

# John Baptist de La Salle – Walking in Compassion



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## Going Deeper

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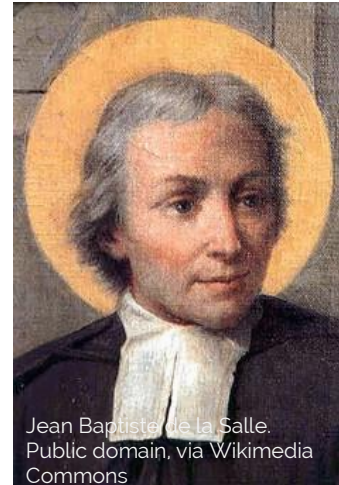
## Prayer Opportunity One

### We Reflect

Born at Reims, France on April 30, 1651, John Baptist de La Salle grew up in a devout and influential family.

Almost by accident, the young de La Salle gradually assumed the leadership of a small group of lay teachers. Moved by the plight of the poor who seemed so “far from salvation either in this world or the next”, he determined to put his own talents and advanced education at the service of the children.

To be more effective, he abandoned his family home, moved in with the teachers, renounced his position and his wealth, and so formed the community that became known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools.



Jean Baptiste de La Salle.  
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De La Salle and his brothers succeeded in creating a network of quality schools throughout France that featured students grouped according to ability and achievement, integration of religious instruction with secular subjects, well-prepared teachers with a sense of vocation and mission, and the involvement of parents.

Perhaps the simplest, yet most profound, element of de La Salle's spirituality was his practice of constantly recalling the presence of God. It was the way he began each task of his day, and he instructed his Brothers to do the same: a brief recollecting of the self, and a recitation of the “Lasallian signal”

- *“Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God.”*

In this way, de La Salle believed that he and his Brothers would be more inclined to focus themselves and their work on God.

De La Salle was a man of great faith, prayer and compassion. But he was also a very down to earth practical individual. For him, Christian spirituality is something to be embodied in ordinary actions. Lasallian spirituality is a process of “discovery”:- discovering the poor, discovering oneself, discovering communion with others as a way of life.

The Lasallian mission is rooted in discerning and doing God's will in regard to God's children. Lasallian educators and schools everywhere share Lasallian spirituality as the heart of both the Lasallian story and their ministry to instruct the minds and touch the hearts of the young who have been entrusted to their care.



## **Prayer and Movement**

Part of the appeal for many people with praying at 'stations' (as in the weekly staff prayer or stations of the cross) is the movement it involves. The movement period is a time to reflect on how all the elements of the prayer are fitting together, how it relates to your life and a good chance to stretch your legs.

Praying with movement doesn't have to have 'stations'; *nor does it have to involve liturgical dance*. Take any form of prayer and do it while walking and you have 'movement prayer'. It's not new – for centuries people have prayed as they walked with God.

If you love to dance, perform, run, walk, play - they can all be prayer, when they are an expression of God within us.

### **Stone Prayer - for my work**

In the spirit of John Baptist de La Salle's "Lasallian Signal" the stone prayer is a focusing prayer for the start of each class.

It is private and is a simple way to focus yourself on the sacredness of the children we teach and work with.

Take your stone from staff prayer.

Place it on your desk, or somewhere it is easily accessible and visible to you during your day.

Before you begin your class, hold it in your hand and take a moment to pause. Look around your students...

As you look at them, pray a simple prayer to focus you...

*"I am in the presence of God"*

Or

*"Lord, give me a heart of compassion"*

Or

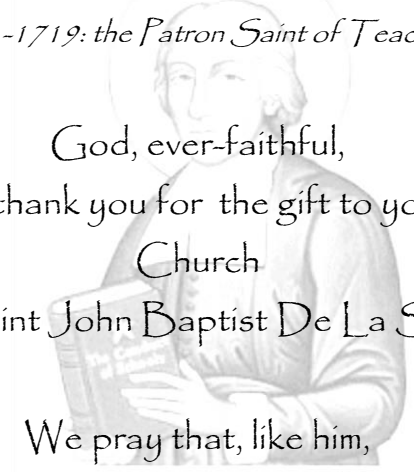
*"Be with me as I teach O God"*

As each class comes in or each session of the day starts take a moment to move among your students recognising the presence of God.

Saint John Baptist

De La Salle

*(1651-1719: the Patron Saint of Teachers)*



God, ever-faithful,  
we thank you for the gift to your  
Church  
of Saint John Baptist De La Salle.

We pray that, like him,  
we may deepen our friendship with  
you  
and grow more aware of your  
presence  
in our lives each day.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.