



De La Salle Institute

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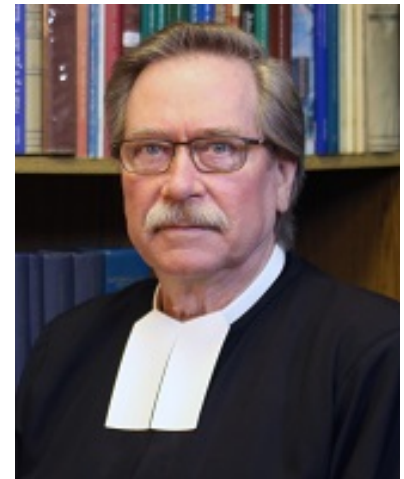
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June 1, 2020

Dear School Leaders,

It is with a heavy heart that I write these words to you. It is my hope that, through them, I can express to you my concerns, prayers, and support during a time that is testing our strength as Lasallians and as Americans.

The ugly reality of racism and division in our nation is again bringing injustice and tragedy into the lives of our brothers and sisters, as well as unrest, anger, and violence to our cities and neighborhoods. I know you share my sense of shock and sadness over the terrible events of these past days. However, we must not let ourselves or each other – especially the young entrusted to our care – sink into their darkness. We must hold tightly to God, to each other, and to our vision for a better world. This is because we have work to do.



The cries of pain and frustration of a mistreated people are something that we cannot ignore, and something to which we must respond as one Lasallian family. We will not tolerate the sin of injustice in any of its forms, nor will we be complacent in its presence. To paraphrase Mahatma Gandhi, we must be the change that we wish to see in the world, and we must instill that same zeal in the hearts of those entrusted to our care. It is that spirit I offer to you these recommendations and encouragements.

As Lasallian educators, we are called to care for one another and for our students, and also to let ourselves grow from the experience. Teaching, learning and praying in community are what we do best. I recognize, as I know you also do, how difficult it must be for our young people not to be able to be with each other on their campuses, especially now. Accordingly, we must find innovative ways to join them in an intentional and courageous dialogue about race, one that identifies and stands against bigotry and discrimination, advances solidarity with its victims, and leads to action to transform unjust social structures. We have a sacred responsibility to do this.

Also, we need to ensure that our schools are truly places of salvation in the midst of today's extraordinary need for peace and justice. I ask that we recognize that the work of educating our youth will be incomplete if it is not fully relevant to God's work of healing and redeeming the world. In addition to continuing to strive for the full accessibility and diversity of our ministries, we must focus on delivering learning experiences that prioritize like never before, both in content and method, the formation of young people who will unswervingly build a society where the voiceless are finally heard, the invisible are finally seen, and the lost are finally found. Know that I am with you as you decide how you will listen to your faculties, staff and students so that they can participate in your leadership in determining next steps in accomplishing this.

Earlier this morning, our District released a video message where I commended you and our District family on your resilience, creativity, and faith through the ever-evolving reality of our COVID-19 pandemic. It will be through these same attributes that we will persevere. For guidance, we can look to the example and teachings of Jesus Christ, and also to the life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

Together we will act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God who loves us (Micah 6:8)...each and every one of us. I assure you and your school communities of my continued prayers and deep gratitude. May God bless you during these trying times, and I look forward to witnessing how our District guides and empowers our young people through these momentous times.

Sincerely,



Brother Donald Johanson

Brother Visitor

District of San Francisco New Orleans