



Novena for Vocations for Our Lasallian Family

Dear Jesus, Holy Child and Master Teacher, we pray today for all those to whom we minister, that they may hear and answer Your call to service. Inspire our high school students to join Lasallian Youth and our college students to join Lasallian Collegians. Inspire our graduates to become Lasallian Volunteers and join us in our ministry. Lead them gently, from one commitment to another; and show us how to nurture their youthful vocations. Show us how to support our Lasallian Youth and how to invite young people to do the same. Use us, Lord, to awaken in youth the ability to listen to and respond to Your call.

November, 2004

Dear Brothers and Lasallian Colleagues:

In the reflection for this month, I would like to offer for your consideration three groups to whom we are ministers. As the title for Day 3 on the front cover states: **“For our students, that they might hear the call to service.”** I would like not only to give the Mission Statement of the Lasallian Volunteers, but give consideration to those other two groups mentioned in the prayer: Lasallian Youth in our high schools and elementary schools, and Lasallian Collegians. Each group has a particular role to play in the Lasallian Family and we, as teachers, need to encourage our students to share in these different aspects of the Lasallian Mission.

1. I would first like to focus on Lasallian Volunteers. What exactly is a Lasallian Volunteer? What is it that they are seeking to do with their lives? I will quote here their Mission Statement: **“The Lasallian Volunteer offers a unique opportunity for an individual to respond to Christ’s call to the service of others, especially the poor. The response is a one to three year experience in the field of Christian education or related human development services. During this period of service, Lasallian Volunteers affiliate themselves with the ministry of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, sharing fully in the apostolic and community life of the Brothers and their Lasallian Partners.”**

2. Even though we have a “Mission Statement” about what a Lasallian Volunteer does, shouldn’t our idea of a volunteer be broader? Lasallian Vol-

unteers are graduates of colleges and universities. Lasallian Volunteers is an “organization.” But “volunteering” is a part of our Lasallian tradition. Our high school and elementary school students, their parents, and the administration/faculty of our schools, are part of this Lasallian volunteering tradition.

3. What about those students who offer to spend time visiting hospitals, nursing homes, etc.? Is not volunteering time and energy a part of our Lasallian volunteering tradition? I quote: **“Our mission is to make the loving and saving presence of Jesus Christ a visible and effective reality in the lives of the young.” (Brother John Johnston)**

4. What about those parents who volunteer their time and energy in our educational ministry as teacher aides, occasionally handling mail-outs, answering phones, working at school fairs, silent auctions, performing cafeteria duty? What about students who volunteer as tutors after school? How do we look upon those who volunteer their time in a soup kitchen, or distributing food to the hungry, or helping people find jobs? Are not these part of the Lasallian volunteer tradition?

5. May I quote a short version of the virtue of Generosity as given by **Brother Agathon** in 1785: **“Generosity is a virtue which makes teachers sacrifice willingly their own personal interest for those of their students.”** While Brother Agathon speaks specifically of teachers, might we not include fellow students and parents of our students who also “sacrifice willingly their own personal interest” for the interests of others?

6. What are the benefits to those who volunteer? First of all, one learns compassion because volunteering is a hands-on approach to generosity.

7. Who wins when one volunteers? Both parties benefit from the experience and both are winners. The volunteer finds out more about him/herself and the person receiving the help is renewed, hopefully, by the generosity of the giver.

8. I would like each of you, as we pray this prayer on the third day of our Lasallian Novena, to pause a moment and reflect on this concept of volunteering, a part of the Lasallian tradition.

Sincerely,

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