



## Prayer in Vocation

### Saint La Salle and 12 Brothers Profess Vows (1694)

#### A School Prayer:

Today we remember the gathering of 12 Brothers with Saint La Salle in the profession of vows. Loving Creator, in the example of Saint La Salle and the early Brothers, we are encouraged not to go it alone but to lean on each other as community. May we foster commitment to and support of each other, to stick together through the ups and downs of life. We pray through your Son, our brother Jesus. Amen.

#### A Classroom Prayer:

Jesus, so often we want to do things alone, but then don't want to be lonely. As we remember Saint La Salle joining 12 of his Brothers in vows together, we see the value of a commitment to support each other for the service of others. May we, like Saint La Salle, work together today, supporting each other in our common task of education. We pray through your Son, our brother Jesus. Amen.

#### A Prayer for Parents *(could be used in a newsletter):*

In remembering the vows that Saint La Salle made with 12 of his first Brothers, we acknowledge our need for community. May we, as parents, draw strength from the commitments we make with others in raising our children. May our hearts be open to the holiness God calls us to, so that we may help our children come to understand their unique gifts as God-given and holy. Amen.

By 1691, De La Salle realized that he had been mistaken in preparing a single Brother to replace him as Superior. He also realized that the future of his Society should not depend on himself alone. His solution was to apply the principle of association to the leadership that would put the Society on a solid foundation. Choosing two of his most competent and trusted Brothers, together with them in 1691 he made a vow of 'association and union to procure and maintain the establishment' of the Society.

By 1694 the situation was stable enough to develop a formal set of Rules and to invite selected Brothers to consider making perpetual vows. In an assembly in that year, 1694, ever since considered as the first General Chapter of the Institute, twelve Brothers made perpetual vows for the first time. These vows were not the traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience but rather three vows all directed to the educational mission. The central vow was 'to keep **together and by association** gratuitous schools.' This was supported by vows of **obedience** to the body of the Society and **stability** in the Society, designed to provide permanence and flexibility to the association... Not only was each school conducted by two or more Brothers acting in concert (i.e. together) but they did so *by association*, as part of a larger society or network of schools. Not all the Brothers were required to take vows, but these were the only vows made by the Brothers during the Founder's lifetime and for some few years thereafter.