Saints of La Salle University

In the first part of this book, you read about who we are as a family. Like all families we have our story, our family history. There are key figures in our story, and just like your family, they range from the amusing to the profound and serious. Our family portraits can be seen in the series of icons that are being written for the De La Salle Chapel, but we are also constantly reminded of them when we talk about the buildings on the main campus here at La Salle.

Since 1953, when the first residence hall was opened, most of the buildings on campus have been named after Saints of the Roman Catholic Church. While it may be convenient to remember them alphabetically we can also look at them chronologically and discover something of who we are as a family.

If we look at them chronologically we are also looking at the tradition that shapes us both as Catholic and as Lasallian. Tradition, after all, is a way of respecting the wisdom of those who have gone before us. Our faith traditions interpret themselves as stories because they teach us how to embrace hope over fear and love over isolation. In telling these stories, we share with each other what moves us to act—one of the ways that we motivate each other.

Our first set of family members go back to the very beginning of Christianity. They are the individuals on whose shoulders the rest of the story stands. Some of these individuals died for what they believed in. They were the first to articulate the faith in language that we know. The Apostles’ Creed as well as the Nicene Creed is part of their gift to us. Over the centuries, the Church has always returned to the writings and teachings of these individuals as the touchstones against which latter developments were seen and judged.

**St. George:** Pictures of Saint George usually show him slaying a dragon to rescue a beautiful lady. The dragon stands for wickedness. The lady stands for God’s holy truth. George was a favorite soldier in the army of the Roman Emperor Diocletian who was a bitter enemy to Christians. He put to death every Christian he could find. George, a devout Chris-
In the Saints, we can see the Gospel lived out in various circumstances and states in life for thousands of years. Their message isn’t that holiness is unattainable, but that you and I are called to become Saints.

St. George he was for England
And before he killed the dragon
He drank a pint of English ale
Out of an English flagon.

G.K. Chesterton

Now order the ranks, and fling wide the banners, for our souls are God’s and our bodies the king’s, and our swords for Saint George and for England!

Arthur Conan Doyle
tian, scolded Diocletian for his cruelty. He resigned his position, and for this he was tortured and finally beheaded. So boldly daring and so cheerful was George in declaring his faith and in dying for it that Christians felt courage when they heard of it. We all have some “dragon” we have to conquer. It might be pride, or anger, or laziness, or greed, or something else. With God’s help, we can fight these “dragons.” Then, we can call ourselves real Christians.

**St. Cassian of Imola:** Martyr of Imola, near modern Ravenna, Italy. He was a teacher arrested for being a Christian. His students hacked him to death when he refused to deny Christ. Prudentius recorded Cassian’s grisly martyrdom, noting that the students could not wield mortal blows, thus prolonging the martyr’s agony.

**St. Denis:** Denis (or Dionysius as he is also called) was born and raised in Italy. He was sent as a missionary to Gaul (now France) circa 250 A.D. by Pope St. Clement along with five other bishops. Denis made his base of missionary activity an island in the Seine near the city of Lutetia Parisorium—what would become Paris. For this reason, he is known as the first bishop of Paris. There, he was captured by the Parisians along with two companions. After a long imprisonment and several aborted executions, the three were beheaded and their bodies were thrown into the river. Denis’ body was retrieved from the Seine by his followers and buried. The chapel that was built over his tomb grew into the abbey of Saint Denis. Denis is the patron saint of France.

**St. Hilary of Poitiers:** Known as the first great Christian thinker from France, he was noted as a defender of the faith and a scholar who helped to change the course of religious history in the West. He wrote the first lengthy study of the doctrine in Latin, introduced Eastern theology to the West, and contributed to the development of hymnology. The son of pagan parents, he was received into the church at the age of 30 and later was named Bishop of Poitiers, in central France. He died in 366.

**St. Jerome:** Patron of Librarians. A lawyer in Rome, he later became a priest in Antioch after spending four years in prayer, study, and penance in the Syrian Desert. Often called the Father of Biblical Science, he
Your total ignorance of that which you profess to teach merits the death penalty. I doubt whether you would know that St. Cassian of Imola was stabbed to death by his students with their styli. His death, a martyr’s honorable one, made him a patron saint of teachers.

 Ignatius Reilly, in John Kennedy Toole’s, 
 A Confederacy of Dunces

In God, love is outgoing, ecstatic. Because of it lovers no longer belong to themselves but to those whom they love.

 St. Denis

Keep this piety of my faith undefiled, I beseech you, and let this be the utterance of my convictions even to the last breath of my spirit: that I may always hold fast to that which I profess in the creed of my regeneration when I was baptized in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, namely, that I may adore you, our Father, and your Son together with you, and that I may gain the favor of your Holy Spirit who is from you through the only-begotten. He is a suitable witness for my faith who says: “Father, all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine,” my Lord Jesus Christ, who always abides as God in you, from you and with you who is blessed forever and ever. Amen.

 St. Hilary of Poiters

Be at peace with your own soul, then heaven and earth will be at peace with you.

 St. Jerome
translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Latin and revised the existing Latin translation of the Christian Scriptures to produce the Vulgate version of the Bible. He died in 420.

**St. Basil the Great**: Basil was one of the giants of the early Church. St. Basil the Great was born in 330 in what is now modern Turkey. He was one of ten children of Basil the Elder and Emmelia. His parents as well as several of his brothers and sisters are honored among the saints. In 370, he was made bishop of Caesaria. He was a man of vast learning and constant activity, genuine eloquence and immense charity. This earned for him the title of “Great” during his life and Doctor of the Church after his death. He was responsible for the denunciation of Arianism at the Council of Constantinople in 381-82. Basil fought simony (paying for positions in the Church), aided the victims of drought and famine, strove for a better clergy, insisted on a clerical discipline, fearlessly denounced evil wherever he detected it, and excommunicated those involved in prostitution traffic. He was learned, a man of great personal holiness, and one of the great orators of Christianity.

The second group of family members whose stories are part of our tradition comes from the Middle Ages. These men and women helped the Church to further define who it was. Their writing is part of the intellectual heritage of the Church. In their lives we see that faith is built on reason and thought. They teach us how to integrate knowledge as a basis for true wisdom in the living of our lives.

**St. Edward the Confessor**: Edward the Confessor was the son of King Ethelred III, the Anglo-Saxon King of the English in the 11th century. He was born at Islip, England, and sent to Normandy with his mother in 1013. Edward remained in Normandy and was brought up a Norman. In 1042, he was acclaimed king of England. His reign was a peaceful one characterized by his good rule and remission of odious taxes. Edward became more interested in religious affairs and built St. Peter’s Abbey at Westminster, the site of the present Abbey, where he is buried. His piety gained him the surname “the Confessor.” He was canonized in 1161 by Pope Alexander III in a ceremony at Westminster Abbey presided over by Thomas Beckett. Prior to Saint George, he was considered the patron saint of England.
The bread that you store up belongs to the hungry; the coat that lies in your chest belongs to the naked; the gold that you have hidden in the ground belongs to the poor.

St. Basil the Great

Not the power to remember, but its very opposite, the power to forget, is a necessary condition for our existence.

St. Basil the Great

Blessed Lord, Saint Edward was one of the most popular English kings, because he trusted in You and greatly loved his people. By relying on You, he was able to rule wisely and maintain peace. I ask him to pray for world leaders and for those serving in my nation’s governmental offices. Lord, help us to elect Godly men and women and guide our politicians to make wise decisions inspired by the Holy Spirit. Bless the leaders of every country and all religions and fill them with a high sense of values. Raise up new leaders who build peace, protect life, and promote the fair and just treatment of all people. Saint Edward, pray for us. Amen.

Author Unknown
St. Bernard of Clairvaux: St. Bernard, Abbot and Doctor of the Church St. Bernard was born of noble parentage in the Burgundy region of France. At an early age, his parents sent him to a college at Chatillon, where he was conspicuous for his remarkable piety and spirit of recollection. He embraced the newly established and very austere institute of the Cistercian Order. His superior sent him with twelve monks to found a new monastery, which afterward became known as the celebrated Abbey of Clairvaux. St. Bernard was at once appointed Abbot and began that active life which has rendered him the most conspicuous figure in the history of the 12th century. He founded numerous other monasteries and composed a number of works for the honor of God. The reputation of St. Bernard spread. Popes were governed by his advice. He was commissioned by Pope Eugene III to preach the second Crusade. In obedience he traveled through France and Germany and aroused the great enthusiasm for the holy war among the masses. The failure of the Crusade raised a great storm against him, but he attributed it to the sins of the Crusaders. He died on Aug. 20, 1153.

St. Albert the Great: Albert the Great was one of the Church’s greatest intellects. He entered the Dominican order, studied at the University of Padua and taught at Regensburg and Strasbourg in Germany. He later taught at the University of Paris where he received his doctorate in 1245. He was among the first and greatest of the natural scientists, gaining a reputation for expertise in biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, geography, metaphysics, and mathematics. He was also very learned in biblical studies and theology. He and his most famous student, Thomas Aquinas are credited with incorporating the philosophy of Aristotle into the Christian West.

St. Katherine of Siena: The 25th child of a wool dyeer in northern Italy, St. Catherine started having mystical experiences when she was 6. She became a Dominican tertiary when she was 16, and continued to have visions of Christ, Mary, and the saints. Catherine was one of the most brilliant theological minds of her day, although she never had any formal education. She persuaded the Pope to return to Rome from Avignon, in 1377, and when she died she was endeavoring to heal the Great Western Schism. St. Catherine’s letters and a treatise called “a dialogue” are considered among the most brilliant writings in the his-
Remember, O most loving Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, we fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, our mother. To you we come, before you we stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer.

*St. Bernard*

The greater and more persistent your confidence in God, the more abundantly you will receive all that you ask.

*St. Albert the Great*

To a brave man, good and bad luck are like his right and left hand. He uses both.

*St. Katherine of Siena*

Let the truth be your delight ... proclaim it ... but with a certain congeniality.

*St. Katherine of Siena*
tory of the Catholic Church. She died when she was only 33.

**St. Francis de Sales:** Authored *The Introduction to the Devout Life*. For Francis, the love of God was like romantic love. For him, the key to love of God was prayer. For busy people of the world, he advised “Retire at various times into the solitude of your own heart, even while outwardly engaged in discussions or transactions with others and talk to God.” The test of prayer was a person’s actions: “To be an angel in prayer and a beast in one’s relations with people is to go lame on both legs.” He died on Dec. 28, 1622, after giving a nun his last word of advice: “Humility.” St. Francis developed a sign language in order to teach a deaf man about God. Because of this, he is the patron saint of the deaf. He is also the patron saint of journalists because of the tracts and books he wrote.

**St. John Neumann:** Bishop of Philadelphia, who was gifted with outstanding organizational skills. He encouraged a number of religious orders, including the Christian Brothers, to teach in the city and built more than 80 churches. He pioneered the organization of the parochial school system and wrote a catechism. He died in 1860.

**St. Teresa of Avila:** Teresa was born in 1515 in Spain. As a teenager, Teresa cared only about boys and clothes and flirting and rebelling—like other teenagers throughout the ages. When she was 16, her father decided she was out of control and sent her to a convent. At first she hated it but eventually she began to enjoy it—partly because of her growing love for God, and partly because the convent was a lot less strict than her father. Still, when the time came for her to choose between marriage and religious life, she had a tough time making the decision. When she finally chose religious life, she did so because she thought that it was the only safe place for someone as prone to sin as she was. In her books, she analyzed and dissects mystical experiences the way a scientist would. She is the founder of the Discalced Carmelites. In 1970 she was declared a Doctor of the Church for her writing and teaching on prayer, one of two women to be honored in this way. St. Teresa is the patron saint of headache sufferers.

The last three members of the family are especially close. If everyone
Never be in a hurry: do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset.

St. Francis de Sales

All people of whatever race, condition or age, in virtue of their dignity as human persons, have an inalienable right to education. This education should be suitable to the particular destiny of the individuals, adapted to their ability, sex and national cultural traditions, and should be conducive to amicable relations with other nations in order to promote true unity and peace in the world. True education aims to give people a formation which is directed towards their final end and the good of that society to which they belong and in which, as adults, they will have their share of duties to perform.

Pope Paul VI
(Declaration on Christian Education, 1)
Austin Flannery translation

Nada te turbe;
nada te espante;
todo se pasa;
Dios no se muda,
la paciencia
todo lo alcanza.
Quien a Dios tiene,
nada le falta.
Solo Dios basta.

Santa Teresa de Avila
else is a second and third cousin, these three men are first cousins, if not brothers. Each of them is a Christian Brother and so their stories tell us something very special about what it means to be Lasallian. While only two residence halls and one other building on campus are named after Brothers, over 100 Brothers have been declared Blessed or Saints in the last 40 years. These individuals, along with all of those we have already named are “a cloud of witnesses” who constantly surround us, support us, and challenge us to be individuals of integrity, who work for the common good, and seek to make the world a better place because we have been here.

Saint Brother Miguel: Francisco Febres Cordero was born into a family that has always been prominent in Ecuadorian politics. Crippled from birth, he had to overcome family opposition to realize his vocation to be a lay religious, the first native of Ecuador to be received into the Institute. Brother Miguel was a gifted teacher from the start and a diligent student. When he was not quite 20 years old, he published the first of his many books, a Spanish grammar that soon became a standard text. In time, his research and publications in the field of literature and linguistics put him in touch with scholars all over the world and he was granted membership in the National Academies of Ecuador and Spain. Despite high academic honors, teaching remained his first priority, especially his classes in religion and for the young men he prepared for first communion. His students admired his simplicity, his directness, his concern for them, and the intensity of his devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Virgin Mary.

Saint Brother Benilde: Pierre Romançon was born in the village of Thuret in south-central France. He was so far ahead of his classmates in elementary school that when he was only 14 years old the Brothers engaged him as a substitute teacher. Despite the objection of his parents, who wanted to keep him at home, and the reluctance of the superiors, who thought he was too short of stature, he was finally admitted to the novitiate. From 1821 to 1841 he taught successfully in the network of elementary schools conducted by the Brothers out of the administrative center at Clermont-Ferrand. In 1841 he was appointed Director of a school that was opening in Saugues, an isolated village on a barren plateau in southern France. For the next 20 years he worked
Our first reaction in dealing with others should always be to find something about them worthy of praise.

San Miguel

The heart is rich when it is content, and it is always content when its desires are fixed on God.

San Miguel

GLORY be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches’ wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J
quietly and effectively as teacher and principal to educate the boys in
the village and some from the neighboring farms, many of whom were
in their teens and had never been to school before. Small as he was, he
was known as a strict but fair disciplinarian. In time, the little school
became the center of the social and intellectual life of the village, with
evening classes for the adults and tutoring for the less gifted students.
Brother Benilde’s extraordinary religious sense was evident to everyone.
At his beatification, Pope Pius XII stressed that his sanctification was
attained by enduring “the terrible daily grind” and by “doing common
things in an uncommon way.”

**St. Mutien Marie Wiaux:** After two years teaching elementary classes,
his was assigned to the boarding school at Malonne, where he would
spend the next 58 years. He had difficulties at first coping with the
demands of both teaching and prefecting. However, he was given a new
assignment in which he did very well teaching courses in music and art.
From then on, Brother Mutien was not only an effective teacher, a vigi-
lant prefect, and a catechist in the nearby parish, but also a tremendous
influence on the students by his patience and evident piety.

**St. John Baptist De La Salle:** John Baptist de La Salle was born into a
world very different from our own. He was the first son of wealthy par-
ents living in France over 300 years ago. Born at Reims, John Baptist
de La Salle received the tonsure at age 10 and was named Canon of the
Reims Cathedral at 16. Though he had to assume the administration of
family affairs after his parents died, he completed his theological studies
and was ordained a priest on April 9, 1678. Two years later he received
a doctorate in theology. Meanwhile he became tentatively involved
with a group of rough and barely literate young men in order to estab-
lish schools for poor boys.

At that time a few people lived in luxury, but most of the people were
extremely poor: peasants in the country, and slum dwellers in the
towns. Only a few could send their children to school; most children
had little hope for the future. Moved by the plight of the poor who
seemed so “far from salvation” either in this world or the next, he
determined to put his own talents and advanced education at the
service of the children “often left to themselves and badly brought up.”
He lived in the love of God from morning until evening.

Student of St. Benilde

God is everything

St. Mutien Marie

Come Holy Spirit!
Take possession of my heart,
And so guide my actions
That I may be able to say that they are the work
of your hands
rather than mine;
and that my whole being in each of its functions, is entirely
dependent on your good pleasure.
Blessed will I be when I no longer live or act but by the Spirit
of God.
Then will I be able to say,
“It is no longer I who live, but Jesus Christ and His Holy
Spirit who live in me.”

St. John Baptist De La Salle
Method of Interior Prayer
To be more effective, he abandoned his family home, moved in with the teachers, renounced his position as Canon and his wealth, and so formed the community that became known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

His enterprise met opposition from the ecclesiastical authorities who resisted the creation of a new form of religious life, a community of consecrated laymen to conduct gratuitous schools “together and by association.” The educational establishment resented his innovative methods and his insistence on gratuity for all, regardless of whether they could afford to pay. Nevertheless De La Salle and his Brothers succeeded in creating a network of quality schools throughout France that featured instruction in the vernacular, students grouped according to ability and achievement, integration of religious instruction with secular subjects, well-prepared teachers with a sense of vocation and mission, and the involvement of parents. In addition, De La Salle pioneered in programs for training lay teachers, Sunday courses for working young men, and one of the first institutions in France for the care of delinquents. Worn out by austerities and exhausting labors, he died at Saint Yon near Rouen early in 1719 on Good Friday, only weeks before his 68th birthday.

De La Salle was a pioneer in founding training colleges for teachers, reform schools for delinquents, technical schools, and secondary schools for modern languages, arts, and sciences. His work quickly spread through France and, after his death, continued to spread across the globe. In 1900, John Baptist de La Salle was declared a Saint. In 1950, because of his life and inspirational writings, he was made Patron Saint of all those who work in the field of education. John Baptist de La Salle inspired others how to teach and care for young people, how to meet failure and frailty with compassion, how to affirm, strengthen and heal. At the present time there are De La Salle schools in 80 different countries around the globe. La Salle University is named after Saint John Baptist de La Salle.
O God, early in the morning I cry to you.
Help me to pray
And to concentrate my thoughts on you:
I cannot do this alone.
In me there is darkness,
But with you there is light;
I am lonely, but you do not leave me;
I am feeble in heart, but with you there is help;
I am restless, but with you there is peace.
In me there is bitterness, but with you there is patience;
I do not understand your ways,
But you know the way for me . . .
Restore me to liberty,
And enable me to live now
That I may answer before you and before me.
Lord, whatever this day may bring,
Your name be praised.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer
CONDUITE
DES
ECOLES CHRETIENNES
DIVISEE EN DEUX PARTIES.

Prenez-garde à vous, & ayez soin d’enseigner les autres; Perseverez dans ces exercices, car par ce moyen vous vous sauverez vous-même, & vous sauverez ceux qui vous écoutent. 1. Epit. à Timoth. 4. 16.

A AVIGNON,


M. D. CC, XX.

AVEC PERMISSION DES SUPERIEURS.