



# *Mission Statement*

A Catholic University in the Lasallian Tradition



## **SIGNUM FIDEI (THE SIGN OF FAITH)**

When the De La Salle Christian Brothers accepted sponsorship of Lewis University in 1960, the University adopted the seal of the Christian Brothers. The *Signum Fidei* (the Sign of Faith) symbolically represents the integration of the distinctive values of knowledge, fidelity, wisdom, justice, and association. Each of these values is significant, but it is only in their union that the Mission is realized. The *Signum Fidei* is a symbol of the Lasallian spirit which unifies these distinctive values proclaimed by the University.

Faith may be understood as the search for truth that cannot be understood by reason alone. In this context, the University develops the relationship between faith and daily life in each individual and in the situations in which individuals live and act.

Just as the seal of the University provides a common symbol for identification, the Mission defines the values of the institution and inspires and unifies the work of its members.



## **THE MISSION STATEMENT**

Lewis University, guided by its catholic and lasallian heritage, provides to a diverse student population programs for a liberal and professional education grounded in the interaction of knowledge and fidelity in the search for truth. Lewis promotes the development of the complete person through the pursuit of wisdom and justice. Fundamental to its mission is a spirit of association which develops community in all teaching, learning and service.

## **SANCTIFIED ZONE**

Guided by its Catholic and Lasallian heritage, Lewis University is firmly committed to fostering a campus atmosphere that is permeated by its Mission-based values of Fidelity, Wisdom, Knowledge, Justice and Association. Accordingly, we have declared the University campus to be a Sanctified Zone, a place and a people United in Diversity. The active promotion of diversity and the opposition to all forms of prejudice and bias are a powerful and healing expression of our desire to be "Signs of Faith" (*Signum Fidei*) to our students and each other.



## **FAITHFUL TO THE LASALLIAN HERITAGE IN CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION**

Lewis is a University dedicated to the sharing of knowledge, grounded in its Catholic character, and animated by the Lasallian heritage of the De La Salle Christian Brothers and their colleagues.

### **UNIVERSITY**

As a University, Lewis is committed to blending liberal and professional education effectively by engaging all dimensions of human experience. Such learning is freely pursued, value-centered, and disciplined. This process seeks to develop educated persons with the knowledge, critical judgment and wisdom required throughout their lives.

### **CATHOLIC**

As Catholic, Lewis University fosters the creative interaction of faith with all forms of knowledge, in an environment of open inquiry, in the belief that all of created reality is intelligible and coherent. The University seeks a world of justice, rooted in community.

### **LASALLIAN**

As Lasallian, Lewis University promotes a values-based education characterized by quality teaching, a supportive environment, personal interaction between students and faculty, a commitment to service and social justice, and a sensitivity to poverty and oppression.

# THE MISSION AND ITS DISTINCTIVE VALUES

These five interconnected values are distinctive features which guide the University in fulfilling its Mission: Knowledge, Fidelity, Wisdom, Justice and Association.



## KNOWLEDGE

**The result of a lifelong pursuit of learning fostered through creative and critical interaction in a community of learners.**

Knowledge is achieved through respectful and disciplined dialogue, the development of intellectual skills and methodologies, and the valuing of open inquiry and academic freedom.

Knowledge preserves what is of perennial value from the past, tests what is current and new, and seeks to discover the future in the secrets of the physical universe and the mysteries of the human spirit.

It evolves from the lifelong pursuit of intellectual, professional, cultural and religious learning. Knowledge allows one to experience autonomy of thought grounded in discipline and structure, which enhances personal growth, responsibility and leadership.

The University is dedicated to academic excellence, particularly in the promotion of a high quality of student-centered, interactive learning and instruction. To this end, the University places major emphasis on instructional excellence and student/faculty relationships.

## FIDELITY

**The spirit which recognizes God as Ultimate Reality, unifying the diverse forms of knowledge in the pursuit of fullness of truth, while recognizing the diversity of human experience.**

In a Catholic community of higher learning, fidelity is an important dimension in the search for truth.

Fidelity is the recognition that God as Ultimate Reality is encountered in all of creation. As a result, creation is seen as dynamic, yet ordered, and thus open to inquiry. This dynamic order provides a stimulus for an active, free, and continuous exploration and understanding of the meaning of life.

In the Catholic and Lasallian heritage, God is understood to be the central source of wisdom, inspiration and conviction. This heritage is inspired in part by the spirituality of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the founder of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, and is reflected in the values of the Gospel. At the same time, an ecumenical openness affirms a commitment to diversity and the importance of other faith traditions, thereby respecting their contributions to the life of the University and to the pursuit of truth.

## WISDOM

**The result of the integration of reflection and action achieved through lifelong learning.**

Wisdom is attained through the development of a critical perspective that respectfully examines and creatively responds to contemporary society, culture, Church and human experience. This perspective results from an emphasis on critical thinking skills and the application and integration of knowledge with experience leading to creative problem solving.

Wisdom includes a consistent and committed vision based upon one's faith. It provides an understanding of the nature of the human community, the importance of ethical and just behavior, and the rewards of service.

Wisdom empowers Lewis University to plan creatively in providing learning experiences that meet the needs of a changing pluralistic society while maintaining faithfulness to its Catholic and Lasallian heritage.

## JUSTICE

**The affirmation of the equal dignity of each person and the promotion of personal and social responsibility.**

The University values the sacredness of all of human life, affirms the dignity of work, seeks to overcome prejudice, and promotes change in oppressive systems.

The University is committed to enhancing a sensitivity to, and an understanding of, the causes of poverty, injustice and oppression, leading to service and social action within the local community and beyond.

Justice directs one to promote moral and ethical action which fosters tolerance, sensitivity, concern for the poor, peace and generosity. Justice is pursued through regular reflection upon personal responsibility, and through programs which promote social action.

## ASSOCIATION

**A commitment to student learning, development, and success accomplished through collaboration, mutual respect, collegiality, and dedicated service in the spirit of our Catholic and Lasallian Mission.**

Association invites Lewis University to achieve its institutional vision and goals through the unified efforts of faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, alumni, and benefactors for the benefit of its students. This core value of Association is an invitation to become an engaged member of the Lewis University community – a community in which each faculty and staff member is an educator called to integrate the fundamental elements of the mission into their professional lives, living out that charism in their teaching, leadership and service.

Personal and collective commitment to the Mission fosters a bond among persons, which leads to the creation of an authentic community directed toward the common goal of providing high quality, values-based and relevant learning experiences for all students.

Association calls us to solidarity with all women and men in the global Lasallian network who are dedicated to providing a human and Christian education to all, especially the young and underprivileged.



## SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE PATRON SAINT OF EDUCATORS

John Baptist de La Salle was born into a world very different from our own. He was the first son of wealthy parents living in Reims, France more than 360 years ago. At the age of sixteen, De La Salle was named Canon of the Reims Cathedral, an honorary position that provided additional income to his family. 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, De La Salle recruited a group of teachers in order to help establish schools for poor boys.

At that time, few people lived in luxury but most were extremely poor: peasants in the country, and slum dwellers in the towns. Only a few could send their children to school. Moved by the plight of the poor, De La Salle determined to put his own talents and advanced education at the service of the children who had little hope for the future, those who were “often left to themselves and badly brought up.” To be more effective, he abandoned his family home, moved in with the teachers, stepped aside from his prestigious role in the Church, gave up his wealth, and so formed the community that became known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools, commonly known today as the De La Salle Christian Brothers.

De La Salle’s enterprise met opposition from Church authorities who resisted the creation of a new form of religious life. 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 students grouped in classrooms 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 programs for training lay teachers and Sunday courses for working young men. De La Salle died at Saint Yon near Rouen early in 1719, only weeks before his sixty-eighth birthday.

John Baptist 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. In 1900, he was declared a Saint. In 1950, because of his life’s work and inspirational writings, he was made Patron Saint of all those who work in the field of education.



Admissions Office  
One University Parkway  
Romeoville, IL 60446  
[lewisu.edu](http://lewisu.edu)

## THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS AND THE LASALLIAN MOVEMENT TODAY: A WORLDWIDE NETWORK

The De La Salle Christian Brothers today work in collaboration with thousands of Lasallian lay partners who together carry the vision of De La Salle to hundreds of education-related works in 79 countries throughout the world. This global community of Christian Brothers, numbering about 4,000 today works alongside more than 90,000 lay partners for the benefit of nearly one million students. Many of those students attend one of 64 Lasallian colleges and universities around the world. Here in the United States, there are approximately 100 Lasallian educational institutions. Lewis is one of six colleges and universities in this country sponsored by the Christian Brothers. The Brothers of the Christian Schools, by their own choice and vocation, are lay religious. They express commitment to their work through vows of association for the service of the poor through education, chastity, poverty, obedience, as well as stability of the Institute. The Brothers and the lay partners with whom they share their mission, approach their educational work as more than a job or a profession; it is the essence of their calling to “touch the hearts” of the students entrusted to their care and to “inspire them with the Christian spirit.”



## HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Founded in 1932 under the direction of the Chicago Archdiocese and Bishop Bernard J. Sheil, Lewis University began as the Holy Name Technical School for boys. Aviation technology was the special emphasis of instruction and the origin of today’s highly regarded Department of Aviation and Transportation. In 1952, the school was renamed Lewis College of Science and Technology. In 1960, the De La Salle Christian Brothers assumed direction of the institution. Today, with growing enrollment, outstanding programs, experienced faculty and motivated students, Lewis University is fast becoming one of the finest, mid-sized, comprehensive Catholic universities in the Midwest.

LASALLIAN EDUCATION  
*Transforming Lives Since 1680*