

C O N C L U S I O N

There you have, very dear Brothers, the explanation of the virtues of the good teacher. As you can perceive, this has been entirely written in line with what we have learned from M. de La Salle; it is only the development of the general outline he laid down for educating children properly. And with what amazing success did he not carry out this plan! His outline, in fact, includes the four main means which the most skillful teachers use to succeed in educating the young: to make themselves esteemed, loved, respected, and feared. Obviously, the Twelve Virtues of the Good Teacher include all these means, for not even one virtue fails to involve one or several more. What help, then, will they not provide to a teacher when they are all gathered together, and he possesses them all in a high degree?

Was it not by adhering closely to what M. de La Salle taught us that you have so successfully continued his work? Persevere, then, in following in his footsteps. Be sure that, like the Apostle, *"He who has begun this good work within you will continue, and make it perfect even to the day of Our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Phil. 1.6). If some of you have not yet perfectly attained of the virtues of the good teacher, we hope that you will, in the future, stir yourselves up to new fervor in acquiring them to the degree to which you should possess them, and in avoiding with more care than ever the defects opposed to these virtues. This is the right way to make our Institute flourish more and more vigorously, or rather to procure all the more glory to God, and to make more effective the education we are giving to the young.

What we have said on this topic, my very dear Brothers, gives you to understand that, when we seek to educate youth and willingly sacrifice ourselves for this end, we can apply to ourselves, in all justice, these words that the Apostle addressed to Timothy: *"in doing this you will save both yourself and those that hear you."* Thus, we have every reason to hope - if we are faithful in carrying out our duties, to receive *"the crown of justice which the Lord, the Just Judge, will render to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to them who love His coming."* (2 Tim. 4. 8). That crown will be infinitely glorious for us; for as you must have noticed in a passage from St. John Chrysostom: *"He who macerates his body by austerity has less merit than the man who wins souls for God."* "There are," adds this same Saint, *"two paths leading to salvation. In the one a person labors for himself alone, and in the other he takes interest also in the service of his neighbor. It must be acknowledged that fasts, corporal austerities, continence, and other like virtues are useful for the salvation of the one who practices them. But almsgiving, teaching, and charity, which reach out to one's neighbor, are much more exalted virtues."*

He further remarks, on the passage: *"who is the faithful servant...?"* *"A single soul which we have won for Jesus Christ can make up for an infinity of sins in us, and be the price of the redemption of our soul."*

Let us then highly prize our good fortune in that after embracing one of the most austere forms of religious life in the Church, we add to this what many of the others do not possess: the precious advantage of instructing others, and of laboring for the salvation of souls.

May the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit; grace be to you all, Amen.