

St. John Baptist de LaSalle

Feast Day April 7

Patron saint of principals and teachers

John Baptist de LaSalle was born in 1651 in Rheims, France, the oldest of 11 children. He left the seminary to care for his brothers and sisters when his parents died. He returned to school after they had grown and was ordained a priest.

John believed all children deserved a good education, not just the rich. He knew that ignorance could easily lead to evil thoughts and actions. He also realized that in order to have good Christian education, there must be well-trained teachers. He used his talent for organization to establish the first teachers' colleges that promoted new ways of teaching. John also started technical schools where children could learn a trade. In 1680, John founded the Christian Brothers Schools. Today, there are over 20,000 Christian Brothers teaching 750,000 students in 85 countries.

John is often called the "father of modern education". He developed the idea of teaching children in a classroom setting rather than individually, as well as the process of dividing students into grades. He introduced the blackboard and added subjects such as arts, science, and math to the traditional studies of reading and writing. Perhaps the most important vision of John Baptist de LaSalle was that he saw the school as a community of faith. He led the way in believing that the vocation of the lay Christian teacher was a very important part of the ministry of the Church and of Jesus.

He died on Good Friday at age 68, on April 7, 1719, and was canonized in 1900.



"To touch the hearts of your pupils is the greatest miracle you can perform."

-John Baptist de LaSalle