

## What Makes a Lasallian School Unique

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In New Mexico, there are not many choices for Catholic secondary education, so when reflecting upon the comparison of Catholic schools and the uniqueness of a Lasallian school, many respondents know them as one in the same; we are a Catholic Lasallian school.

I recall being at a meeting about ten years ago with the lead administrators from all the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese and we were sharing about our schools. I was in my third year of Regional formation and my passion about our Lasallian Heritage was very fresh in my mind and heart. After I finished sharing, one of the principals from a diocesan school told me how lucky we were at St. Michael's to have a founder, an example to follow. She mentioned to me that the charism of De La Salle is evident in the passion that I spoke of our heritage and our school. I had never thought what it was like in other Catholic or diocesan schools, but she helped to affirm my belief that there was something special about this Lasallian school.

St. Michael's theology teacher, Tom Ludzia, was a student and teacher in other Catholic schools and finds the Lasallian school to be very specific in nature. "We are here to meet the needs of the students," he said.

The example of St. John Baptist de La Salle gives us a very concise manner in which to follow. From his writings and his interactions, he led and continues to lead us in developing relationships with each other and with God. De La Salle has helped give us a broader sense of following Jesus and recognizing him in others.

That broader sense of following God is also echoed in students who recognize that at our school different faiths are welcome. A senior, Amber Varela, shares, "We are inclusive and we work together in service to others in our community. That is just what we do and who we are. At Catholic elementary, I felt like the main purpose was to discipline us and keep us in line, but here the focus is on providing a great education and using our talents to help others."

Julia Turner, class of 2010, shared with the current faculty her experience as a student, "You, as teachers, influenced my life in more ways than you will ever know. You made me want to take a stand on a belief I had. You made me realize it was okay to be an individual. You taught me about history, science, and math. But, you also went beyond that, because although those history, science, and math lessons were important, it was all of the life lessons you taught me that will stay with me forever."

