

46

BROTHERS OF THE
CHRISTIANS SCHOOLS

CIRCULAR 476 | 30th APRIL 2020

CONVOCATION OF **46th GENERAL CHAPTER** (2021)

Building new paths
to transform lives



La  Salle



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FRATRES SCHOLARVM CHRISTIANARVM

THE GENERALATE

Brothers of the Christian Schools

Via Aurelia, 476

Rome, Italy

www.lasalle.org

Dear Brothers:

The 46th General Chapter is on the horizon and God continues to invite us to follow Him with fidelity and confidence. We recall the letter that John Baptist de La Salle addressed to a doubtful Brother Gabriel Drolin. The Founder invited Brother Gabriel to bear everything with patience, always believing in God's providence and to carry on with his valuable mission in Rome¹. In this beautiful letter, the Founder promised Brother Gabriel that he would never abandon him and encouraged him to persevere.

In the beginning of the Institute, De La Salle insisted that the first Brothers be aware of the wisdom of God, because He does everything for and with us. Today, we remember and rejoice in the presence of God and trust that an awareness of his presence will inspire us to be creative, dynamic, joyful and open to renewal of heart and mind. Now is the time to recommit to Jesus Christ! Now is the time to reaffirm our belief that great things are possible through our fraternal communion and our ministry of human and Christian education!

¹ Valladolid, J. M. (Ed.). (2001). *Obras completas de san Juan Bautista de La Salle* [Writings of Saint John Baptist de La Salle] (vol. I-*Cartas Autógrafas*). San Pío X.



Recently, Pope Francis wrote to young people about how wonderful it is to see the stars at night and how they invite us to dream, to know where we are and to lead us to the Holy Child. The Pope asks us to be shining stars for the young and to guide them to Jesus Christ incarnated in this world². The 46th General Chapter is an opportunity to rekindle the lights of those stars and renew our commitment to fraternal communion with each other, our Partners, children, youth, young adults and all those whom we encounter, especially those who are poor. In this way, we will continue to cooperate with Jesus Christ and his mission for the Reign of God in this challenging and complex time in our history.

How might we describe the spirit of this age? Some philosophers contend that our time is fraught with new dangers, some doubt a positive future for humanity; for example, Byung-Chul Han believes that today's society is tired, anxious, depressed, worried about producing and saving money³. We wish that our Institute's response will flow from a spring of apostolic energy to create life-giving opportunities, to develop empathy and to follow courageously the ideals that pushed John Baptist de La Salle to create in his time a new way of going forward⁴. We are building a new bridge between

² Francisco (2019). *Christus vivit*, 33. *Vatican.va*.
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html

³ Han, Byung-Chul (2013). *Topologie der Gewalt* [Topology of Violence]. Editorial Herder, pp. 69-70.

⁴ Brothers of the Christian Schools (2015). *The Rule*, 27. Casa Generalizia.

the past decades and this new one, and our special care is for the young who are vulnerable to the cruelties in our age, those who are lonely, and those whose families have migrated to other latitudes in search of a life of dignity. They thirst for life-giving initiatives that will give them confidence to face the future with hope.

It is in this context that we will assemble in Chapter as the Body of the Society. We will gather in Pattaya, Thailand (Redemptorist Centre)—a new location and a new environment in which to renew our hearts and minds and discern a new way forward. In more and more societies, we carry out our mission among varied cultures, belief and religious traditions, economic backgrounds and emerging apostolic demands. Locating our discernment in a new physical place challenges us to question the *status quo* in a new, even radical way, and to read the signs of the times from a vantage point away from the familiar and at the periphery. In some ways this is a bold change, in others it is consistent with our history and heritage. We are accustomed to using novel approaches to respond to old and emerging needs, and we also know that such creativity strengthens our charismatic dynamism.

Our Chapter is, in part, meant to respond to Pope Francis's invitation to a 'dirty-footed leadership'⁵. As Brothers and through our Chapter, let us seek creative

⁵ Lowney, C. (2014). Pope Francis: Why He Leads the Way He Leads. Saint Paul Press Training School, pp. 101-103.

responses to the challenges of today's world while in solidarity with children, youth and young adults living at the periphery in the context of a multi-religious and pluralistic society in Asia. Let us bring to the Chapter our stories of 'touching the flesh of the poor Christ in the humble, the poor' and re-commit ourselves to the saving power of our educational and evangelising ministry.

Brothers, the Holy Spirit is inviting us to foster communion. Our consecration to procure the glory of God is calling us to witness to fraternity⁶ and to love those who are different to us, despite their opinions, styles and beliefs⁷. Let us therefore prepare for the Chapter with faith, confidence, patience, and trust that great things are possible when we allow ourselves to be brightly shining stars that invite others to follow Jesus Christ in making our world a more merciful and just home for all. Now is the time to let us be energized and inspired by God.

⁶ Bonhoeffer, D. (2004). *El precio de la gracia, el seguimiento* [The Cost of Grace, the follow-up] (6ta. ed.). Ediciones Sígueme, p. 66.

⁷ Schieler, R. (2019). *Witnesses to Fraternity*. Casa Generalizia, pp. 9-10.



- ★ PATTAYA, THAILAND
- BANGKOK, THAILAND

1.

Proposal of the Preparatory Commission for the 46th General Chapter



1.1. In preparation for the 46th General Chapter, the Preparatory Commission is tasked to organize, evaluate, and select proposals for the Chapter's agenda. In undertaking this task, the Preparatory Commission has taken or will take into account the following:

a) The *Announcement of the 46th General Chapter*, in which the Brother Superior General and Council expressed their conviction that the Chapter focus on only two or three priority areas, including association for the mission, and leadership and government (Circular 473, 2 May 2019, 8).

b) The topics, reflections and suggestions offered by the members of the Intercapitular Assembly in March 2018, and the Letter of the Brother Superior General and Council to the members of the Intercapitular Assembly, June 2018.

c) The topics, reflections and recommendations in the following reports that the Capitulants will receive between now and the 46th General Chapter:

- a. **The International Council for Association and the Lasallian Educational Mission (CIAMEL)**
- b. **The 3rd International Assembly of the Lasallian Mission (AIMEL)**
- c. **The 4th International Symposium of Young Lasallians**
- d. **The 2nd Assembly of Young Brothers**
- e. **The International Strategy Committee, and**
- f. **The Report of the Brother Superior General.**

1.2. Embracing an attitude of openness of mind and spirit, the intended goals of the 46th General Chapter are the following:

a) To discern, in the spirit of De La Salle, what God is asking of the life and mission of the Institute;

b) To engage in rigorous dialogue and reflection, guided by the Holy Spirit, to hear and respond to the call made to the Institute, and the wider Lasallian world, to incarnate the reign of God by discovering ‘new roadmaps that encourage creativity and innovation in the pursuit of the common good’ (Circular 470, March 2015, II);

c) To review the Institute’s current leadership and government, and to discern and re-imagine how the Institute’s leadership and government can better serve the mission entrusted to it in the face of the diversity of persons and ministries in the international Lasallian community.

1.3. ‘Building new paths to transform lives’ is the guiding principle chosen by the Preparatory Commission to address the three primary topics proposed for consideration by the 46th General Chapter:



**“Building
new paths
to transform
lives”**

a) Association for Mission

The Lasallian mission is expanding in many areas of the Institute as is the understanding of Lasallian vocation. As Brothers, we continue to deepen our response to God's call to transform lives in association as a Lasallian community. Together we proclaim the Gospel through education and the promotion of justice.

b) Leadership, sustainability and governance

There is a need to develop appropriate structures to respond to current realities, unafraid of replacing what is obsolete or non-functional. A renewed mission requires a renewed governance guided by discernment, collaboration, solidarity in the management of human and economic resources, networking, and collaborative structures that are truly shared among Brothers and Partners.

c) Life of the Brothers

As Christians 'we are always "missionary disciples"' (Evangelii Gaudium 120). In the light of this conviction, there is a need to take important decisions about formation, mobility, and priorities for our presence and ministry as Brothers. Further, there is also the need to enable renewed styles of community that are oriented to the future and that place us close to the peripheries.

1.4. The Preparatory Commission invites the Institute and Lasallian Family to reflect and to respond to these three primary topics. We invite Brothers to send notes, personally and as communities, to <http://fsc46gc.lasalle.org> or by mail to fsc46gc@lasalle.org. We also invite and encourage Lasallian communities to share their reflections. The questionnaire that follows will nurture this reflection.

- a. What “new paths” are required so that leadership and government structures respond to the needs of the Institute, the Church and the world today?
- b. What concrete strategies can help ‘transform the lives’ of all Lasallians so as to enable them to respond to the spiritual and educational needs, especially of those who are poor?
- c. How do you envision Lasallian communities (of Brothers, of Associates, and others) in the future?
- d. What priorities for our presence and ministry as Brothers do you think will contribute to the sustainability of our mission?
- e. Do you have a proposal that you believe is important for the General Chapter to consider?

2.

**Itinerary and phases during
the celebration of the Chapter**



It is hoped that this 46th General Chapter will be a dynamic movement, an adventure during which the Capitulants will embrace a life-giving journey, along paths that transform lives.

The following prayer illuminates the Chapter process and journey that is proposed:

PRAYER

To You, Most Holy Trinity
we entrust the 46th General Chapter
of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

We ask you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
who guide all things in our lives
as Brothers and Partners,
to grant us joy in thanksgiving,
boldness in truth,
and strength in decisions.

Despite our fragility,
our hearts are filled
with reasons to hope,
because of our desire
to commit the Institute
to following new paths
to transform lives.

With your grace,
we will have the strength and courage
to move to the peripheries
and release our creative energies.

Together, as Brothers and Partners
committed to the Lasallian mission,
we want to work
in the spirit of the gospel
to change our way
of viewing the world,
to take care of our common home.
And to become true missionary disciples.

We ask Our Lady of the Star,
Saint John Baptist de La Salle,
all our Lasallian saints and holy Brothers
to intercede for us.

Amen.



This 46th General Chapter process will unfold in three phases, each preparing the way for discernment and decision.



2.1. JOY IN THANKSGIVING

These paths must have their source in God and receive their completion from Him. For it is God who summons, gathers, blesses, elects and sends. The opening ceremony, therefore, is intended to be a spiritual act that symbolizes the desire to base the work of the 46th General Chapter in God.

This spiritual act will be followed by a juridical act: the official opening of the 46th General Chapter will commence with the roll-call of the Capitulants and guests, and the signing of the register of the Chapter. It will also include organizational work such as: the election of officers, the reading and amendment of the rules of procedure, and the approval of the Chapter's work programme.

Coming from diverse places and contexts, with horizons, concerns, aspirations and dreams as multiple as they are varied, the Capitulants will be offered the opportunity of a deep experience of God so as to discover His will and guide their participation in

this 46th Chapter. A one-day recollection will nourish this intense spiritual communion with God and with the body of the Society.

2.2. BOLDNESS IN TRUTH

The 45th General Chapter gave orientations and propositions to the Institute. Over the past seven years, the Institute and the entire Lasallian family, under the leadership of Brother Superior General and his Council, have implemented them. The question is: Where are we with regard to these guidelines and propositions? What have we done with them? This evaluation phase is an opportunity to look back at our recent history. This assessment will be based on the reports received, notes sent by the Brothers, and the answers to the questionnaire from communities.

The Brothers of the Christian Schools live their “Sequela Christi” in the midst of a more secularized, consumerist and individualistic world, and at the heart of a Church whose message is often not heard by our contemporaries. The Lasallian Family carries out its mission of educational and evangelising service of the poor in a globalised world facing many challenges.

The Lasallian educational mission also develops in a multi-religious and multicultural context. This ecclesial and international reality brings to bear new needs of children, youth, and young adults that challenge the whole Lasallian family. In order to respond prophetically and creatively, the Capitulants will be made aware of the major educational, religious, economic and political issues of today and tomorrow. To enlighten the Capitulants on these themes, three conferences will be organized.

2.3. STRENGTH IN DECISION

The mission of the General Chapter is essentially to formulate orientations and propositions to help the Institute and the Lasallian Family better serve the Church and society. In order to do this, the Capitulants will need time for reflection, discussion, discernment and writing. The work in different kinds of groups and in plenary sessions will encourage this exercise of discernment, formulation and voting on orientations and propositions.

As the Rule reminds us, *'...Following the example of John Baptist de La Salle, who from the beginning of the Institute involved the "principal Brothers" in a process of consultation, discernment, and decision-making, the Brothers exercise authority in a spirit of co-responsibility and subsidiarity'* (R 110). This service of the community for the common good comes from God. He calls some to exercise this service for the spiritual growth of the members of the community, in creative fidelity to the spirit of the Founder and to the mission, and for the effective management of the temporal goods of the Institute. It is appropriate that the choice of leaders (the Brother Superior General, the Brother Vicar General and the General Councillors) be preceded by a time of reflection, discernment, and prayer.

Opened in the holy presence of God, the 46th General Chapter will close in thanksgiving to God while gathering His blessings for the future.

3.

Members of the Chapter



3.1. The members of the 46th General Chapter

As the Rule stipulates, *'The members by right of the General Chapter are: the Brother Superior General, former Brother Superior Generals, the Brother General Councillors and the Brother Secretary General'* (Rule 114.2).

3.1.1. The members by right

- Brother Superior General (1)
- Former Brother Superior General (1)
- Brother General Councillors (8)
- Brother Secretary General (1)

The total number of members by right is eleven (11).

3.1.2. The Delegates elected by the Districts (Rule 114.3)

Based on the statistics of the Institute on the date of the publication of the Circular of Convocation, the number of delegates to be elected, is determined as follows:

1^o The number of delegates is a function of the number of Brothers in the District. It is fixed at one more than the whole quotient of the number of those Brothers by the number N fixed by the Brother Superior General and his Council. The whole number immediately higher than the quotient obtained becomes the number of District delegates.

2^o Each Sub-District or Delegation officially constituted elects one delegate.

3^o Brother Superior General and his Council fix the number N in such a way that the total number of elected delegates is not smaller than 1% and not greater than 1.5% of the number of Brothers in the Institute.

3.1.3. On the date of publication of the Circular of Convocation, the official number of Brothers in the Institute is 3,418. (Official statistics of the Institute as of 31st December 2019). In accordance with the Rule, a minimum of 35 and a maximum of 51 delegates can be elected (representing, respectively, 1.02% and 1.49% of the total number of Brothers). The Brother Superior General and his Council have decided that the number N should be 105. In this way we can meet the requirements of article 114.3 of the Rule and elect 50 delegates, which is 1.46%, a figure no less than 1% and no more than 1.5% of the number of Brothers in the Institute. Therefore, the number of Delegates corresponding to each District and Delegation is as follows:

DISTRICT	BROTHERS	DELEGATES
Antananarivo	62	1
Antillas-South Mexico	121	2
ANZPPNG	110	2
Argentina-Paraguay	36	1
ARLEP	624	6
Bogota	95	1
Bolivia-Peru	77	1
Brazil-Chile	156	2
Canada francophone	62	1
Central Africa	30	1
Central America-Panamá	74	1
Central Europe	42	1

Colombo	54	1
Congo-Kinshasa	58	1
DENA (Eastern North America)	246	3
France and Europe francophone	316	4
Gulf of Benin	23	1
India (Delegation)	48	1
Ireland-Great Britain-Malta	107	2
Italy	137	2
LEAD (Lasallian East Asia)	136	2
Lwanga	103	1
Midwest	123	2
Norandino	88	1
North Belgium (Delegation)	37	1
North Mexico	94	1
Poland	46	1
Proche Orient	32	1
Rwanda (Delegation)	34	1
San Francisco New Orleans	112	2
Viênnam	88	1
West Africa	47	1
Number of Brothers and delegates	3.418	50

3.1.4. Capitulants who may be appointed by the Brother Superior General and his Council

The Rule indicates that: 'With the consent of his Council, the Brother Superior General can appoint up to ten supplementary delegates so as to ensure a better representation of the diversity of the Institute. '(R, 114.2).

3.1.5. Total number of Capitulants at the 46th General Chapter

- 11 Members by right.
- 50 Delegates elected by the Districts and Delegations.
- 10 Delegates who can be appointed by the Brother Superior.

The maximum total number possible for the 46th General Chapter is 71 Capitulants.

3.1.6. Experts or consultants at the 46th General Chapter

Article 117.3 of the Rule states that 'The Brother Superior General and his Council, as well as the General Chapter, may invite certain persons to participate in the work of the Chapter as experts or consultants'.

3.1.7. Young Brothers

Aware of the important role that young Brothers are called to play in the present and in the future of the Institute, and of the significant contribution that they can make to the General Chapter, the Brother Superior and his Council will invite young Brothers, designated as Delegates or Consultants to the General Chapter.

3.2. Election of the Brother Delegates to the General Chapter and of the substitutes

3.2.1. The Rule states that ‘Every Brother with vows in the Institute on the date of publication of the Circular of Convocation is an elector. Every Brother perpetually professed in the Institute on the date of publication of the Circular of Convocation can be elected’ (Rule 115)

3.2.2. The Rule leaves it to the initiative of the Districts and Delegations to ‘determine the rules of procedure for the election of the allotted delegate or delegates, as well as of their substitutes, bearing in mind the following norms:

In order to be elected, a delegate must obtain an absolute majority of the votes validly cast. However, if a third ballot is necessary, a relative majority will suffice. Substitutes, in the same number as the delegates, are elected by a separate vote.

A full report of the results of the election should be sent without delay to the Brothers of the District and to the General Secretariat. Any derogation from the preceding norms requires the approval of the Brother Superior General and his Council’ (R 115.1).

3.2.3. The Brothers may vote only once and must do so in the District or Delegation to which they belong when they cast their vote.

3.2.4. Each District or Delegation shall schedule its election calendar in such a way that the report and complete record of the ballot, duly signed and dated, shall be sent to the Brother Secretary General of the Institute by 4th September 2020. It should be sent by e-mail to fsc46gc@lasalle.org or to the General Secretariat by private courier service.



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4.

Forms of participation



4.1. The most significant documents of the Lasallian Family in recent years can be found on the Institute's website (<https://www.lasalle.org/en/publicaciones/>). We invite all Brothers to reread and reflect on these documents in preparation for the 46th General Chapter.

4.2. To centralize all the communication of the 46th General Chapter, the Preparatory Commission and the Communications Service of the Institute have set up a Chapter website, <http://fsc46gc.lasalle.org>, where you will find the preparatory documents and the news, videos and information leading up to the Chapter. This website will serve as the communications' clearinghouse for the Chapter.

- a. The Chapter website contains a form for responses to the questionnaire for communities described above. The closing date for these responses is 5th January 2021.
- b. There will be also an option for sending notes or position papers to the Chapter. The Rule states that 'All the Brothers of the Institute are invited to participate in the work of preparing for an ordinary General Chapter. Each Brother has the right to send to the Brother Superior General or the Brother Secretary General whatever notes or position papers, duly signed, he may judge useful' (R 118).
- c. 'The General Chapter takes into account the consultations of the Brothers, especially in District Chapters, and in regional assemblies held with a view to better informing the General Chapter. It also takes account of notes from communities or individuals properly signed

by their authors. These notes may be addressed to the General Chapter, to the Preparatory Commission, or to the Secretary General of the Institute' (Rule 118.I). For practical reasons these should be sent via the form found on the Chapter website, or by e-mail to the Secretary General, Brother Antxon Andueza (fsc46gc@lasalle.org), before 5th January 2021.

- d. The Preparatory Commission will collate these notes and design a system by which the Capitulants can read and reflect on them.

4.3. On social networks, the hashtag #FSC46GC will be used to link the publications related to the Chapter. We encourage all Lasallians throughout the world to continue the conversation on social networks.

4.4. As on other occasions, representatives of the entire Lasallian Family will participate in the General Chapter, in various ways:

a) A representative from the Third International Assembly of the Lasallian Educational Mission (AIMEL 2020) will be invited to present its report during the Chapter. The 46th General Chapter will receive the propositions of this Assembly and will decide on their ratification.



**“Association
for mission,
leadership and
government”**

b) The Chapter will also receive the report and possible propositions presented by the Young Lasallians.

c) De La Salle Guadalupana Sisters and Vietnam-Thailand De La Salle Sisters will be invited as observers.

5.

Logo





This is the logo selected by the Preparatory Commission for the 46th General Chapter.

It shows an open hand, in an attitude of offering, blessing and help. The fingers of the hand are reminiscent of the open leaves of the lotus, symbol of the Thai culture that will host the General Chapter in Pattaya and that represents the search for new paths to transform the lives of protagonists and recipients in our mission.

6.

Conclusion



Brothers, please be aware that, with the reception of this Circular of Convocation, we are now 'in Chapter time'. You, as members of this Institute, are the real protagonists. This is your Chapter, our Chapter.

We invite and encourage you to spend these months leading up to the Chapter with an open mind, a burning heart and renewed enthusiasm.

In this 46th General Chapter we will review the road we have travelled but, more importantly, we will design new paths for a Lasallian future that is committed to solidarity and sustainability.

Brothers, we are already on our way.

Live Jesus 
in our hearts!
Forever!

7.

Calendar of preparation for the Chapter



2020	
April 30 th	Publication of the Circular of Convocation
June 8 th -12 th	Third meeting of the Preparatory Commission for the General Chapter
September 4 th	Deadline for receiving the names of Delegates and Substitutes.
September 7 th -12 th	Fourth meeting of the Preparatory Commission for the Chapter
September 21 st to October 2 nd	Third International Assembly of the Lasallian Educational Mission (III AIMEL)
September 30 th	Appointment of the designated Capitulants
October 20 th	Publication of the list of Capitulants
November 1 st -7 th	Fourth International Symposium of Young Lasallians
November 1 st -15 th	Second International Assembly of Young Brothers
December 3 rd	Appointment of consultants and experts to participate in the Chapter
December 15 th	Publication of the III AIMEL Report
December 20 th	Deadline for Capitulants to send their biographical data to the Secretary General (fsc46gc@lasalle.org)
December 28 th	Deadline for receiving notes sent to the Chapter and the answers for the questionnaire from communities

2021	
January 15 th	Reception of the Report of the Brother Superior General and reports from the International Symposium of Young Lasallians and the International Assembly of Young Brothers.
February 1 st – 8 th	Fifth meeting of the Preparatory Commission for the General Chapter
May 2 nd –23 rd	46th General Chapter in Pattaya (Thailand)

**United in De La Salle,
 Brother Superior General and
 Brothers of the General Council**

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