students' estimation.
 Among the virtues of which love or Christian charity is an example.
 The Lasallian educator shows love with the firmness of a father and tenderness of a mother.
 The educator avoids getting acquainted personally with a student or showing favouritism that is not for reward or encouragement, or for being more needy or poor than others.
 The exemplary educational love is the evangelical preference for the poor and needy.

3. The inspiring pedagogy arises from the theology of education

Br. Michel Sauvage, F.S.C., in his doctoral thesis on *The New Testament Quotations in the Meditations for the Time of Retreat*⁶, considered by him in his Introduction as “a modest contribution to Lasallian Studies”, without knowing began a historical turnaround. By drawing attention to these *Meditations for the days of retreat. For the use of many people engaged in the education of youth, and particularly for the retreat that the Brothers of the Christian Schools have during the holidays*, he began the conciliar renewal of education, the theology of education, the educational pastoral and the spirituality of the Christian educator. In the original version of the MR the references of the cited biblical texts did not appear and one had to discover them, going to the translation of the New Testament of Fr. Denis Amelote, P.O., in his 1707 edition, which he identified as the source of the quotations. The MR are the most inspiring among the Meditations of Saint John the Baptist De La Salle. With his spirit of faith, when looking at education in light of the faith in their MR, in the other *Meditations* and in the *Explanation of the method of prayer*, he believes in the theology of education, recent academic discipline of systematization⁷.

Br. José María Valladolid in his doctoral thesis *Saint John the Baptist De La Salle, Catechist*, provides a theological synthesis of those 8 doctrinal meditations of the mornings related to the 8 most practical and compromising of the respective evenings, which numbered from 1 to 16. He summarizes its contents in ten themes, although each one is mentioned in more than one of them⁸:

⁶ SAUVAGE, F.S.C., Michel. *Les citations néotestamentaires dans les Méditations pour le Temps de la Retraite*. “Cahiers lasalliens” N° 1 (Rome, Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, 1959).

⁷ GALLEGU, F.S.C., Saturnino. *The theology of education in Saint John the Baptist De La Salle*. Madrid, Bruno, 1958. GARCIA AHUMADA, F.S.C., Enrique. *La Salle and the theology of education*. “Cuadernos MEL” N° 47, Rome, Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, 2013.

⁸ VALLADOLID, F.S.C., José María. *Saint John the Baptist De La Salle, catechist*. Madrid, Editions, St. Pius X, 2007, 3 Vols., Vol. II, 56-58.

- I. The Triune God, creator, saviour and sanctifier, loves men and wants everyone to be saved (MR 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16).
- II. God the Creator loves the beings he created and calls all men to his Kingdom (MR 1, 2, 5, 10 and 15).
- III. The mystery of sin has wounded men and has turned them away from God (in MR 3, 10 and 11).
- IV. Christ, Saviour of men sent by the Father, calls them to join the mystery of redemption (MR 3, 4, 7, 9 and 11).
- V. The Holy Spirit is constantly at work in the Church and gives life to believers (MR 3, 4, 8 and 12).
- VI. The Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, in which his believers are incorporated and receive his grace, has the mission to evangelize all men (in MR 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 13 and 16).
- VII. Salvation is performed in the believer in Christ through faith and works that responds to the grace of the Holy Spirit in a spiritual growth favoured by education (especially in MR 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15 and 16).
- VIII. Man freely accepts the grace that God gives freely, in particular through the sacraments, with which he lives the life of Christ (especially in MR 3, 9 and 13).
- IX. God chooses, calls and sends to accomplish his work in the Church through the ministry of evangelization to save men, to which education belongs (especially in MR 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12).
- X. God calls to eternal life, which he awards as a just judge according to the fidelity to the mission entrusted to them (especially in MR 13, 14, 15 and 16).

I slightly amend his outline to emphasize the relationship of these meditations with education, as the Holy Founder expresses it in his title, and not only with evangelization and catechesis, as Br. Valladolid does in his thesis. Such a scheme consists of basic affirmations, which the MR specifies in the educational apostolate. Other aspects of the theology of education of Saint John the Baptist De La Salle are in other texts of his about Creation, the Incarnation, Holy Mary, the sacraments, service to the Church and the State, the poor.

Lasallian pedagogy derives from the purpose of Christian education, the earthly and eternal salvation of people, founded on the Gospel of God made man. Serve those who are far from eternal and earthly salvation; for this reason, it directly or indirectly serves the poor. “Since your job is to seek the salvation of souls, the first care you should have is to get it as far as possible. You have to imitate in this, in a way to God, because *“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”* scope (Jn 3, 16)” (MR 201,3,1). “Jesus Christ...taught the principal truths of our religion, as it is shown in numerous passages of his Gospel, in which said to his apostles: *It is necessary that I announced the Gospel of the kingdom of God, because that's why I was sent* (Lk 4, 43)” (MR 199,2,2).

The Lasallian pedagogy is liberating. “The child who has become accustomed to sin has lost, in a certain way, their freedom, and has become a captive and miserable, according to what Jesus Christ said, that *whoever commits sin is a slave to sin* (Jn 8, 34). To you, who are the masters of those who are under your direction, you must exercise all possible care to take them to that *freedom of the children of God, that we acquired through Jesus Christ* (Gal 4, 31), by his dying for us” (MR

203, 2, 2). Saint John the Baptist De La Salle also freed the children from poverty by introducing preparation for paid work for the first time in the parish school. He did not use the expression liberating education, introduced in the 20th century almost simultaneously by three mutually independent Catholic educators with different languages. The Servant of God Julius Nyerere (1922-1999) published his proposal in 1967 for education for autonomy in Tanzania⁹, a statement that he had formed as the first democratic president from 1963 to 1961 before joining in the British colony of Tanganyika with the island of Zanzibar, to which Pemba was added. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire said (1921-1997) in 1968, as Lay Assessor in the General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín, supporting the notion of liberating education, which he expressed in several works¹⁰. The Cuban Br. Alfredo Morales, F.S.C. (1927-2012) published his version in exile yours afterwards with a team in the Dominican Republic¹¹ and suffering from the dictator in turn the withdrawal of his Dominican nationality already received by grace. The coincidence of three authors each other in space and without mutual ties originates in the Gospel, which moved to Saint John the Baptist De La Salle to educate the poor and needy of their time.

What is the purpose of the lasallian pedagogy? “As ministers of Jesus Christ, to instruct them you must have as only the love and glory of God...your zeal must bring you to inspire that your disciples, *how if the same God encourage them for you, since you are ambassadors of Jesus Christ* (2 Cor 5:14-15)” (MR 201, 2, 1). “*The glory of my Father is that you bear much fruit and be my disciples* (Jn 15, 8). What Jesus Christ said to his holy apostles is also said to you” (MR 195,3,1). “If you have zeal for the children for whom you are responsible and have committed yourselves to keep them from sin, which is your duty, you must take on this spirit of the Prophet Elias when they fall into some fault. Driven by this same holy ardor that roused this Prophet, you must say to your disciples, I am so zealous for the glory of my God that I cannot see you renounce the covenant you made with him in Baptism and the dignity of children of God, which you received” (MR 202,1,2). Teach to live well is “help us to live in a way worthy of God, so that they are at all pleasant and fruitful in all type of good works...in imitation of the great apostle, you must teach them to *live in a way worthy of God, those who have been called to his kingdom and glory* (1 Thess 2.12)” (MR 198, 2, 1). “You must ... pay special honour and consecrate yourself completely to the Most Holy Trinity, to contribute, as far as you can, to spreading its glory throughout the earth” (MD 46,3,2). According to Thomas, the glory of God is the manifestation of his goodness¹²: “*Moses said to the Lord: 'Let me see your glory'. He answered: 'I will pass before your view all my goodness'*” (Ex 33, 18-19a). We give glory to God by extending his goodness and love, as Jesus says: “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father who is in heaven*” (Mt 5, 16).

What inspires? The spirit of faith, Christian spirit or spirit of Jesus. “It is necessary that those who have been given to children are to instruct them to apply particularly to educate them in the spirit of Christianity, which gives them *the wisdom of God, that no prince of this world has ever known*

⁹ NYERERE, Julius. *Education for Self Reliance*. Dar-Es-Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1967.

¹⁰ FREIRE, Paulo. *Education as a practice of freedom*. Rio de Janeiro, Editora Paz e Terra, 1967.

¹¹ MORALES, F.S.C., Br. Alfredo. *The new man, new education. Education in freedom and for freedom*. Santo Domingo, La Salle, 1972.

¹² Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Sum of theology*, Part I, question 65, Article 2.

(1 Cor 2:7-8) and that is totally opposed to the spirit and the wisdom of the world¹³, toward which they must inspire extreme horror, because it serves as a cover for sin” (MR 194,2,1). “This is also what you must do, to whom Jesus Christ chose among many others to be his co-workers (1 Cor 3:9) in the salvation of souls ... Inspiring horror to the sins that usually fall men” (MR 196,2,2). “Jesus Christ, speaking to his apostles, telling them *that he had given example, to do as he had done the provider* (Jn 13, 15)...that seeing the way the appropriate, could be adjusted and accommodated in everything that they would have to do to win souls for God” (MR 196, 2, 1). “(Jesus Christ) you want your disciples to look at you to the workplace, and to receive your instructions *as if it were him giving them* (2 Cor 5, 20); Jesus Christ that speaks for your mouth, that only in your behalf ye teach them, that He is the one who gives you authority over them” (MR 195,2,1). “Often they give themselves to the Spirit of Our Lord ... in this way, the Holy Spirit spreading over them, they can fully possess the spirit of Christianity” (MR 195,2,2). “It should be your intention when you instruct your disciples, that they may live a Christian life, and that your words be spirit and life to them: first, because the Spirit of God which dwells in you shall be produced; second, because they will seek the Christian spirit “(MR 196,3,1). “It is not enough to ensure children with the spirit of Christianity and teach them the mysteries and speculative truths of our religion. It is also necessary that you let them know the maximum practices that are disseminated by the Holy Gospel “(MR 197,2,1). “If you want to carry out your ministry as custodian angels of the children you have to instruct ... you should try to inspire them with the same sentiments and put them into the same dispositions that St. Paul tried to inspire the Ephesians in the letter he wrote to them. 1. That they do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by which they were marked, in baptism and confirmation, as with a seal for the day of redemption (Eph 4:30). 2. *Let them renounce their past life ... for which reason, you must induce them, ... to renounce the lie* (Eph 4, 22.25) and 3. *Let them be gentle and kind to one another, forgiving one another as God forgave them through Jesus Christ* (Eph 4:32). *And love one another as I love Jesus Christ* (Eph 5, 2) “(MR 198,3,2). “In imitation of the Apostles, you must take altogether special care that those whom you instruct receive the sacraments in particular and that they are made ready to receive Confirmation with the proper dispositions in order to be filled with the Holy Spirit and the graces that this sacrament produces. You must see to it that they go to Confession often after learning how to do it well. You must dispose them to receive their first Communion with holy dispositions and to receive Communion frequently thereafter in order to be able to preserve the grace they received the first time they performed this action” (MR 200,2,2).

Apply the Christian spirit, particularly in their way of rebuke, which explains with originality and by experience: “The reproofs and corrections would be helpful if little those who perform do not adopt appropriate measures to do it well. The first thing to be attended to is not to start them but under the guidance of the Spirit of God. Therefore, before their start-up, it is advisable to be collected inwardly and delivered to the Spirit of God and prepare to make the rebuke or correction with the greatest caution possible, and the more appropriate way to make it profitable to whom it is done. For men, and even children, being endowed with reason, should not be corrected like beasts, but as reasonable persons. You have to rebuke them, and correct them with justice, making you can realize the error in which they are and the punishment which he deserves the offense committed, and try to accept it. And how are Christians, willingness to give reproof and correction

¹³ That is to say, of the worldly.

in such a way that God is pleased to them, and to ensure that they receive as a remedy to their lack and means to be more restraint. For that is the effect that the Holy Spirit says must produce correction in children (Pr 12, 1). Then it is expedient to examine before God what correction deserves the fault and whether the guilty party is willing to receive it with submission, or to try to dispose of it. If one proceeds with prudence one does not have to fear that it produces pernicious effect. On the contrary, teachers who rebuke and correct those who fall short draw the praises of men, the blessings of God and the gratitude of those who are corrected (Pr 28,23) “(MR 204,1,1 and 1,2). “In that way, more or less, you must proceed with those whom you instruct, when they fall into a fault and you are forced to correct them. And if it happened that you were agitated by some passion, beware of making any correction while this movement persists, for then correction would be harmful both for them and for you. On the contrary, in those moments, reflect inwardly and allow time for your anger to pass, without opening anything outwardly. And when you feel free from passion, then you can impose, after having given the Spirit of God, the correction that you had foreseen, with the greatest restraint that you can “(MR 204,2,2). “The result of a wise correction is that those receiving it are disposed to correct their faults, whereas when correction is administered through passion and without God in view, it serves only to turn the disciple against his teacher and to arouse in him feelings of revenge and ill will, which sometimes last a long time ... If, then, you want your corrections to have the results they ought to have, administer them in a way that can please God and those who receive them. Take care, above all, that it be charity and zeal for the salvation of the souls of your students that lead you to correct them. Show them so much kindness when you give corrections that although you might cause them pain, they will not be angry at you but will show you gratitude for the good you have done for them, great regret for their faults, and a firm intention not to commit them again. From this very moment, be disposed to use the means needed to carry out this resolution” (MR 204,3,2).

Communicating a way of being and not only knowledge belongs, in the current language, to the realm of values, which are not learned by theoretical instruction, but only by example. “Your zeal for the children you instruct would be very limited, it would bear little fruit and would have little success if everything were reduced to words. To make it effective, your example must support your teachings. This must be one of the main characteristics of your zeal” (MR 202,3,1). “It is easy to conclude that your zeal for the children whom you supervise would be very imperfect, if you did not exercise it but instructing them; but that it will become perfect if you yourselves practice what you teach. For example, it produces much greater impression than words in the mind and heart, especially in children, who, lacking even their minds of sufficient capacity for reflection, are ordinarily trained by imitating the example of their teachers, and how much more so when they see in their teachers what they hear them say, especially instead of their words not agreeing with their works “(MR 202.3.2). La Salle surpasses the so-called knowledge society, which is governed by the scientific-technical culture that does not feel a need to allude to God and also is of an economic nature, interested in making people externally productive without developing their ethical core. Fortunately UNESCO, probably influenced by Christian educators, proposes learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be¹⁴.

¹⁴. DELORS, Jacques (Director). *Report to UNESCO: Education: the treasure*. International Commission on Education for the 21st Century, 1996.

“Show in all your conduct to the children who are entrusted to you, who regard you as the ministers of God, acting in charity and sincere and true zeal, bearing with all patience the difficulties that you have to suffer, content with being despised by men, and being persecuted by them to give your life for Jesus in the exercise of your ministry (2 Cor 6: 3-9) “(MR 201,1,2). “Seek, through your zeal, to give sensible signs that you love those whom God has entrusted to you, as Jesus Christ loved his Church; let them really enter into the structure of this building and be able to appear one day before Jesus Christ, full of glory, without blemish, without wrinkle and without spot (Eph 5: 25-27), to manifest to the ages to come the abundant riches of the grace which he gave them (Eph 2: 7) giving them the help of instruction; and to you, to instruct and educate them, to be one day the heirs of the Kingdom of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 8:17)” (MR 201,2,2).

“Let them practice what our Lord says, which commands us to love our enemies and do good to those who do us wrong, persecute us or slander us (Mt 5:44), instead of returning evil for evil, insults for insults, or of revenge “(MR 202,2,1). “And since most of them are born poor, we must instil in them the contempt of riches and the love of poverty, because our Lord was born poor and loved the poor, he was pleased with their company and went so far as to say that the poor are blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Mt 5, 3). These are the kinds of maxims and practices you must continually inspire in your disciples if you have any zeal for their salvation. This will be the way you will show how zealous you are for the glory of God. Because these maxims can come only from God (being contrary to human inclination), it is a mark of zeal for the honor and glory of God to inspire children to put them into practice “(MR 202,2,2).

To be inspirational is your responsibility to God. “Because God has called you to your ministry in order to procure his glory and to give children *the spirit of wisdom and the insight to know him and to enlighten the eyes of their hearts*,¹ (Eph 1: 17-18) you will give an account for how well you have instructed those who have been under your guidance” (MR 206,1,1). “When you appear before God, it will not be sufficient for you to have instructed the children entrusted to you, but you will be found guilty if you have not watched over their conduct. For it is your duty *to watch over them exactly, as the person who must account to God for their souls* (Heb 13, 17)” (MR 206,2,1). “God gives two kinds of reward in this world to those who commit themselves untiringly to the work of the salvation of souls. First, he gives them an abundance of grace; second, he gives them a more extended ministry and a greater ability to procure the conversion of souls” (MR 207,1,1). “Another reward in this life that those who work for the salvation of souls receive is their consolation in seeing God served well by those whom they have instructed and in realizing that their work has not been useless but has served to save those whom they were called upon to instruct” (MR 207,2,1). “What a consolation for those who have procured the salvation of souls: to see in heaven a great number whom they have helped to obtain the advantage of enjoying so great a happiness! This will happen to those who have instructed many people about the truths of religion, as an angel said to the Prophet Daniel. *Those who instruct many people in justice will shine like stars throughout all eternity* (Dan 12, 3). They will shine, indeed, in the midst of those whom they have instructed, who will eternally bear witness to the great gratitude they have for so many instructions they received from their teachers, whom they will regard as the cause, after God, of their salvation” (MR 208,2,1).

4. Proposals to inspire the lasallian pedagogy of the 21st Century

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I suggest:

- Organize in the educational communities reflection and exercise of the inspiring pedagogy, more by example than by words.
- In meetings on the Lasallian educational mission, prioritize experiences and proposals on the demanding inspirational pedagogy.
- Include in provincial and general chapters the proposal to study and practice inspiring pedagogy to promote in Brothers and lay people the creative fidelity to this central Lasallian feature.

Conclusion

Lasallian pedagogy is essentially inspiring, as the most important educational writings of the Holy Founder, founded for the first time in the biblical animation of education and in the theology of education, insistently put forward, as shown by his own inspiring life as an apostle educator .

Annex:

Saint John the Baptist De La Salle is inspiring

In a process of several years guided by God initiated in 1680, this saint founded the Brothers of the Christian Schools, first male religious congregation entirely lay. It is his first institutional creation.

He established in Reims and directed from 1685 to 1688 the first Seminary of School Teachers for the Field, able to lead one-teacher schools; entrusted to Brothers another in Paris from 1698 to 1705, and a third at Saint Denis from 1709 to 1712, a precursory work of the Normal Schools, which arose in Germany in 1783 and in France in 1792. The foundation of training centres, systematic and prolonged practice of teachers is its second institutional creation.

He transformed the parochial school from one year to begin in the Christian and liturgical life, adding training for manual labour in 1688 in Paris, then commercial or office work in other cities, extended from 1698 to at least six years, freeing the faithful from poverty. It is his third institutional creation.

In addition to arranging a multi-year preparation for each teacher¹⁵, he organized an auxiliary teacher roster, class teacher, school inspector, regional director and visitor. For both joint

¹⁵ DE LA SALLE, Saint John the Baptist, *Memorandum about habit*, in *Obras Completas*, volume I, page 85.

initiatives he is the creator of the profession of teacher, previously non-existent. It is his fourth institutional creation.

In 1698 the Archbishop of Paris Louis Antoine de Noailles asked La Salle to educate about 50 children of Irish nobles accompanying the exiled James II, last catholic king of Great Britain. Instead of organizing a school with Latin and Greek as the basis of philosophy and theology, he prepared them as public or private officials with modern languages, mathematics, and other sciences¹⁶. Contemporary of Isaac Newton (1643-1727), he is the creator of the modern humanities. It is his fifth institutional creation.

In the eighteenth century of the Enlightenment, he published in 1703 the Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility for use of the Christian Schools as an eighth-level reading book. He considered the systematic teaching of good manners or good treatment as also part of the Christian training on the basis of charity with God and to our neighbour. This is the first case of the evangelization of academic or school culture ¹⁷, his sixth institutional creation.

His catechism of 1703 with 300 exact editions until the nineteenth century, *The duties of the Christian* in three volumes, the first that included the life of Jesus Christ, constituted as the axis of a school ministry with testimonial support from family and teachers and liturgical support of the parish, the most complete and enduring catechism of the time in France, is his seventh institutional creation.

From 1706 he accepted in the house of Saint Yon, diocese of Rouen, children from difficult behaviour, and later young offenders sent by judges. In 1716 he agreed to open a centre for incarcerated adults; he assigned them tasks in the garden and made them eat with the other residents, greatly improving their manners. Establishing programs of behavioural rehabilitation is his eighth institutional creation, among which motivated Venerable Pius XII to name him in 1950 in a Papal decree heavenly Patron of all Educators.

In the above-mentioned educational works he introduced, by his faith and as a forerunner of the Second Vatican Council, the biblical orientation of education, his ninth institutional creation.

He completed the MR between 1682 and 1718 before he died in April 1719, according to the thesis of Br. José María Valladolid¹⁸. The theology of education, a view o the education from the spirit of faith based on the MR, the source of the spirituality of the educator and of the educational pastoral, is the tenth institutional creation of Saint John the Baptist De La Salle.

All of this can serve as an argument for him to deserve to be named a Doctor of the Church.

¹⁶ Current sign among others of Lasallian zeal for popular scientific education is the Br. José PEREDA NÚÑEZ, F.S.C. *Fundación La Salle de Ciencias Naturales (FLASA). Un modelo científico-educativo que favorece la "Opción preferencial por los pobres"*. "Cuadernos MEL" 36. Rome, Hermanos de las Escuelas Cristianas, 2007

¹⁷ GARCIA AHUMADA, F.S.C., Enrique. *Theology of education today*, op. cit., chap. 12, evangelize the academic culture, 297-364.

¹⁸ VALLADOLID, F.S.C. José María. *Saint John the Baptist De La Salle, catechist.*, Ob.cit., Volume II, 21-22.

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