NOVENA

PRAYERS FOR OUR founder
9 Days of Prayerful Reflection leading us to April 7th

Compiled by Kane Raukura, Lasallian Facilitator, De La Salle College, Auckland, New Zealand
(from original works and from Lasallian resources worldwide)
NOVENA

DAY ONE  MARCH 30TH  INNOCENCE
DAY TWO  MARCH 31ST  PAIN
DAY THREE APRIL 1ST  PROVIDENCE
DAY FOUR  APRIL 2ND  BROTHERS
DAY FIVE  APRIL 3RD  HEROIC
DAY SIX  APRIL 4TH  DARKNESS
DAY SEVEN APRIL 5TH  BEGINNING
DAY EIGHT APRIL 6TH  CELEBRATION
DAY NINE  APRIL 7TH  LEGACY
1651 April 30th Reims, France - Our beloved Founder is born.

On the 30th day of April in the year of Our Lord 1651, John Baptist de La Salle was born in the lordly mansion called "La Cloche" which means "The Bell". The sun shone radiantly that day and the house of the De La Salle Family couldn't contain its joy. The new baby was the first born of Louis de La Salle and Nicole Moët, the young couple married the previous year. "John will cultivate our vineyards", said his grandfather - and godfather - Jean Moët. "The boy will be a magistrate like his father," responded Louis, swelling with pride. "No, our son will follow the path that the Lord has marked out for him”, answered his mother, smiling.

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God

Dear Heavenly Father,

We ask you to protect the innocence of children, both within our own families and in the families of others. May childhood be a blessed time of discovery and formation fostered by loving parents and caring teachers.

Send angels to guard children from harm and to guide them throughout their lives so that they become loving, compassionate and humble. Like the new born child, John Baptist de La Salle, let our paths be marked out by the Lord and let us be brave enough to walk them.

As the innocent child, we pray to you Lord, in wonder and fear at your majesty and great works. You are the ever present parent. You are the ever present teacher.

Great is your love!

Amen.

SJBDLS - Pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts - Forever!
While studying theology at the famous Sorbonne University of Paris, John had not even finished his first course when he received the very upsetting news of the death of his mother whom he loved so much. He wrote to his father offering to do anything to help in the education of his brothers and sisters who were still quite small. "No, my son. You continue in Paris with your studies for the priesthood. God and your mama, who is now in heaven, will keep on helping us. Somehow we will manage!" Sadly, the very next year, John's father died as well. Without hesitating, he left Paris for Reims to care for his siblings, the youngest being only 20 months old. John himself was only 21.

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God

Dear Lord of comfort,

I come to you to ask that you provide strength and comfort in our times of great need. Often our hurt and that of others can run very deep. We feel so much pain when we lose those we love and share our lives with. I pray that you help us always maintain our faith in you during these difficult times.

I know you can be our greatest shoulder, but I also ask that you remain our biggest provider. Surround us with understanding so that we can work through all the emotions that loss brings raging to the surface. Bless us with people and friends that provide tender patience and comfort as we try to bring our lives back on track.

And Lord, allow me to be like John Baptist de La Salle. Let me still see the hand of God in my life, let me find peace in your word and allow my heart to be still. Let my pain wash away, leaving only the warm memories of their love.

SJBDLS - Pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts - Forever!
On a chilly March morning in 1679 a meeting took place that would change the life of the young priest forever. After celebrating Mass in the school of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, two men approached him at the door and the older of the two asked him: "Pardon me, but aren't you Father de La Salle? My name is Adrian Nyel. I am a teacher and this young fellow is Christopher. He helps me in the classroom. We have come here from Rouen." "And what can I do to help you?" replied de La Salle. "I am carrying a letter for you from Madame Maillefer whom you must know?"

And so it began - a unforeseen journey that would lead John down a path he couldn't of imagined.

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God

Dear loving Father, my guide and protector,

You know all the days of my life before they are spent.
Each step and each breath, every high and every low. You are there as my guide and protector.

At times, I am deaf and don't listen. At times, I am blind and don't see.
Please be patient with me Father. Let me trust in your Providence and in your plan for me. Grant me the grace to let go and to abandon myself to you.

We give thanks for the example of John Baptist de Lasalle and his life.
We ask that we can have his strength, resilience and zeal as we live out each day in the service of others.

Let me be a instrument for your work Lord for now and for time eternal.

SJBDSL - Pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts - Forever!
John Baptist de La Salle brought his most stalwart companions together in an assembly. They proposed to create a community in which each Brother would feel himself loved and appreciated by others. John wanted them all to freely express their opinions. After many hours of prayer and discussion, they reached a number of accords. The teachers would call themselves “Brothers” among themselves, and they would be big Brothers for the children. They also would not become priests, for school life would occupy them all day long. John felt extremely happy by the end of the assembly, he felt that the Brothers were beginning to discover Jesus under the ragged clothes of the children.

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God
Dear God,

Trusting in you, we join one another as a community
A community of faith on a journey to grow deeper to you and to each other as images of Christ
Along the way, remind us of your love, of your sacrifice for us and of your ever mindful presence
Let us never lose hope along the way
Help us to be strong in faith and strong in love
Strong in our desire to be ever mindful of your presence
Let us be ‘Brothers’ and ‘Sisters’ to one another in communion with you
Let us be accepting of differences, appreciate diversity and rejoice in our shared mission.
May we be stalwart companions like De La Salle’s first Brothers and may our eyes be open to seeing Jesus beneath the ragged clothes.
Lord, the work is yours.

SJBDSL - Pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts - Forever!
After a retreat dedicated to prayer, the Founder and two of the most trusted Brothers, Nicholas Vuyart and Gabriel Drolin, expressed their fervent commitment to the schools in the following way. “Most Holy Trinity, from this day and forever, we will live together to maintain the Christian Schools even though just the three of us remain and we see ourselves obliged to live on alms and have only bread to eat.” This most heroic of commitments sees the Founder, Nicholas and Gabriel vowing to keep the society alive no matter what the difficulty or obstacle. That the mission they had chosen was God’s mission, and so, could not fail.

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God

Lord Jesus,
I give you my hands to do your work.
I give you my feet to go your way.
I give you my tongue to speak your words.
I give you my mind that you may think in me.
I give you my spirit that you may pray in me.
Above all, I give you my heart that you may love in me your Father and all mankind. I give you my whole self that you may grow in me, so that it is you, Lord Jesus, who live and work and pray in me.
Take all my freedom, my memory, my understanding, and my will. All that I have and cherish you have given me. Like John Baptist De La Salle, I surrender it all to be guided by your will. Your grace and your love are wealth enough for me.
Give me these, Lord Jesus, and I ask for nothing more.

SJBDLS - Pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts - Forever!
Due to continued difficulties with the authorities and even once trusted Brothers, de La Salle began doubting himself and the very future of the schools he had created. Searching to know the will of God, he set out for the Grande Chartreuse Monastery of the CATHUSIAN ORDER near Grenoble where he spent three days in profound prayer. When he came back, he had all but made up his mind to leave the work of the schools. Looking for more enlightenment, one day he climbed the hill of Parmenie. There he met a Shepherdess, Sister Louise. He prayed and confided in this simple woman so that he could discover once more what God wanted of him. "Brother, God wants you to continue with the family that He has given you. Don't let yourself be overcome by these difficulties. Jesus will strengthen you." De La Salle came down from that hill a changed man.

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God

Thank you, Lord, for being there for me and allowing me to cry out to you in my times of need.

It is amazing to me that the Lord of the Universe would take time to listen to me and to care about what I say.

God, sometimes things happen around me that I do not understand. Some of these things make me feel weak, helpless and afraid. Even in the midst of this, I know that you are the Lord. I know that the situation is in Your hand, and I trust You. I beseech you for strength and for wisdom that I would be able to endure this situation and be able to handle it in a way that would bring glory to Your name. Let me climb the hill to You, let me find your love, and let me return changed and renewed.

Amen.

SJBDLS - Pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts - Forever!
DAY SEVEN APRIL 5TH  BEGINNING

1719 April 7th, Saint Yon - JBDLS is called to our Lord.

On Good Friday, very early, surrounded by the Brothers, De La Salle blessed them and then summed up in a single sentence what had been his whole life: "I adore and accept in all things God’s guidance of my life!" Then he recited the prayer that he had prayed so many times: "Mary, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, deliver me from the enemy and receive me at the hour of my death." Peacefully, as one who drops off to sleep after a great struggle, he expired. Through the window could be heard the laughter, the joy and the life of the children and youngsters who were being educated in the house of St. Yon. When they learned of his death, they watched over him in silence and with tears. This was in Rouen, on the seventh day of April, 1719. It was not to be an ending, De La Salle’s inspiration, love, kindness and devotion to God would live on. The Christian Schools would endure and his legacy was only just beginning.

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God

Dear Heavenly Father

May today there be peace within.
May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.
May you be confident knowing you are a child of God.
Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.
May we like John Baptist de La Salle, adore and accept in all things God’s guidance in our lives.

SJBDSL - Pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts - Forever!
Our Founder, John Baptist de La Salle, educational pioneer and visionary, led a group of young teachers on a path that would lead to the creation of a world-wide Institute - The Brothers of the Christian Schools. Six years after his death, the recognition that De La Salle sought was granted and the Christian Brothers Institute was recognised by Pope Benedict XIII and its rule approved. Celebration across the Institute was seen when in May 1900 the Founder was made Saint by Pope Leo XIII. It is through John’s valiant efforts we owe in large part the acceptance of the idea of universal education. Today we celebrate with joy our global Lasallian family. Together and by association, the Brother's, assisted by more than 100,000 lay colleagues, teach over 1,000,000 students in 80 countries.

How far we have come!

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God

Oh Holy Father!

Be with us this day. Let us give love and appreciation to our Founder and Confessor Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

We remember with affection the countless Brothers that followed in his footsteps and tread a path less common. A choice of personal vocation that echoes Christ and His love for children.

May we continue to celebrate every day this wonderful gift bestowed upon us. May we celebrate our association, our love of mission, our rich tradition and our unique spirituality and charism.

Dear Founder, bless us this day and all our works.

SJBDSL - Pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts - Forever!
DAY NINE APRIL 7TH LEGACY

1950 May 15th, Rome, Italy - Our Founder, JBDLS is proclaimed ‘Patron of Christian Teachers’.

On this final ninth day of our Novena, we reach April 7th. It was today that our Founder was released from the shackles of this world and entered God’s Heavenly Kingdom. We take this opportunity to not mourn his passing as such but rather to rejoice in his legacy. As an educational pioneer, a man of pious example, a spiritual director and confessor, innovator and consummate scholar, Saint John Baptist de La Salle has left us a gift that continues to give. Through our educational services and outreach programmes worldwide we provide hope and salvation in a society whacked with unknowns and instability. Even though our reality is very different from 17th Century France, today’s youth call out to us. Like De La Salle, we show bravery, courage and zeal, to answer that call. To be modern day innovators, to be pioneers and to lift the students in our care up to God. What a profession we are in! Our blessed we are, as like our Founder, we daily touch hearts and change lives. Honneur a toi glorieux de la salle!

Let us remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God

Saint La Salle, our dearest Father, to thy children’s prayer incline. While today we sing thy triumph and the glories which are thine.

Saint La Salle, our dearest Father, hear thy loving children pray. Grant that we, by thy protection, grow in virtue day by day. Earnestly we ask of you, pray to Jesus that his Spirit comes alive in us anew. Model of the Christian teacher, patron of all searching youth; as we follow your example may you lead us in the truth. So we praise the name of Christ, who for his work has chosen you.

Saint La Salle, inspire us always. Pray that we may serve Him, too. And to light a new beacon for the people of today.

SJBDSL - Pray for us! Live Jesus in our hearts - Forever!