

## Mission Mandated Lasallian Vision for Racial Justice<sup>1</sup>

This is a dynamic draft of the vision rooted in the Lasallian Core Principles.<sup>2</sup> It was penned initially by Maureen O’Connell (La Salle University-LSU), Jordan Pascoe (Manhattan College-MC), Jeff Sable (Christian Brothers University-CBU), and Jack McClure (Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota-SMUMN), and endorsed by participants at the January 10-12, 2017 Colloquy. Over the next year, the draft received refinements and revisions, and it laid the opening framework for the second Lasallian Higher Education Colloquy on Racial Justice held January 31-February 2, 2018. This is not intended to be a final and definitive document, but rather a starting point and an ongoing challenge for the Lasallian community.<sup>3</sup>

<b>WHAT? Lasallian Core Principle<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>SO WHAT? Translation in post 11/9</b>	<b>HOW? Resources from our Heritage</b>	<b>NOW WHAT? Recommendations for Contemplation &amp; Action</b>
<b>Concern for the poor and social justice</b>	<p>Social justice addresses the root causes of injustice. In the U.S., racism fuels economic inequality and poverty is racialized.</p> <p>Social justice, rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, is answering the call of the prophets to stand in the gaps created by racism and embody a vision of relationship.</p> <p>Our institutions are perpetuating inequality and are often not aware of/ in denial about it.</p>	<p>“Concern for the poor” needs to be couched in language of “The Heroic Vow of 1691,”<sup>5</sup> which defines association and union as taking risks to stand in solidarity with the vulnerable.</p> <p>Social justice in the context of racism uses a systems analysis lens to consider root causes of racial inequality and resists individualizing or pathologizing understandings of and responses to racial inequity. “Our mission must not be reduced to mere assistance but rather go to the roots of poverty in order to find structural solutions and educate to justice.” (Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, FSC, “New Wine in New Wineskins” 2006)<sup>6</sup></p>	<p>Be aware that our institutions are working from a deficit model when it comes to our students of color, which in turn gives rise to an austerity mentality when it comes to distributing institutional resources.</p> <p>Be aware of the way in which the very language of “concern for the poor” is objectifying</p> <p>Build classes into our curricula that address issues of racism over the life course of all of our students.</p>
<b>Faith in the Presence of God</b>	<p>Racism renders faith a private experience, rather than something that animates our concern with and commitment to - in relationship to others - the common good.</p> <p>Racism has made an idol of the Christian God, rendering that God as exclusively white and male and Christian</p>	<p>Incarnation: All are created in image of God, a God in the Christian tradition who is best known in the multiplicity of the Trinity</p> <p>Circular 461: The theme of God in the Lasallian heritage is welcoming people of all faiths and recognizing non-Catholics as a valued part of Lasallian community.<sup>7</sup></p>	<p>Design and support opportunities for multi-faith prayer and action on campus and in our communities.</p> <p>Create ways of sharing out activities among the institutions, particularly within the FSC community.</p> <p>Exhibit diverse religious symbols to capture the presence of God in different traditions; or the multicultural expression of presence of God.</p>

		<p>God present in midst of suffering and <u>dreaming</u></p>	<p>Commission public art – such as a mural, for example - that could exist on all campuses</p> <p>Cultivate notions of belonging by inviting those of other traditions to explain to us what it means for them to be in the presence of God or their understanding of what it means to be Lasallian, which could “flip the script” and invite a deeper, unfolding, and shared understanding of our heritage.</p> <p>Have people trained in and committed to religious pluralism in our campus ministry staffs.</p> <p>Assist faculty in figuring out how to create spaces for remembering the holy presence in an inclusive way in our classrooms.</p>
<p><b>Respect for all persons</b></p>	<p>Racism, in its many forms (personal, cultural, institutional...) denies the full humanity of people, perceiving them through narrow lens of stereotypes and prejudices.</p> <p>Racism stunts the ability to achieve full flourishing and the integral development of persons and peoples.</p> <p>Racism denies respect for persons in a variety of systems, including our Lasallian education system.</p> <p>Inequality is both intentionally and unintentionally conveyed and perpetuated by language. Structural inequality based on gender, gender identification, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity persists. These realities of a person’s identity are deeply</p>	<p>“The anthropological view of human nature that motivates Lasallians recognizes and dignifies every human being as being unique, unrepeatable, and educable. Discrimination based on gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation has no place in the Lasallian educational mission. As social beings, humans are capable of establishing meaningful relationships. As spiritual beings, they are open to transcendent reality and the search for life’s meaning. This holistic view of human nature includes intellectual, emotional, social, cultural, ethical, and spiritual dimensions. (Section 3.3, <a href="#">Circular 461</a>)<sup>9</sup></p> <p>Human persons cannot be reduced to or defined by artificial and arbitrary categories of race and ethnicity</p> <p>We live our heritage when we respect persons by honoring, engaging, and celebrating difference.</p>	<p>Recognize that the dynamics and conditions of racism intersect with other expressions of human identity, particularly gender.</p> <p>Help students and colleagues avoid a reductionist approach to our shared heritage by understanding it in light of their <i>lived</i> experience and not in arbitrary and static categories.</p> <p>Embrace the reality that acknowledging these lived experiences of our shared heritage are ways of helping each other, particularly our students, transform their realities and build bridges to each other and of building community/connection/ association.</p> <p>Help our students and faculty be proud of being Lasallian in this regard.</p>

	connected – often inextricably so – and efforts to address them need to be rooted in this understanding. <sup>8</sup>		
<b>Inclusive community</b>	<p>Racism fragments, fractures, divides, and isolates people with otherwise common concerns and common dreams.</p> <p>In the name of political correctness, neutrality, assimilation, and public order racism maintains communities that exclude/deny the experiences of many of its members</p>	<p>Language on “solidarity” from the 45<sup>th</sup> general chapter</p> <p>Inclusive communities are certainly open to all, and cannot be neutral. They affirm the dignity of their most vulnerable members and cultivate generosity in contexts of discomfort.</p>	<p>Be aware that the work we are doing here has to more than reactionary, since for many among us the reality we’re attempting to address predates 11/9/2017.</p> <p>Move beyond alienation, but still provoke discomfort, disruption, conflict, and exploration by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cultivating practices of dissent with civility</li> <li>- uncovering our own assumptions and our own personal biases</li> <li>- creating spaces where we can be vulnerable with each other</li> <li>- breaking silences</li> </ul> <p>If we want our students to be status quo breakers, then we too need to become vulnerable enough to be status quo breakers ourselves</p>
<b>Quality Education</b>	<p>Racism precludes opportunities for students to encounter ideas and people who are different</p> <p>Systemic racism creates barriers to education, particularly for communities of color, and to multicultural education for all teachers and learners.</p>	<p>We draw on the 12 virtues of Lasallian teaching<sup>10</sup> to meet students where they are, to help them recognize their positionality in the morass of racism, and to accompany them in growth needed to find their own purpose.</p> <p>Just as the first Brothers “discovered God’s call in the faces of the urban poor children and young people excluded from advancement in society” (Circular 461 section 2.5.2)<sup>11</sup>, Lasallian education is committed to challenging the norms of “meritocracy” built into contemporary social systems, particularly education.</p> <p>We encourage both dialogue with and engagement with difference as a lived experience in our classrooms and campuses as pathways to truth.</p>	<p>Be clear about who are our people? Our people are our students, faculty, staff and administrators across our Lasallian network.</p> <p>Ensure classrooms that promote quality education need to be dedicated as “safe” or even “sanctified zones,” (being attentive to potential exclusivity with that language).</p> <p>Have resources available for all of our educators – books, courses, etc.</p> <p>Continue to build up the network so that we can exchange ideas and resources.</p> <p>Encourage a growth mindset among ourselves, since the work of undoing racism is ongoing.</p> <p>Use our geographical/physical spaces as places for uncovering the full history of who we are and to learn from that history.</p>

			<p>Conduct institutional audits of where we are in terms of our:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- mission statements</li><li>- demographic representation in all areas/divisions</li><li>- curriculum and learning outcomes</li><li>- symbols on campus</li><li>- tenure and promotion processes (to see how innovation is or is not valued, and how maintaining the status quo is or is not valued)</li></ul> <p>Pay attention to data: the national data is out there and connect it to the data we are or could be collecting.</p> <p>More explicitly incorporate our core values and Lasallian heritage into our courses and assist faculty in making that happen.</p> <p>Decenter whiteness by moving from being allies (colonial missionaries) to accomplices (liberation workers).</p> <p>Look at tenure and promotion processes – how to acknowledge those who are doing this work and hold those who are not accountable</p> <p>Create spaces for people of color.</p>
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**NOW WHAT?**  
**Recommendations for Contemplation & Action**

**Concern for the Poor and Social Justice:**

1. Be aware that our institutions are working from a deficit model when it comes to our students of color, which in turn gives rise to an austerity mentality when it comes to distributing institutional resources.
2. Be aware of the way in which the very language of “concern for the poor” is objectifying
3. Build classes into our curricula that address issues of racism over the life course of all of our students.

**Faith in the Presence of God:**

1. Design and support opportunities for multi-faith prayer and action on campus and in our communities.
2. Create ways of sharing out activities among the institutions, particularly within the FSC community.
3. Exhibit diverse religious symbols to capture the presence of God in different traditions; or the multicultural expression of presence of God.
4. Commission public art – such as a mural, for example - that could exist on all campuses
5. Cultivate notions of belonging by inviting those of other traditions to explain to us what it means for them to be in the presence of God or their understanding of what it means to be Lasallian, which could “flip the script” and invite a deeper, unfolding, and shared understanding of our heritage.
6. Have people trained in and committed to religious pluralism in our campus ministry staffs.
7. Assist faculty in figuring out how to create spaces for remembering the holy presence in an inclusive way in our classrooms.

**Respect for all Persons:**

1. Recognize that the dynamics and conditions of racism intersect with other expressions of human identity, particularly gender.
2. Help students and colleagues avoid a reductionist approach to our shared heritage by understanding it in light of their *lived* experience and not in arbitrary and static categories.
3. Embrace the reality that acknowledging these lived experiences of our shared heritage are ways of helping each other, particularly our students, transform their realities and build bridges to each other and of building community/connection/ association.
4. Help our students and faculty be proud of being Lasallian in this regard.

### **Inclusive Community:**

1. Be aware that the work we are doing here has to more than reactionary, since for many among us the reality we're attempting to address predates 11/9/2017.
2. Move beyond alienation, but still provoke discomfort, disruption, conflict, and exploration by:
  - cultivating practices of dissent with civility
  - uncovering our own assumptions and our own personal biases
  - creating spaces where we can be vulnerable with each other
  - breaking silences
3. If we want our students to be status quo breakers, then we too need to become vulnerable enough to be status quo breakers ourselves

### **Quality Education:**

1. Be clear about who are our people? Our people are our students, faculty, staff and administrators across our Lasallian network.
2. Ensure classrooms that promote quality education need to be dedicated as "safe" or even "sanctified zones," (being attentive to potential exclusivity with that language).
3. Have resources available for all of our educators – books, courses, etc.
4. Continue to build up the network so that we can exchange ideas and resources.
5. Encourage a growth mindset among ourselves, since the work of undoing racism is ongoing.
6. Use our geographical/physical spaces as places for uncovering the full history of who we are and to learn from that history.
7. Conduct institutional audits of where we are in terms of our:
  - mission statements
  - demographic representation in all areas/divisions
  - curriculum and learning outcomes
  - symbols on campus
  - tenure and promotion processes (to see how innovation is or is not valued, and how maintaining the status quo is or is not valued)
8. Pay attention to data: the national data is out there and connect it to the data we are or could be collecting.
9. More explicitly incorporate our core values and Lasallian heritage into our courses and assist faculty in making that happen.
10. Decenter whiteness by moving from being allies (colonial missionaries) to accomplices (liberation workers).
11. Look at tenure and promotion processes – how to acknowledge those who are doing this work and hold those who are not accountable
12. Create spaces for people of color.

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<sup>1</sup> Young, Danielle M., Jeffrey J. Sable, and Jack Curran. [“Exploring the Intersections: Racial Justice, our Lasallian Heritage, and the Catholic Tradition.”](#) *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 9, no. 2 (Institute for Lasallian Studies at Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota: 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Lasallian Core Principles <https://www.lasallian.info/lasallian-family/5-core-principles/>].

<sup>3</sup> Thus far there have been four Lasallian Higher Education Colloquies since June 2015. The first took place in June 2015 at the Loyola Retreat Center in Morristown, NJ, and included 14 participants from La Salle University and Manhattan College. The theme was “Deepening our understanding of how we bring to life the Lasallian heritage.” It was facilitated by Maggie McGuinness, PhD, and Brother Jack Curran, FSC, with Brother Gerard Rummery, FSC, as the keynote presenter. The theme of the second Colloquy was “Lasallian Higher Education Colloquy: Together and by Association.” It was facilitated by Brother Ernest Miller, FSC, and Brother Jack Curran, FSC. Eighteen participants from La Salle University and Manhattan College convened in January 2016 at the San Alfonso Retreat House in Long Branch, NJ. In January 2017, January 2018, and January 2019 the Lasallian Higher Education Colloquies focused on Racial Justice. The Colloquy for 2020 was scheduled for June 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this Colloquy was postponed. A new date has yet to be established.

<sup>4</sup> Lasallian Core Principles <https://www.lasallian.info/lasallian-family/5-core-principles/>].

<sup>5</sup> On 21 November 1961, John Baptist de La Salle, Nicholas Vuyart, and Gabriel Drolin professed the “The Heroic Vow” of unity and commitment to the “society,” even if it required great poverty. [text: <https://www.delasalle.org.au/blog/the-heroic-vow>].

<sup>6</sup> Rodríguez Echeverría, Alvaro. “New Wine in New Wineskins.” In *Associated for the Lasallian Educational Mission: Report of the International Assembly*, 41-44. Rome, Italy: Brothers of the Christian Schools, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> We want to note the inclusive religious and spiritual nature of the Lasallian heritage, reflected both in the attendees and the tenor of our conversation, “Let it be stated clearly and unambiguously that calling oneself Lasallian is not relegated only to those of the Christian faith. Many faith-filled people professing other creeds participate daily in the Lasallian educational Mission. They are a valued part of this community. In turn the goal, in those places where Lasallians minister in a multi-religious context, needs to be the deepening of faith in each student. It is our hope that students of all religions would graduate from our Lasallian schools professing their beliefs more faithfully and be committed to the construction of a better world.” *Associated for the Lasallian Mission...an act of HOPE*, Brothers of the Christian Schools, Circular 461, 2010, General Council, Rome, Italy: [[http://www.lasalle.org/wpcontent/uploads/pdf/circulares/461\\_circ\\_en.pdf](http://www.lasalle.org/wpcontent/uploads/pdf/circulares/461_circ_en.pdf)], page 36.

<sup>8</sup> Glenn E. Singleton and Curtis Linton, *Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> Brothers of the Christian Schools, *Associated for the Lasallian Mission ...an act of HOPE*, Circular 461, Section 3.3, page 31 (September 2010). <https://lasallianresources.org/product/circular-461-associated-for-the-lasallian-mission-an-act-of-hope/>

<sup>10</sup> The 12 Virtues of a Good Teacher by Brother Agathon, FSC, translated by Brother Gerard Rummery, FSC <https://lasallianresources.org/product/the-twelve-virtues-of-a-good-teacher/>

<sup>11</sup> Brothers of the Christian Schools, *Associated for the Lasallian Mission ...an act of HOPE*, Circular 461, Section 2.5.2, page 28 (September 2010). <https://lasallianresources.org/product/circular-461-associated-for-the-lasallian-mission-an-act-of-hope/>