

THE BUTTIMER INSTITUTE
OF LASALLIAN STUDIES

June 22 – July 4, 2008
Saint Mary's College of California



Summer 2008

Nature and Purpose

The Buttimer Institute is an intensive formation and education program that studies the life and work of St. John Baptist de La Salle and the origins of the Lasallian Educational Mission. Through an examination of the writings of De La Salle and an analysis of the works of some modern educational thinkers, participants develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Lasallian heritage and its application to contemporary educational practices.

A valued dimension of the program is the gathering of highly motivated adult learners to form a distinctive, supportive, and international community of faith. Since its founding in 1987, the Institute has drawn over 500 participants from the United States and around the world, engaging them in a program of personal growth, spiritual renewal, and expansion of intellectual horizons.

Chief among the goals of the Institute is to inspire its participants to delve more thoroughly into the founding story and there discover a wellspring of one's vocation as an educator. What is more, as the Buttimer program seeks to deepen the participants' association for the Lasallian mission, it strives to broaden that association by imparting practical strategies and skills for furthering the mission in one's own ministry.

The Sessions

The Institute consists in the main of three consecutive, independent summers of study, each two weeks in duration. A fourth session—one week in length—is open to all graduates of the primary course of studies.

Year One: "The Founding Story"

Participants are introduced to a detailed study of the life and times of St. John Baptist de La Salle. The story of the origins is related through reading and discussion of notable biographical and autobiographical texts. This course takes up the related theme of the "vocational journey of a teacher," a concept explored by contemporary writers such as Parker Palmer and others.

Year Two: “De La Salle’s Educational Vision and Influence”

This session examines the educational vision of De La Salle primarily through a reading of his classic, *The Conduct of Schools*. In addition, the participants are invited to study other pedagogical and catechetical writings of De La Salle, a modern analysis of those writings, and some contemporary texts exploring the Lasallian Educational Mission.

Year Three: “De La Salle’s Spiritual Vision and Influence”

The final year of the main course of studies finds the participants immersed in the spiritual writings of De La Salle, particularly the *Meditations* and *The Method of Interior Prayer*. This session seeks the integration of Lasallian spirituality with the themes of the previous two years. In addition, an array of topics will be explored that will enhance each participant’s own spiritual journey.



Year Four: "The Spiritual Journey Continues"

The nature of the Buttimer IV program is that of a retreat. Buttimer IV provides participants with a meaningful experience of prayer, community, input, and dialogue, all centered on themes related to the vocation of the educator. In addition, opportunities for spiritual direction are made available for those who desire it. This special session is scheduled for one week and is intended to serve Buttimer graduates.

The Practicum

In addition to their regular class studies, the Buttimer students are required to participate in a co-curricular activity called the "Practicum." Employing cooperative learning strategies, the Practicum facilitators seek to engage students with similar interests in a particular aspect of the Lasallian mission in the development of skills, creative ideas, and their practical application in furtherance of that mission. The practicum will meet four times throughout the two weeks. When a participant selects a practicum, the participants is expected to remain in that practicum for each of the three years of Buttimer. Each participant will be asked to select one Practicum from among the following:

A. Local Lasallian Mission Coordinators/Animators

An increasing number of schools and agencies are complementing their administrative teams with persons responsible for some level of oversight of mission effectiveness. This Practicum is designed for those who currently hold such positions or for those who wish to become mission coordinators or animators. Best practices will be shared and program development strategies will be explored.

B. Program Presenters

As the demand for local Lasallian formation opportunities increases, so too does the demand for effective presenters. This Practicum gathers those who are interested in learning more about developing engaging presentations on Lasallian themes to faculty, staff, board members, students, parents, and others. The content of various "toolboxes", including PowerPoint presentations, video clips, prayer services, and the like will be shared and enhanced.

C. Lasallian Scholars

The years immediately preceding and following the Second Vatican Council saw the rise of several significant Brother scholars, including Michel Sauvage and Miguel Campos, who advanced our knowledge of and appreciation for the Founder, his life, and his works.

The Lasallian world awaits the emergence of the next generation of scholars, Brothers and partners alike, to address systematically issues related to Lasallian association for mission and other topics of importance. This Practicum is designed to give impetus to those inclined to such academic pursuits.

D. Young Lasallians

Lasallians from 21 to 35 years of age are an increasingly significant segment within our schools' and agencies' populations. Acknowledging that Young Lasallians have different experiences and that they have a valuable contribution to make within the growing association, this Practicum is an opportunity to: (a) dialogue about the role of Young Lasallians in the Mission; (b) enable Young Lasallians to develop initiatives for implementation; and (c) encourage and support the voice and networking of Young Lasallians at the local, district, regional, and international levels.

E. Lasallian Associates

As the scope and breadth of the Lasallian Mission worldwide continues to expand, the need for committed Lasallian educators grows more urgent. The concept of an association for the Lasallian mission is taking root, though its implications are not clearly understood. This practicum creates a forum for the discussion of various views on this vital topic and invites those interested in exploring ways to move the issue beyond conversation to action.

Academic Credit and Continuing Education

Academic Credit

Saint Mary's College of California will award academic credit to Buttimer participants who are enrolled in the Master of Arts in Education in Lasallian Studies Program. If enrolled in the program, Buttimer participants may request that the Buttimer experience be considered for transfer into the degree program. For more information, contact Carole Swain, Ph.D., Dean of Mission and Faculty Development, Saint Mary's College of California, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga, CA 94575 (cswain@stmarys-ca.edu).

Continuing Education Units

Saint Mary's College of California will award Continuing Education Unit Certificates to Buttimer participants upon completion of each course of study. Each Buttimer year is considered a different course. The units are considered professional development units, not academic units. For more information, please contact Carole Swain, Ph.D.

The Participants



The participants of the Institute are drawn from among persons engaged in Lasallian ministries internationally and from others who are interested in De La Salle and the

movement he began. The Buttimer students come from secondary, middle, and elementary schools, from colleges and universities, and from childcare agencies and other ministries. A richly diverse group of Brothers, lay colleagues, other religious, clergy, and Lasallian Volunteers form the Buttimer community.

The program in its recent restructuring seeks to address the particular needs of Lasallian associates, emerging scholars, formators and accompaniers of Brothers and partners, mission effectiveness coordinators, program presenters, and young Lasallians. In addition, the graduates of other regional and district formation programs are likely to benefit greatly from the Buttimer experience.

The Daily Schedule

The daily schedule incorporates time for formal presentations, group discussions, informal sharing, reading, prayer, and meals. Classes are normally conducted in the morning and evening. Afternoons are generally free for study and relaxation. Most evenings end with prayer and a social. Mass is available several times during the week.

The Campus

Since 1987, The Buttimer Institute has been held on the beautiful campus of Saint Mary's College in Moraga, CA. Saint Mary's is one of the seven Lasallian institutions of higher learning in the United States. Founded in 1863, the College is located in the Bay Area about twenty miles east of San Francisco. You can read more about Saint Mary's at www.stmarys-ca.edu.



The Name

The Buttimer Institute is named for Brother Charles Henry Buttimer (1909-1982), the first American Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Born in Brighton, MA, he served as Superior General from 1966 to 1976.







*“The purpose of this
Institute is to give a
human and Christian
education to the
young, especially the
poor, according to the
ministry which the
Church has entrusted
to it.”*

***The Rule of the Brothers of
the Christian Schools, 1987.***