



15 May 2026  
THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

**“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me”**

According to the traditional calendar, the feast of Saint John Baptist de La Salle is celebrated on May 15, and we will dedicate today’s meditation to him. For this occasion, the following Gospel passage has been chosen:

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.” (Mt 18:1–5)*

Here the Lord presents us with two aspects regarding children. First, their simplicity and sincerity. That is the attitude with which we must approach our heavenly Father. In children who still retain their purity, we find a wonderful innocence that willingly receives what we offer them. By living such a relationship with our Father, we become receptive to God’s love, which can be transmitted to us directly. True greatness flows from this, for in the Kingdom of Heaven, the one who loves and serves others is great. If our heart is as open as a child’s, not only do we receive God’s love by the most direct path, but this love also becomes the motivation for action, since love drives us to carry out God’s works. Ultimately, it is the Holy Spirit—the love between the Father and the Son—Who impels us to do good and enlightens our hearts.

Added to this openness is an attitude of true humility. In fact, if we submit ourselves to our Father like a child, we will never consider ourselves great. On the contrary, we will know that we are recipients and that all greatness must be attributed to God. Our participation consists in allowing God to perform great works through us.

In this context, Jesus even speaks of conversion. This means that we do not possess this attitude of humility innately, as is the case with a small child, but must acquire it through God’s grace. This happens as we walk the spiritual path following Christ, in which we learn to receive everything from the Lord and to attribute it to Him, considering it a gift of His goodness. This attitude can help us overcome vanity and false pride with the Lord’s help, working on all those habits that hinder the simple action of the Holy Spirit.

The second aspect that Jesus teaches us regarding children is the following: *“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.”*

At this point, it is easy to draw a connection to today’s saint. The plight of the poor children and young people of Reims (France) deeply moved the young cleric Jean-Baptiste, who came from a noble family. Therefore, after his ordination to the priesthood, he took over the leadership of the *“The Sisters of the Child Jesus of Reims,”* who were dedicated to the education of poor girls, establishing free schools and training teachers. Shortly thereafter, he himself founded a free school for poor children in Reims. Unlike what was customary at the time, instruction there was given in French rather than in Latin.

The saint’s educational method focused on the integral formation of the person, with the aim of educating young people not only intellectually, but also morally and spiritually. His dedication to poor young people, often marginalized by society, reflected a true love and a deep understanding of human suffering. For this reason, his teaching was not limited to the transmission of knowledge, but he treated each of his students with the same mercy that Christ had shown to humanity. To do so, it was necessary to recognize the dignity and worth of each individual person.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle dedicated his entire life to this work. A religious institute known as the *“Brothers of the Christian Schools”* formed around him. The saint had been moved by the needs of children and the poor, and he put the Lord’s word into practice by welcoming the little ones in His Name. The following words that Saint John Baptist addressed to his teachers will help us understand the spirit with which he wished to educate those entrusted to his care:

*“Consider in your hearts, dear brothers, what the Apostle Paul says: God has appointed in His Church apostles, prophets, and teachers (1 Cor 12:28), and be convinced that God has also appointed you to your ministry. The saint himself testifies to this when he explains that there are various ministries and various gifts, and that the Holy Spirit Himself is manifested in each of these gifts for the common good, that is, for the good of the Church (cf. 1 Cor 12:5, 11). Do not doubt, then, the great grace you have received: to teach children, to proclaim the Good News to them, and to educate them in the spirit of religion. It is a great gift from God that He has called you to such a holy task.*

*Therefore, let your dedication and zeal move your students. Let them feel that God admonishes them through you, for you are Christ’s messengers.*

*Furthermore, you must show the Church how much you love her and give her proof of your diligence. For you work through the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. Through your zeal in your work, demonstrate that you love the people God has entrusted to you, just as Christ loved the Church.”*

Blessed are those who have such educators!

NOTE: From tomorrow on, we will be repeating the reflections on the Holy Spirit from 2023, which are also available to watch on video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTOakQXb2Dw&list=PLQ38K-XkWVpIt5k7iPVbsSy7kykKCch0p>