



# DE LA SALLE

1651 - 1719  
ONE HEART.  
ONE COMMITMENT.  
ONE LIFE.

## Opening Prayer Service

2 December 2018

2019

TERCENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF  
ST JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE  
&  
YEAR OF LASALLIAN VOCATIONS

*This Opening Prayer Service is based on the goals outlined by Brother Superior for the Tercentenary Year:*

- *To celebrate and give thanks for our common heritage*
- *To renew our commitment to the needs of today by promoting mission, charism and founding story*
- *To share our hope for the future*



## *Call to Prayer*

Leader: Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence.

Leader: Lord, open our lips

**All: that we may speak your words.**

Leader: Lord, open our eyes

**All: that we may discover your presence in our midst.**

Leader: Lord, open our hearts

**All: that we may know your love.**

Leader: Lord, open our hands

**All: that we may receive your gifts and more readily share of ourselves with those to whom you send us.**

# Opening Hymn

## Founder's Hymn

*Arr. Brother Matthew Hautus*

Lord, we bring our thanks and praises  
for the life of De La Salle  
who for youth, deprived, neglected  
gave the world the Christian Schools.

Glory be to God the Father,  
praise to Jesus Christ the Son,  
honour to the Holy Spirit  
for the life of De La Salle.

Faith in God his guiding beacon.  
Love for youth his one true call.  
Leaving home, possessions, family,  
dedicated to his cause.

Glory be to God the Father,  
praise to Jesus Christ the Son,  
honour to the Holy Spirit  
for the Life of De La Salle.

May we follow his great vision.  
May we sense his love and zeal.  
May we share his dedication,  
with him answer God's great call.

Glory be to God the Father,  
praise to Jesus Christ the Son,  
honour to the Holy Spirit  
for the life of De La Salle.

Leader:

Let us celebrate and give thanks for our common heritage.

# First Reading

## **First Reading from Chapter 2, “De l’ésprit de cet Institut”**

*Rule (1726)*

The spirit of this Institute is first of all a spirit of faith, which should induce those who compose it not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God and to attribute all to God . . . Secondly, the spirit of this Institute consists in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children and for bringing them up in the fear of God . . . The Brothers of the Society shall strive by prayer, instruction and by their vigilance and good conduct in school, to procure the salvation of the children confided to their care, bringing them up in piety and in a truly Christian spirit, that is, according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel.

## *Reflection and Prayer*

God is revealed through history. The people of God celebrated God's mighty acts of deliverance in the past - like the exodus from Egypt - as an incentive to look to God for salvation in their present and future. An example is Psalm 145, rehearsing God's mighty deeds in the past, as an encouragement to trust God in the future.

We pray together:

**One generation shall laud your works to another,  
and shall declare your mighty acts...  
They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness,  
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness...**

**They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom,  
and tell of your power,  
to make known to all people your mighty deeds,  
and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.**

*(Psalm 145:4, 6, 11-12)*

*Psalm 102 proclaims God's lordship over history as a reason for future generations to worship God.*

We pray together:

**But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever;  
your name endures to all generations...  
Let this be recorded for a generation to come,  
so that a people yet unborn may praise the Lord...  
so that the name of the Lord may be declared in Zion,  
and his praise in Jerusalem,  
when peoples gather together,  
and kingdoms, to worship the Lord.**

(Psalm 102:12, 18, 21-22)

As Brothers of the Christian Schools, we celebrate our history and our heritage. We celebrate God's goodness to us in our history and pray for fortitude as we face the immense challenge of our future. Russian Orthodox theologian Georges Florovsky defined tradition as 'the life of the Holy Spirit in the church.' Looking at our history and heritage helps us to see what the Holy Spirit has been saying to us and doing among us through the years. We discern in the continuities of our heritage something of God's purpose for us as an Institute.

We pray together the words of the Founder:

All:

**We thank God who has had the goodness to engage us in securing such great benefits for children.**

(MR 194.1)

Leader:

Let us renew our commitment to the needs of today by promoting mission, charism and founding story.

# Second Reading

## Second Reading from Memoir on the Beginnings

*(John Baptist de La Salle)*

Thus it was . . . by these two incidents, that is, the first meeting with Monsieur Nyel and the arrangement made with Madame de Maillefer, that I first began to be concerned with schools for boys. I had never really thought about such a project before, not that no-one had previously suggested the idea to me. Several friends of Monsieur Roland had tried to inspire me with the intention of following through on such a work, but it had never seriously entered my mind. In fact, if I had known that my act of disinterested charity in assuming the direction of the schoolmasters would ever lead me to live with them, I would have abandoned the work right then and there. Naturally, I considered those I had to employ in the schools, especially in the very beginning, to be of lower social standing than my own hired valet. The very thought that I would have to live with them would have been intolerable to me. I suffered a great deal in the beginning, during those first two years, when I had them come to live in my house. Apparently, it was for this reason that God, who always acts with wisdom and tenderness, and who is not accustomed to forcing man's will, acted in a very imperceptible manner and over a long period of time. Little by little, one commitment led me progressively into another, without my being able to foresee it from the beginning.

# Prayer

## **Meditations on Christian Doctrine**

(Cardinal Newman 1801-1890)

*(each person takes a paragraph with everyone joining in the last paragraph)*

Let us put ourselves into God's hands,  
and not be startled though he leads us by a strange way.  
Let us be sure that he will lead us right,  
that he will lead us to that which is -  
not indeed what we think best,  
nor what is best for another  
- but what is best for us . . .

*I am created for God's glory  
- I am created to do his will.  
I am created to do something or to be something  
for which no-one else is created.*

I have a place in God's counsels, in God's world,  
which no-one else has:  
whether I be rich or poor,  
despised or esteemed by people,  
God knows me and calls me by name.

*God has created me to do him some definite service:  
he has committed some work to me  
which he has not committed to another.  
I have my mission  
- I may never know it in this life,  
but I shall be told it in the next.  
Somehow I am necessary for his purposes.*

I have a great part in his work.  
I am a link in a chain,  
a bond of connection between persons.  
He has not created me for nothing.

*I shall do good; I shall do his work.  
I shall be an angel of peace,  
a preacher of truth in my own place,  
while not intending it,  
if I do but keep his commandments  
and serve him in my calling.*

Therefore, I will trust him.  
Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away.  
If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve him  
if I am in perplexity, my perplexity may serve him;  
if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve him.

My sickness or perplexity or sorrow  
may be necessary causes of some great end,  
which is quite beyond us.  
He does nothing in vain;  
he may prolong my life, he may shorten it;  
he knows what he is about ....

**All:**

**O Lord, I trust you wholly.  
You are wiser than I  
- more loving to me than I am to myself.  
Fulfil your great purposes in me,  
whatever they may be.  
Work in and through me.  
for you are my Father.**

Leader:

We share our hope for the future.

# Third Reading

## **Third Reading from Letters of John Baptist de La Salle**

*(each person takes a paragraph with everyone joining in the last paragraph)*

Take care not to let yourself be discouraged by anxieties and ailments; life is full of them, and do not give way to self-pity. *(Letter 102 & 111)*

In prayer often give yourself up to God's guidance and tell him frequently that all you want is the accomplishment of his will. *(Letter 7)*

I do not fail to pray for you, and for the success of your work. *(Letter 28)*

I pray that our Lord will fill you with his Spirit, and that he will do with you what he wills... Live by the spirit of faith. You are in God's presence; that is more than enough for you. *(Letter 111)*

# Prayer

## The Road Ahead

(Thomas Merton)

*(each person takes a paragraph with everyone joining in the last paragraph)*

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.  
I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself,  
and the fact that I think that I am following your will  
does not mean that I am actually doing so.  
But I believe that the desire to please you  
does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.  
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this,  
you will lead me by the right road  
though I may know nothing about it.

**All:**

**Therefore, I will trust you always  
though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.  
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,  
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.**

