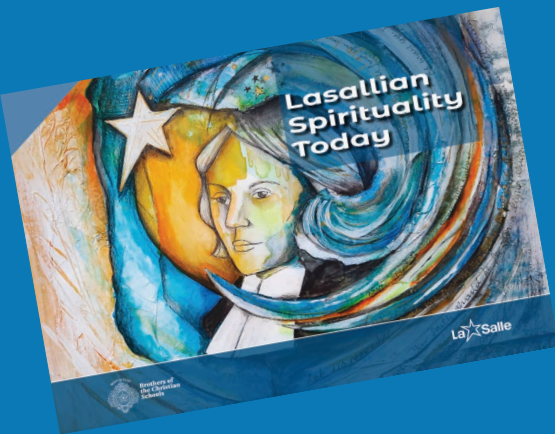


Exploring Lasallian documents.

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 Spirituality Today*, a document that emphasizes the importance of Lasallian spirituality within the present context of the shared Lasallian mission and association. Published in February 2023, the document includes three parts: a conceptual graphic, an explanation of Lasallian spirituality and a section that looks to the future, asking how Lasallian spirituality can help meet needs in the world.

Visit www.Lasallian.info/LasallianEssentials to get a printable version of this section, along with a PDF of *Lasallian Spirituality Today*.

Lasallian Spirituality Today

By Brother George Van Grieken, FSC



Lasallian Spirituality Today began as an initiative by the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian School's Secretariat on Association. Many meetings with educators, teachers, Brothers, volunteers and other members of the Lasallian Family from all over the world had made it clear that there was a great desire on the part of all Lasallians to deepen their understanding of Lasallian spirituality.

The Institute pursued several cumulative efforts in response to this expressed desire and interest:

1. An international survey was created, compiled and published by the Lasallian Research and Resources Service to gain a more comprehensive picture of current realities of each District's efforts to promote Lasallian spirituality, along with the programs and resources that were being used to do so.
2. An international think tank on Lasallian Spirituality was created with the goal of providing a better understanding of Lasallian spirituality within the Lasallian Family. The think tank included Brothers and Lasallian Partners of various backgrounds and faith traditions.

3. After two years of regular online meetings and a week together in Rome, this group, drawing on all the information that had been shared by Districts, source documents around Lasallian spirituality and the group's own expertise and experience, developed a resource to help all Lasallians develop a deeper appreciation of Lasallian spirituality today. It is designed to be used by both individuals and Lasallian groups for either personal reflection or general discussion.

This new resource includes three parts: a conceptual graphic, a brief systematic explanation of Lasallian spirituality that underpins the graphic, and proposed "horizon commitments" that provide key focus areas from our spiritual storehouse that can meet the needs of the world as we move into the future. All the components of the booklet supplement one another and are meant to complement the formation and development of Lasallian spirituality already active in each District.

Brother George Van Grieken, FSC, served for four years as Secretary of the Lasallian Research and Resources Service for the Institute, concluding his service in October 2023. He is one of the authors of this document. Brother George also serves as Lasallian Resources Coordinator for Christian Brothers Conference, with much of his focus on the Lasallian Resource Center.

Highlights

The three parts of the resource provide different communicative approaches for perceiving Lasallian spirituality today.

1. A conceptual graphic (at right) provides a visual overview of the major elements of Lasallian spirituality along with their relational connections. It is designed for the visual learner, expressing the dynamic nature of a living spirituality, whereby there may be an immediate connection, place or home by way of this visual expression.
2. The central narrative section builds an understanding of Lasallian spirituality, moving from the general



to the specific, drawing on the group's research and discussions, along with key references from existing Lasallian resources. It provides an articulated conceptual framework around which reflections and conversations about Lasallian spirituality may effectively occur.

3. The horizon commitments section looks to the future,

asking us to think about what we need to draw from the wells of Lasallian spirituality to enrich the world in these particular areas of need, bringing the treasures of Lasallian spirituality to meet the hungers of the world today. It is asking us to bring our gift to others and to look "out," not just "in" or to each other.

The Development of Lasallian Spirituality

The Development of Lasallian Spirituality is the central section of the document. It explains spirituality and Lasallian spirituality, the essential dynamics of Lasallian spirituality and how a living Lasallian spirituality is pursued on three levels.

Terms

A clear definition of "spirituality" is followed by a definition for "Lasallian spirituality," along with concise descriptions of Lasallian mission, ministries and education. "The best way to learn about Lasallian spirituality is to be part of an authentic Lasallian educational community." (#13)

The incarnational aspect of Lasallian spirituality is highlighted, one

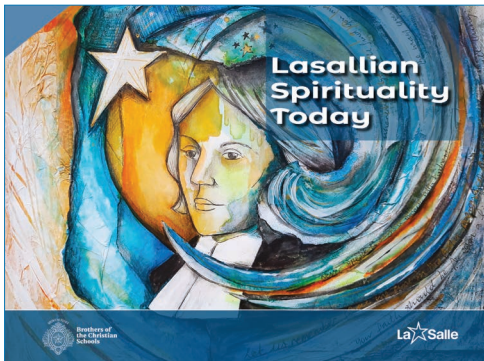
that is integral to the Lasallian vocational journey. "The incarnational dimension of Lasallian identity encompasses a habitual movement toward the transcendent, a passion for education in all its rich complexity, and a community with shared Lasallian mission priorities. All Lasallians, in their own way, embody these elements of Lasallian identity in their ministry." (#23)

Essential Dynamics

After descriptions of major Lasallian terms, attention is paid to the essential dynamics of Lasallian spirituality. These are what mark the character of a Lasallian life: living in the holy presence of God, trusting

in the way God works in one's life, having a passion for the mission and being in a ministry together and by association. These dynamics come together in a vocational journey among "a circle of lifelong educators and lifelong learners who see learning and teaching as a holy endeavor that is deeply relational, centered on teaching the minds, touching the hearts, and transforming the lives of those entrusted to their care." (#24)

The natural question that follows is "Where is Lasallian spirituality found?" The answer has two parts. It is found in a distinctive kind of education: "Lasallian pedagogy places relationships at the center of its activity.



Student-teacher relationships are the transformative catalysts for genuine educational success.” (#55) And it is found in a distinctive kind of educators: “Teachers educate as much by who they are as by what they do and say.” (#58)

“The best way to learn about Lasallian spirituality is to be part of an authentic Lasallian educational community.” (#13)

Pursuing Lasallian Spirituality

The last major section looks at how a living Lasallian spirituality is pursued on three levels: the personal: “It is a ministry that calls us to nourish interiority and approach each person as an expression of God’s love.” (#60); the relational: “It is as a community that we seek, identify, and pursue the Lasallian mission and the common good, engaging all people of good will and welcoming the diverse religious experiences of those within a community.” (#64); and the professional: “The character, deep values, and core priorities of all those involved in a Lasallian ministry are reflected in how students are served, especially those who have greater difficulties...” (#66)

The conclusion provides the wider summary perspective. “The Lasallian educational movement has been a river of grace for an untold number of students, educators, families, and others throughout its history, and it continues to be a source of growth and inspiration around the world.” (#70)

For Reflection and Discussion

1. **Your Experience:** In which parts of the document did you find yourself agreeing with the statements? Why? What connected strongly for you? Which parts describe your own experience? Which parts differ from your experience?
2. **Your Growth:** Where can you see a need for growth in your own Lasallian vocational journey? What first step could you take in that direction? Who could you talk to about it? How could you be a mentor for others who may want accompaniment on that shared journey?
3. **Your Reflection:** If you were to add a section to the booklet, what area would you address?