



Consecration of *Santuario de La Salle* De La Salle University–Laguna

Santuario de La Salle was conceived as a gift of the Lasallian Family to the Church on the occasion of the 500th Anniversary of the Evangelization of the Philippines. It especially honors teachers and the noble vocation of teaching, an apostolic ministry in the Church. It strives to continue and develop the legacy of St. John Baptist de La Salle, the Universal Patron of All Teachers of Youth. Barangay Villavicencio and countless donors and friends have generously supported the construction of this teachers' sanctuary at the campus of De La Salle University–Laguna. May the Lord, in His abundance and generosity, bless you, and may this strengthen your resolve to contribute to countless other ministries of the Church and the evangelization of peoples.

This iconic religious space was conceptualized as a holistic design process anchored on Lasallian values and tradition as well as Catholic liturgical guidelines. These were then translated coherently into the different facets of the Santuario, including its spatial and sensory experience, artistic intent, furniture design, and the selection of sacred objects. This Lasallian edifice is a celebration of the Christian faith and Filipino talent. May all those who participated as members of the project team, those who were part of the architectural design, those who will maintain this sacred edifice, and all those who will eventually come to worship experience God's holy presence and merit the divine grace that comes from the sacraments.

This sacred space is not exclusive to Lasallians but will especially welcome young people, teachers and educators, catechists and formators, parents and pastors from far and wide. All are welcome to bring their hopes and dreams, their anxieties and fears, and their noblest aspirations, all woven into their human frailties before Christ, the Teacher who will guide us to the Truth.

The centerpiece of this sacred space is a visualization of the road to Emmaus, where two disciples with downcast eyes were discussing the events, the frustrations, the tears, and the fears that have passed in their lifetime. In their casual conversation and as they listened to each other, they encountered another presence: a listening ear and a welcoming heart of one who broke bread with them, who explained things for them, and to whom they asked, "Stay with us, Lord." In this holy sanctuary, we welcome students, both those who are struggling with disbelief as well as those who have encountered the light of human knowledge and divine wisdom. We welcome teachers who are celebrating their commitment, the many years of service of walking with their students, and of accompanying them on this earthly road towards the road to heaven. We welcome educators who are working to create nurturing spaces where the young can feel that they are loved, those who are struggling with administrative bureaucracies, and those who have to deal with the current learning crisis. In this sacred space, we encounter the Lord who walks with us, illuminates our disbelief, and brings us to trust in Him. We welcome parents struggling with the difficult ministry of caring for their children, the difficulty of understanding them, and their fears and anxieties about what the future will be. In this sacred space, we ask Christ the Teacher to also lead us into the joy of heaven.

Dear friends, Santuario de La Salle, is also the permanent repository of the precious relics of our holy Founder: his dry bones. Today, we hear the prophecy from Ezekiel (37:4-6): “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: ‘I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life... Then you will know that I am the Lord.’” You who have participated in our celebrations today and those who will enter this sanctuary are invited to open your hearts so that we may always remember that we are in the holy presence of God. Graced with the Lord’s presence, we go with faith and zeal to provide a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor.

It is my prayer that Santuario de La Salle will provide a breathing space, a resting place, and a holy dwelling for generations of teachers in the Philippines and East Asia so they may rediscover the nobility and grace in the educational ministry, a ministry handed down to us by the Apostles from Christ the Teacher who commands us even today: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20).

“I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Live Jesus in our hearts forever.

Br. Armin A. Luistro FSC

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