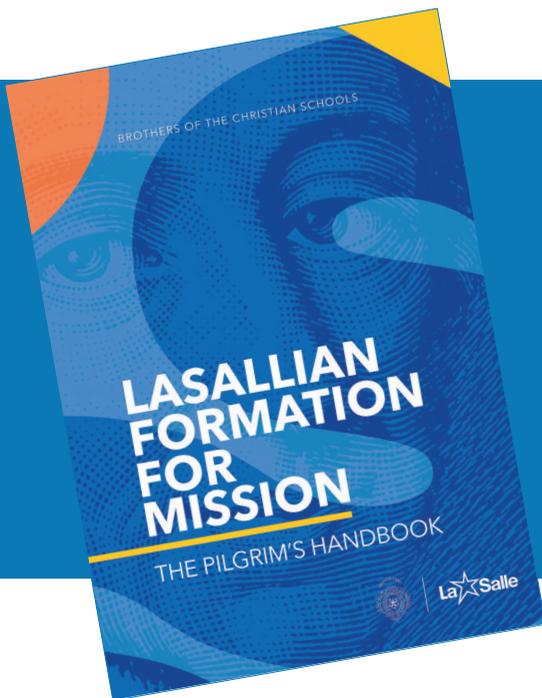


Exploring Lasallian documents.

Uncovering Lasallian research.

Sparking engagement to build a deeper understanding of mission and community.



Lasallian Essentials, a recurring feature in *De La Salle Today*, focuses on bringing Lasallian documents to life. This issue highlights *Lasallian Formation for Mission: The Pilgrim's Handbook*, a publication of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools that offers best practices and approaches for Lasallian formation. Published in November 2019, *The Pilgrim's Handbook* is the result of a collaborative effort of the Secretariat for Formation and Lasallians worldwide.

Do you have a suggestion on what you would like to see featured in Lasallian Essentials? Email your ideas to [communications@lasallian.info](mailto:communications@lasallian.info).

# Lasallian Formation for Mission: The Pilgrim's Handbook

By Maryann Donohue-Lynch



*Lasallian Formation for Mission: The Pilgrim's Handbook* offers an inspirational and practical guide for Lasallian formation, a long-important aspect of the mission. "Since the time of the Founder, formation for mission has been understood as a practical response to prayerful consideration of real-life situations. ... It enables all Lasallians to be protagonists in the ongoing story of participation in God's mission." (p. 12)

The beginnings of *The Pilgrim's Handbook* stem from the 45th General Chapter in 2014. Proposition 31 in Circular 429, *The Documents of the 45th General Chapter*, called for the General Council to "constitute an ad hoc commission to update the Brothers' Guide for Formation, taking into account the revised Rule (2015), MEL 51, and the current reality and diversity of the Church and the Institute" (p. 40).

With the formation of the International Council for Association and the Lasallian Educational Mission (CIAMEL) and after much discussion, prayer and discernment, the document ultimately included all Lasallians, Brothers and Partners, together and by association. The editorial team began work in September 2016 and concluded in October 2019. The title was purposeful, as the themes of mission,

formation, Lasallian and pilgrimage developed as essential elements of the document as it focused on the primacy of the lived personal experience in the formative process.

The life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle offers the paradigm for identifying and integrating the various capacities needed to carry out the Lasallian mission. The document offers five capacities that are fundamental to the journey of the pilgrim: 1) seeing with the eyes of faith, 2) prayer and spiritual practice, 3) growth in freedom, 4) association and fraternity and 5) solidarity and care for the world through education. These five points became a charismatic dynamism for De La Salle, coming together in a life of faith, service and communion in mission. (p. 67-68)

## Five Thresholds

*The Pilgrim's Handbook* offers five thresholds to help understand how someone is negotiating the transition each threshold represents in their formation journey. "Knowing what people are experiencing at these thresholds gives the formator a sense of how to make formation meaningful and relevant to participants." (p. 69)

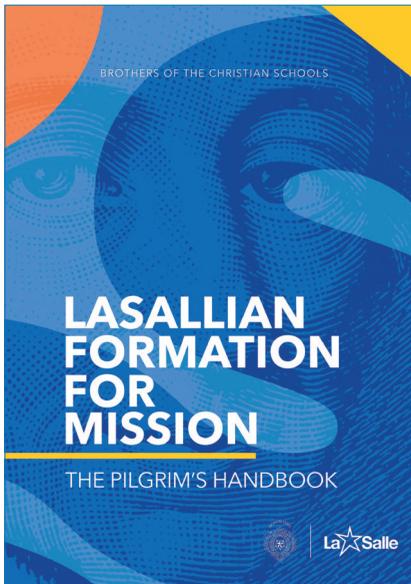
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Maryann Donohue-Lynch is associate executive director for the District of Eastern North America's (DENA) Office for Mission and Ministry. She has presented at a number of Regional and District formation programs and events. With *The Pilgrim's Handbook* as the guide, DENA developed a new formation program on Lasallian Spiritual Accompaniment, which is currently in its second year.

1. **Induction: From Outside to Inside.** Coming into the Lasallian family with discovery and dependence. Entering a new community means navigating a new culture, becoming aware of the community's vision and values, and building relationships. Formation includes introducing the founding story and developing an awareness of concepts related to Lasallian spirituality and the mission. (p. 69-71)
  2. **Belonging: From Me to Us.** Self-identification as a Lasallian. This threshold includes looking for support in peer groups and seeking out role models. Formation includes deepening an understanding of Christian discipleship, discernment and the spiritual writings of De La Salle and Institute documents. (p. 72-73)
  3. **Commitment: From Career to Calling.** The discovery of the alignment between one's personal values and aspirations, the Lasallian vision and the mission. Spiritual practices and theological input facilitate the transition from seeing work as a "job" to seeing it as a life-giving vocational response. Formation includes deepening one's spiritual life, developing positive self-care, and understanding servant leadership and the principles and spirituality of justice, peace and integrity of creation. (p. 74-75)
  4. **Co-Responsibility: From Followers to Leaders.** To increase one's capacity for leadership. As one becomes more attentive to the inner life, one acquires a greater capacity to mentor and accompany others.
- Formation includes communal discernment, the spirituality of the *Rule*, cultural literacy, promoting Lasallian vocations, mentoring and spiritual accompaniment. (p. 76-77)
5. **Wisdom: From Positional Power to Charismatic Witness.** One's trust that one's life will bear fruit beyond one's lifetime. This often relates to age or health and involves passing on responsibility. Formation includes a reimagined role in mission, creative fidelity to the reign of God, mentoring, inter-generational relationships, the Gospel journey of De La Salle's final years and ministry of presence. (p. 78-79)

## For Reflection and Discussion

1. The Lasallian community is described as a visible sign of the presence of God in the world today as it gives expression to a variety of vocations in the Church. (p. 8) What is your personal experience of how the Lasallian family is a visible sign of God's mission active in the world today?
2. The handbook introduces the metaphor of "formation as pilgrimage, understood as a personal and communal journey of faith that deepens a sense of mission and purpose" (p. 9). What is your pilgrimage experience? In which threshold would you place yourself on your journey?
3. "The process of planning quality Lasallian formation recognizes the opportunities and challenges of the local contexts and structures." (p. 15) What are the unique contexts and structures of your Lasallian community?
4. "De La Salle identified faith and zeal as the chief characteristic of members of the Institute." (p. 68) How do you identify with these chief characteristics?
5. How can *The Pilgrim's Handbook* assist the development of formation programs for the mission within your context?



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## Elements of Formation Programs

A formation pilgrimage is a lifelong experience. Formation programs that comprise the Lasallian formative pilgrimage have particular characteristics. A quality formation program (p. 86):

- is a process of self-appropriation and of affective, intellectual, moral and religious transformation;
- cannot be reduced to a series of formation courses;
- enables each person to acquire the skills to freely live their experiences and to re-enter their lives with new perspectives;
- is characterized by accompaniment that provides support and challenge for the integration of the experiences;
- is a community-based experience, either through simultaneous experience or through clear support for the person;
- is holistic; it is an experience of faith, service and community;
- is of an appropriate length to meet the identified needs; and
- allows time for action, reflection, learning, sharing and integration, while encouraging ongoing practice of these skills to facilitate and institutional conversion.

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**“Accompaniment implies walking with others on the journey, sharing wisdom and insights learned from the Lasallian pilgrimage.”**

*The Pilgrim's Handbook, p. 30*

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Visit [www.Lasallian.info/LasallianEssentials](http://www.Lasallian.info/LasallianEssentials) to read *The Pilgrim's Handbook* and download a printable version of this section. On that page you will also find the Lasallian Essentials from previous issues of *De La Salle Today* on Bulletin 260, which tells the story of the Lasallian Region of North America, Circular 475, *From Hope to Commitment: Understanding Lasallian Vocations* and the *Declaration on the Lasallian Educational Mission*.